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Editorial Introduction

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Preface to JAC 118, by Stephen Court

Greetings in Jesus' name. Welcome to JAC118 - the 118th issue of Journal of Aggressive Christianity. We're blessed this round with a guest editor, Captain Pete Brookshaw, who is no stranger to JAC, contributing frequently and being featured in JAC104's Brookshaw issue. The theme for JAC118 is EVANGELISM. And to speak to this crucial issue Brookshaw scoured the planet and has recruited articles from northern Norway all the way Down Under! The contributors approach this truly global issue of the world's need for the Gospel of Jesus Christ from a heavily Australian perspective. Also, we're blessed with some voices new to JAC - welcome. And, enjoy.

I sense a new season for The Salvation Army. One that embraces the full gamut of the gifts found within the body of Christ. This edition of Journal of Aggressive Christianity is about one of those gifts, and one of those callings for followers of Jesus: namely, evangelism.

It's a word that has been somewhat lost amid words such as love, justice, care, teaching and pastor. There are reasons for this. For some decades now we've embraced pastoral and teaching gifts. We've celebrated great pastoral leaders (which we should), and we've focused in on academic achievement. In terms of Ephesians 4:11-12, we've been comfortable with Shepherds (Pastors) and Teachers, but have at time, found ourselves pushing the Apostle, Prophet and Evangelist to the outskirts.

Though we need all of these gifts functioning well if The Salvation Army is to thrive into the 21st Century.

The Apostle starts new initiatives and tries things that others may find risky. They know they can create new systems and ideas that usher in the Kingdom of God on earth.

The Prophets call people back to the Word of God and hold us accountable when we drift.

The Evangelists are known for leading people to Jesus. They believe that repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit are necessary for Salvation. And they're passionate to see that salvation occur.

The Shepherds lay down their lives for the sheep. They are there for them whenever they are struggling, hurting and in need of pastoral support.

The Teachers expound on the Word of God. They want people to wrestle more deeply with truth and with the ins and outs of the Scripture, both Old and New Testaments.

This edition calls people to consider evangelism. I think we need to think about this afresh. We need to re-embrace the evangelists into our movement. You know the people I'm talking about: They are passionate about calling people to follow Jesus. We need them! Evangelists are part of the body of Christ, and when united with the apostle, prophet, shepherd and teacher, a strong united kingdom front is established!

This edition takes a look at evangelism from a predominantly Australian perspective and will challenge you to consider what you think evangelism is and what it means for your life.

Love Well

Captain Stephen Mayes

Is it too blunt to say that I am sick and tired of new strategies for evangelism? I'm tired of the endless brainstorming as to how we can "reach the next generation" with the Gospel while many already in the church are failing to live out the very Gospel we're attempting to peddle.

In my ten or so years of ministry this struggle has grown to a fever pitch. And I must admit that it isn't just with others. I see these flaws in my own faith and in my own ministry leadership. And these flaws bring on exasperation with the continued stream of new ideas.

The only new idea I believe we should focus on in the current day is an old one. Rather than new creative ways to reach new people with the Gospel, let's find new creative ways to live the Gospel amongst new people.

Let's place an emphasis on teaching those already within the church to love well. Helping them to recognize and seize the organic opportunities to love which already fill the believers days.

Let me be clear here: I'm not preaching a "preach the Gospel at all times..." theology often misattributed to St. Francis of Assisi. I believe the sharing of the Gospel always requires words to be completed.

But I think we need to drink the juice before we try to get others to buy it...

Let's remember that the reality of the Gospel is immense. More than a just a "personal savior from sin" Jesus brought a new Kingdom to earth. A Kingdom which He now rules with unlimited power and unending passion.

We Christians have been "rescued from the Kingdom of Darkness and transferred" into this new Kingdom of Jesus (Colossians 1:13).

And this Kingdom is radically different from the one left behind (which also still exists and is the natural habitat of those whom we hope to reach with the Gospel).

The single greatest difference in the Kingdom of Jesus is its central truth and reality: Love.

It is the central truth of His Kingdom because it is the central truth of Jesus himself.

God is love. This is evidenced by the perfect union we see between the Father, Son and The Holy Spirit within the trinity.

This is the perfect love which people were created to participate within. An option finally available in the newly inaugurated Kingdom of Jesus.

In this new kingdom Love becomes the very essence of God's people. Those whom he brings in are given new spiritual DNA. They are now able to share the very essence of God: LOVE.

But yeah, I hear ya. "What does this have to do with evangelism?"

I respond with, "EVERYTHING!"

Much of current evangelism is nothing more than people inviting others they know to a life they aren't currently experiencing. Rather than inviting them into a new Kingdom, most evangelism feels like an invitation to a new worldview or weekend club.

But if we begin to teach and learn how to love well, how to practically meet the needs of those around us, even when requiring personal sacrifice we will accomplish two tasks at one. We will live out life as it is meant to be lived in the new Kingdom which we reside all while offering something radically different to those outside the Kingdom whom we encounter every day.

I believed it truly is this simple.

Around the world I don't hesitate to say that hundreds of millions of non-believers encounter believers organically each and every day. If we can learn to love well we will create countless opportunities to share the reality of our new Kingdom.

This means willingly laying down our lives (wants, dreams, desires, well being) for another (John 15:13). It means seeing the needs of others as more important than our own needs (Philippians 2:3)

These are heavy things, but they are the way of things in the Kingdom of Jesus and we will find them surprising possible as we set out to be obedient.

Perhaps Burt Bacharach was right,
"What the world needs now is love, sweet love
It's the only thing that there's just too little of".

Inviting Others to the Table – Cultivating an Environment for Evangelism

Major Deborah Robinson

- Evangelism is not my strong point. The idea of ‘witnessing’, handing out tracts, or doing an ‘Open Air’, standing on a street corner, just creates in me this sense of dread, a feeling of awkwardness. Why, I’m the one who quickly rushes by, avoiding eye contact with those on our streets doing the very same thing. Don’t judge me, but I may have even crossed the street on occasions. Anyway, my point is, I’m not real good with evangelism. Now if someone came up to me and said “Hey, tell me about Jesus”, well that’s something I’d get excited about.

Which gets me thinking; what kind of environment creates the space for a more organic conversation? I’d like to suggest that an environment that cultivates evangelism is one of hospitality, where the people of God are living out an authentic expression of discipleship within community.

Welcoming and Hospitable.

Lyn Edge and Gregory Morgan in *Partnering with God: Being A Missional Salvationist*, remind us that,

Welcome and hospitality are not optional extras: they are both message and means. Welcome is the message of the Kingdom. Hospitality is the demonstration of that welcome...When we extend welcome and hospitality to those who would not normally be in our orbit, we communicate expansive and inclusive love...True hospitality is a way of life which offers welcome to others. It involves treating strangers as equals and creating space for all to flourish (104).

If we look at the scriptures it is clear that welcome and hospitality matter (Deut 10:18-19; Luke 14:13; Hebrews 13:2).

The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine, states:

The doctrine (of the Trinity) describes a God-in-community who reaches out to create community. It is the very basis of the inclusive gospel. From its beginning, The Salvation Army has consistently proclaimed this gospel...We seek to include and welcome into the family of God those who feel themselves to be excluded from society...The challenge for us today is to retain that genuine inclusiveness, resisting developments in our corps and centres that may lead people to feel alienated (75-76).

It’s All About Food

In *Partnering with God* Mike Frost says,

Food is presented as a symbol of the inclusiveness of the gospel. Jesus calls a people who had strict dietary standards to “eat whatever is set before you” (Luke 10:8). In this instruction, we hear a call towards inclusiveness and relationships.

The sharing of meals and practice of hospitality become places of belonging and of genuine encounter, with each other and with God (105).

In the book of Luke and Acts there are more than one hundred references to food. Here's just a few from Luke, plus a favourite of mine that is not recorded in Luke, but rather in John ☺

- Dinner with Levi – Luke 5:27-32
- Grain with the disciples – 6:1-5
- Dinner with the Pharisees and a sinful woman – 7:33-50
- Dinner with Five Thousand plus – 9:10-17
- Eat and Drink what is given to you – 10:7-8
- Dinner with his 'favourites' – 10:38-41
- Just enough for today – 11:3
- Another invite from a Pharisee – 11:37-54
- And another – 14:1
- Teaching on hospitality and the Great Banquet – 14:7-24
- Warning about ignoring the hungry, the poor – 16:19-31
- Dinner with Zacchaeus – 19:1-10
- Passover/Last Supper – 22:1-38
- Dinner at Emmaus – 24:13-32
- Breaking bread in Jerusalem – 24:33ff
- Breakfast on the beach – John 21ff

The practice of eating together as followers of Jesus continues on as we note in Acts 2:42-47 as well as feeding the poor and the widow (6:1), not to mention Peter's vision in chapter ten that speaks of inclusion and acceptance of others. Mike Frost says

The table ought to be the primary symbol of the Christian gathering. It represents hospitality, inclusivity, generosity, and grace...The invitation to share a table is a profoundly meaningful one in every culture...The table is the great equalizer in relationships. When we eat together we discover the inherent humanity of all people. We share stories. And hopes. And fears. And disappointment (Frost, 46-47).

When we intentionally create an inclusive space at our table for the other we are an expression of the welcoming inclusive grace of God and we are creating an environment that allows us to share the good news of Jesus.

I may not see myself as a great evangelist and maybe you do or don't, but I encourage you to create space at your table for another, to set an extra place holder and ask God to show you who to invite to the table. I am praying for you, even now as I type. God, increase in us a desire to be hospitable and an attentiveness to your Spirit's leading. Fill us with your love and lead us into wonderful opportunities to "tell others about Jesus."



Sieger Köder-“Sinners Meal”

Edge, Lynette, and Gregory Morgan. *Partnering with God: Being a Missional Salvationist*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017

Frost, Michael. *Surprise the World: The Five Habits of Highly Missional People*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, a NavPress Resource Published in Alliance with Tyndale House, 2016.

The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine. London: Salvation, 2010.

Accidental Evangelism is Not Enough

Major Gary Grant

A long time ago, when I was around 18 years of age, playing in the Perth Fortress Band in Western Australia, I used to drive my car to the city and often pass this old Christian gentleman who used to stand on the side of a busy road in Perth city holding a sign that said, "Repent now, or Wrath soon."

It often caused me to be curious, and at times, I confess, quite cynical of this old timer, who seemed to be there every weekend. (I wonder how many people came to faith as a result of that warning sign?)

Anyway, one day, I decided to stop and give him 2 tickets to a band concert that our band was putting on, thinking it would encourage him, and in my innocent and fairly naïve and ignorant mind back then, thinking it might actually save him (pretty naïve hey?).

Gone are the days, in Australia at least, where it was easy to march a band down the main streets of our City, as a march of witness. These days a permit is required, and maybe a police escort. And at the very best those who observe us, would see us now as a quaint attraction, and be amused and entertained possibly. But hardly saved for Jesus as a result of this time honoured tradition of The Salvation Army.

To stand on the corners and proclaim the gospel is also not an easy thing to do with so much legality around just even trying to do that now.

For me the best form of evangelism is still personal relationship where people are connected in a personal manner, where life is shared together, and there is time for questions and answers. Where an opportunity, for example, is given for a person to ask, "Why are you so different?"

When I think back over my life as a Salvo, and not to criticize anyone else, I always thought that our accidental evangelism would be enough. That by playing in a big brass band that demanded attention when it marched down the streets, that people would naturally flock to Jesus and be saved. After all, I had been.

Over the years I have discovered though, that *accidental evangelism* (what I call it when we are not intentional) is simply not enough.

People are seeking authenticity....something real, something more personal. A life that matches the speak, something worth investigating... maybe even worth trying church to see what the fuss is all about.

If The Salvation Army is ever to gain the attention of the public and further the cause of Christ on the planet then we need to grasp every opportunity granted to us, whether it be, our emergency relief programs, or social work, or collecting money to do these

works...whether it be our bands and songsters and timbrel brigades, or youth programs...whatever it is, we must match the work with our faith speak, and speak it out in boldness for Christ in a personal and relational way.

We must not be afraid to take the risks of getting up close and personal with a pre-saved person.

We must not hide behind these programs or strategies, but rather see them as tools for the work we do, and the greatest work we do is to be The SALVATION Army... the getting people saved Army.

I wonder whether it is still easier to invite someone to a concert in the hope that someone might preach the Word at this concert and our friends find Jesus?

Or I wonder whether it isn't easier for us to hand out a food voucher and think we are helping, when really what is needed is a food voucher and Jesus? What would it look like if every time we handed out our social work or assistance, if it came with a prayer attached and shared? No exceptions. Taking the moment, whilst we have it, to just ask if we could pray for this person and "love on them with the love of Jesus."

It seems a lot harder for us to broach the subject about Jesus intentionally, one on one, yet it might be the only way a person actually finds Jesus and is saved.

When we take the time to get involved with others, share our life with them, share a meal and to invest into their life When we are unafraid to speak of our faith and our own personal relationship with Jesus and allow a natural conversation to flow from that, that's when we might actually be doing what Christ intended for us to do, when He said...

"Hey...go out there into that community in which you live and work, teach people about me, by sharing what you already have, get them immersed in my dream for them, tell them about me and how I changed your life....and how I can change theirs as well" (My Matthew 28 paraphrase).

And then it will all click into gear as the questions start to flow...

Get yourself ready for some long nights and outrageous times as your friends trust Jesus for the very first time. There isn't anything better in this world, than when an unsaved person finds Jesus for the very first time.

You seriously want to be involved in that!!! Yeah, take them to the concerts, sure...but don't wimp out on the one-on-one conversations in the process.

The only way you can be.... Is to get involved, on the coal face, take some risks and be intentional in your relationships for Jesus sake.

Accidental evangelism is not enough.

A Better Gospel: The Gospel According to Jesus

Envoy Craig Stephens

I wonder if all of the 2.5 billion professing Jesus-followers on the earth had the same gospel (good news) that Jesus carried, whether the whole world would be saved by Christmas.

I was reading the Bible on my iPad a while back and something struck me as I read the gospel of Mark. The small subheading read, “The gospel according to Jesus.”

As an evangelist, that captured my attention. I know the gospel according to: The Salvation Army – 7 gospel shots on our crest; I know the gospel according to: Matthias Media – 2 ways to live; I know the gospel according to: Dr. James Kennedy – evangelism explosion; I know the gospel according to: Nicky Gumbel – Alpha; I know the gospel according to: Campus Crusade for Christ – 4 spiritual laws; I know the gospel according to: The Willow Creek Association – contagious Christianity; I know the gospel according to: C. Peter Wagner- power evangelism; BUT, what was the gospel according to Jesus?

As I read on, I was captivated. The gospel according to Jesus was, “The Kingdom of God has come, repent and believe.” So simple. Sooo good!

As I began to announce this gospel to friends, neighbours and family over the ensuing years, it seemed to be good news to them as well. The amazing thing about Jesus’ gospel is that it is relevant to every human being... always, no matter the circumstance they face.

For the pre-Christians in our world, they aren’t keen to hear how God forgives their sin – they quite like their sin thank you very much! Actually, today more than ever the pre-Christian identifies as their sin, often proudly, and often wholeheartedly. It’s time the church caught on to the fact that the pre-Christian world is not concerned with forgiveness of sin (although that is extremely good news), nor are pre-Christians concerned about whether God created the world (which we know through Scripture that He did), or whether Jesus was born of a virgin, or even if there was a God whether He needed to send a Saviour in the first place (which we know He did through personal experience – Hallelujah).

The pre-Christian world I interact with has little concern for any of these matters, yet it has been inherently these elements of a poor gospel which we the church have attempted to evangelise with – and it wasn’t even Jesus’ Gospel!!

The Kingdom of God is everywhere throughout Scripture. Jesus teaches the Kingdom constantly and there’s 72 New Testament references alone to the Kingdom of God. What struck me as I contextualised the gospel of the Kingdom within the meta-narrative of Scripture, was the Great rescue story of Scripture: Death to life, slavery to freedom,

darkness to light, deliverance from oppression and cursing to blessing – God’s great rescue story.

In the western world we are plagued by stories on the kingdom of this world. They come in the form of anxiety, stress, fear, depression, shame and guilt. These stories are most familiar to us. Our neighbours and communities know these stories inside and out and back to front, and they’re crying out for help.

“How can I love a better story than the one I have?”

THAT IS THE QUESTION THEY’RE ASKING!! And, Jesus has given us His glorious gospel to answer it. For every story of anxiety the kingdom of this world offers, Jesus’ Gospel announces: PEACE. Do you know a pre-Christian who is anxious and in need of peace? I thought so.

For every story of stress the kingdom of this world offers, Jesus’ Gospel announces: PERMANENT UNENDING REST. Do you know a pre-Christian who is stressed and in need of rest? I thought so.

For every story of fear the kingdom of this world offers, Jesus’ Gospel announces: UNCONDITIONAL LOVE. Do you know a pre-Christian who is fearful and in need of love that drives out fear? I thought so.

For every story of shame the kingdom of this world offers, Jesus’ Gospel announces: COMPLETE ACCEPTANCE AND FORGIVENESS. Do you know a pre-Christian who is loving a story of shame and in need of acceptance? I thought so.

The Gospel Jesus announced truly was GOOD news for pre-Christians. It’s time for Christians to evangelise with a better gospel, the gospel according to Jesus.

Evangelists and the Necessary Migration to an Apostolic Paradigm

Envoy Craig Stephens

Growing up in the Salvation Army local church expression (Corps) as a son of Salvation Army Officers (ministers), I was at the church at least five or six times a week. Quite frankly I would rather have been anywhere else. We were immersed in a conservative pastoral/evangelical (familiar) paradigm, and I was a 12 year old boy and I was bored. I saw precious few people ever get saved. No one got healed. Probably the only miracle I witnessed was that no one fell out of the proverbial second story window and died of boredom. Sister Joyce's Organ recital (played during the collection) bore no resemblance to the PETRA (1980s Christian rock band) or Michael W. Smith recorded (yes I'm that old) that I played my tennis racquet lead-guitar breaks to. Then one day everything changed.

The First Paradigm Shift

I remember it as if it was yesterday, the day I was filled with the Holy Spirit. It, or more accurately He, happened to me whilst attending the Salvation Army 20 years ago. Our Corps Officer (minister) laid hands on me and prayed that I would be filled with Holy Spirit, it was that simple. In that moment I enjoyed a supernatural encounter with the living God. This encounter transformed, and continues to transform my life. In one moment I had received a new (Pentecostal) paradigm from which I began walking out my Christian Faith. As a result of this encounter I was released into a phenomenal grace for evangelism.

This work of grace must have appeared obvious to others who put an "evangelist" tag on me. I just thought I was being a Christian. It seemed that many people thought only evangelists introduce pre-Christians to Jesus – what a tremendous error. Not long after the initial encounter with Holy Spirit, I was asked to teach evangelism courses – Not because I could teach, but because I had been introducing pre-Christians to Jesus. This is where I began to understand the function of an evangelist to prepare the saints for the ministry of evangelism (Ephesians 4:11-12), to release a grace upon believers to boldly proclaim Jesus to a broken and dying world.

A couple of years later The Salvation Army gave me an appointment as Territorial Evangelist, which I suspect was mostly because I continued to introduce pre-Christians to Jesus – a privilege which is afforded to every Christian.

A Better Gospel

Having journeyed in the grace of evangelism for a couple of decades now I have learnt many things. Most notably, the gospel of the Kingdom (Mark 1:15), and how easy it is to share with pre-Christians. It amazes me how readily pre-Christians respond to genuine (Kingdom) good news.

A New Reformation is upon us

Perhaps the most significant learning has been how to function in the emerging paradigm of Apostolic reformation. There is a reformation upon us. The Lord, in His grace, has restored pastors and teachers to the church – this has been the predominant paradigm of leadership of His church for hundreds of years. He has also restored evangelists to the church – again evangelists have been present in broader Church leadership for many years.

More recently the function of Prophet has been restored to the broader body of Christ. In fact even amongst the incredible diversity of the Christian church it's much more common to hear prophetic language in prayer and preaching in most streams of gathered worshipping communities. Now, finally the Apostle is being properly restored to the body of Christ.

The Apostle William Booth

Granted, this language is a paradigm hurdle for some in the body of Christ. As Salvationists though, we ought not have a problem with the paradigm as our founder General William Booth demonstrated this Apostolic grace in his leadership of the movement.

The Old Model

So here's the relevance to the evangelist. Once upon a time, as an evangelist I would hear from God. Hearing from God is a grace afforded every Christian. Often this would result in vision for a campaign, witnessing or outreach. Then I would rally the troops, and people would get on board with my vision (or not) and we would have a campaign... wohoo!

And people would get saved. BUT the City/Region/Nation would not be transformed.

The New Model

Hearing from God is as easy as drinking a glass of water; anyone can do it. What's more complex as an evangelist is to hear from God and then submit your vision/campaign/idea to a group of ascension gift leaders to weigh and discern together (1 Corinthians 12:28).

Hurdles

This can be difficult for several reasons. Finding a mature expressed of 5-fold ministers in a region is neither common nor easy. If you can find them, the next hurdle is whether they're functionally postured in mutual submission to one another out of reverence for Christ. Preferring to honour one another is a crucial observation necessary for any mature ascension gift leadership groups. Apostles are crucial to any idea offered for regional transformation. They're given the blue prints of heaven for a region. They're

fathers and they're gentle. Their assignment is given to them very personally and directly from Jesus. Prophets are critical to mature level discernment as they bring the dimension of timing to what's being weighed. Right idea, wrong time means no substantial regional transformation. The Biblical model for city wide leadership (as outlined in Ephesians) and subsequent city transformation must include: first Apostles then Prophets (Ephesians 2:20), as well as evangelists, pastors and teachers.

Apostolic (Ascension gift) leadership is the Biblically mandated model for city wide leadership and transformation. This paradigm is highly relational and requires (fivefold ministry gifted leaders) who will discern the will of God together, and who abound in all love and grace towards one another. This is brilliantly outlined in John Kingsley Alley's book *The City Gate*. Evangelists must courageously seek our Apostles, Prophets and Pastors and Teachers to walk with. We must migrate to this new paradigm if we are to see cities, regions and nations transformed and led under the governance of Christ.

Further Reading:

The City Gate by John Kingsley Alley
Peace Apostolic Ministries: peace.org.au
Dr Don Lynch: drdonlynch.com

Evangelism is Simple

Marj Rava

I remember standing in the school yard in high school when one of my school mates called out to me, “Hey Marj, are you a Christian?” It was year 10 and I had spent what I thought was a solid four years of being ‘Jesus’ to my friends at school. I had never denied that I went to the Salvos and had invited people to youth group & youth camps. I had never denied what I had been up to on the weekend if someone asked...that on Sunday I went to the Salvos with my family. I remember being confused as I responded with “yes?!” My friend replied saying, ‘Oh I thought you were a Salvo!’

I knew that my commitment of faith had somehow been lost in this word or explanation of attending the Salvos and being a Salvo. Somehow in all my conversations about what I was up to I had perhaps neglected to actually be clear that I was in fact not only a Salvo, but I was a Christian – a Christ follower. The message had been lost and confused, and with it perhaps the chance to impact others as I had hoped to do so.

What does it mean to evangelise? Even now I sit here thinking back to that moment and it is still so vivid in my mind. What was it about that conversation that struck such a strong chord in me that I still think about it now? I think for me I realised the importance of being clear in who and what I portray so that people get the right message of who Jesus is.

To evangelise I think can be pretty simple – living out who Jesus is so that who Jesus is can be clear to others. This suggests two things:

1. We need to actually know who Jesus is.
2. We need to use what we know about Him to live so that others can come to know Him too.

I love in James (2:14-26) how it talks about faith & action and neither one working without the other. In fact it says it's dead! It's that idea that our faith coupled with our action can be the most effective. If we believe and know that Jesus has saved us, that He loves us, wants us to have a full life into eternity, and wants this for all people - shouldn't this impact the way we choose to live life and interact with others? Our desire will be that others come to faith in Jesus, and our actions will reflect that. A simple way for me to think about it is this – Jesus loved us, so we will want to love others. Jesus forgives us, so we should forgive others. Jesus accepted people for who they were, so we should try not to change people before we accept them. Living life like Jesus did will impact others and help them come to know Him too.

Too often as Christians I think we neglect what our actions or even words are saying. If we profess to be Christians – then even if not intentionally, who we are tells a story about who Jesus is. If we preach and tell people that Jesus loved us so much that He

died for our sins so we can have freedom, yet as Christians don't show love to others – are we confusing the message of who Jesus is?

As a youth pastor I feel like there is so much you can say and do that will impact the understanding of the young people you are in contact with. In fact the pressure is on...who I say Jesus is, and who I 'show' who Jesus is, is so important. If I say to a young person that Jesus believes they are worth it yet can't be bothered spending time with the young person, am I really showing them that what Jesus says is truth? I want to be that youth pastor who shows my kids the best idea of who Jesus is. I want to be the Salvo that lives out the covenant I committed to and through that show people they are loved and accepted. I want to be that Christian who knows who Jesus is and live a life that reflects that. I want to be that person that knows how my actions coupled with my faith can help people come to know Him.

I wonder – who are you portraying in your actions or what you say? Are you living a life that really does reflect who Jesus is? Are you intentionally making sure you are sending out the best message of who Jesus is? Or is there perhaps some confusion in the message you are sending out?

I know that my high school years didn't go to waste. Some of my best friends are people I met at my high school and I am constantly seeing God do a work in their lives. I know that one conversation wasn't necessarily a reflection of every persons understanding of who I was at that time. But how grateful am I for that one small interaction that is a constant reminder that if I want to be a Christian and therefore share the Good News of Jesus to those I encounter and meet; I need to live a life that reflects who Jesus is so that the message is clear, and that others may come to know His love and goodness in their lives.

Lock In Contracts

Captain Mark Schatz

I have always been a guy that is a little out of shape. Unless you call round a shape. For years I have contemplated joining a gym but I haven't. The main thing that has stopped me is that I have heard story after story of people who get locked into contracts that just cannot get out of. Stories of people paying mass amounts of money each and every month and not getting any benefit from the gym at all.

Just this week in my local newspaper there was a story about how a lady was trying to terminate her membership for over 2 years. It stated that she had many encounters with the gym, a number of them in person, and how it took so many attempts to terminate the contract. She was quoted in saying *"I thought it was going to be good to get into shape, but all this has done is cost me money and a whole lot of anguish. I'll never join a gym again"*.

This is a real fear and pain that many people have. However, there are some that see the benefit of regular gym attendance and they turned into regular 'gym junkies' and got into shape.

When it comes to Jesus and the local church, many people have this same kind of fear and hurt. They fear that the church will take their money, their time, try to change them and make them live boring simple lives. They fear that when they join the church, they will be stuck with a lock in contract that will just cause them anguish! Others have found it to be a bad experience and have vowed to never go again!

We know this does not need to be true! John records Jesus saying *"The thief [the enemy] comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows]."* (John 10:10, Amplified Version) That's right, the good news is Jesus come that we may have and enjoy life!

For us as Christ followers within the church, we get this. We see the benefit of gathering together as a family of believers worshipping the God of the universe! We see that He is all powerful and mighty and have chosen to give our lives to God and serve the church. We have seen the healing that God can provide and the benefits of regularly attending church. But, how many of us share what we have and what we know with those that don't know Jesus. The sad truth is that many of us don't like sharing our faith or don't know how to. We stay silent when we need to speak out!

Friends, The Salvation Army more than ever need's a shake up! The Salvation Army needs a method, a plan to go into all the world and share the gospel. If we don't, we will die a slow, slow death. In recent years in Australia, we have heard of another corps closing, and another and another, and I'm afraid that if we don't do something, there will be nothing left!

So, with the fear and pain of many in mind, I want to suggest an idea that sees our churches grow and effectively plunder hell to populate heaven!

It's called the 4-week challenge!

Firstly, don't invite people to believe in Jesus. Well not yet. Invite people to join the church community for four weeks. Challenge them to come along each Sunday and spend one and a half hours, (two if you have a preacher that goes on for a while) each week for four weeks. Tell them to eat the food, drink the coffee, and to not put any money in the offering. Tell them just to come and join you. Tell them the only cost to them will be some time!

Once you have presented the challenge to them, finish off by telling them that after four weeks, if they don't believe church is for them, if they don't believe that there isn't any benefit from coming and joining the fellowship, then they are free to leave no questions asked!

It's risky and bold! It gives permission to people to leave without explanation and puts the whole church under a microscope. Nevertheless, I am convinced that if someone takes the challenge, they are spiritually open to Jesus and primed to receive the message of Christ.

In my former church appointment, I encountered a guy that was having marital issues. He explained right from the start that he "wanted nothing to do with that Christian stuff". After spending some time talking to him, I offered him the challenge to come for 4 weeks! No lock in contracts!

What happened in those 4 weeks was that he developed friendships and realised we were not a bunch of crazy people. He saw a real authentic belief in God. After the four weeks, he kept coming and after 3 months of regularly attending the church, he gave his life to Christ. Just recently, he has become a senior soldier and is starting a journey towards ministry.

Others have taken the challenge and asked to keep attending after the four weeks are up. Still others have found a sense of community and friendship months before they found God. Some have left, but 80% of people stayed. Whatever way you look at it, you don't have to be theologically smart, you don't have to even have all the answers, you just have to invite them to the challenge and allow God to speak to them over the four weeks!

Friends, we can no longer sit on the sidelines and expect that someone else will tell them about Jesus. Now is the time to show people that what we have is real; That God is real, that we are not a bunch of weirdos, but mostly so we can fulfil the great commission.

But here's the best part! You only need to remember two simple steps.

First, we need to issue the challenge to those that don't know Jesus. If you don't have friends or family that don't know Jesus, go find some! Join some kind of group where you talk and interact with people who don't know Him yet.

Secondly, pray for them. Pray that they will take the challenge, pray that God will speak when they are in the middle of the challenge and pray they will stay after the challenge.

The time is now. A hurting and sceptic world is reaching out, looking for healing, hope and life. If every Christian issues a challenge to someone, we can not only remove the fear they have about being locked into the church, we can double the size of the kingdom in less than a year!

So, the question is, whose brave enough to put it all on the line and invite someone to take up the four-week challenge?

Do Not Argue

Renae Farrington

The maxim “You can’t argue someone into heaven” has (somewhat ironically) been argued about for many years in church and theological circles. Despite a lack of formal theological training, my life and ministry experience has led me to believe very firmly that it is true – you definitely can’t argue someone into heaven, and in fact, I’ve even seen Christians who have attempted to argue someone into heaven wind up argued out of it themselves.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”¹ If salvation comes by faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, how does that answer to someone who refuses to believe in the truth of the gospel without having all of their arguments conclusively answered with measurable scientific proof? And how will such a person ever come to accept a humanly unfathomable doctrine such as the trinity?

Samuel Logan Brengle wrote in his book *Helps to Holiness*, “Cold logic will not make a man love Jesus, and it is only he that loveth that is ‘born of God.’”² The Dawkins-Hitchens era of the Armchair Atheist thinks he is speaking from a position of cold logic, but his arguments are almost always laced with arrogance and a sense of superiority over the religious man he is arguing. He is well-informed and prepared with an answer to every point of logic the amateur apologist attempts to present. He can argue with you until you are backed into a corner, where the devil will use every opportunity to get you to answer his arrogance and vitriol with defensiveness and anger – destroying two souls with one stone of argument.

The most powerful weapon available to the Evangelist is the one that no one can argue with – his or her testimony. People can choose not to accept your testimony, but they can’t really argue with it. Your testimony is your witness of the divine Grace at work in your life – not merely the story of how you came to be saved, but the work of the Holy Spirit in your life each and every day. If I testify that, although I am diagnosed with medical Generalised Anxiety Disorder, because I am sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit I have become more than a conqueror of the worry in my life – what argument can be made against it? It can be suggested that my relief could be attributed to other causes, but it can not be argued that it did not happen if I have borne witness to it. It’s also nearly impossible to be backed into a corner where you are manifesting negative emotional responses if you are verbally proclaiming the work of the Holy Spirit in your life.

An argument of logic, even if it finds some unlikely success will only appeal to the head – and salvation is not achieved through a turning of the head. “For it is, by grace you have been saved, through faith...”³ A testimony of grace will touch the place in the

¹ Hebrews 1:11 NKJV

² *Helps to Holiness*, Samuel Logan Brengle 1896.

³ Ephesians 2:8 NKJV

human heart that longs for grace, while also protecting the heart and mind of the Evangelist by keeping the Holy Spirit at the forefront of the conversation.