KINGDOM EVANGELISM

Presenting Christ is not just the work for the evangelist, or the pastor, or the executive team in our church. Every Christian has the responsibility of witnessing to the lost and sharing their personal testimony concerning their conversion, and doing it with the expectation of winning converts to Jesus. When Paul and Barnabas arrived in the city of Derbe on their first missionary journey, "they preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples" (Acts 14:21). I believe Paul and Barnabas expected to catch fish (people) when they went fishing. And they usually did…along with a lot of persecution. So, share your faith on a regular basis with the people in your circle of influence with the expectation of a catch or harvest. As we're obedient to the Great Commission, we can expect God not only to hold up his end, but at times, to do it in a way that openly confronts the powers of darkness and dramatically pulls in the catch.

The great evangelist Billy Graham said: *It could be that one of the greatest hindrances to evangelism today is the poverty of our own experience*. – Billy Graham

What was the instruction that Jesus left us all? "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." In the original text, there is **one object "make disciples of all nations or peoples,"** with three means for achieving that:

1. Evangelise people from all nations (ethnic groups)
2. Baptise them (bring them into the church)
3. Teach them obedience to God's word

In sum, Jesus calls us to bring people fully under his reign and into the kingdom of God. This is a "kingdom conversion" in which people are converted to a new reality, a reality in which the "supernatural" is quite natural. The goal of making obedient disciples who are integrated into the body of Christ and who regularly proclaim the Good News is an impossible ideal apart from God. This is why Christ promised help to fulfil the task:
"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

HOLY SPIRIT MAKES YOU A WITNESS…

The promise of the Holy Spirit is implicit in the Great Commission, where, just before calling the Eleven to make disciples, Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matthew 28:18). The Spirit of God, as the administrator of the church, releases gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11). And then, after the commissioning, he said, "And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). The Greek word used in this passage for authority, **exousia**, expresses power which was divinely given to Jesus. Jesus used that very word when he delegated his authority to his disciples in Matthew 10:1

Matthew 10:1
Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them authority to cast out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and illness.

Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, we receive the authority of Christ, which is the authority of the Father. In 1918, the Anglican Archbishop's Committee in England defined evangelism in a way that summarizes what I have written: *"To evangelise is to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, so that men shall come to put their trust in God through him, to accept him as their Savior, and serve him as their King in the fellowship of his church."*

That's not a bad attitude to have toward evangelism. Now most of us have missed opportunities to talk about Jesus with our friends, relatives, neighbours and work colleagues because we get frozen on the spot…

Why?
We have reservations and fears when it comes to evangelising… Well, we are scared of other people…

Now fear comes in lots of forms but there are 4 common fears:

1st - We fear been inadequate:

You shouldn't worry about what you don't know, focus on what you do know…
I remember Donald, Mandy's dad always saying, But I don't know the bible well enough to share with others… I always said to him, "Come on dad, you have so much to offer, don't worry about what you don't know, focus on Who you know!" And you know what he did have a whole lot to offer, he had incredible insight and wisdom, so it wasn't all hot air… But he focused on what he didn't know and got paralysed when sharing about his faith…

Jesus taught profound truths in very simple ways…
Mat 18:3 And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

So we mustn't panic but be confident about the Good News that we have to offer…

2nd – Fear of losing our reputation:

We are sometimes paralysed by what we think other people will say or think about us… But Jesus "Made Himself nothing…" for us Phil 2 vs.7
And that's the example we should follow…

At Golgotha when Jesus was crucified, He had no reputation to lose… So why should we worry about ours?

Look, we must still present the Gospel sensitively, graciously and with love and care…
No point in beating people with the bible… I sometimes believe that new Christians should be locked away for a few months so that they can calm down a bit and learn to share in love…

3rd – Fear of rejection:

None of us likes to be rejected, because we all have a built in need for love and acceptance…
When I went to Cyprus…? Communion on silver…
My mom when she went to Cyprus found out that her god child had to fast for 40 days because she was a heretic for leaving the Greek Orthodox Church…

4th – Fear of being hypocritical

Do our lives demonstrate to those around us that the gospel does make a difference?
Or do we live inconsistently, having given in to the attitudes and moral standards around us that actually we aren't credible anymore…? Jesus made it clear that if we follow Him, people will reject us; in fact, we should expect it… After all, He, of all people, as Isaiah tells us, was 'Despised and Rejected' 53.3… John tells us *in 1:11 Even in his own land and among his own people, he was not accepted. NLT* The Greek word for witness is *'Marturia'* – from which we get the word 'Martyr'…Paul even made it clear to Timothy – *2 Ti 3:12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,* Lots of people accepted Jesus, but lots rejected Him as well… We shouldn't be surprised if sometimes part of sharing Jesus is rejection…We shouldn't provoke it or invit e it, but we are told to expect it…

I even had trouble sharing my faith… It was a private thing between me, the Lord and those closest to me… Mand's and family… Then, when I was baptised, Mike Mahoney, a friend who baptised me, in his wisdom, made me tell in front of all the people there, why I wanted to be baptised… I read some scriptures out of my bible and then was baptised… The Lord seemed to open my mouth and now I can't seem to keep quiet… Every opportunity I get I share… It was a wonderful experience and my life has never been the same since…

What is Evangelism?

The verb "Evangelize" which clearly is biblical and in fact is used 52 times in the NT – Most of the time is looked at with suspicion today by Christians and non-Christians…

We hear the word and immediately what comes to mind? I person standing on a box on a street corner shouting about the end of the world… Or People who don't want religion shoved down their throats and people who don't want to shove religion down people's throats…I was one of them… Mom and sisters ramming Christianity… Evangelism basically is the practice of sharing the Gospel of Jesus… The word Gospel means good news… The Gospel to the 1st century followers of Jesus was most definitely NEWS – Breaking news in fact of 'Victory over the enemy' which is only made possible through Jesus…

Evangelism is to pass on GOOD NEWS or as evangelist and director of Kingfisher Ministries, Greg Downes puts it *"Evangelism means to hand out invitations to a free party that's out of this world!"* But now we must remember that words mean nothing without actions…It's clear from this scripture and from the life of Jesus that the proclamation of the Good news… WORDS… is only one side of the coin…The other side is the demonstration of the Good News… WORKS… We can't just throw words at people, no matter how good and eloquent we think they are…

J.John *"Just like faith without works is dead, so, too, evangelism without Godly action is hypocrisy…"* Do we practice what we preach? Do we believe what we share with other people? We must make sure that our conversations and lives have integrity and authenticity… Practice what you preach!!! Live the life you talk about!!!

Tom Johnson from Prof from World Evangelical Alliance - *Instead of arguing for Christianity, try living it. Then see how many 'fish' you catch*! Evangelism is not just about the "Sinners Prayer" – It's also about helping people start a lifetime journey of obedience and discipleship to Jesus… And as a Church we must do our best to help draw people in and to disciple them… As well as what He gets done THROUGH us to continue His ministry in the world…

Does this sound familiar?
Part of our mission statement here at CVCF… In as much as…

We want to be LIVING OUT THE MESSAGE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS EMPOWERED BY HOLY SPIRIT

We experience the Kingdom (Worship)
We Reflect the Kingdom (To those around us; Well being – lived lives)
We extend the Kingdom (Evangelism)

By accepting the supernatural as a natural part of kingdom living, we consciously encounter Satan's kingdom daily. It is here that we must take on Christ's authority, as given in the Great Commission, to demonstrate God's reign by healing diseases and casting out demons. These conflicts are called power encounters, the clashing of the kingdom of God with the kingdom of Satan. Power encounters are still occurring today, and with results similar to those of the first century. There are divine encounters available to us if we are available to Holy Spirit. Being at the right place at the right time with God's anointing adds a supernatural dimension to evangelism–all it takes is an obedient and teachable attitude, and a sensitivity to the promptings of the Holy
Spirit.

Why should we do this? Why should we live our lives like this?
THE COMPASION OF JESUS

If we truly love God then we will love other people… Jesus was deeply moved by human needs…

Matthew 9:36-38 (NLT)

36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep
without a shepherd. 37 He said to his disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. 38 So pray to the Lord
who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields."

In the original Greek the word 'compassion' is a very strong word full of deep gut-level feeling and emotion… It's about been moved to the depths of your heart "Suffering for someone" by entering into their despair and pain… Evangelism isn't just about numbers; We count people because people count… We are made in the image of God and every single person is intrinsically valuable… Think of those closest to you who are not Christians… Do you know anyone? Is it not incredibly painful? Now how many countless lives are lost everyday to satan? 6 million Jews died in the holocaust… This year 50 million people will die somewhere around the world…How many people die everyday

not knowing the sweet love of Jesus? How many will slip into an eternal hell not knowing Jesus? I pray that the Lord would give you discernment and compassion to become more aware of peoples needs when you see them…

THE CONVICTION OF JESUS

The Church is a living organism and anything healthy grows… Jesus was committed to the growth of His Church…
Mat 9:35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.

He didn't only use words but works and wonders… Jesus said *"I will build my Church…" 16v.18* It's His Church and He wants it to grow… So many of the parables use growth terms and imagery…

What's more the NT shows us numerical growth as well… Look at the book of Acts… When it starts there are about 120 Christians and by the end of the book there are 1000's… That's serious growth…!!! But what Jesus has in mind isn't just bigger crowds of believers, but also in people being transformed by the Gospel of the Kingdom so that they can make a difference in the peoples lives closest to them… in their communities and in society at large…

THE CONSUMATION OF JESUS' KINGDOM

Jesus *said Mat 24:14 "… this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. "*

So one of the things that need to happen for Jesus to return is that the Gospel needs to spread to the whole world… Now the bible doesn't say that there will be world conversion before Jesus come again, but it does say that there will be world evangelization… Everyone must hear, but not everyone will respond… As the world's population expands the job gets harder… @ the time of Jesus the world population was around 170 million… Today it's closer to 8 Billion… There are now 218 Nations and 271 major languages… I mean SA has 14 official languages…

Lots of us have had opportunity come knocking, but by the time we opened the electric gate, turned off the alarm, locked up the rotweillers, unhooked the chain, pushed back the bolt, unlocked the 2 locks… It was gone! We are all faced with great opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations… Our response is often too little too late… Or the knock on the door is simply ignored or goes unheeded because we are too preoccupied with our own agenda's…

A Christian family was on holiday, traveling down the rd, when they saw a big suitcase fly of the top of a car going in the opposite direction… They stopped and picked it up… But the driver of the other car never noticed, so he never stopped. The only clue to the driver's identity was a gold coin with the inscription "Given to John Green on his retirement by PPC" After a whole lot of investigating and research John Green was found and contacted. He wrote back to the Christian family telling them to throw away all the stuff in the suitcase except the gold coin… Only to send him the gold coin… Mr. Green used the phrase "My most precious possession" several times to describe the coin… The Christians sent the gold coin back to him and when they did they wrote a note to him telling him about their most treasured possession… Jesus! A year later they @ Christmas they got a package delivered to their home… It was the gold coin with a note from Mr. Green. "You will be happy to know that both my wife and I have become Christians and are active members in our Church. We want you to have this gold coin. I am 74 and my wife is 72. You were the 1st people to tell us about Jesus, Now He is our 'Most precious and prized possession'

How many of your friends, relatives, work colleagues, neighbors know about the treasure that you possess? ARE WE FRIENDS WITH PEOPLE WHO DON'T KNOW WE ARE CHRISTIANS? When will you pull the trigger… Just how infectious is your love of Jesus…? Have you forgotten that Jesus is your most prized and precious treasure…?

How many people will thank you when you get to heaven?

As you step out in faith and take risks, the Holy Spirit will guide you and speak through you. You may be surprised at times to find that certain situations naturally arise where you are suddenly empowered to "do the stuff," ushering people into faith in Jesus, and thereby advancing the Kingdom of God. That is power evangelism. That is kingdom evangelism.