

SOUL WINNER

A Handbook for Lifestyle Evangelism

Everything you need to know to lead others to Jesus

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PREFACE

New Horizons



If you would have said to me at the time I started writing this book, the beginning of 2020, that in a few short months every church building in the world would be shut, their doors locked and their gates bolted because of a worldwide pandemic, I probably would have smirked at you in total disbelief! Yet that is exactly what has happened. At the time of writing this, church buildings are still closed, large gatherings are mostly illegal, and masks must be worn in public spaces. Some churches have closed their doors for good and a number of pastors have resigned, feeling that their ministries are over. I can see the difficulty of this moment; however, I also see this as a crucial moment for the Church. You see, the reality is that the Church did not shut – their buildings did! As I've said repeatedly over the years: the Church was never a building, we just met in them; the Church was never a service, we just had them. The Church always has and always will be a community of

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people who have been called out of darkness and into His light, who are filled with His life. The inconceivable moment we are currently living in is actually causing us, His Church, to re-evaluate and rediscover ourselves and our mission in a fresh and very powerful way. We are looking at ourselves in a way that we probably would not have done unless the buildings and stages that we trusted in so much had not been shut down for a time.

It was around the middle of 2019 that I began to hear the Lord say two words to me: new horizons. At first, I thought He was speaking to me about new destinations, thinking that perhaps He was giving me a new assignment. However, I quickly realised that these new horizons were not about my assignment, but rather they were about the Church at large. He was preparing us so that we would be ready for the new things that were about to happen. The Church needed to be ready for brand-new horizons of ministry, that were unlike anything we had seen or experienced before.

Naturally speaking, a horizon is the space where sky and earth seemingly meet or connect. Spiritually speaking, a horizon

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is the place where heaven and earth meet; where supernatural meets natural and heavenly meets human. This is what I believe the Church, or the people of God, are supposed to be. We are God's new horizon for the time we are in. Through us, God desires to minister to a lost and separated

world, reconciling it back to Himself. I am reminded of the passage of scripture, Genesis 28:10-17, where Jacob had a

dream at Bethel. In his dream, Jacob saw spiritual things ascending and descending in a supernatural relationship between heaven and earth. After waking up he said, "Surely this place is the house of God." What did he mean? The place where he sat was a portal where he experienced heaven touching earth. Just like that stairway created a relationship between heaven and earth, today there remains a relationship between these two realms; the point where they connect is called the Church!

There are heavenly things that God wants to do on the earth today. His plan, as it has always been since Jesus rose from the dead, is to do these things through His Church, which is His house on the earth. This house is not a building or a cathedral, rather it is us, wherever we may be. You see, we don't go to church, we are the Church! Our lives are this gateway, or place of meeting, between heaven and earth. We, the Church (the people not the building), are the new horizon; we are the point where heaven and earth interact, and God's will is revealed and released.

So, when God says to us that it is a time of new horizons, He is announcing that it is a *kairos* moment! A moment of divine resetting for His Church. This is a fresh moment, where we are able to see with true 20/20 vision what it is that we are on the earth to do. Right at the centre of this vision is our commission to reach lost people and to bring them back to God.

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Right now, there is a divine awakening taking place. All across the world God's harvesters are waking up to the fresh call that is coming from the harvest fields. They are arising from their slumber and embracing this original mandate. This is the time for the Church to shine and to no longer be asleep in the light, as Keith Green put it so well. We are to be the light shining in the darkness that Isaiah 60 says we are destined to be; the unhidden city on a hill, and the uncovered light that Jesus referred to in Matthew 5:14-16.

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with our own spirituality and our soulish needs, maybe we can get down to real business – Kingdom business! Can you not hear the alarm clock sounding? This is the hour when the Church must arise, the saints must be equipped, and the harvesters must be sent out!

When the doors of our church buildings one day open again, we must be different! May we all, regardless of the denomination

that we belong to, have a greater revelation of the actual purpose of our gatherings and an accompanying revelation of how God desires to use us, even in our scattering. A somewhat parallel moment to that which we are now in, can be seen in Acts 8:1. We see the early Church, not that long after they opened, beginning to become settled in their meetings and formats, when suddenly they were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria because of persecution. They were suddenly thrust back into the harvest field that Jesus had

called them to! What would this scattering have initially felt like for those who were living in that moment? It must have been confusing, unnerving, and uncomfortable. Yet, as is promised in Romans 8:28, God was at work, even in that moment. He was working for the good of the Church and the purposes that He had for her. What seemed like a bad thing turned into a great thing! Yes, their regular gatherings had been somewhat ruined, but as a result the attendees went to the places that He had originally called them to and some set sail for the four corners of the world! As a result of this great scattering, the world was impacted. What if God is using this moment to shake His Church, to equip, and to send us into the world to reach people who we might not have considered before? What if!

This, my friends, is indeed a *kairos* moment; a moment when the harvest is calling, "Come". As you step into the pages of this book with a heart to learn, my prayer for you is that something fresh will awaken in your heart for the lost. My hope is that you will be empowered, equipped, and sent to reach the lost.

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CHAPTER 1

The Equipping of the Saints



How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:14-15)

Good news – God has removed the separation between Himself and man. Anyone who comes through Jesus can now have a personal relationship with Him. This means that we are now able to experience the fullness of salvation and new life that He desires for us! This is, indeed, good news – but how will others know about this good news unless people are sent to tell them? This book is for every person who has the desire to see the people in their world find the same life-transforming walk with Jesus that they have found.

The subject of this book is evangelism. We will specifically focus on personal evangelism, which is also referred to as

lifestyle evangelism. You see, evangelism can have a number of different expressions in the Christian life. One of these expressions is speaking to crowds at a conference, a church, or other public gathering. Another expression of evangelism is a person's individual commitment to be a witness who chooses to make Jesus known in the unique relational circles that God has given to them.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word "evangelism" in a very clear and understandable way, it is "the spreading of the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness". It is the second part of this definition that we will be focusing on in this book. My heart behind this book is

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that you would be empowered to be the best personal witness of Jesus that you could possibly be to everyone in your world! I hope that by reading this, you will be equipped and released to be the soul-winner that God has also called you to be. Through these pages we will take time to carefully unpack what we have known as the Great Commission,

making it a very natural and active part of your everyday life. We will explore the motivation (driving force) behind our evangelism as well as discover some incredible, God-given tools that will cause us to be more effective soul-winners. Let us begin by asking some very practical, but honest, questions concerning evangelism as we have known it.

MEETING-CENTRED OR LIFESTYLE EVANGELISM?

For us to change the world, as the Lord desires us to, we need to dare to upset the status quo of what we currently believe effective evangelism looks like. For many years the Church has believed that effective evangelism predominantly happens on a stage. As a result, we have put most of our energy into getting unsaved people to come to meetings, arenas, and evangelistic events. Because of this, we have had unspoken rules and methods regarding what we believe effective evangelism looks like. These methods have encouraged us to persuade people to attend a meeting where they can hear the good news about Jesus, in the hopes that when an opportunity is given at the end of the meeting to respond, they will pray a short prayer and lift their hand to demonstrate what they just did – job done! While these evangelistic meetings should certainly have their place in every church calendar, if this is our ultimate plan for telling the whole earth about Jesus, it is really not working that well. Meetings and one-off events alone are not going to cause the same number of salvations that a more biblical model of evangelism could. To put it even more bluntly, if our current model of evangelism is our ultimate plan for changing the world, then why is it not changing the world? We must re-evaluate the methods of evangelism that we have used in times gone by, and begin to look at how we can reach the whole world, in this age!

IS STREET PREACHING STILL EFFECTIVE?

So, while we are here, let's begin to ask some further questions about present day evangelism. We need to have some honest conversations about the methods that we are currently

using and begin to talk openly about the evangelistic methods that actually work and those that no longer work. Let's dare to open up these conversations so that we can be more effective soul-winners.

Being deliberately provocative, an example of one of these questions could be: is street preaching still effective today,

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or do the people we are trying to reach simply ignore us and walk past? It is honest questions like this one that are going to cause more people to be saved and direct our energies into the most effective methods. Now, I am certainly not against street ministry – when it is done well. I have been involved

in a lot of effective street ministry outreaches over the course of my life. In the right circumstances it can be an effective tool for evangelism, but can we also be honest and admit that we have all seen some terrible examples of street preaching. Though we can certainly honour the courage and boldness of the person doing it, sometimes their presentation of the gospel is perceived as nothing more than judgemental, exclusive, and sometimes just downright scary. Street ministry done in the wrong way can push people further away from God, rather than drawing them closer in. I have walked past some street preachers in our city centre and have avoided them, and I am a Christian! I need to confess that I, a pastor, have gone into one store and out of another just to avoid their judgemental accusations and unloving rants. Think about it, if this is how Christians react to street preaching, then how do non-believers react? Yes, I certainly agree that

seeds may have been sown by street preachers, but what I am asking is whether or not this is the most effective way for us to be obedient to the Great Commission in our generation.

A common argument for the effectiveness of street preaching is that it worked well in former times. Many people look to Wesley for an example of its power; however, we are no longer in the days of Wesley! Wesley found a way to make Jesus known in his day that produced incredible results; we need to dare to find an effective way to make Jesus known in our day!

I remember watching a street preacher once, who was certainly courageous, and he also had a fairly good understanding of the gospel. Yet, for some reason, he could not see that absolutely no one was stopping to listen to him.

With great gusto he continued as people walked on by. Meanwhile, I noticed on the benches not far away from him, there were many people sitting, maybe resting or waiting for their family who were in the shops. I couldn't help but wonder how much more fruit this street preacher would have had from his day if he and his team changed their strategy? What if they turned off the microphone and spent the morning sitting next to people on benches, initiating natural conversations with them about their day, about life, and about God? I understand it would be less dramatic, and you would not have anything to show on your Facebook page of your labours, but the real question is: would it be more effective? If we quantify our success in

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evangelism by the amount of response and engagement in our message, rather than just the number of people who heard our voice, which method would actually be more effective in our generation? It's an open question.

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From my experience, people in this progressive culture appreciate honest and intriguing conversations more than being preached at. In my experience, they respond in a greater and more authentic way to a relational approach than to a non-relational one. Again, please allow me to underline one more time that I am not against good-quality street ministry or evangelistic outreaches that get the Church active and on

the streets, I just don't believe that this is where evangelism should end, or that we should place all of our hope in this alone to reach our world like the Lord has commissioned us to.

Since the meetings and certain evangelistic methods that we have used are not proving to be as effective in our generation as they did in others, maybe it is time for us to add something else to these strategies? Perhaps we need to consider another model of evangelism? As mentioned earlier, there is a biblical model for evangelism. This model is not new, rather it is truer to the evangelism that we read about in the New Testament, especially in the book of Acts. I am referring to lifestyle evangelism. Lifestyle evangelism does not just encourage the Church to bring others to church meetings, it also mobilises and equips people in the Church to be effective soul-winners in their own day-to-day lives.

This model does not rely on a celebrity preacher or a one-off event, rather it relies on an everyday person who loves Jesus. Allow me to emphasise the point that this is not some newly discovered or radical model of evangelism; rather, it is simply a return to the original design of evangelism. The blueprint plan of God was always for evangelism to be a part of the lifestyle of every believer rather than merely being an event or one-off corporate initiative.

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So, what about the question: should we have meeting-centred evangelism or lifestyle evangelism? My response is – can we not have both? If the projects we are using are working and result in people finding Christ in a genuine way, then we should certainly continue doing them. But, if they are not producing these results then we must not be hesitant or afraid to rethink, reshape, or even remove them.

My main thought on this subject is simply this: what if we could create a radical paradigm shift in the thinking of the western Church regarding evangelism? A shift towards every follower of Jesus taking personal responsibility for evangelism. By doing this, we would mobilise a sleeping army that could invade the world with the life-transforming message of the gospel, having a greater effect than any of us have ever seen up to now. This change in strategy would also deliver pastors and ministers from being showmen on Sundays, who people come to see. Instead, they could be

the “equippers of saints” that they have been called to be. You see, the Church was never meant to be a people storage

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Today we find ourselves at a very crucial moment in history. Here and now, evangelism is something that we must get right if we want to see the world saved on the scale that Jesus desires it to be. It is time to flow with the Holy Spirit and to see a new level of spiritually empowered ministry.

But this time, rather than seeing it only on a stage, we will see it in the lives of believers. How do we begin to see lifestyle evangelism naturally happening in the lives of believers? We will see it by empowering and mobilising the Church to be the Church outside of the walls of the buildings that we so often have been guilty of hiding within. The Church was never meant to be a building, a service, or a weekly meeting, but a community of people called out of darkness into the kingdom of light; a people filled with God’s Spirit, who carry the mandate of seeing the world introduced to a personal relationship with Jesus.

We must bring this conversation about evangelism into the lifestyles of believers everywhere. The gifts of the Holy

Spirit are available for us, to empower us, not only on a stage but also on Monday mornings when we wake up to our very normal everyday lives. By enabling the Church to embrace this truth and to have a hunger for the reality of it, we will cause the swing that is needed in our modern culture to make a significant difference. The gospel was never meant to be a sedative that caused a believer to enjoy a restful life; rather the gospel is a stimulant that should awaken believers to a missional life. A life where the commission to see other people encounter Jesus is their personal responsibility.

REDEFINING OFFICES OF MINISTRY

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)

These verses in Ephesians 4 reveal to us that there are certain offices of ministry that God has called some individuals to; these offices are also commonly known as the ascension gifts. These are gifts that God gave to the Church after Jesus ascended. God still appoints certain people to the office of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. It is crucial that we understand that the purpose of the office, or grace, that these individuals have been given, is not for them to parade around on stages with their ministry title. Instead, the grace is given to them to train and equip others

Even though certain offices or ministry gifts have been given by God to certain people, the fruit of each ministry gift should be seen in the lives of the people who are trained and equipped underneath these individuals with an office. This is “the equipping of the saints” that we see in Ephesians

The true cure for the western world is an army of God’s people who are awake, mobilised, and sent out with evangelistic lifestyles! Nothing less than that will get the job done.

4. It is time for a rewiring of the way that we think of ministry so that we can return to a biblical model of thought, rather than the model we have seen in our culture which has bred far too many spiritual celebrities. With this rewiring, we can then see the equipping of the saints effectively activated in the local church. Just imagine the impact we could have on the world if a large percentage of people who attend our weekly services made the decision to no

longer just sit, watch, and be entertained on a Sunday, but rather to be empowered and trained to see God use them daily. Imagine the people who would be impacted beyond the walls of our churches and schedules if people saw themselves as the ministers of reconciliation and ambassadors that the Bible says they actually are!

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us [that’s every believer] the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the

message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:18-20 NIV)

My revolutionary cry is simply this: I see a world that desperately needs to be reached, yet at the same time, an army belonging to God that is fast asleep. It’s time for a Holy Spirit inspired awakening that will mobilise the Church again back into the harvest field. It is time to give the Church back to Jesus and the power back to the people! I believe we are standing on the edge of a fresh move of the Holy Spirit, a new era of what He is doing on the earth! But this next move will be very different from ones that have preceded it over the last few decades. It will be all about the empowerment of the seated saints that will cause them to arise and change the worlds they live in. It will be an awakening that makes us uncomfortable again for the gospel’s sake. Let’s face it, believers have been made far too comfortable for far too long and it is time for another great awakening. This awakening is coming! Are you ready?

Are you tired of just watching ministers on stages show you what they have learned how to do? Is there a hunger in you to get your sleeves rolled up and to see the people in your world come to Christ because of your individual witness? Are you ready for a personal rewiring of what evangelism is and should be? Are you ready to be commissioned and sent out to meet Jesus in the harvest field? Then read on, because you are exactly who I wrote this book for!