

THE CHURCH GOD USES, #5
God Uses a Consistently Evangelistic Church
Dr. Greg Tyree, BBC, AM, February 15, 2004

INTRODUCTION: The Church God uses is...

Christ-Centered Church

Heavenly-Minded Church

Uncompromisingly Biblical

Relationally Oriented

Consistently Evangelistic

Habitually Serving

ILLUSTRATION:

3 Churches and the Squirrel Problem...

There were three pastors discussing their mutual squirrel problem. It seems that squirrels were overtaking their churches. They were talking about how they got rid of them.

Methodist Pastor: We just can't bring ourselves to hurt one of God's creations, so we humanely trap them and drop them off in the woods at the edge of town, but three days later they are back!

Presbyterian Pastor: We believe that it is predestined that they be there, so who are we to mess with God's sovereign decree? So, we just leave them alone, hoping God has foreordained them to leave!

Baptist Pastor: We have almost totally gotten rid of them. We baptized them and registered them as members, and now we only see them on Easter and at Christmas!

How can we be a church that is consistently evangelizing the lost?

PROPOSITION: The Consistently Evangelistic Church practices four types of evangelism.

I. THE CHURCH GOD USES PRACTICES PERSONAL EVANGELISM.

A. It Reaches Out to Friends. Mark 5:18, 19.

After casting demons out of a man...

¹⁸And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. ¹⁹However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.”

B. It Reaches Out to **Relatives**. John 1:43-51.

⁴³The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, “Follow Me.” ⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” ⁴⁶And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” ⁴⁷Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!” ⁴⁸Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” ⁴⁹Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” ⁵⁰Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” ⁵¹And He said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

C. It Reaches Out to **Associates**. Mark 2:13-17.

¹³Then He went out again by the sea; and all the multitude came to Him, and He taught them. ¹⁴As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed Him. ¹⁵Now it happened, as He was dining in Levi’s house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. ¹⁶And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, “How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?” ¹⁷When Jesus heard it, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

D. It Reaches Out to **Neighbors**. John 4:28-30; 39-42.

²⁸The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ²⁹“Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” ³⁰Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

³⁹And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I ever did.” ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of His own word. ⁴²Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

Bad Testimonies

A few years ago I had a chance to become a hero, but it turned out to be an embarrassing moment. I was in China on a tour group. Our tour bus was on the way to a scenic spot with another tour bus in front of us. It was snowing, and the road was muddy.

Suddenly the bus ahead of us skidded off the road and tipped over on its side in a rice field. I quickly jumped off my tour bus, ran to the overturned bus, and jumped on top. Windows were shattered, and people inside were obviously hurt. The emergency door was facing upward, so I grabbed the handle of the emergency door and pulled. The door did not open. I kept pulling hard, but it wouldn't budge. By this time, others had come and were pulling people out through the windows, so I gave up on the door and joined them. After I moved away from the door, another man went over to the door. He turned the door handle, and the door opened easily.

I suddenly realized why the door did not open for me: I had been standing on the door as I tried to open it. With good intentions to save lives, I had become the biggest obstacle blocking the door of rescue.

Sometimes those who want to lead others to Christ likewise become the biggest obstacle to their salvation.

Citation: Charles Chu

II. THE CHURCH GOD USES PRACTICES PROGRAM EVANGELISM.

A. It Is Evangelistic in Its Program of **Preaching**. 1 Cor. 1:21.

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

B. It Is Evangelistic in Its Program of **Teaching**. Matt. 28:18-20.

¹⁸And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰"teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

C. It Is Evangelistic in Its Program of **Reaching**. Luke 14:16-24 (KJV).

¹⁶Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: ¹⁷And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. ¹⁸And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. ¹⁹And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. ²⁰And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. ²¹So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. ²²And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. ²³And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. ²⁴For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

ILLUSTRATION:

Serving Your Enemy

Watchman Nee tells about a Chinese Christian who owned a rice paddy next to one owned by a communist man. The Christian irrigated his paddy by pumping water out of a canal, using one of those

leg-operated pumps that make the user appear to be seated on a bicycle. Every day, after the Christian had pumped enough water to fill his field, the communist would come out, remove some boards that kept the water in the Christian's field and let all the water flow down into his own field. That way, he didn't have to pump.

This continued day after day. Finally, the Christian prayed, "Lord, if this keeps up, I'm going to lose all my rice, maybe even my field. I've got a family to care for. What can I do?"

In answer to his request, the Lord put a thought in his mind. So, the next morning he arose much earlier, in the predawn hours of darkness, and started pumping water into the field of his communist neighbor. Then he replaced the boards and pumped water into his own rice paddy. In a few weeks both fields of rice were doing well—and the communist was converted.

Citation: Paul Faulkner, *Making Things Right When Things Go Wrong* (Howard, 1996)

III. THE CHURCH GOD USES PRACTICES PASSIONATE EVANGELISM.

A. It is Passionate Because of the Priestly "Purchase" of People.

Acts 20:28b

...the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

1 Cor. 6:20a.

For ye are bought with a price...

B. It is Passionate Because of the Painful Predicament of People. Eph. 2:11-13.

¹¹Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—¹²that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

C. It is Passionate Because of the Potential Punishment of People. Rev. 20:14, 15.

¹⁴Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

ILLUSTRATION:

Runaway Courage

Harriet Tubman escaped from slavery in 1849. She immediately became involved in the abolitionist movement, organizing meetings, speaking against slavery, and the like.

But that wasn't enough for Tubman. She decided to return to the South secretly and deliver other slaves to freedom. It was a great risk, because if she had been caught, she would certainly have been thrown back into slavery—or killed as an example to other potential runaways.

But not only did she return to the South that one time, she went back 19 times, to eventually rescue some 300 fellow slaves. Each trip became more risky, as slave catchers were on the alert for her. But each time she embarked on the journey, and each time, with God's help, she confessed, she evaded the authorities.

Citation: Matt Donnelly, "Black Moses: The Mystical Faith and No-Nonsense Tactics of the Underground Railroad's Most Famous Leader," *Christian History*, issue 62, volume 2, page 24

IV. THE CHURCH GOD USES PRACTICES PURPOSEFUL EVANGELISM. Matt. 28:18-20.

¹⁸And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰"teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

- A. It is the Church's Purpose to **Win** People.
- B. It is the Church's Purpose to **Build** People.
- C. It is the Church's Purpose to **Equip** People.
- D. It is the Church's Purpose to **Multiply** People.

ILLUSTRATION:

Titanic's Last Hero

John Harper was born into a Christian family May 29, 1872. He became a Christian 13 years later and had already started preaching by age 17. He received training at the Baptist Pioneer Mission in London, and in 1896 he founded a church, now known as Harper Memorial Church, which began with 25 worshipers but had grown to 500 members by the time he left 13 years later.

In 1912 Harper, the newly called pastor of Moody Church in Chicago, was traveling on the Titanic with his 6-year-old daughter. After the ship struck an iceberg and began to sink, he got Nana into a lifeboat but apparently made no effort to follow her. Instead, he ran through the ship yelling, "Women, children, and unsaved into the lifeboats!" Survivors report that he then began witnessing to anyone who would listen. He continued preaching even after he had jumped into the water and was clinging to a piece of wreckage (he'd already given his lifejacket to another man).

Harper's final moments were recounted four years later at a meeting in Hamilton, Ontario, by a man who said:

I am a survivor of the Titanic. When I was drifting alone on a spar that awful night, the tide brought Mr. Harper of Glasgow, also on a piece of wreck, near me. "Man," he said, "are you saved?" "No," I said, "I am not." He replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

The waves bore him away, but, strange to say, brought him back a little later, and he said, "Are you saved now?" "No," I said, "I cannot honestly say that I am." He said again, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," and shortly after he went down; and there, alone in the night, and with two miles of water under me, I believed. I am John Harper's last convert.

He was also one of only six people picked out the water by the lifeboats; the other 1,522, including Harper, were left to die.

Citation: Elesha Coffman, "Sacrifice at Sea," *Christianhistory.net* (August 11, 2000), adapted from *The Titanic's Last Hero* (Moody Press, 1997)

APPLICATION: What is your excuse for not soul-winning?

1. Is it a lack of Confidence? Seek more Skills.
2. Is it a lack of Concern? Seek the Spirit.
3. Is it a lack of Conviction? Search the Scriptures.
4. Is it a lack Conversion? Search your Soul.

ILLUSTRATION:

Remarkable Persistence in Prayer

The diary of George Mueller, Christian social reformer from the Victorian era, chronicles his devotion in prayer:

In November 1844, I began to pray for the conversion of five individuals. I prayed every day without a single intermission, whether sick or in health, on the land, on the sea, and whatever the pressure of my engagements might be. Eighteen months elapsed before the first of the five was converted. I thanked God and prayed on for the others. Five years elapsed, and then the second was converted. I thanked God for the second, and prayed on for the other three. Day by day, I continued to pray for them, and six years passed before the third was converted. I thanked God for the three, and went on praying for the other two. These two remained unconverted.

Thirty-six years later he wrote that the other two, sons of one of Mueller's friends, were still not converted. He wrote:

But I hope in God, I pray on, and look for the answer. They are not converted yet, but they will be.

In 1897, fifty-two years after he began to pray, these two men were finally converted, after he died. Mueller understood what Jesus meant when he told his disciples "that they should always pray and not give up."

Citation: Ben Patterson, *Deepening Your Conversation with God* (Bethany, 1999), pp. 105–106; submitted by Phillip Gunter, Round Rock, Texas