

  
**Areté**  
 CENTRE FOR MISSIONARY LEADERSHIP  
 A work of the Missionaries of God's Love

**How does Conversion Take Place I?**  
 Theological Foundations of Mission 8

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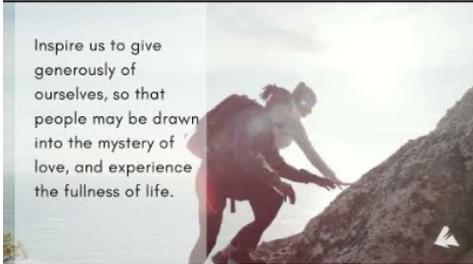
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Inspire us to give generously of ourselves, so that people may be drawn into the mystery of love, and experience the fullness of life.




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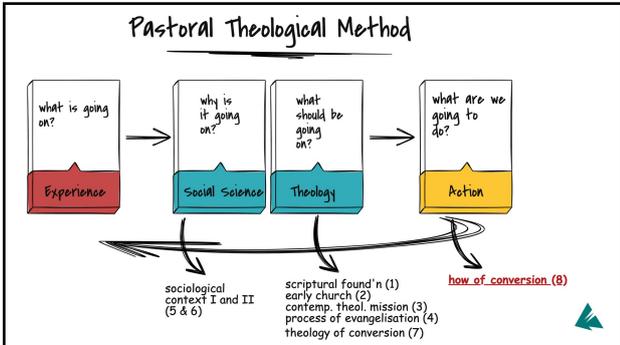
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### How Does Conversion Happen? 3 Models

- Lewis Rambo's inter-disciplinary model
- Sherry Weddell's Thresholds
- Albert Winsemann's Engagement model



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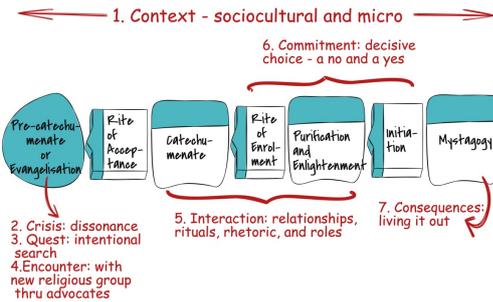
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#### Lewis Rambo's Model



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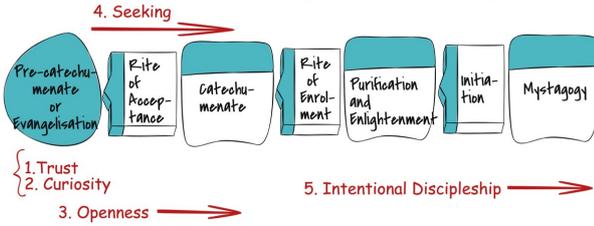
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#### Sherry Weddell's Thresholds "Forming Intentional Disciples" (Everts and Schaap "I Once was Lost")



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Threshold 1: Trust

- Positive association – some aspect of faith, person, experience
- E.g. "Mary" in RCIA




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Threshold 2: Curiosity

- Can begin with curious about aspect of church teaching, practice, or person, or thing > grace
- Curiosity about Jesus > key
- Personal God is issue here too
- Stages –
  - Awareness > I can have a personal relationship with God
  - Engagement > starts looking – friend, reading etc
  - Exchange > intense curiosity, open dialogue




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Threshold 3: Openness

- Open to the possibility of spiritual and personal change
- May feel terrifying to the person undergoing it
- Can be a back and forwards sort of time
- Key things:
  - Connect the dots – God has been at work
  - Ask for a sign
  - Pray for them to be open to God
  - Pray themselves to be open to God




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### Threshold 4: Seeking

- Focus upon Jesus and the kerygma
- Active rather than passive
- Seeking – actively seeking Jesus
- Openness to seeking – works of mercy, prayer,
- Sin comes up – relatively late in the journey




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### Threshold 5: Intentional Discipleship

- Committed follower of Jesus




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### “Threshold Conversations”

- To ascertain what threshold is someone at:
- “Tell me about your relationship with God up until this point”
- “What do you mean by [atheist, agnostic, spiritual]?”
- “Do you believe in God?”
- “Tell me about the God you don’t believe in”
- “Do you ever pray?” “How?”
- “What do you know or believe about Jesus?”
- Be curious




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### Albert Winsemann (Gallup)

- *Growing an Engaged Church*
- Perhaps people once – believed, and then behaved and so got to belong
- Now though: belong first, then behave, then believe



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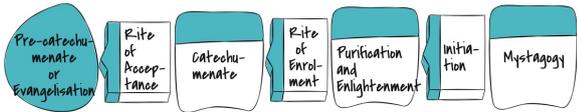
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### Winsemann



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### How does Conversion Happen: Alpha as a Case Study

- What is Alpha?
- Why do we need evangelization tools?
- Embedding Alpha in the process of evangelisation
- Alpha and the thresholds of conversion
- Weaknesses/issues with Alpha



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### What is Alpha?

- Key Features
  - Meal
  - Video
  - Discussion



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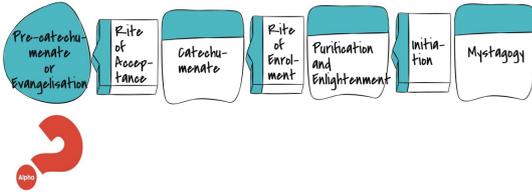
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### Alpha - RCIA



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### Rambo's Model and Alpha

- Context – sociocultural and micro context
- Crisis – dissonance
- Quest - intentional search
- Encounter – with new religious group thru advocates
- Commitment – decisive choice
- Consequences – living it out



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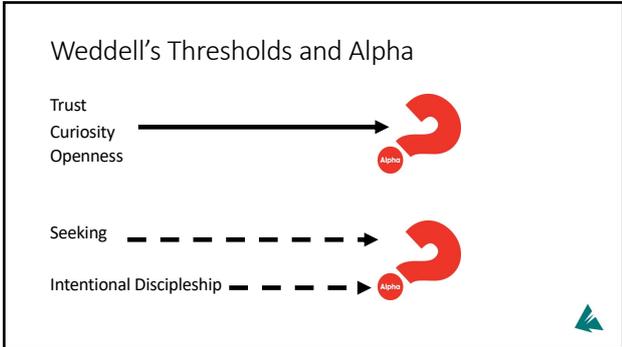
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### Alpha's Weaknesses?

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- ### Alpha as a Changer of Culture
- Evangelising is prioritized – fosters an encounter with Christ and the beginnings of missionary discipleship
  - Evangelization is the driver (the “pump” or the “engine room”) for all other ministries
  - Small groups create a sense of community
  - Evangelised people want to worship God

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Takeaways from this Lecture

- Rambo's Model
- Weddell's Thresholds
- Winsemann's Engagement Model
- Alpha as a tool for group evangelisation
- Alpha can move people along the thresholds of conversion and can engage with much of Rambo's different stages – but people don't tend to move through every threshold or stage in one Alpha (not impossible)
- Alpha can drive parish renewal by changing the culture of the parish



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