



RBC CONNECT GROUP STUDY FOR WEEK 6/9/20

BUV Flourishing Churches Devotions

Congregational Mission Part 2 - Evangelism

by Rev Brett Mitchell and Sulari Nielsen

Matthew 28:18-20 "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Sulari: I love the Great Commission in Matthew 28: 18-20. We are invited to go and share with all people of all nations. It's an invitation from Jesus to participate in His mission; in what He is already doing, and it is comforting to know that He is already there to guide us as we go. So, I decided to respond to this invitation to go....

My transformational experience of mission involved going to Cambodia with Global Interaction in January 2019. I had never been on an overseas mission trip and I didn't know what to expect. It was here I saw missional engagement and evangelism come to life. God opened my eyes to what His mission looks like, not only in a Global context, but also in my local context!

1 Peter 3:15 states "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect." This is what I saw our cross-cultural workers in Cambodia doing. They spent time praying, waiting on God, learning the language and the culture. Evangelism and mission for them was spending time in their village getting to know the locals by forming authentic relationships with their hairdresser or barber; shopping at the same market; chatting with coffee shop owner; eating at a regular breakfast bar and buying clothes from the same shops. The Xposure trip had me reflecting on my understanding of evangelism and mission. I even changed jobs and started working for Global interaction as their Young Adults Consultant - that is how transformational the experience was!

Brett: I recall the very first time I went overseas as well - as exciting as it was to visit India I returned with a renewed enthusiasm about the fact that the world is on our own very doorstep, living and serving as I do, here in Melbourne.

I would not classify myself as an Evangelist - my strengths lie elsewhere - and yet, when I came to the realization that God has given to me, a very ordinary person, the invitation to share in His mission, my life

has been anything but ordinary. My wife and I are about to embark on a new mission: move to a new house, yet again, and plant ourselves smack in the middle of a new housing estate on the outskirts of Melbourne. Our plan is simple - wait (on God); listen (to our local community); and serve. I call that evangelism!

Sulari:

What does evangelism look like for your church or for you, personally? Ask yourself, "What do I already do well?" How you can use that to become creative in innovating what mission looks like in your local neighbourhood and context. It maybe something as simple, yet profound, as writing a note or letter; making a care package; or using your gifts and talents to safely serve and bless others. We must keep investing in our own relationship with Jesus so that those that we meet, see and speak with, can hear Jesus in us and through us. With evangelism there is no formula. God is working all around us, as He is already in our communities and invites us to participate in what He is already doing. Evangelism for me involves engaging with those who I encounter each time I go to the shops, exercise or am out engaging with my neighbours whilst gardening. One of the young adults, Cat, in my Global Interaction Unearthed Leadership team said recently "it involves loving the person in front of you". Let's use the opportunities that we have to go the extra mile to interact and start building some authentic relationships. Begin with one person - the same courier; barista; hairdresser; or sales assistant- be authentic, share your story, listen, and love them.

I am also surrounded by some incredible young adults at our church. Callum recently expressed that "mission is every action you take, being Christlike every day and mission locally involves living with purpose and walking in step with Jesus." Another young adult, Charlotte, shared "it's God doing the work in people's hearts - praying for opportunities. We must live mission in the everyday." Let's be inspired by these words and ask Christ to show us how we go and share to those on our doorstep and to the ends of the earth.

Our top tips, as we go out and live out the Great Commission is to:

- **Listen to God** - Begin with prayer and listen to and wait on God. Each day ask the Holy Spirit to guide, direct, and help you to be sensitive to those around you and to where God is already at work.
- **Be prepared to share your story** - Genuinely sharing your story, your personal Jesus encounter, using language others can hear and understand.
- **Serving your family, friends, and neighbours** - We need to safely serve in our own local contexts for the sake of seeing people come to know Christ. The heart of the cross is that Jesus entered a context, our world, to make the Father's will known to us.

Note: *In Stage 4 restrictions it is difficult to be practical and serve those around us. However, we can be creative in this. Mow someone's lawn; order a care package; send a box of chocolates; purchase an Uber Eats gift-card; or a bunch of flowers; and show what it means to love, care and serve - please wear a mask, sanitise, wash your hands and adhere to the rules of contactless delivery!*

Brett - Questions for consideration and discussion:

1. Why do you think so many Christians get a little nervous about the word evangelism? How do you feel about the word, and why?
2. If it is the Spirit's job to draw people to the Father (John 12:32), how do we partner with God in this?

3. Who is it (who doesn't yet follow Jesus) that the Lord has laid on your heart to love, bless and to serve at this time?
4. Is there a special group of people or a household that others in your Church can partner with together to love, bless and to serve, this coming month?
5. When can you set aside some time this coming week to specifically pray so that you can be better prepared (1 Peter 3:15) as you 'go' out into your world (Matt 28:18-20)?

Blessings,

Brett and Sulari

BUV Mission Catalyst Team