

Xee: What is it?

Early this year the EE International Board approved the release and launch of a brand new product to be named "Xee". X stands for many things, e.g. Generation X, but also for "the unknown".

In 2006, I had the privilege to be part of a group of some 20 people from all over the world put together to discuss the foundations of a new product which will make EE even more relevant to a new generation. EE itself is more than 40 years old and although it has been revised periodically, many of the teaching methods employed were from another generation. The teaching methods were dated and overly dependent on the teacher's personal skills. Even the concepts of "eternal life" and "death" which the EE presentation uses were no longer deemed relevant by sections of our secular, post-modern society.

During our time together, the group isolated the core principles of EE e.g. the on-the-job training that made EE effective. These were to be our "non-negotiables" and would be retained in our new product. Next, we brainstormed, with a zero-based approach. We even revisited the 5 gospel points and discussed the relevant scriptures and illustrations we would use in the new presentation. (No one could answer why we never used John 3:16, the most familiar verse in the Bible, which an unbeliever is most likely to know if they knew only one single Bible verse!).

Historically, EE's thread of logic has been thus:

Finding out what a person is basing their hope on, to be "right" with God, or to have eternal life. Once that is determined, and assuming it is some kind of "works" hope, the EE Gospel presentation tactfully points out the hopelessness of trying to be good enough to satisfy God's requirements, then moves on to explain God's real provision through the substitutionary work of Christ on the cross.

A new approach:

We have discovered that for many (though not all, which is why we keep the standard diagnostic question available) the idea of trying to obtain righteousness with God is not a key question that is perceived as relevant to a secular, post-modern, thinker. If not that issue, then what is a more burning question in the mind of many non-Christians? We have found that many people are saying, "I don't care anything about eternal life or trying to get there. My problem is that life doesn't make any sense now. Instead of telling me about eternal life, tell me how my life can make sense of this mess NOW".

While EE's standard "Diagnostic Questions" are still present, we have added another, very effective dialogue question which helps students get into the Gospel more effectively. We first ask a person, "On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your life right now?" Then..."what would make your life a 9 or a 10?" These are much less aggressive questions than the EE diagnostic questions. Indeed, they do not even mention heaven or eternal life.

However, the next question begins to move into a more spiritual context, which is: "Do you think knowing about God would move you one way or another on that scale?"

If the person responds in some way that knowing about God might help them, we then proceed to share the concept that God wants us to experience abundant life both now and forever. This emphasizes the "now" element of knowing God, i.e. that knowing more about God can, in fact, have a positive impact on a person's life today.

We have found that many people who do not perceive their greatest need is to know if they have eternal life, do see their greatest need is to know what can help their life in the here and now. Of course, we know that a relationship with God, through Jesus, will meet these needs. The Gospel remains the same, but the initial approach is more fitted to many non-Christians' immediate felt needs.

From this point, the Gospel presentation is very similar to what we have used for years. We proceed to explain the nature of sin, beginning with, "Life doesn't work because we are cut off from the One who designed life in the first place." We can further explain the nature and consequences of sin. From this point, once again, we can share about God's provision, not only for life making sense, but because of Christ's substitutionary death on the cross, received through faith.

New teaching methods

We solicited the help of experts in modern teaching methods and those very aware of the thinking minds of the present generation to help us decide how we will teach the material.

Lastly we asked the experts in the field of mass media communication and advertising to help us to package the product so that many more will find EE exciting.

Whilst surfing the internet and reading the blogs, I can sense a genuine new excitement about EE - and indeed, about witnessing for our Lord Jesus Christ.

This product has been field-tested world-wide and the results have been remarkable. No doubt further improvements can and will be made in the near future but EE International feels the product can and should be brought to the attention of the user community quickly.

Voon Yuen Wo – used by www.eesued.de / April 2009/ Uli Hees