

MOTIVATED FOR MISSION

11 Biblical Reasons to Reach Out

By Terran Williams

This book is the second of 8 short books in a series on Missional Potency. (See the back page for the other titles.)

Many are available (and the rest will be in the coming months) at www.commonresources.co.za which is a resource website for Christians and church leaders created by Common Ground Church, a church in Cape Town, South Africa, that has grown from a motley crew of 50 people in the late 90's to a bigger much bigger motley crew, now spread over 10 congregations and 15 services each Sunday across the city of Cape Town.

This particular book does not necessarily reflect the view of all leaders in Common Ground. It has been written by Terran Williams who has served variously as a congregational leader, teaching team and content leader, and missional potency champion in the last 20 years,

This book is the first draft. For an improved version of this book (with updated content and better formatting) please return to www.commonresources.co.za in the future – and be sure to find new resources being added, especially to the Missional Potency section.

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SYNCING YOUR HEART

Having our hearts beat in sync with God's must be one of the greatest privileges of knowing and serving God.

We know that many things matter to God, and as we get to know him and them, they begin to matter to us too.

But, as we delve deeply into the Scriptures, we discover that there seems to be one thing that makes his heart beat fastest of all ... the sight of a lost one who is coming home to him.

The story of the Prodigal Son is the story of a heartbroken father who spots his limping son on the horizon, and runs with arms wide-open and heart beating-loud towards the bewildered prodigal.

Jesus tells that story to explain why he carves out so much time for people far from God. The story lets us listen to a Divine stethoscope. It tells us the motivation behind his methods, the passion behind his practice.

Something remarkable happens as we listen to God's heart for the wilting wonderers. Our heart starts to sync up with his. What matters to him, starts to matter to us.

It is my prayer that as you read this booklet that, like a child resting on her parent's chest, our hearts will start to beat as one with God's heart.

Released from leading a single local church, I now work into ten churches. My tailor-made job description is to 'release greater missional potency in and through these churches'.

By 'missional potency' I mean help these churches and these Christfollowers introduce more people to Jesus.

This is a dream job for me. Since the age of 16, I have devoted my life in the main to these two goals...

- *Personally reaching people for Jesus.*
- *Leading churches over which I have influence to reach more people for Jesus.*

In fact, that's why I write this very short book.

- *I want to motivate and help all Christ-followers to introduce more of their friends and family to Jesus.*
- *I want to motivate and help all church leaders to lead their churches into greater evangelistic effectiveness.*
- *I want to resource preachers with ideas to pervade their preaching with God's passion for people who don't yet know him.*

START WITH WHY

I have written elsewhere on how followers of Jesus can introduce their friends and family to Jesus, how church leaders can organize their churches for greatest evangelistic potency, how preachers can preach not just to disciple Christfollowers, but to entice and evangelize not yet followers, how parents can learn to pass their faith on to their kids, and how new believers can learn how to follow Jesus.

But this book – the shortest of all of them – captures the heart underneath it all.

It affords the chance for us to sync up our personal and collective heartbeat with God our Father's. It obeys the counsel of Simon Sinek's well-known book: 'Start with why'. It explores God's passion for people far from him. It seeks to help Christfollowers and church leaders, parents and preachers to have their hearts beat in sync with God's.

Why precedes how. Once we are passionate about something, we find a way to do it. Motivation comes before method. It is as we become more passionate about reaching people for Jesus, that we become more practical in our attempt to actually do that.

Why sustains how. All of the most important things in life are very difficult. Since evangelism is so important in the eternal scheme, it is also so difficult in our earthly efforts. Ask any follower of Jesus and they will tell you how hard it is to reach their friends and family for Jesus. Church leaders, too, often lament along with the disciples, 'We fished long and hard and caught nothing.' Christfollowing parents of children who have left home as well as the family's faith suffer profound agony. The preacher whose preaching neither attracts nor seems to reach unchurched people will share a story of frustration.

See, reaching people is immensely difficult. But instead of giving up, we should deepen our conviction of its importance.

So this book starts with why.

CONVICTION-FORGED COURAGE

Most followers of Jesus I know think evangelism is important.

Important enough to celebrate those who do it, because we know that someone must do it.

But not important enough to throw our lives headlong into ourselves.

If we're honest, we sometimes drop the evangelism priority because our best efforts as a church or as individuals to introduce people to Jesus may have led to results that are few and far in between, if there were any at all.

This is why, we're tempted to reduce the priority of evangelism to just one of the many things we should get round to as churches and followers of Jesus. We then allow other biblically valid priorities to eclipse the evangelism priority. I am talking about things like leadership development, community building, social justice, getting people into small groups, Bible study, deeper worship.

Don't get me wrong. All these things are so, so important! They matter to God and should matter to God. The point I make is that we take our feet off the evangelism pedal and put more weight on these things rather.

But might I suggest that evangelism should be the leading priority. I will show you why in this book, but let me suggest one startlingly simple reason for letting evangelism lead...

Evangelism means that we will have more people whom we can then direct into community, worship, discipleship, leadership and social justice.

Evangelism is like the front door of the church. Then there are other doors into these other diverse rooms of ministry in the church. But the only way we can usher people into these other rooms of the Christian life, is that they first come through that front door.

WILLIAM CAREY

William Carey (1761-1834) is known as the father of modern day missions. He tried to inspire church leaders in Britain to reach out to all the nations of the world, most notably the populous India. To his shock and horror, they countered his appeal with the theology of election. They said, 'If God wants the heathen of India saved, he can do that on his own. He doesn't need us fussing about such things.' Thankfully for us, he found this 'so-called' theological argument utterly assailable.

And assail it he did. He wrote a theological manifesto for the missionary priority in his work, 'An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens'¹. In this paper he offered unassailable arguments from Scripture that the established church must do everything it can to get the message of Christ to every nation.

So potent was his biblical line of logic that the British Missionary Society came into being, to do just what the paper said God wanted done. Carey did more than just argue for mission though. He trailblazed an evangelistic path into the nation of India as well as doing all he could to alleviate what suffering he could. He translated the New Testament into the local language, founded a school and a university (the first one in India to award degrees), and inspired a multitude of missionaries to follow his example in going to the ends of the earth. His motto, inspired by his biblical insight into God's commitment to 'the heathen' was, 'Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.'

Since then, ten thousand papers and books have been written on the biblical argument for evangelism, in which biblical arguments are offered. This book is my attempt at the same.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

First, use it to pound deeper into your mind and heart, God's passion for people far from him. Read it. Pray it. Read it again. Share and discuss it with others. If you are a seasoned follower of Jesus, I am sure that there will be little in this book that you have not heard before. It is not so much to teach you new things as much as it is to help you keep the main thing front and centre, to keep your heart beating to heaven's heartbeat.

In the life of a Christfollower and of a church, evangelism is the plate that tends to stop spinning first. This is the bucket that tends to leak the most. So let this booklet re-spin your devotion to those who are outside the kingdom. Let it refill your bucket.

Second, if you are a church leader or preacher, use this book as a resource to motivate your church to care about the Christless. As a preacher, I know that the best way to keep the passion for the lost hot in the hearts of our churches is to preach on it again and again.

In the tight family of churches I serve, every three or so years we try do an entire series of Sunday messages on the importance of outreach. Most years we preach at least an entire message on God's heart for the lost. And several times a year, we will devote an entire section within a message to the subject. This book is the result of me scanning over the last few years of preaching on the evangelism priority, then collating that content. This book gives you many tried-and-tested angles and nails to hammer God's heart into your people.

Please, go beyond this book. There's far more reasons in Scripture to reach out, and better articulations than the ones I have given you. Add those to my list.

MOTIVATION 1: The wonder of salvation

What we have in Christ is too good to keep to ourselves!

In his epistle to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul, remembers how the people he is writing to were once '*without Christ, without hope and without God in the world*' (2:12), but now he can celebrate the fact that, "*Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be his through our union with Christ, so that we would be holy and without fault before him*" (1:4, GNT).

Though there is so much more to the gospel than individual salvation, in this point I want to hone in on some of the individual benefits of salvation that are ours personally in Christ. For this point, instead of mining into a long list of the many fantastic dimensions of salvation that are mine through union with Jesus – regeneration, justification, adoption, propitiation, expiation, sanctification, glorification – I will rather describe my experience of salvation, and the 'felt' difference it has made in my own life.

When I was sixteen I first heard the gospel. It was communicated to me by someone I trusted and respected. It touched my heart through the power of the Spirit, awakening me to the reality of God and the wonder of salvation.

Looking back on over 20 years of following Christ, the moment I trusted in Jesus at least 5 things became true of me...

1. I have a relationship with God. This was not 'the religion' I feared. This was not rules. This was the experience of being united to Christ, inhabited by the Spirit, adopted by the Father. Although I still feel like I am only in the shallow ends of knowing this God, it was clear to be that I had become friends with God. Although, I am not immune to the world's attractions, I can honestly say that nothing has satisfied the deepest chambers of my heart like being in the presence of this God, pouring out my heart to him in prayer, hearing him whisper to me through the Scriptures and the Spirit, and sensing him pour love into my heart at times.

2. My view of all things has changed. CS Lewis once said that when we come to know God, it's as though we see the Sun/Son rising. We start to behold his beauty, strength, grace and wisdom. But not only are we dazzled by who he is, the brightness of his light starts to shine *on everything else*. It's as though we see life, the world and everything in it, in a new light. For me, I started to understand my favourite sport, surfing in a new way. A gift from God, an enjoyment of his creation, but not worthy of being my life's singular goal. I started to see sexuality, and money, and time, and relationships in a new way. I could honestly echo the great hymn, 'I once was lost but now I am found, was blind but now I see.'

3. My heart's composition has changed. Not only was I forgiven for my transgressions, which I'd heaped up in my teen years, but I was given a new heart. The Spirit of God not only indwelt me, but began to etch into the walls of my heart new cravings, new desires, even new abilities. I wanted nothing more than to know Jesus better, to become more like Jesus, to walk faithfully in the path he set before me. These appetites were brand new. Before I was saved I had prayed every night for God to look after me and to provide for me. But now I wanted not just his

blessings, but the Blessor himself. It was clear to me that these longings were placed there supernaturally, as part-and-parcel of the new birth.

4. My life's trajectory has changed. I have heard the testimonies of people who came to faith in their later years. Although they praise God for his grace to cover so many failures, yet they often lament the wasted years of walking in the path of self-reliance and self-centredness, rather than the path of God-reliance and God-centredness. I am so lucky that as a teenager I discovered the joy of living on the path that Jesus carved out for me. For example, I was born into a very dysfunctional family, marked by generations of divorce and brokenness. Statistically, my chances of enduring relationships were far less likely. But here I am decades later. I am in a happy marriage. I am raising happy children. I attribute it to the new heart and the new path that salvation ushered me into (yet I admit the possibility of my veering from that path.) But more than showing me the path of life, salvation has led to a path of purpose. I have not had to create my own purpose, rather I have been bestowed with one, a purpose that is not only divinely commissioned, but supernaturally supported.

5. My eternal destination has changed. Before I was saved, I feared dying. I did not have any assurance of life beyond the grave, nor getting to heaven if there was a heaven. Coming to Jesus, I sensed the grip of Jesus take hold of my life. It was clear as day that the One who overcame the grave, would never let go of me, not in this life, and also not in the next. Life has many choices, but eternity has two, and I was granted assurance that I would never be lost, never be separated from the love of God.

By the way, there are at least 10 other aspects of salvation that I could mention, but these will suffice to argue my point that the best thing that has ever happened to me, and the best thing that could ever happen to anyone, is to receive Christ.

I have had many problems in my adult years, and I have been burdened by unanswered prayers and unresolved questions, disappointments and setbacks. But a thousand times over I have been able to rejoice even in the midst of the agony and confusion, because nothing in this life has been able to dislodge the fact of my salvation, which has been for my soul an anchor in life's storms!

All that to say, what I have in Christ is so magnificent and thrilling. And it is just too good to keep to myself.

To know the love of the Father, and the forgiveness in Christ, and the life in the Spirit and yet to be so self-absorbed in life's and ministry's challenges that I forget to share it with those who need it – this feels like delusion and selfishness of the highest order.

The youth leader who baptized me all those years ago, once said that we are not just saved to know Jesus, but also to introduce others to Jesus. He joked that if it was only the former, then when he baptized me he would have just held me under the water for a couple of minutes. That way I could know Jesus without hindrance in heaven. But no, I was pulled out of that water, he said with a smile on his face, "because there was still work to be done, people to be reached."

Saved from the horrors.

I have spoken of what we are saved into, but it is also good to remember what we are saved from.

Charles Spurgeon, the great preacher of 150 years ago, used to plead with non-Christians in his services, 'If you want to go to a Christless eternity, you're going to have to jump over my body, and go there with my arms hanging around your knees.'

Mind you, Jesus Christ went far further than Spurgeon said he would – the cross of Christ is a giant blockade on the road that leads to a Christless eternity and a terrible judgment for our sins. Arms stretched out, he wrestles not just one but potentially billions from the pit. He is dragged to his death, so we can have life. He goes to a kind of hell, so we can be spared from it.

My Father died of HIV Aids – one of the first 100 in South Africa to do so. A cureless disease that ravages through the immune system, until a common cold can kill the host. For decades scientists have been in search of a cure!

Imagine you and everyone you know is HIV-positive. Imagine discovering the cure. You test it on yourself, and wonder of wonders, all the boils and cancer cells and viruses and bacteria in your system are totally eliminated. The startled doctor gives you a clean bill of health. How happy you would be!

Now imagine deciding that you will keep that cure to yourself, that you will let the people you live and work and play with, continue to live under the shadow of death, and die early.

That would be unthinkable – as unthinkable as having a cure for SIN-positive people, a cure that is working wonders in your own life, and then not sharing it with them.

Rodney Stark offers a similar metaphor, one that urges us to take the gospel not just to our friends, but all people in every culture:

*Imagine a society's discovering a vaccine against a deadly disease that has been ravaging its people and continues to ravage people in neighboring societies, where the cause of the disease is incorrectly attributed to improper diet. What would be the judgment on such a society if it withheld its vaccine on the grounds that it would be ethnocentric to try to instruct members of another culture that their medical ideas are incorrect, and to induce them to adopt the effective treatment? If one accepts that one has the good fortune to be in possession of the true religion and thereby has access to the most valuable possible rewards, is one not similarly obligated to spread this blessing to those less fortunate?*²

Along the same vein, Jonathan Dodson writes in 'The Unbelievable Gospel',

We should expect to feel some desire to share our faith. If Christians really believe what Jesus taught — that a fiery eternity awaits unbelievers but eternal life is available to those who believe — then not sharing the rescuing grace of God with others is cruel. Atheist Penn Jillette of illusionist duo Penn and Teller frames this dilemma in stark terms: If you believe that

*there's a heaven and a hell, and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life, and you think that it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward . . . how much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?*³

MOTIVATION 2

The compassion of Jesus

Wherever one lands on the doctrine of election, we must not use it to delete the testimony of Scripture that 'God does not want anyone to be lost' (2 Peter 3:9). Second Peter 3:9 says that God *"does not want anyone to be lost"* (NCV). If God wants every person to be saved, we should too.

People should matter to us because they matter to Jesus. If we could have held a stethoscope to Jesus' chest what would we have heard? Matthew 9 gives us a clue: *'When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.'*

When we look at the people driving or walking past our church gathering, if we could see what Jesus saw, we'd see people that are like 'sheep without a shepherd' – vulnerable to the Wolf, on the wrong path, without real, substantial and lasting comfort.

They are 'helpless and harassed'. Sure, they might be oblivious in the moment to their spiritual condition, but Jesus sees that they are plundered, distressed, bewildered, dejected and scattered. Given enough time, they will feel it too.

The One who knows best what we need, knows that it would be much better if they could come into his fold. The Greek word used most in the Gospels to describe the emotional life of Jesus is *'spagchnistheis'*. It is translated compassion, an English word that hardly does justice to the original word. The Greek word speaks of a convulsive turning of one's gut – not in the gastric sense but in the deepest emotional sense. He felt gut-wrenching agony and love for people.

As Richard Foster put it in his book 'Prayer': 'God's heart is not made of stone. It's an open wound of love.' It yearns to bring sin-estranged people home.

The apostle Paul, in one of his greatest passages about the priority of mission reveals what made his missional heart tick:

Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others ... For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all ... All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.' (2 Cor 5, 11,14,18-20).

Look carefully at his words. Yes, he is motivated by the sheer wonder of salvation – a salvation which reconciles hell-deserving sinners to a holy God. Yes, he is motivated by the trust and commission given to him by God. But this passage shows he is also motivated by the greatest Heart of all: 'Christ's love compels us'. Having been joined to Jesus through the Spirit, he feels the compassion of Jesus welling up in his own heart. He seeks to reach out to people for the same reason that God sent down his Son in the first place (John 3:16), and Jesus went to the cross (Eph 5:25) – love!

MOTIVATION 3

The mission of Jesus

Jesus repeats this message over and over in the New Testament. If I'm a Christian, my mission in life isn't optional—it's a command. We're either obedient to do what Jesus said or we're not.

Forty-four times in the New Testament, Jesus is referred to as sent by the Father. It refers to a being on mission. He did not discover his mission only decades into his earthly life. It is the reason the Son of Man incarnated to start. Mission preceded his first breath of the animal-odoured air in that Bethlehem stable. His heart was beating for the lost, before his aortas started to pump with blood.

At the end of John, the newly resurrected Jesus does something remarkable. He funnels all of that sentness into the newly born church. He says to the disciples in the upper room, 'As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.' (John 20:21)

This echoed what he had prayed in front of his disciples the evening before he was killed: "*In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world*" (John 17:18, *The Message*).

But now the prayer from days prior was becoming a commissioning. In that moment of sending, all the momentum of heaven created an electromagnetic field, coiled around the nascent church, propelling them forward. Jesus' outward-focus became the outward focus of the disciples, even as he continues to do the same for us. The Divine Domino fell upon his disciples, pushing them forward into the purposes of God.

The key word in the verse is the word 'as' – 'as' the Father sent Jesus. It calls forth a question as we try to make sense of his words: 'How then did the Father send the Son?'

A little bit of reflection leads to 3 tantalizing answers:

1. The Father sent the Son out of his comfort zone. For all eternity, the Son had known the joy of uninterrupted intimacy with the Father, the presence of the Spirit, the glory of heaven. Then he leaves all that, and comes to inhabit his enemy-occupied world, in a body that is destined for death, amongst a people that are blinded by sin, in a culture that is oppressed by legalistic religion and by Rome's brute power. At the age of 33, all of these – death, sinful people, and religious and civic authorities – snuff him out. All that to say, we too might expect to put sent into situations that are sometimes uncomfortable and people who are sometimes indifferent or hostile.

2. The Father sent the Son into the culture. Jesus does not speak in a heavenly language. He speaks Aramaic and Greek. He dresses like the locals. During his life on earth he builds a bridge of common ground with his host culture. He lives and dies as a Jew. That said, he does not take on the idols, sins and wrong beliefs of the culture. He is in the culture but not of it. He demonstrates the full reclamation of Jewish culture, imbibing what is best and beautiful in it, shaking off what is harmful and flawed. We too are sent to build bridges of common ground with the people in

our communities and places of work. We embrace the unique challenges of being in our culture, but not of it.

3. *The Father sent the Son to be accessible to people.* The accessibility of God is best supported by the doctrine of incarnation. If people cannot come to him, he will go to people. He 'became flesh and blood and moved into the neighbourhood' (John 1:14 MSG). He builds relationships and shares meals with all kinds of people in the Gospels: blue-collar and white-collar, women and men, young and old, Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, incrowd and outcrowd. We too are sent to be accessible to people, to all kinds of people. We are called to widen our range of relatability. People might not agree with what we believe, but let no one accuse us of being aloof and removed.

There is no shortage of inspiration in the New Testament of people who actually lived like this. Jesus is the supreme example – after bringing salvation to the house of Zacheues, Jesus gives the reason for the detour into Zach's life: 'The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost' (Luke 19:10).

Paul is an example of this life on mission. Outside of Jesus himself, there's no better example than the Apostle Paul who stated his life's mission like this...

"I want to carry out the mission I received from the Lord Jesus—the mission of testifying to the Good News of God's kindness"(Acts 20:24, GW).

When he reflected on the effort he was willing to put in to fulfil his mission, he said...

"I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might win some." (1 Corinthians 9:22). We should be especially provoked by the words, 'by all possible means'. Paul was willing to do whatever it took, short of sinning, to win some. Read the book of Acts and you will find him leaving his comfort zones, entering into various cultures, and making himself as accessible as he could to all kinds of people.

In 2018, 12 children and their soccer coach were trapped 4 kilometres deep in a water-filled cave. Following their coach, this soccer team, after practice went on an adventure into the depths of the earth, clueless about the Monsoon rains that would arrive once they entered the pit. The two British divers who discovered all 13 alive, embarked on the most daunting path to find them. The water was muddy and moving. Three times, they had to pass through parts of the cave that are so narrow that they had to remove their tanks. At the very point they were considering turning back, half way in, they surfaced into a dry air chamber that had some graffiti that looked fresh. This was enough to cause them to risk their lives in continued pursuit of these 13 lives. The Go-pro footage that went viral shows these divers surfacing in an air chamber some time later, to the wondrous sight of 13 well-behaved boys. That footage was enough to stir the world to action. In a matter of days, 100 cave divers were queued to line that cave, in an all-out attempt to rescue the boys.

Yet at that point, there were no guarantees of success. So what warranted this all-out rescue mission? It was the sheer value of the ones who could be rescued.

I wonder what value Jesus must place on the lives of lost people, people in the dark, people who cannot save themselves, to come on his rescue-mission? Whatever

value it is, we must let the sheer love of God for lost people cause us to embark on the mission – even if we do not reach people, we must try.

Elon Musk, moved with compassion for these boys, interrupted his SpaceX operations for several days where some of the best inventors and scientists in the world created a small submarine capsule that could transport these boys back through the inundated caves. Though the Thai rescue operation opted to not use his offering, I was struck by his approach to the situation. It was the same that drives his company's efforts to make commercial flights to Mars available: 'If something needs to be done, then it must be done, even if our efforts prove unsuccessful.'

MOTIVATION 4

The worthiness of Jesus

In the unforgettable words of John Piper, mission exists because worship doesn't. Our job as pulpit preachers and gospel gossipers is to alert people to the true reason for their existence:

"Bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, and whom I have created for My glory, whom I have formed even whom I have made." (Isaiah 43:7) We are made to glorify our Maker. He made us so that we could know his goodness and greatness.

What a travesty that so many do not know their God. 'Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!' (Ps 96:3) 'Make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted' (Isaiah 12:4). We were made to know God. And once we know him, we see that knowing him is the thing that closes the loop of our existence with the deepest sense of joy and meaning. This leads quickly to a deep yearning that others will know him too. Our life's worth is found in exalting the worthiness of our Maker.

God is worthy not just because he made us, but – even more pointedly – because he redeemed us.

'For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in^[b] Christ Jesus our Lord' (Rom 3:23). Part of the message of the Gospel is the claim that none of us deserve our salvation. We do nothing to earn it. What we deserve – the wage we fetch with our sinful lives – is condemnation. Yet we are granted, free of charge, at Christ's expense, the gift of life.

The corollary to this is that *our salvation is something Jesus deserves*. We are the reward of his life's perfect obedience and his death's horrific sacrifice. The Father had promised it to him: 'Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors' (Isa 53:12)

A primary motivation for his embracing of that splintering cross was the joy of having us. 'For the joy set before him he endured the cross' (Heb 12:2).

Our condemnation is the just deserts of our sin, yet our salvation is the reward of the Saviour's sinlessness and sacrifice. Jesus is worthy of the worship and affection of every person who worships him. The heavenly masses recognize and revel in the worthiness to Jesus: 'Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth' (Rev 5:9-10).

Jesus was promised an inheritance. Hebrews 1:2 speaks of Jesus as the one whom the Father 'appointed heir of all things'. Like all inheritances in the story of God's people, it would come through faithfulness. What is this joy, this portion, this inheritance Jesus receives? Psalm 2:8, a prophecy about Jesus, tells us that the Father made this promise to his Son: 'Ask me, and I will make the nations your

inheritance.' There's the answer: you are his inheritance. You are the reward of his suffering.

Have you heard of the Moravians missionaries? In the 1700s, this group of Germans committed to pray around the clock for 100 years. Fully surrendered to God's Spirit, they started to go, preaching the gospel in all the nations of the world. They went and preached the gospel, confident that the world's populace was the inheritance Jesus' crucifixion had earned.

Some of them even went to North America, selling themselves into slavery so they could reach slaves. What drove them as they left home and climbed aboard ships with one-way tickets? We're told that they waved at their weeping family members as their ships set sail, trying to console them with the words – that also articulated their motive for mission: 'We go to win for the Lamb the reward of his suffering.'

MOTIVATION 5

The call to discipleship

Some people argue that bringing people to maturity is more important than bringing people to faith. But this is a flawed argument for two reasons: First, unless people come to faith in the first place, how do you plan on bringing them to maturity? Second, according to Jesus one of the most defining marks of spiritual maturity is a commitment to reach others for Christ. Tony Morgan's 'The Unstuck Church':

"When Jesus called the first disciples into ministry, he said, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" (Matt. 4:19). Let's consider what Jesus didn't say when he summoned those first disciples into ministry. He didn't say, "Come, follow me, and I will teach you spiritual insights!" He didn't say, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to sing worship songs together!" He didn't say, "Come, follow me, and I will gather you together in a home group!" He didn't say, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to pray!" He didn't say, "Come, follow me, and I will make you members of the church!"

I think we can all agree that Jesus was fairly insightful, so I think it's interesting that of all the things he could have said, he chose to put the focus of ministry on reaching other people. It's not that any of the other alternatives are wrong. In fact, we can find plenty of examples in the Gospels where Jesus intentionally taught, prayed, and shared fellowship in small groups with his disciples. But I believe it's important to acknowledge that Jesus did all of that for the purpose of getting these disciples on mission."

"Generally, that's not how we disciple people in the church today. Rather than putting the focus of ministry on reaching people, we prioritize different activities. Doesn't it make you wonder if there's something significant about the initial vision that Jesus shared with these first disciples? Maybe discipleship is really more about helping people serve God by serving others. Maybe it's more about disciples making disciples."⁴

Pastors must admit that, if we have so filled our people's weeks with Christian programs and Christian relationships that they no longer have any time or ability to spend time with people far from God, we have failed in making disciples. We may have taught people to go to church, but not be the church. We may have guided them into a cloister of non-mission rather than a beachhead of Gospel-advance.

The call of discipleship is the call to representation. Through his disciples, Jesus multiplies his presence and impact in the world. My favourite metaphor for this is ambassadorship: 'We are Christ's ambassadors, as though Christ is making his appeal through us: be reconciled to God.' (2 Cor 5:20). Rick Warren comments on this:

'We have the opportunity to represent the King of Kings to the people in our lives. It's a privilege to serve as an ambassador for a government. But it's a much, much bigger privilege to represent the Creator of the universe to our friends, family, and neighbors—along with those who live on the other side of the planet. That's the opportunity we have as we tell others about Jesus!'⁵

MOTIVATION 6

The overflowing love in the Trinity

The deeper I go into biblical theology, the wider I yearn to go into mission. The mother of all theologies is the theology of God. There is no more important question than 'Who is God?'

The answer is that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God in three distinct persons, an eternal community of love, partnering together on a time-bound mission of redeeming creation and humanity.

1. God is an eternal community of love. This means that all that he does – whether creation or redemption – is an overflow of love. Only a many-person God could essentially be love. Starting with Augustine, Christian Philosophers, have long made the point that a single-person God could not be essentially love. For a simple reason, for eternity past, before they created creatures, they were all alone. And the one thing that love needs to exist is someone to love. This single-person God may be wisdom – thinking wonderful thoughts. They may be holy – reveling in intrinsic purity. They might be magnificent – enjoying their own grandeur. But they cannot be love in essence. Sure, they might turn out to be loving when they create, but this cannot be their essential quality because it is not their eternal state.

Not the God of the Bible. In a triune God, each of the persons of the Trinity already has all the love and adoration they could ever want. They give it to each other perfectly. There is no void, there is a fountain, an explosion of joy, a God who says, 'I made you for love, my love, our love. I made you to love, each other and me and us.' This God is love before he does anything. And therefore all that he does, he does for love. He did not create the world, because he felt lonely, or wanted someone to appreciate him. And he did not send his Son and Spirit, because he felt a longing for recruits who could do his bidding. No, all mission is an overflow of love – generous, joyful love.

It is no co-incidence that Jesus' clearest statement of the Trinity comes in the great commission. 'Go make disciples ... in the name of the Father, Son and the Spirit.'

2. God is a time-bound partnership of mission. God's love moves him to action. Especially in John's Gospel, we see the Father sending his Son down to this world. The Father sent the Son because of how he so loved him (and wanted that love to be shared and enjoyed), and the Son went because he so loved his Father (and wanted that love to be shared and enjoyed). Then the Father sends the Spirit upon the Son, and the Spirit and the Father send Jesus on his mission in the world. My point is that mission comes from the overflow of love, from the uncontainable enjoyment of the fellowship within God. This love is generous, outward-focused and missional in impulse. Mission is an aspect of God's love and therefore not only something God does but something God is.

3. The church is invested with that same sense of mission. Mission is not God lounging back in heaven with some servants rubbing his neck, others feeding him, and then commanding the church, 'Get on with proselytization. I need someone to rub my feet and tell me how amazing I am! I need more recruits!' It's not that at all. Rather it is a privilege! It's more like inviting others to a party. Tim Keller, in a sermon, put it like this,

*'If you are a Christian and you are a disciple, and you've come into relationship with this Triune God, God wants there to be the same outward-directed dynamism and dance and music in you. There's a "Go" about your life, a sent-ness rather than a stasis, because God himself, as the Trinity, is a dynamic, overflowing being. Therefore, we're always going. We're always thinking outside. We're always thinking, "Look at the love we have. Look at the joy we have. How can we draw other people in, 'Therefore go and make disciples ... in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...' getting the life of the Trinity and the joy of the Trinity into their lives?'"*⁶

CS Lewis, reflecting on the Truine God, speaks of *"the living, dynamic activity of love that has been going on in God forever and has created everything else ... in the Gospel, God is not a static thing—not even a person—but a dynamic, pulsating activity, a life, almost a kind of drama. Almost, if you will not think me irreverent, a kind of dance."*⁷

There's no neediness in God. He doesn't need people's praises. But he does love them, and he sends us out to bring people into his joy precisely because this is the highest blessing anyone could ever receive. When we see that mission is a fountainhead of life, we are motivated at the core of our beings to bring others into the music, into the dance.

MOTIVATION 7

The opportunity of the harvest

As I write this, I'm sitting in a coffee shop on a wine farm. Just a few months ago, I remember the excitement and urgency that marked this farm. Forty tons of ripe grapes needed to be picked in the period of 6 weeks. Some grape-varieties needed six more weeks, others needed to come off the vines by the end of the next day. What a waste it would be if the harvest was missed! The wine farmers would not even think the thought – farm hands must be mobilized to pick and collect the grapes! It is a sight to see the flurry of action as all farm hands work tirelessly to urgently bring in the harvest – sometimes 16 hours a day, and weeks and months at time.

I sense a similar sense of excitement of a grape farmer in Jesus as he looked up at the Samaritan women who had, hours before, come to faith and was now bringing some more village-folk to come meet him. As the throng draws near to Jesus, he excitedly points to them and says to his disciples,

'Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.' (John 4:35).

I sense a similar sense of urgency in Jesus when, on another occasions, he points to the crowds, and says to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful ut the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers into his harvest field.' (Matt 9:37).

Jesus sees people who don't yet know him as a harvest waiting to be brought in. He knows that there are times when some people are more receptive to the Gospel than other times. He knows that life is short, and that a person is only rescuable until they take their last breath, after which the window of mercy closes. He presses that same sense of watchfulness and urgency upon us.

But it is not a *desperate* urgency. He is infecting us with a sense of faith. The harvest is plentiful. It is abundant. There are so many who can be reached. Perhaps a few people that we carry current concern for are not receptive, but there are so many *others* who are ready to respond. Besides, this is not the devil's harvest field – this is the harvest field that belongs to 'the Lord of the harvest'.

When will we finally see the true result of our sowing and reaping efforts? In heaven. When we get there, we'll see people we had a hand in bringing in to the kingdom. We won't remember the awkwardness when sharing our faith didn't go as planned. The joy will be so great that all the time and tears, effort and prayers it cost us to reach these people will be forgotten.

In his book 'The Irresistible Church', pastor Wayne Cordeiro reflects on the evangelistic zeal and urgency that he wished would run through every church:

'The Great Commission found in Matthew 28:18-20 is a corporate calling as much as it is an individual one. We must never miss our true purpose as Christians. We must never function as if our role is to convince the already convinced over and over again. I think when the day comes for me to stand before God's throne in heaven, He will ask me one specific question. He will not ask me how big our choir was; He won't ask how popular our potlucks

*were; He won't ask the size and budget of our building program. He will ask one important question: "How many of my children did you bring home with you?" Now is our time. We won't have another chance at this life again. This is our run. An irresistible church never forgets its assignment. Our energies, our activities, our planning, and our actions must somehow, somewhere, always be connected to a soul.'*⁸

MOTIVATION 8

The promise of the Spirit

We are promised that as we resolutely determine that we will spend our energies on spreading the love of message of Jesus to a dying world, that God's Spirit will powerfully support us – guiding us, empowering us, emboldening us, sustaining us, comforting us, making us effective, and opening up the hearts of people to the gospel.

Jesus gives us this assurance in Acts 1, days before the church was endowed with the Spirit's power:

On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit ... 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 1:4,5,8)

There are several things to notice in this passage:

1. We need the Spirit's power as a matter of priority. Once Jesus was resurrected the apostles were no doubt filled with a fresh confidence. They probably wanted to get out there and tell everyone about Jesus. But Jesus instead instructs them to not leave Jerusalem until they experience the Spirit's power. This is his way of saying, 'To do the work I have for you, you need more than natural confidence, and even the possession of the truth. You need nothing less than an outpouring of the Spirit's power. Don't even try start your ministry until you have this.' Still today, every Christian who seeks to minister to others should prayerfully seek such an experience of the Spirit's power.

2. The ascended Jesus has sent and is sending his Spirit to the church. In verse 5, Jesus alludes to John the Baptist' prophecy concerning him. In all four Gospels we have record of John the Baptist prophesying that the Messiah would baptize people with the Spirit (Mark 1:8, Matt 3:11, Luke 3:16, John 1:33). But the fascinating thing is that throughout Christ's earthly ministry, he never baptized anyone with the Spirit. It is only once he is exalted into heaven that he does so. John, in John 7:39, helps us understand why: Speaking of 'the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive' he says, 'up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.' One reason that it is better to follow Jesus now that he is in heaven, rather than 2000 years ago when he was still upon the earth, is that we now have the Spirit indwelling us, and he is ready to fill us power.

3. The Spirit's power makes Jesus extremely real to us. What is meant by the phrase, 'then you will be my witnesses'? It means to speak of our experience of Christ. A witness is someone who declares some truth to others based upon their personal experience of that truth. Jesus is using courtroom language. Notice he doesn't call us to be a lawyer, who primarily presents a case, and a line or reasoning. Rather he calls us to be a witness. Still today, there is a way of sharing our faith with others that is based upon reason and logic, where we assert some truths. But this is what a lawyer does – simply presents a case. But we're called to more than that. We're witnesses. We don't only have a line of argument. We have

experience of Jesus. When we experience the Spirit's power, we become witnesses. We do more than just present a case. Rather we speak of how real Jesus is to us, a reality that has been made tangible by the Spirit.

4. The Spirit's power makes it possible for us to change the world. Notice the progressive geographical spread of the gospel that Jesus envisioned. Jerusalem, the Judea, then Samaria, and then the ends of the world. Jerusalem was a city in the province of Judea. Samaria was a province north of Judea. God's plan for the church then and now is that, starting where we are but then progressively extending to the ends of the earth (v8), the gospel will be preached. This task is a massive one. It will require more than mere human strategies and energies. It will require Spirit-directed strategies, and Spirit-empowered energies! Interestingly, the book of Acts details how the church, once baptized with the Spirit, did indeed spread through Jerusalem, through Judea, then into Samaria, and then beyond that to far-off nations! Christ empowered them by the Spirit, and he still empowers us by the Spirit to change the world.

MOTIVATION 9

The possibility of the catch

Every year my family goes on holiday on the patch of coast where the 'greatest shoal on earth' happens. Once a year when the water gets sufficiently warm, millions of sardine fish head North East along the South Eastern coast of South Africa, in a tightly packed shoal when the water gets sufficiently warm. It can come on any day. Usually the first sign of it is a massive gathering of birds dive bombing the water, and a large area of splashing out to see, as dolphins and other sea life corral the fish to the surface. When fishermen see it, they drop everything, get out there, and drop their nets for what might be a record-breaking catch.

I keep that excitement and sense of possibility in mind when I read in Matthew 4, Luke 5 and John 21 how Jesus led the fishermen-disciples to launch out into the deep, and put out their nets 'on the other side' for a great catch.

Luke 5 details such a great catch of fish that the disciple's nets began to tear apart, and their over-loaded boats became dangerously low in the water. In all three stories, Jesus used the miraculous catch as a parable and a promise. The parable: 'follow me and I will make you catch people.' The promise: 'you can expect my help in seeing many many coming to faith.' The 3000 people who come in to the church on the day of Pentecost is the fulfilment of both the parable and the promise.

God has used two titles of books that I never read (I did read the back pages though) to impassion me for leading churches to actually reach the lost.

The first book I read 15 years ago. It was written by a missiologist, George Hunter: 'Church for the Unchurched.' On it's back page he explains that in the North American landscape there are basically two kinds of churches, those churches that seem to organize around the needs of churched people, people who already are in the church, and those who organize around their desire to reach unchurched people. At that point, I could honestly say that I had spent my life in churches that revolved around the needs of Christians. The only people we ever seemed to draw were Christians transferring from other churches who liked what we had to offer.

Given the growing dissonance I was seeing between the book of Acts and my theology of the priority of evangelism, I was hungry to be part of a church for the unchurched. (Later I would change my language to 'a church for the unchurched, amongst other things' because I don't believe the church is *only* for the unchurched.)

The second book was a business book: 'The Blue Ocean Strategy.' The book was about the need to capitalize on new, uncontested markets. The analogy of the book was based on international commercial fishing, which divided the oceans into 'red waters' (those parts of the sea known for its fish-life and packed with fishing trawlers) and 'blue waters' (those parts of the sea, usually deeper, where fish-life is less predictable, and very few ships trawl). Based on Jesus' use of the fishing metaphor, the parallel struck my between the eyes...

So much of the way we do church, and so much of what we focus on as a church is trying to grow our church by attracting churched people. In a part of a city where, say 15% of people go to church, that is quite an appetizing 'market'. The effect

though is that we simply try 'do church' better than the church next door in the hope that more of those 15% will come. But I heard the whisper of the Spirit, 'Launch out into the deep'. As risky as it is, I'd rather let the other churches go for the 15%. I want in on that 85%. I'd rather take risks, try new things than play the safe church game. Just think what's possible!

MOTIVATION 10

The sheer joy of it

In Luke 15, Jesus is criticized by the religious folk for hanging out with 'sinners and tax collectors' – dodgy, non-churched, non-religious people. In an accusative tone, they want to know why Jesus is spending time with these people.

He answers by telling the stories of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. The way to make sense of these parables is to see them as Jesus' reason for doing mission. And the way to draw these answers out is to find the ideas that run through all 3 stories. So, why does Jesus do mission? Based on a reflection of these main ideas that weave through these parables, it is as though Jesus gives three explanations:

1. *"I love people who are lost."*

What affect does what's lost have on the shepherd and the widow and the father? The shepherd is shattered. His friends try console him: 'Don't worry shepherd, you still have 99. Let the lost one go.' But he can't sleep until he has that other one. He's not thinking in terms of numbers, he's thinking of that particular sheep. That sheep has a face and a history. Perhaps he saw it being born. Maybe he once carried it when it was injured. He has a name for that sheep. The widow is weeping. Perhaps each coin represents 3 years of marriage to her husband who is deceased, 3 years of him working and toiling for her in the event of what might happen. She cannot sleep. The dad is devastated, broken, his son has abandoned him. His heart is torn to pieces. How could this man ever recover?

In effect, Jesus is saying, 'These so-called 'sinners' matter to me. I love them. I miss them.'

As a parent, I don't have infinite ability to love kids. But I have noticed that it is as if, along with every child I have had, a new room is opened in my heart that is my love for that child and that child alone. With 5 of these rooms in my heart, I love each child with all my heart as if they are the only one. Similarly, Jesus' mansion of a divine heart has room for each and every person – he loves each as if they were his only one.

There's one thing worse than being lost. It's being lost and no one cares that you're lost. As Jesus' representatives, we must never let people think that we don't care about their salvation. Jesus cares about every single person in your street, in your school, in your workplace, in your family, every person you've seen today and the rest of today. He cares. He knows them, He knows how many hairs are on their head. He is emotionally invested in them. They might be oblivious to that. But that is what Jesus is telling us in his three parables. We are to represent this care and interest to the lost people he loves.

2. *"Lost people warrant an all-out rescue mission."*

We see that in the three parables: The shepherd leaves the 99 in the open country and goes after the lost sheep until he finds it (v4-5). There are bandits, robbers, hunger and thirst, and wolves out there. He faces all of those dangers because he's on an all-out rescue mission to find his lost sheep.

The widow lights a lamp, sweeps the house, and searches carefully until she finds it (v8). Likely her home is dark and dusty. She gets on her knees and spends hours scouring every possible crevice for that coin. Until she finds it she just cannot sleep.

Though the story is slightly different for the father (physically running after his child will only drive him farther away), he searches the horizon everyday. We know this because it says, 'while the son was still a long way off, his father saw him ... (v20) *Perhaps*, from the first light till the last light, the father stares at the horizon from his patio, and every time he saw someone he would hope: "Is that you, my boy?" The moment he does finally spot his son, 'he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him' (v20). In those days men didn't run.

3. *"There's no greater joy than when they come home."*

In all three cases, grief gives way to celebration. All three reach the highest level of joy they have ever known:

When the shepherd finds the lost sheep, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' (v5-6)

When the widow finds the lost coin, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' (v9)

When the father is reunited with his son, he calls his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate. (v22-24)

The shattered shepherd organizes a shindig and a shebang. He's in seventh heaven. The weeping widow is whooping with joy. She's walking on sunshine now. The devastated dad is now dancing. Jesus sums up the meaning of these parties: 'In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents' (v10).

It is clear that nothing causes God's heart to beat with more joy than when just one person comes home. Jesus' point: God throws a party in heaven and he invites his neighbours, the angels. There is a cosmic celebration which span from one horizon to the next. The heavenly father's heart thrills: 'One of my children has come home.' Nothing thrills God's heart more than just one person coming home, coming home. See, if found they're celebrated.

The critics ask Jesus, "Why do you hang out with people far from God?" He answers: for the sheer joy of it, the joy of seeing lost people come home.

Wonderfully, this is a joy that he invites us to take a share in, as we take a share in the mission. Jesus, speaking about some who reap (those who help others cross the line of faith) and those who sow (those who help people come closer to receiving Christ), says, "Even now those who reap draw their wages, even now they harvest

the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together”
(John 4:36).

There's no greater joy than being part of a church that collaborates to see people come home! This is the joy of love. I don't know about you, but I am addicted to joy – I want more of it, whatever it takes!

MOTIVATION 11

The command of Christ

When people die, they sometimes give their last words. In Jesus' case, and in my father's case, it was an instruction.

As for my father, I was 16 and I had him to myself in the hospital room. The doctor said he had days to live. His cancer-filled body had withered to half its previous weight. My mother thought it would be wise for my younger brother and I to get our last words with him.

'Don't remember me like this. I love you so much my boy. Look after your brother for me.'

What a task he gave me! Soon after my father died, I became a Christian. But my brother became a Satanist. Not really, but at times I wondered. He became bitter and twisted. He would swear to my mother's face, and he pulled away from both my mother and me.

And all the while, my dad's charge to me reverberated through my head. Everything I tried to do guide him, only seemed to goad him into greater hardness and rebellion. All I could do, it seemed, was pray for him. And pray I did.

When, 2 years later, Ryan turned to Christ, it was the greatest relief of my life. Shortly afterwards, I had a dream, the first one since my dad died, in which my father spoke to me. 'Terran, how is Ryan?'

In my dream, I was so happy to tell him that Ryan was fine, that he had come to know God, and was on a good track! He smiled. I woke up the next morning feeling like I had fulfilled the task my father gave me.

The resurrected Jesus also has left us last words. Days or hours before he returned to heaven, he told his disciples, 'Remember me like this. I love you. Look after the world – don't give up till they all come to me.'

He didn't really use those words, but something similar. Here are the accounts of his last words in all five books in the Bible that record them...

"Go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19).

"Go and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15).

"And this Gospel will be preached in all nations" (Luke 24)

"As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." (John 20:21)

"You will be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

As the world population grows, so the weight of this command strengthens. The book of Acts starts with one church, the Jerusalem church. The New Testament closes with about 20 named churches in all. Since then, the gospel has taken root in more and more places, and more churches have come into being – missiologists estimate there are about 38 million of them.

Only 38 million.

That's hardly enough churches for soon-to-be 8 billion people in the world!

We need to plant more. And every church, whether it has been around for a long time or not, must keep focused on the mission to make more disciples, to preach to more people, to go to more people, and to be witnesses in every hamlet, town, suburb, ghetto, city, people group, country, and (if people relocate there) planet!

If Jesus commands us to spread the gospel to people, I have often wondered what happens if we simply don't. One verses haunts me with its answer: *"When I tell wicked people they will die because of their sins, you must warn them to turn from their sinful ways so they won't be punished. If you refuse, you are responsible for their death"* (Ezekiel 3:18, CEV).

Ouch.

But when the blood-stained Lord of the cosmos and the church issues a command, disobedience is a serious thing. Over two decades ago, John Piper wrote,

'From time to time in the life of the church there needs to be a wake up call to some simple and central and basic things. One of these is: Christianity is a converting religion. It is evangelistic. It is persuasive and expansive and missionary. It is not coercive. It does not use the sword, manipulation, or brainwashing. But it does proclaim, and persuade and plead and pray.... When we lose a passion to see people won over to Jesus, we lose Jesus. Christianity is a soul-winning, out-reaching, mind-persuading, heart-entreating, rescuing, missionary faith, or it is not true Christianity. We need to be reminded of this, because it is almost incredible how listless we can become while calling ourselves Christians. Little by little our whole orientation can become inward.... We just go about our in-house religious business like a medical clinic that sees fewer and fewer patients and has more and more staff meetings, until there is nothing left but a smooth running program for the doctors and nurses and their families. That is what happens to many churches.'

All in.

The Bible issues many compelling, even unassailable reasons to reach out:

1. *The wonder of salvation.*
2. *The compassion of Jesus.*
3. *The mission of Jesus.*
4. *The worthiness of Jesus.*
5. *The call to discipleship.*
6. *The overflowing love in the Trinity.*
7. *The opportunity of the harvest.*
8. *The promise of the Spirit.*
9. *The possibility of the catch.*
10. *The sheer joy of it.*
11. *The command of Christ.*

Once we are persuaded – heart and soul – by the undeniable priority set before every believer and every church to introduce people to Jesus, it's time to go 'all in' and re-organize our lives and churches accordingly.

I have one friend who planted a church with her husband in a poor mining town in Wales. She has daily reminders on her phone to remind her that she is to live every hour of every day with this mission in mind, attentive to the missionary Spirit and attentive to the various far-from-God people she is interacting in the daily rhythms of her life.

As we live on mission, we hold onto the possibility that God may use us to penetrate the darkness in many people with God's own light. Very few of us will be called by God to go to some desert tribe and die while we tell them about Jesus. But the people who have been led in that way should not frighten us, but rather inspire us. Mark Batterson in his book 'All in' tells of one such person who was ready to obey Jesus' command regardless of the cost:

*'A century ago, a band of brave souls became known as one-way missionaries. They purchased single tickets to the mission field without the return half. And instead of suitcases, they packed their few earthly belongings into coffins. As they sailed out of port, they waved good-bye to everyone they loved, everything they knew. They knew they'd never return home. A. W. Milne was one of those missionaries. He set sail for the New Hebrides in the South Pacific, knowing full well that the headhunters who lived there had martyred every missionary before him. Milne did not fear for his life, because he had already died to himself. His coffin was packed. For thirty-five years, he lived among that tribe and loved them. When he died, tribe members buried him in the middle of their village and inscribed this epitaph on his tombstone: When he came there was no light. When he left there was no darkness.'*¹⁰

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Ten. How to introduce those you care about to the One who cares for them most.

Magnetic Sundays. How to reach people in your Sunday meetings.

In-Reach. Introducing our kids to Christ.

Double-impact preaching. How to engage and evangelize not-yet believers every time you preach.

Ignite. A 31-day journey into the Bible for new and not-yet believers.