

HOW WE CAN BE MISSIONAL

KCBW, Sunday 28th Jan 2018

Jn 4:1-26. Stats tell us that Ev'sm is dying and we are at the lowest level of evangelistic activity since the last world war! I believe it's time the church made Christ's last command her first priority. Mt 28:18-20. Go..The church needs to quit her pre-occupation with her preferences and prejudices, quit her courtship with an insular and cloistered lifestyle, quit her addiction to self-improvement and keeping up with the spiritual-Joneses and partner together in the greatest movement of world history – to proclaim Christ's Name and seek His Fame in the natuon.

Concentrating on anything else is like re-arranging the furniture on the Titanic. It's time to up our outreach, to major on winning souls, and to searhead the gt revival that will occur at the end of the age, so when He returns it will be to crown the work of His church and reward His people.

Last week I answered the ? **Why** should we become a missional church...

- 1. Saving people is the Father's passion – God's will Jn 3:16**
- 2. Saving people is the Son's desire – I Pet 3:18** suffered for our sins to bring us to God
- 3. Saving people is the primary purpose of being filled with the HS Acts 1:8**
- 4. The awful consequences that unsaved people face.**

This week **How** can we... Where do we start? How can I participate in this process?

Ken Strachen of the Latin America Mission made a study of the fastest-growing movements in their field: the Communists, the Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Pentecostal Churches. Their common denominator was obviously not their message. The three groups are respectively an antichristian ideology, a heretical cult, and a Christian movement. **Strachen concluded that the growth of any movement is in direct proportion to its ability to mobilise its entire membership for continuous evangelistic action**

I agree! That describes Biblical outreach. Every member ministry. Ev memr outreach. Mt 28 for all. We need to be delivered from the idea that belonging to church is a 'spectator sport' and adopt the concept that it is something that we participate in.' Illn 'Church like a football match.' 22,000 - 12

We have been called to be in the Army of God and that doesn't mean sitting in the barracks, thanking God we got conscripted! We are here to train, to develop some skills, to become familiar with our weaponry, to learn obedience to our Captain and to go to war against the enemy of men's souls in prayer and actions.

Look at this passage: the master evangelist at work. Caveat: Evangelists and Witnesses are different! 5%-95%. But many principles are the same. All cooks but Jamie Oliver is a Ck of cks

- 1. Personal witnessing is often inconvenient and uncomfortable** see vs 4,5,9

You know about Samaritans. Mixture. Normally had to go round for fear of getting contaminated. And they were not receptive, nor welcoming. Its going to mean inconvenience. It's going to be uncomfortable. He was tired. What's worse: she a woman and was of questionable character!...

As said last week. The average Brit has a very distorted view of God and the Christian church. He believes, at worst, that God is cruel, or vindictive and that He is against anything that produces fun or pleasure. In fact, God - in their eyes - does not really appreciate any happiness at all but is there to whip us into line, to frown on us when we go over that line and to threaten us with punishment if we do bad things. At best He might be indifferent or unconcerned, apathetic to us and our world. He is certainly not Someone that anyone in their right minds wants to be friends with. It's like making friends with the biggest bully in school! – or worse, with the austere, strict headmaster. Who wants that?

And the church? Well, the church is just sad. It's made up of grey, colourless people who are out of touch with the real world, who have no idea what life is about, who don't have any joy and who

make you feel bad because your not plain, boring and sad like them. They produce such feelings of guilt and condemnation that the average man avoids like the plague.

And the problem is that the task of evangelism is trying to persuade people to follow this cruel, vindictive or indifferent God and join the saddest bunch of people in the world!! It's a hard task!! But we have to do it! We have to bite the bullet! Like Jesus – let's do it anyway, even though hard.

2. Personal witnessing begins by building bridges v7

In v 7 Jesus makes conversation. He asks her for a drink and in v9 he offers her a (spiritual) drink. How is it that Christians only ever want to do things for other people. As young Christian I lived in London and the hundreds of Xns who invaded the streets on the weekend to reach drug addicts were described by most as “do-gooders.” They were great people. They loved the down-and-outs. Someone would get converted from time to time. But the most common view was that they were a bit condescending and patronising. Not putting them down, they did a great work. But it would have been greater if they worked on relationships.

Jesus started by asking for help not offering it! “I need you.” This gave the woman **dignity** and **self-worth**. She knew Jesus wasn't loathed by her, wasn't judging her or condemning her.

A few years ago we taught the church GIGAWOK – **God Is Good And We're OK**. We said that Christians should make it their aim to be nice people, friendly people, accessible and available. We need to learn to connect to non-Christians before we convert them! We should all have a goal every day building bridges to other people, so when they think about us they think GIGAWOK.

Your are writing a gospel chapter a day, By the deeds you do and the words you say. Men read what you write whether faultless or true. So what is the gospel according to you? – that's evangelism, and we can all do that. And I don't believe that any of us should ever preach the gospel before we practice GIGAWOK.

What matters is your character, conduct, care, conversation, compassion, consistency,

3. Learn to discern God's green light

This is probably the most important thing I will say to you this morning. Many of us fear speaking to people about Jesus or inviting them to church because it has been met with total rejection and sometimes even abuse. The reason is we have been too soon and the person has not been ready. So how do you know when its right to say something spiritual, share testimony or invite to church? It will help if you think about conversion being a process rather than just an event.

Got to check out the spiritual state of a person – Engel scale

Missionaries and personal evangelists use what is known as the Engel scale which is a very useful tool to determine where a person is and what approach to use. At the left side there are the determined and resistant atheists, followed by those of other religions. Coming up the scale there are the totally uneducated in the gospel but who are friendly to Christians, right through to those who have a sufficient grasp of the truth to cope with a challenge for decision. **The skilful soul-winner tries to discern where people are on the scale and serve them accordingly**. The mistake is to have a 'one-size-fits-all gospel' which is totally irrelevant and inappropriate to most people! But most people in our society are in the place where they need to trust and have confidence in Xns before they hear the Christian message.

Now the problem is that most people you know are pretty low down the scale. They don't believe, they are cynical, they have heard all the horror stories from paedophilia, to cultic control and science disproves Xnty, and they generally have no idea about the gospel and its power to change their lives for the better. And what we have done is we have tried to fast forward the process and bring the message of the gospel when they are ill-prepared/not ready. Consequently, they have been put off, we have been unsuccessful and discouraged and we are not too willing to try to evangelise again.

'You can't push a ten-ton truck over a one ton bridge – it will collapse under the strain.

But see what Jesus does here. He throws in a little bait to see if the fish bites. He wants to see if this lady is open and ready. V10-11. She responds! It's no good banging on closed doors. We have to look for open doors! Don't cast pearls before swine. When a door opens we take it as God's green light. Have you noticed that everyone Jesus heals involves the issue of faith. He says things like, "do you believe I can do this?" "When he saw their faith he healed..." "Be it unto you according to your faith." He was always looking for God's green light before he ministered to a person. We should do the same! Look for man of peace. He who receives me...

Eg. Susanne in Malta. Phone call re: abandoned English woman, visit, 'Good News.'

Eg: Adelina in Spain Manager of the Info Office

Eg: the funeral directors rep. Bobbi. A young lady. Very nice, very sensitive, engaged in conversation, ask how she came to do this job, she shared that she loved it, even dressing the bodies, but especially visiting families and ensuring funeral service was perfect. Then Liz asked her, something like "do you ever wonder where the person has gone?" She answered that she and her father had endless conversations - even recently - about what happens when a person dies. The green light came on! Before long we were telling her about Jesus, about our conversions, our confidence in the future and the Discovery Course. She said she'd love to come to the next one!

This is true for your family members, your work colleagues, your friends.

So, as you live the life, build relationships, look for indications that God wants you to share further.

4. Be sensitive and gentle about people's sins

I am reticent to raise this issue here, but it is part of the text. Tell the story v16-19. This is exactly what happened but I believe this is a model for evangelists not witnesses. No more than 5% of any congregation are evangelists. They are uniquely gifted to cut to the chase and go for the jugular in a way that neither embarrasses nor humiliates. And some of them, occasionally receive a spiritual gift called a word of knowledge. In this case it exposed her sin and birthed conviction. In other cases in Scripture it reveals something less drastic but which let the hearer know that God is aware of their situation.

But I don't think this is for everyone - just some evangelists. I am not discounting the possibility that God can use you like this. It's possible - but unlikely. It's wrong to say this is for everyone, because it is not. I remember David Pawson, Next door neighbour, It'll be alright, cancer op.

Nevertheless, Jesus didn't immediately give her the **turn or burn treatment**. Call for yr husband. She was the one who confessed her state. She said, 'I have no husband' Jesus then proceeded to reveal things more specifically. Be sensitive about people's sins. Let God do the convicting.

5. Personal evangelism will produce some red herrings vs 19-24

Common controversies.

Why are there so many divisions and denominations?

Christianity causes wars! What about N. Ireland? The Inquisition. What about disasters? Children with cancer. That's not fair! If God's a God of Love why...?

But we Christians should always be ready to give an answer for the hope that is within us. We should be able to explain the 'why' as well as the 'what' of the Christian faith and be well prepared to answer any red herring that's thrown our way. I'll deal with these in 2 weeks time.

Jesus respectfully answered her question but skilfully brings the conversation back on track!!

Jesus then continues his conversation and finally reveals himself as the Messiah. V25-26

Personal evangelism can/should go on in every Christian's daily life. **But we have other tools.**

Home group

Where do home groups come into this? The small group is an excellent a bridge building environment, to make friends and further build relationships. Once you have made friends, made connection and gained their trust, you may feel that an invitation to a full-on church meeting is too big a step. So why not invite them to this small group of friends you call homegroup. The hg should regularly put on open events like walks or B-B-Q's in the summertime or indoor food or other events in the wintertime – for no other reason than making friends and building relationships.

These are designed to have fun, but also to break down the idea Christians are sandal-wearing odd-bods, intellectual nit-wits, social misfits, party-poopers or people who live in the grey zone.

If you think your prospective convert wouldn't fit into your homegroup, talk to your leader and take them to another group that is more appropriate. Jn 13:35

The same applies to other events in the church: mums and toddlers, men's breakfasts, ladies birthday celebrations etc. Anything that introduces them to the family of believers. It can have an amazing effect – but not to evangelise directly – leave that to the gifted ones.

The homegroup is also helpful for two other things:

1. Provoking you to think about who you should – and identify your harvest field.
2. Pray for those God lays on your heart. Each person should pray for 3

Church meetings.

Personally I would rather invite an unbelieving friend to a special outreach event than to a regular Sunday morning meeting. They may get help in a church meeting, but the difference is like buckshot and rifle shot.

Do make efforts for Guest service on Feb 18th.

If you think that your contact is ready for it, tell them about the Discovery Course. It's a powerful tool to reap the harvest. Everything else we can do is sowing. But there need to be reaping events. Discovery is one of these.

Based on compelling evidence, this Course investigates the claims of the Bible and the amazing message that has transformed millions of lives across the world! Its for those seeking for some kind of meaning to life or are struggling with the great questions of life