

Inspire

The Why factor

"But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Luke 5:30

There is a constant challenge to every church, no matter how well things are running, how great the building looks, how developed the program is, how fantastic the preaching is or how great the worship. It's "But are people coming to the Lord!"

I suspect that this is the primary concern of most ministers and leaders. The offering could be down, the ministry and leadership team a little thin, the service slightly average but if people are coming to the Lord it overrides everything. Well, that is how it has been for me so I'm encouraging myself in that.

Seeing people come to know the Lord should be the highest priority and the end result of all that we do. Right now I believe the Lord is challenging believers and churches to emerge and incarnate themselves into their communities with a grassroots level of outreach and interaction with those outside of the faith. Yet, in many Christian circles, we have built a wall of thinking that prevents us from entering these parameters.

"For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility". Ephesians 2:14

Or like it says in Colossians 2:20—23: **"Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!""? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence."**

This speaks of a philosophy of

thinking that stops us heading into unfamiliar territory. But I believe God is calling His church to rise up and begin to mission itself like never before on a more grassroots level, with people who would never generally venture into church.

The Gospel of Luke

The Bible was written by 40 different authors in five different countries over a 2000-year period, yet it fits together like a hand in a glove. It is interesting that Luke was the only non-Jewish writer. It seems that he looked at faith, Christianity and Jesus from a completely different angle. Matthew saw Jesus as the Son of man, Mark saw Him as a miracle worker, John saw Him as the Son of God which is all great but Luke saw Him as a friend of sinners which is so important, especially if you are a sinner; then you'd want to know if this Jesus would be your friend before He's your Saviour, miracle guru or your God.

All the way through the book of Luke there are references to Jesus' association with people outside the faith. For example:

- Luke 5:27-32 Levi, the tax collector
- Luke 7:1-20 the Roman centurion
- Luke 7:34-35 the prostitute
- Luke 7:36-50 the women with the issue of blood
- Luke 8:40-48 the Good Samaritan
- Luke 10:25-37 the crowd of sinners
- Luke 15:1-2 the lost sheep
- Luke 15:3-7 the lost coin
- Luke 15:8-10 the lost son
- Luke 15:11-31 the angels celebrating
- Luke 15:10 the purpose of these parables.
- Luke 16:9-15 the Pharisees and the sinner
- Luke 18:9-14 the chief tax collector
- Luke 19:1-10 Central verse of Luke 10 is 19:10
- Luke 23:39-43 the criminal
- Luke 23:44-48 the centurion

I think you've got the picture! Jesus was a friend of sinners, people outside the faith.

Jesus painted another picture, as well—of His disregard for the religious and the self righteous. Have a look at the

following references, and I think you'll get the idea!

- Luke 4:28-30
- Luke 5:21
- Luke 5:30
- Luke 6:10-11
- Luke 7:39
- Luke 11:45
- Luke 13:14-17
- Luke 14:1
- Luke 16:13-15
- Luke 19:7
- Luke 10:25

It is as if Luke were saying, *"Hey, you comfortable believers, don't forget why Jesus came, and while you're enjoying the favour of another, don't forget those outside the faith who are without a relationship with God."* Let us that enjoy the privileges of fellowship with God and His church remember why He died. Lest we forget!

I don't think we need to be against the church or religious setting of our day for the sake of it, but if it is holding us back from reaching and touching people who don't know and walk with Him then we should disregard it.

Levi's Story

"After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Luke 5:27-32

I felt lead to read and meditate on this particular story because Levi was the first person outside the regular church circle that Jesus collided with. I sensed God saying to me, "I'm going to give you three keys that will help you and your church see more people come to the saving knowledge of Jesus." Let's look at the keys:

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By Kevin

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1. Follow Jesus

I have heard it said that if you're truly following Jesus, you'll be fishing for people, for Jesus said: "follow me and I will make you fishers of men." I remember when I first started following Jesus, this passion to see others come to know Him rose in my heart and has never left me. You see, when we follow Jesus we receive his burdens and His heart for humanity.

Something else about following Jesus—is it not only increases our spiritual potency and power to witness, but it also increases our light and saltiness.

The last thing about following Jesus is our willingness to let go of everything that might hinder us—a bad attitude, an ungodly character, a dorky lifestyle, or even a position of status within society.

2. Mix is with the world

If we are ever going to influence someone we must have close proximity to them. The church at large has really struggled with being in the world over the years. It seems that sometimes we as a church would prefer just to be among our own

company. There could be a number of reasons why people hesitate to mix with the world so that they might influence others regarding Jesus. Here are some common ones:

- ◆ Should we hang around non believers?
- ◆ We could backslide!
- ◆ Its uncomfortable!
- ◆ What would others think!

When really we need to break free from all this negative thinking and mix in with the world. It's a world that Jesus loves. Ministers need not discourage their people from mixing in. Instead they could start to empower them, like Jesus did in Matthew 5:1-16. This is really what missional and incarnational are all about and where it all starts.

3. Remember the "why" factor

A question often thrown at those that mix in the world is "Why do you hang around sinners?" Jesus was quick to answer, because the why factor was strongly in His heart. He knew why He came to earth. He knew why He was at the party. He said: "I'm here to call sinners to repentance."

We feed the needy of our city but it is not about the food. Some churches have sports groups, but it is not about the sport. We put on a fight club

and Beer, Beef and Bible night but it is not about the beer or the fight—it is all about being in a position to be able to call people to Jesus.

We run A.A. in our church building. Someone who started attending asked if I ran a gym group. So we went to the gym together a few times and got to know each other, and then he came to a Christmas service and was touched. After a number of conversations he attended another service and gave his life to Jesus. A month later he heard me share this message and called me saying: "That's it! It isn't about AA or the gym. It's about why you were there."

Let's all remember whether in our following Jesus or in our mixing in the world, that we are there to call people into relationship with God.

Follow
Mix it
And remember Why!

Kevin
Email: info@lifechurch.org.au



Kevin's Travel

Hello Kev

It was great to have you with us on Sunday Night, great preaching! You really imparted some good stuff into the church. We do appreciate your generosity with people, you always leave them encouraged. Kev you're doing a great job and we certainly do feel a sense of connection with what you're doing.

We enjoyed catching up afterwards and look forward to having you back with us sometime soon.

Stay in touch
God Bless

Dave & Alix
Energizer Life Church
Hobart

Kevin travels into churches he has friendship with to encourage and build into those churches. During the year he will be traveling to:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 14th to 21st April | India & Thailand |
| 30th to 31st May | Canberra |
| 19th to 21st June | Shellharbour |
| 10th to 12th July | Thirroul |
| 21st to 23rd August | Gold Coast |
| 29th to 30th August | Campbelltown |
| 12th to 13th September | Mittagong |

24 Hr Express - Must Book

- ◆ Lunch with Kevin on Friday 24th April, 2009 at 12:00 noon
- ◆ Soapbox with James Morrison Friday night 24th April, 2009
- ◆ Breakfast with the needy Saturday 25th April, 2009 at 7:30am
- ◆ A.A. (Alcoholic's Anonymous) with Ted
- ◆ Art Exhibition with Jeffrey Baker on Saturday 25th April, at 2:00pm



All of this within a 24 hour period.

**Bookings Essential phone 4961 0211 or Email: info@lifechurch.org.au
James Morrison including a 3 course dinner \$90.00**





GlobeReach

Cambodia—Linda Chisholm

Testimony from Bluegate House

As a young man, he associated with bad friends, drank beer and got into fights. He left school and his parents were so unhappy with him they did not want him at home. One day he stabbed someone and was arrested and sent to prison. In prison he stabbed someone and was sent to Cell C3 to calm down.

In Cell C3 he started to study the Bible and his life was transformed, he became a Christian. He decided that when he got out of prison he would go to Bluegate House and learn how to repair motorbikes. When he came to Bluegate House we could see how changed he was, excellent behaviour and a wonderful spirit. We also obtained medical help for him. He worked so hard during the course and when he was

finished he got a job in a factory. He goes to church near his house. His neighbours notice what a hard worker he is and how changed he is. He has also reconciled with his parents. His disease is cured but he says that it is God who has changed him and healed him and he only wants to follow Jesus.

Prison Fellowship Ministry—Cambodia
Linda Chisholm . Email: chisholmlinda1@gmail.com

Philippines—Peter Starr

This trip although pretty short (four days) was very impacting. They are a beautiful people (very gentle and open) but huge needs (overwhelming).

The conference which is called "the South East Asian Global Outreach Conference" is now in its fourth year and was largely sponsored by "Life Church" in Newcastle. I went to give the little I had but came back with so much more.

It was a blessing to me to work briefly with Ken and Maisie Gibson (Life Church Newcastle) and a great team of people who have so much wisdom in the work.

On my return I once again kissed the ground (as I always do) with a new found awareness of just how more we all could give to such works (we are all so rich).

Peter Starr
South Coast City
Church Thirroul
Email:
pete@sccc.com.au



San Juan Argentina—Paul Harb

Hey! Got some good news. We are praying and planning to visit Australia maybe sometime in this June or even before, all depending on our passport renewals. The date is not confirmed yet. We feel it is the right time to come back for a couple of months visit, as it has been nearly five years on the mission field. We feel we need to come back to see family, friends, ministry and catch up and organize a lot of stuff. Please keep us in your prayers.

A few prayer points which I can share with you:

- ◆ For renewal of all our passports which will cost approx \$1000 Aus.
- ◆ Wisdom to delegate and appoint the right leaders to take care of the church.
- ◆ Finance to pay for all our air tickets, we need approx \$12,000.00 Aus.
- ◆ Pray that our 80 model VW Van will get sold which will help us financially.

- ◆ Health and protection as a family while we prepare to come to Australia
- ◆ For the church to take it well when we tell them that we are leaving for a few months.

I humbly share all the above so you can pray and believe with me for a financial break through/ miracle that all will go smoothly to prepare for Australia.

Paul & Veronica Harb
Email: him_ministries@yahoo.com.au

Fiji—Peter Schultz

Shaneel's Story Continued...

Many of you have been praying for Shaneel and our support and care of him has continued. I am in daily phone contact and we recently bought him to Suva

for several days of intensive care and encouragement. His journey from prison continued to need ongoing prayer. Peter Schultz is presently in Australia and is available to speak in churches until May. Contact him on mobile: 0413 483 969

Peter Schultz.
Email: peter@operationfoundation.org.fj



GREAT MISSIONS TO SUPPORT

AFTA (Arabs for the Arabs)

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oversights a church in Jordan and a training school that develops people from all of the Arab Nations and releases them back to extend the Kingdom.

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First Circle, Jabal Amman
Amman, JORDAN

Account Number:

01-18-2219174-01 (US\$ account)

Swift code:

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(Note: this is an AFTA account, but is registered under three of the AFTA board members)

For gifts or donations for AFTA in Australia please send to:

Mrs Joan Wicks
14 Raphael Circuit
MORAYFIELD QLD 4506

EmPower Asia

Paul Sommerville heads up EmPower Asia which is focused on moving teenagers from poverty to power. At present they have:

180 young people living in
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4 Nations

Toowoomba City Church,

P.O. Box 2216 Toowoomba QLD 4350.

Email: empowerasia@gmail.com

Website: empower.asia



An Australian-based relationship of churches and ministries that work together in reaching our nation and beyond

to plant, parent and partner with churches in order to see them impact their communities, providing relational and visionary oversight

Senior Minister's Getaway

Please see attached flyer for the next Senior Minister's Getaway at Cataract Dam from 26th to 28th May 2009.



Numbers are limited to 12 please contact Fred David on
Mobile: 0412 284 710
Email: fred4saints@gmail.com

Huonville Tasmania – Malcolm Weir

EMERGING SEMINAR—Huon Life Church

Huon Valley was blessed over the weekend of 13th Feb 2009 to have the ministry of Kevin Wilcock amongst them.

We saw the gathering together of different churches in the valley and to hear Kevin speak first on Friday night at the local award winning Home Hill Winery Restaurant where we had church in a different way—around the table fellowshiping with each other, tasting the local food including a drop or two of the local wine—a real Aussie get together. Kev giving us a yarn or two later about Jesus and some non religious stuff—it was cool.

Saturday saw the coming together of some of the local Pastors (even though we didn't see all of them come together this time—it was great for the first get together for this year and considering no one can remember when this last happened in the valley. The vision is to see unity in the body of Christ in the Huon Valley—that church leaders can come together on common ground that we all serve one God and love the same Jesus. We were all blessed by Kevin's inspiring message and testimony of the work being done in the Newcastle area.

Kevin also ministered at an afternoon seminar and Power Rally in the evening at the Huonville Town Hall—where we saw a representation of different churches in the Huon

Valley. There was an impartation and deposit of God's love and power upon all at these meetings.

What was very evident was that most people felt the genuine love and fellowship that flows so freely from Kevin's heart and ministry and the down to earth ability of Kev to Minister to people where they are at. Simply just sharing around a BBQ with a servant attitude of cooking for us and waiting on us was such a fantastic thing Kev has done here. Many lives have been changed and transformed with legalistic viewpoints changed and the liberty of the Holy Spirit coming upon us all.

Love ya heaps Kev.
Malcolm and Antonia.
Email: maucons@bigpond.net.au

Having Life Outside of the Ministry - Fred David

The Adrenaline of Cycling

I appreciate this segment of the Inspire, being a minister and young family man, most things I do, I do with a sense of duty, either feeling I have to believe I am supposed to do, or are responsible to do. So to escape all my responsibilities and labels, I dress up in bright colored, tight fitting lycra and go ride my bike somewhere.

When I am riding my bike, I'm not a minister, father, or Christian. I'm a poofy little *bep bep bep* taking up your lane and holding up traffic.

Becoming a cyclist has given me some understanding for marginalized people groups venerable to larger powers. The longer and harder the ride, the more

sweat I perspire and the more calories I burned. The better it was coming home completely spent, leaving it all out on the road is the way I relax.

Cycling is great! I have lots of friends with a real kindred spirit, *cycling is surprisingly social*. I maintain a good level of health and fitness, which is important for ministry as my role requires a lot of, thinking, talking and eating. It is amazing for my mental health. I find I have a lot of energy for the other parts of my life because I have a break and go riding. When I am riding my body produces a lot of endorphins and after a couple of hours in the saddle, which is like a drug high for any of you who are longing for a hit,

Cycling brings out the big kid in me and

takes me back to when I was 7 and I would get my bike and go *anywhere*. I was free to do whatever, with the only rule being that I had to be home before dark. It's a release, a sense of freedom, a passion and a great joy. I think if I can put my need to release the inner child into something that's so positive and beneficial then I will be less likely to in areas that are not. See you on the road.

Fred
Email: fred4saints@gmail.com



This team get together once a month for the purpose of prayer and fellowship. All churches wanting to relate will need to make contact with this team.

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