



# CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

## WEEKLY UPDATE

October 28, 2020

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 43

### THE DISCIPLE AS EVANGELIST

#### The Evangelist Bearing Witness

by Mr. Michael Bowerman

Rick Warren tells how he once saw a Peanuts cartoon that described the evangelistic strategy of many churches. Charlie Brown was practicing archery in his backyard. Instead of aiming at a target, he would shoot an arrow at his fence and then walk over and draw a target round wherever the arrow stuck. Lucy walked up and said, "Why are you doing this, Charlie Brown?" He replied, "This way I never miss!"

Rick points out that unfortunately the same logic is behind a lot of churches' – and many Christians' – approach to evangelism. Instead of strategically targeting those we want to reach, we casually hope that the gospel will randomly reach them. We are not thoughtful and deliberate as we seek to tell people out there about Christ. Most of us don't even try.

I have found many people are put off by the word 'evangelism'. They feel threatened by the thought that they should be 'evangelists'. Interestingly, the word 'evangelist' is only used three times in the Bible, and it always refers to a person with a spiritual gift and a specific ministry. This person is to proclaim the 'good news' – the gospel – which is the root meaning of the word. While every Christian is called upon to share this gospel, I prefer to use the word 'witness' to describe what every believer should be and do. Jesus addressed His disciples just before He ascended to heaven with this directive: "You will be my witnesses..." He did not say, "You will be evangelists." In point of fact, every Christian is a witness for Christ; they are either a good one or a bad one!

While this is challenging, understanding this should relieve us of the guilt that we are not very good at being evangelists. But that does not excuse us from our responsibility for sharing the good news in our world. We are those who have witnessed the saving work of Christ in our lives. To share this is not an optional extra.

There is a short passage in Colossians which I have described as a blueprint for witness and evangelism. Paul writes in 4:2-6,

*"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. 5 Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."*

Let me break it down for you. It tells us two things:

- we must speak to God about people (vv. 2-3),
- we must speak to people about God (vv. 4-6).

**First: We must be people who speak to God about people – who pray, and especially for people.** "Devote yourselves to prayer..." he starts. Paul the evangelist is keen that the Colossian Christians pray for him that he will be effective. He asks them specifically to pray for God to open a door to the gospel message – in other words, for suitable opportunities to preach and to share it. The message is described as "the mystery of Christ". It is a mystery in the sense that it was a message not understood by people before Jesus came along. Now, Paul was able to tell them about it. He wanted people's minds and hearts to be open to the amazing, life-changing message of the gospel of salvation.

We, too, should pray for those who are on the front line in preaching the gospel – our ministers, evangelists and missionaries. But we must also pray for ourselves in this regard, and as part of this, pray for those we know who need to hear and accept the gospel. Start with people you know: family members, colleagues at work, those you encounter every day. Pray for opportunities to speak to them about the gospel. Pray that what you say may not seem a 'mystery' to people but, rather, be clear, and pray that God will open their minds to understand the simple truths of salvation and their need to repent and accept it by faith.

**Second, we must speak to people about God. Paul provides several important principles in the way we do this.** "Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders," he says. We need wisdom in the kind of behavior we display, especially when we are around non-Christians. One of the saddest and most embarrassing things said about many believers is that they are no different from anyone else! We must be authentic – the real deal - otherwise we will cut no ice when we speak. Paul continues, "Make the most of every opportunity." We pray for opportunities, and then we seize them when they present themselves. A conversation comes up with a friend who comments on the deterioration in the state of society. Someone

at work asks you why you go to church. A teenager raises the subject of abortion. Take the opportunity to share a biblical perspective.

In this context, I want to add here something important about how we effectively witness. Not everyone will do it the same way. Why? Because we are all different – for example, different in our cultural backgrounds, our ability to communicate, and especially in our personalities. Some of us are more personable – we’re people’s people – and others of us more reserved. We will relate to people differently. When you reach out to people, don’t try to be someone you are not. But, at the same time, in order to be wise we will need to know our faith and be able to articulate the gospel in a simple and understandable way. It is not enough to say to yourself, “I won’t need to say anything; I will let my life do the speaking.” That is a cop-out. Do all you can to prepare yourself. Read and study the Bible. Attend a small group, for example.

Paul ends the section like this: “Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” It is not just what you say but the way you say it that is so critical. Some Christians go in aggressively, often disrespecting others’ different views. Sometimes we are arrogant, harsh and judgmental. Some don’t even listen, let alone try to understand where the other person is coming from. We wonder why people back off, and try to avoid us! Peter, in advising his readers to be ready to give an answer to those who asked for the reason they were Christians, told them to do so “with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15). Oh that we Christians showed more “gentleness and respect”, even when we don’t receive it! That was Jesus’ way.

“Let your conversation be always full of grace” but, he adds, “seasoned with salt,” too. Salt is used for a number of things but one thing we do know it’s good for is to give food flavor – to make it taste better. I think Paul is saying that we need to present the gospel so it appears to be what it is – good news! It is good news in a bad world. In fact, good news is only truly good when the alternative is bad news! A doctor diagnoses an illness in you – that’s bad news – but then he tells you he has medication that will make you better – that’s good news. Jesus said we must be the salt of the earth, and our message must be salty, too.

We have good news, and we need to share it. The Christian faith offers something no other religion or philosophy offers. On the one hand, we believe it is the truth because it is based on the One who claimed, “I am ...the truth.” And on the other, it answers the deep questions and challenges that no other faith does. Let us be those who, if we truly believe this, make it our goal to share that good news as much as we can in the world in which we live.

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on Radio Cayman 89.9  
every Sunday at 7:45 am

**November 01, 2020**  
Mr. Michael Bowerman

## Cayman Prep & High School Priority Registration

If you have a child that is either hoping to join us in KG in 2021/22 or attends another pre-school, primary school, high school or is home-schooled and you would like them to potentially join Cayman Prep and High School in the 2021/22 academic year please note our **priority application deadline is October 31 2020.**

Only children who do not currently attend Cayman Prep should complete an online application form (available on our website [www.cayprep.edu.ky](http://www.cayprep.edu.ky)) If you have already applied, you do not need to do this again. If you are not sure if you have applied, please call the Primary School on 949-5932 or the High School on 949-9115.

Alternatively email [hsadmissions@cayprep.edu.ky](mailto:hsadmissions@cayprep.edu.ky) or [psadmissions@cayprep.edu.ky](mailto:psadmissions@cayprep.edu.ky)

Priority status on our wait list is available to:

1. Children who are Members, or who are children or grandchildren of Members of the United Church, in good standing (requires Church letter)
2. Children of active adherents of the United Church (requires Church letter)
3. Children of current permanent staff of the School
4. Children who have a sibling in the School
5. Children who have previously had sibling/s in the School
6. Past students and children of past students of the School
7. Others in order of receipt of completed application form and application fee.

If you have any questions, please call the High School on 949-9115 or Primary School on 949-5932 or email

[hsadmissions@cayprep.edu.ky](mailto:hsadmissions@cayprep.edu.ky)  
[psadmissions@cayprep.edu.ky](mailto:psadmissions@cayprep.edu.ky)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

October 31. (Saturday)

**'Built to Bend' webinar** via Zoom – 10:00am-12:00 noon

**November 01. (Sunday) 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

November 07. (Saturday)

**Men's Fellowship Breakfast** – 7:30am at Elmslie UC

**'Built to Bend' webinar** via Zoom – 10:00am-12:00 noon

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