

CROSSROADS

newsletter



The Great Omission

BY PASTOR JOEY KALAN

Some of the most famous words that Jesus ever spoke were, *“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.”* These words are at the center of what most churches are trying to be about, including our own, but it’s easier said than done. 90% of churches in America today are not seeing new believers come to faith in Jesus (Paul Feiler & David Clark). I believe that introducing people to Jesus doesn’t happen accidentally, it happens through the work of the Holy Spirit, through intentional efforts to share the Gospel, and with the help and encouragement of the church.

Jesus also said, *“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”* (Matthew 9:36-38). God isn’t just sitting on His throne looking down at the world and wagging His finger, thinking about how messed up everything has become, God looks at each of us with great love and compassion. He deeply desires that we would come to know Him and follow Him.

Let’s break this verse down for a second. First of all, the harvest is plentiful. That’s just as true today as it was in Jesus’ day. The harvest is not only plentiful but it’s curious and interested in being harvested. According to a recent Barna Study:

- 47% of unbelievers in America say they would be open to having an honest dialogue about religious beliefs with a believer.
- And another 31% would be open to listening passively.
- That means 78% of self-identified unbelievers want to talk about or hear about the gospel right now in America.

This means that we have a four in five chance that sharing the gospel will be not only tolerated but welcomed. This is an amazing opportunity! The harvest is ripe and plentiful. So what are we, the church, waiting for? What are the barriers that exist for us? Because the stats on our side of the equation don’t look very good. According to the same recent Barna Study:

- Only 3 in 10 unchurched Americans say that a Christian has ever shared with them how to become a Christian or what the benefits are of joining the local church.
- And only 64% of Christians agree with the statement, “Every Christian has a responsibility to share their faith.”

My conclusion after seeing these stats is that, while most unbelievers are curious and willing to hear about Jesus, the church is either unwilling to share it or no longer believes the commands of the great commission. We have turned the great commission into the great omission.

However, I believe that there is hope! There has been a resurgence in American evangelism in the last few years, but I believe that this is only the beginning. There may be more revivals like the one at Asbury University in 2023, but most evangelistic efforts happen in one-on-one relationships, with coworkers, friends, family, and even at times, with strangers that God leads onto our path.



In my experience, sharing the gospel provides an opportunity for us to not only do as God has instructed, but it gives us a chance to be on the front lines of what God is doing in our world. When we step out in faith we get to have our faith encouraged because when we align our hearts with God's heart we get to see amazing things happen through the power of the Holy Spirit.

I want to revisit my question from above. What are some of the barriers that exist for you in living missionally? In my own life I have felt ill-equipped. I have been afraid of the response someone might have when I approach them to talk about Jesus. And I have just plain been selfish with my time. It's easy to not desire taking the time to intentionally pursue people with the gospel and to not desire to pursue a genuine relationship with them.

My response to our fear is found in the stats we just reviewed above, and from personal experience, I can tell you that people want to hear the hope that we have to share with them. And beyond that, they NEED to hear the hope that we have to share with them.

As far as being ill-equipped goes, I believe you are more equipped than you think you are. At minimum, each of us who is following Jesus has a story to tell about how we started following Jesus. Sharing that story alone can be a very helpful step in encouraging someone to follow Jesus in their own life. Second, Pastor Ben and I want to offer, as graciously as we can, that we would love nothing more than to meet up and help equip you to share the hope that you have. (*Your cup of coffee or sandwich is on us!*) Whether you have been following Jesus for 50 days or 50 years it's never too late to learn something new or to simply be encouraged and built up.

And when it comes to being too busy, I just want to encourage you to pray. Ask God to reshape your heart to share the desires of His heart. God listens and responds when we come to Him. And His Spirit is always at work within us to make us new.

I want to challenge you to seek opportunities to have spiritual conversation with people this month. I don't think it will be as scary as you think. And you know, you just might get to see God do something amazing! And don't forget to invite someone to join you at church for Easter. Your invitation to have them join you at church might be the first step in their life being transformed forever.

Serving Christ Together,
Pastor Joey

We exist to make disciples who
love God, **grow** spiritually, and
serve others.

CRC VISION STATEMENT

Missionary Spotlight

PRAYER FOR BILL ANKERBERG | THE NORDIC-BALTIC INITIATIVE

Please keep our longtime ministry partner, Bill Ankerberg, in prayer as he journeys through a battle with cancer. He was recently diagnosed and is preparing to undergo chemotherapy and radiation. He will no longer be serving God as the Director of the Nordic-Baltic Initiative, but Bill has recognized the opportunity to continue to serve God by being a light in the darkness of the cancer treatment center. In Bill's own words he said... *On Sunday I was preaching on joy, and my second point was Romans 5:1-3, which speaks about having peace in God and finding hope amidst suffering. At the end of the message, a woman came up to me and introduced herself as a chemotherapy infusion nurse. And she looked at me and said, "You can be light." I said I'll try to be. She said, "You don't understand, you're going to a place that can be very dark at times. But you can be light." I felt like I was hearing it from God himself. And so that's my mission now, that I will bring light to these places I'm going.*


Please pray for Bill to persevere in this trial, find healing, and to truly be a light to all who he will interact with in this season. Bill has been a cherished ministry partner for CrossRoads and a faithful director with Converge. Please also pray for Jimmy Smith as he takes over as Director of the Nordic-Baltic Initiative.

A brief summary of this ministry: Through the Nordic-Baltic Initiative, Converge strives to make Christ known in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. We estimate that only 2-3% of the region's population claim to be followers of Christ. We are asking God for a gospel movement among the least-reached peoples of the Nordic-Baltic region.

CrossRoads is grateful to be able to partner with so many outstanding missionaries around the world! We want you to know that when you give to the CRC General Fund you are supporting our missionary partners as well. Every year a portion of our budget goes to these missionaries.

To learn more about our missionary partners you can go to crcff.com/missionaries.





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Ministry Highlight

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

In March Dave and Karen Anderson led us through a workshop on how to make disciples. It was a spectacular workshop that encouraged those in attendance with proper motivation for discipleship as well as the practical steps for how to walk alongside someone learning to follow Jesus and grow in their faith. One of the most helpful takeaways was just how relational true discipleship should be. Jesus didn't disciple everyone, he selected the twelve, and from the twelve he spent extra time with three of them, and of those three he spent even more time with Peter. Jesus modeled the transformational impact of relational discipleship. If each one of us was to disciple one person each year and then if that person discipled someone, and so on and so forth, then in just a few years there would be an exponential effect in our community.

This is a workshop that we plan to revisit in the future. It was certainly at the heart of what we are trying to accomplish by equipping the saints for the work of ministry. If you don't want to wait for the next workshop to learn more about discipleship please reach out to Pastor Joey (joey@crcff.com) or Pastor Ben (ben@crcff.com). We would love to help you walk into discipleship with a game plan!

Our workshops are done for now but they will be back in the Fall. Keep on the lookout for the next opportunity to be equipped and encouraged in your faith!



How to Make Disciples:



Life on Life

