

The Evangelistic Message and Pattern within Church Life

**Authentic Living: A People Who Really Love People
“Behold the Kingdom of God is at Hand!”**

The third aspect of commitment at Northgate Community Church is the matter of evangelism, defined as proclaiming the Kingdom of God. What does it mean to include the evangelistic function in the life of the church?

I. The Gospel of Grace through Faith

One of the pillar truths that we emphasize at Northgate is what we call the **GOSPEL OF GRACE THROUGH FAITH**. The Church of Jesus Christ provides specific and eternal answers to man’s need for God.

*Acts 20:24, 32 - “If only I may complete the task of testifying to the **GOSPEL OF GOD’S GRACE**. Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”*

Mankind needs a Savior. We believe mankind is inherently sinful and needs a savior. We see the church as a redemptive community (in the midst of a humanly independent society) presenting God’s love, forgiveness and salvation through the person and work of Christ Jesus.

Righteousness is found in Christ. We believe righteousness is not found in ourselves and in our works efforts, but is to be found only in Christ. We reject a viewpoint of Christian life that promotes arrogant self-sufficiency in the name of faith, victory or overcoming.

Grace is the basis of Salvation. We believe God honors the humble and gives grace to the contrite. Humility and grace are found in the work of justification with God provided by the shedding of blood on the cross. Grace may be the most neglected of all truths, for the human nature is prone to turn to legalism or other means of legislating morality and conformity.

The objective is “making disciples.” We are not merely after conversion decisions, but encouraging true discipleship (Mt 28:19). This is key to finding a way to show both modern suburbanites and post-modern people that they are in

trouble, need God and that there is a reality called “sin.” In relating to people, we must learn to walk out engaging, embracing relationships with faith. Our present thought is that contemporary people need three things: loving care and attention to their needs, challenging discipleship and a call to selflessness, and a sense of how to develop a life-message with purpose and destiny.

II. The Evangelism Mandate

The following scriptures provide the basis for a biblical mandate, blueprint and strategy.

Genesis 1:28 – “Be fruitful and multiply after your own kind” – God’s original command to mankind.

Matthew 28:19 – “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

Mark 16:15 – “Go into all the world and preach the gospel (good news) to all creation.”

Luke 24:46-48 – “The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.”

John 21:19 – “Follow me!” Earlier, Jesus had said, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Acts 1:8 – “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

III. Key Message: The Kingdom of God

Matt 4:17 – “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Mark 1:15 – “The time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God is at hand.”

Luke 4:43 – “I must preach the kingdom of God.”

John 18:36 – “My kingdom is not of this world...not from here.”

1. Jesus declared: *“This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world”* (Mt 24:14). The Kingdom of God is representative of dramatic events and actions that occur when the presence of God is being manifested by the direct action of the Holy Spirit, and signified in manifest ways by healings, deliverance from demons, and other miraculous works of God.
2. Evangelism is proclaiming the Kingdom of God. We believe in the need for a

passion of reaching people, ministering to their genuine needs, and leading them into the Kingdom of God. We recognize that evangelism is unnatural and requires supernatural enablement. There must be a focused strategy and a plan to equip people for witness and strategic outreach. We see “relationship” as key to touching, knowing and serving people in order that we may “wash their feet.”

3. The King who rules the Kingdom of God decisively and irrevocably has invaded the earth through his incarnation of his Son who was a dynamic manifestation of his Spirit. The Kingdom of God is the reigning of God as Father, Son and Spirit. The Triune God reigns sovereignly as King of the universe throughout all time, both before, concurrent with, and after the incarnation. God’s rule continues to reign in the hearts of individuals and He will continue to reign eternally. God’s purpose for humanity is fulfilled by a multidimensional puzzle in which the Father is joined through the work of Jesus by the Holy Spirit to masses of individuals who are themselves joined together as Church by that same Spirit.
 - a) **The Work of the Father:** In **CREATION**, God made humans in His image designed for fellowship and to enjoy God’s love for every individual. Kingdom means Divine Order. In the Lord’s Prayer it says: “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done” (Mt 6:10).
 - b) **The Work of the Son:** In **INCARNATION**, He made salvation possible and opened the doors of reconciliation and restored fellowship for humankind with their creator. Kingdom means Divine Message. Jesus heralded the Kingdom of God in his message (Mt 4:17; 4:28; Lk 4:43).
 - c) **The Work of the Spirit:** In **REGENERATION**, He makes repentance and faith a life-transforming experience of real empowerment for victorious Christian living. Kingdom is Divine Birth, the new birth, becoming new creatures in Christ. Jesus was heralded as a King at birth (Mt 2:2). He becomes our king at our spiritual new birth (John 3:3,5). God is releasing his Holy Spirit in power, opening hearts to his lively presence, healing wounds past and present, breaking compulsive, addictive behavior, and elevating the poor into his presence by expelling our present darkness and recreating our fallen humanity.
4. Since God is King and his kingdom is here and now for us, we no longer have to be blind subjects of deep-rooted unbelief, carrying guilt for our sensual

misadventures, trying to control our lives, other people, our possessions, afraid to let go, thereby facing loneliness in an empty universe. Evangelism is reaching out God's way and with His message: the message of God's rule and reign in the hearts of humankind.

5. Jesus came announcing the Kingdom of God requiring "repentance" of heart and mind to accept a new way of life (Mark 1:15). The following analysis of Luke 4:17-21 shows the extent and character of Jesus' ministry.

- a) *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me"* – Jesus is claiming the anointing of the Spirit for His mission.
- b) *"He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor"* - Jesus came preaching the good news to the poor, the spiritually dispossessed of the land.
- c) *"He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives"* - Jesus came to preach release to the captives, seeking to set free the demonized.
- d) *"And recovery of sight to the blind"* - Jesus offers recovery of sight to the blind, physically and metaphorically.
- e) *"To set free those who are downtrodden"* – Jesus comes as the liberating warrior to set free the downtrodden, to set free those in bondage, economically, politically, socially, and religiously, those controlled by evil principalities, powers and spiritual wickedness.
- f) *"To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord"* – Jesus came to proclaim the year of Jubilee of salvation and release.
- g) *"Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing"* - Jesus claimed the Spirit of the Lord upon His life and proclaimed his destiny in God's purposes, quoting Isaiah 61.

6. God's kingdom involves Jesus' church. Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Mt 16:16) and "the gates of hell will not prevail against it." The church was designed to be a reflection of the Kingdom of God, only within the context of community. The Church-at-large extends God's rule by its local expressions exercising corporate authority throughout the earth.

IV. The Unashamed Lifestyle – II Tim 1:1-18

One dimension that is absolutely critical to the success and effective functioning of local congregation is that of evangelism and outreach. Without evangelism a church will plateau and eventually die. Our goal in this section is to kindle

excitement and courage for the daily privilege to be unashamedly identified with the person and work of Christ and with the message and cause of the gospel.

*II Timothy 1:8 – “So **do not be ashamed** to testify about our Lord, **or ashamed of me** his prisoner. But join in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.” NIV*

*Rom 1:16-17 – “16 For **I am not ashamed** of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” NKJV*

*Heb 2:11-12 – “11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason **He is not ashamed to call them brethren**, 12 saying: “I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.” NKJV*

Three times in II Timothy chapter one, Paul used the words and emphasizes “do not be ashamed.”

- TIMOTHY “Do not be ashamed” – verse 11
- PAUL “I am not ashamed” – verse 12
- ONESIPHORUS “He is not ashamed” – Verse 16

The Greek work *epaiskunomai* means “do not be ashamed.” In the New Testament, this word is always used in the middle voice, and means, “to shame one’s self” upon, in or at something. Shame is a feeling that attends circumstances of being dishonored, or when having done a dishonorable deed. On the other hand, shame is also the inner sensation that deters, e.g. through the fear of shame or being shamed, a person from bad conduct or yielding to the temptation of sin.

The key to maintaining evangelistic outreach and personal witness is to take on an unashamed identity with Jesus Christ, his church and with God’s people and leaders.

V. Cultivation Questions in Personal Evangelism

The following are helpful questions for encouraging conversation about another’s relationship with God. Sensitivity is required as to when to use the appropriate question at the right time. We should be cautious about sharing the solution (plan

of salvation) until our prospect is eager to hear. Use the questions with sensitivity. Seek to be normal, not tense. Avoid being mechanical or overly intellectual. If at any point in pursuing conversation and the person manifests reaction, simply back off and continue developing a growing, deepening relationship. Be willing to just follow the Spirit and don't force the use of these questions.

1. **Pilgrimage Question:** "Joe, I am interested about your religious background. At what point are you in your own spiritual pilgrimage?" After listening to his response, you might say, "Well, Joe, maybe the next step that God has for you is coming to understand how to have an established personal relationship with Him."
2. **Opportunity Question:** "Sometime I would like the opportunity to share things I have learned that have helped me to understand what it means to establish a personal relationship with Christ."
3. **Interest Question:** "Could I share my testimony with you and the things I have come to understand?"
4. **Schedule Question:** "Do we have time to talk about it now or is there a better time for us to get together?" (Nail down a specific time, or if the time is right, continue the discussion.)
5. **Explanation Question:** "How would you understand the things we have been talking about? "At the scheduled time and place, share the principles that explain the gospel in meaningful terms. Make sure the explanation is biblically accurate but not just mere facts. Ask questions and listen carefully. Be humble and gentle.
6. **Decision Question:** When the Gospel has been clearly set forth, ask questions like: Does this make sense to you? On the basis of this, have you ever committed your life to Christ? Is there any reason why you do not want to trust Jesus as Lord right now?
7. **Invitation Question:** "Would you like to pray with me and invite Christ into your life and place your life under the government of God? Lead the person in a prayer of accepting Christ. Proceed to provide assurance and follow-up encouragement.

VI. Spiritual Decision Scale

The following shows how people move along a path to faith in Christ and then on to maturity in Christian living.

MAN'S RESPONSE

- 10	Awareness of the Supernatural. Man is aware that he is not alone in the universe, He is aware of 'presence'. He may fear it as in animism or study it as in extra-sensory perception. He is aware.
- 9	No effective knowledge of Christianity. Unaware of the content or character of the Christian faith, though the name 'Jesus Christ' may be familiar.
- 8	Initial awareness of Christianity. This comes from a consciousness of the presence of the Church. But such awareness is open to misunderstanding and caricature.
- 7	Interest in Christianity. The presence of the worshipping and serving community of God's people has stirred interest and a willingness to listen. However, the communicator must be acceptable.
- 6	Awareness of basic facts of the gospel. Being involved makes a presence accompanied the witness of words follows the witness of works. The saving acts of Christ are heard and understood.
- 5	Grasp of the implications of the gospel. What is demanded by the gospel in terms of personal response and commitment is understood.
- 4	Positive attitude to the gospel. The demands of the gospel and the Christian life are considered reasonable and attractive, and the result is the beginning of a positive response.
- 3	Awareness of personal need. The benefits of the gospel are seen to be relevant and necessary. The person is coming into felt feeling that Christ and Christianity is beneficial.
- 2	Challenge and decision to act. The challenge to turn from sin and trust Christ as Savior and Lord is accepted. The person requests prayer or responds positively the question, "Would you like to pray?"
- 1	Repentance and faith. The individual response to the working of the Holy Spirit leads to repentance and faith. Confession is made with the mouth accompanied by belief in the heart.
0	A new disciple born. Regeneration has taken place and the man has been born again. John 3:3, "Jesus answered 'I am telling you the truth: no one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again.' "

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