
“The Message and the Mandate of the Kingdom”
(Matthew 28:18-20)
Pastor Peter Yi
February 1st, 2009

Introduction:

(Mat 28:18-20 TNIV)

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

I am really excited about this year's missions focus month because through this year's missions month I sense a strategic importance like no other year. As many of you have already heard, in 2009 our English Ministry is going to deepen our level of ministry in the community of St. James Town, a highly populated community, with a high rate of poverty just east of the downtown core. Up to now we've been partnering with Toronto City Mission in their children's and youth ministry programs by sending volunteers, and we've been financially supporting a TCM worker. And then in February 2008 we launch an Awana kids program and that's just been really well received and has been steadily growing. So there is a lot of great ministry that is being done in St. James Town by several organizations, but one thing that's been severely lacking there is the presence of evangelical churches. In a community of 25,000 people, there is at most two evangelical churches reaching that exist within that community. So we sensed God's guidance to plant a church in that community among the Filipino immigrants.

Why are we doing this? Because we have nothing better to do? Because we have time and money to burn? Absolutely not. We're doing it because called has called us to this. This is the reason why God brought Korean immigrants to Canada 40 years ago. And this is the reason God has blessed this church for 32 years with great leadership and great membership. Not so we could we could gather every Sunday and pat each other on the back and tell each other how big and great our church is. God brought every person of this congregation together, in this great city of Toronto, in this church, so we could expand the Kingdom, the rule, reign and sovereignty of God.

And this year's missions month is also important because in just a few months we'll be taking a huge step in our ministry among orphans in Cambodia. We'll be commissioning our church's first missionary to that country in Anne Chun. Last year and this year we'll be taking up missions offerings to purchase land and build an actual physical orphanage. In fact a team is leaving in just a few days or weeks to do another survey of possible sites where this orphanage will be, as well as to look into the legal stuff behind this, and to research the ins and outs of starting up an NGO. Land, bricks, mortar, wood, chairs, beds and tables are things that'll be purchased, but perhaps nothing is more important than people, missionaries, on the ground, learning the Khmer language and culture, earning the love and trust of the people. That cannot be bought and there are no short cuts with that. And so the sending of Anne is an integral part of our missions strategy.

On top of that, this year a few other things are happening on the missions front. Our two missionaries will be returning for home assignment. The Mclsacs in Kyrgyzstan and Jeongah in Indonesia will return this summer to rest, recharge, and regroup. And part of our responsibility as

the sending church is to care for the needs of our missionaries, physically, spiritually, and emotionally. That's the job of every member of this church. The bible tells us to honor people like this, so every single one of us has that responsibility.

With the Mclsaacs coming back and with so much ministry invested in Kyrgyzstan, we'll be sending our own deacon Hakyung Kang to replace the Mclsaacs for at least a year while they are here in Toronto. And then related to Kyrgyzstan, our first ever Men of Faith construction team, which up to now has gone to Mexico exclusively, will embark on their first trip to Kyrgyzstan to help with the construction of God's Joy Church.

So these are new things that are on top of all the other things that we do regularly. It's been amazing to see many people from different places in our congregations have a burden for the needy and for missions. Last year one young lady, who owns a little boutique clothing store donated a bunch of ladies clothes for missions. Another young lady recently donated a whole bunch of health care products for missions. We took up a small semi-private donation among Mexico mission team veterans for pastor Rolando and raised a significant amount of money for his family's needs. Last year in our missions offering, though we had a real slow start, we finished really strong and gave 42,000 of the 50,000 that will go to God's Joy Church and the purchase of the orphanage property.

So that's a pretty thorough recap of what's been happening and what we will happen this coming year. So it seemed fitting that our church's ministry theme for this year was "to expand God's Kingdom" both locally and globally.

Now stay with me. Even with all this stuff that we're doing like volunteering in St. James Town and Willowtree, Going to short term mission trips, (volunteering at Cornerstone), giving missions offering, it only involves a fraction of our people. For example, only about 40 people a year go on short-term mission trips. That's only 10% of our congregation and over half of those that go are repeat goers. So at most 5% of our congregation go on their first mission trip every year. Only a maximum of 20 people from our church volunteer with TCM on a weekly basis. That's only 5% of our congregation that does that on a regular basis. We even asked this year for our people to fill out a missions pledge form, committing to give a regular missions offering in 2009. Only about 30 people filled out one of those forms. And I know there are those who didn't fill out the form but still give... So what am I getting at? What I'm saying is that we as a church can begin to think that being involved with missions is for a select few. The select few sacrifice their vacation days to go on missions. The select few give two-three hours a week to volunteer with TCM. The select few give 20 or 100 dollars a month for missions offering.

But that is not the sign of a healthy church. That's the sign of a good church, but not the sign of a healthy church. That is not the sign of a missional church. A missional church is a church where all the members of the church are involved in the ministry of the church, that is in reaching the local community and the world with the gospel.

Our senior pastor has been teaching the whole staff and senior leadership, elders and deacons, about what it means to be a missional church. And this is the direction our English Ministry needs to go as well. A missional church involves all the members of the church to be involved in the ministry of the church. Another way of saying it is the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world. And one of the areas where that is seen and lived out it the life of the church is in **evangelism**.

As I assessed the life and health of the church at the end of 2008, and every year when I do that I look at all the different areas of the church's ministry—small groups, evangelism, missions, worship, teaching, preaching, member care, discipleship, and so on, I gave the lowest grade to evangelism. I think in 2008 I would give our church a D+ in evangelism. And so the good news is that there is only room to grow. And that is an area in which we'll be focusing. Deacon Teddy Kim is going to take up the charge and champion evangelism in our church and he'll speak more about that during announcements.

It can be through evangelism that our church can become a more missional church. Missions, though it's not supposed to, can have the tendency to place the burden on a select few—so in the worst case scenario, we hire people like the Mclsacs, Jeong Ah, Anne and Hakyung, to in a sense, do our dirty work. And the rest of us, we'll sit on the sidelines, we'll cheer, we'll give a little money and of course offer up the occasional prayer. Missions is a part of every believer's role, but there can be that tendency to leave it to others.

Just as missions is every believer's responsibility, so is evangelism. Evangelism, or sharing the good news, is a part of missions. The only difference in missions is that we are crossing cultural barriers. And the cool thing for us Torontonians is that we can do missions here. You and I all know that God has sent the world to Toronto, being one of the most diverse and multicultural places on the planet. So missions and evangelism can be done right here.

Some people say that they don't evangelize because they don't have the specific spiritual gift of evangelism. But allow me to dispel that myth. There is a whole array of gifts in the bible. Take any one of them. Teaching, Serving, Hospitality, Mercy, Leadership, etc. Now, do you think because you don't have any of the above specific gifts that you are exempt from those things? So fine, you don't have the gift of teaching, will you then never explain a scriptural truth to someone? Fine, you're not the most hospitable person in the world, will you never buy a person a coffee or open the doors of your home to other believers? Of course not. And so the same goes for evangelism. Just because we don't have the "gift" of evangelism per se, does it mean we don't ever evangelize? Of course not. Please stop using that as an excuse. Every single one of us has the mandate to be evangelists.

So we will spend the rest of our time looking at two aspects of evangelism. The message and the mandate.

In order to evangelize we need to know the **message of the Kingdom**.

Unfortunately some Christians don't know the message or don't know how to articulate the gospel message to others. But to lead people to Jesus you and I have to know the message. The message is at the crux of our evangelism. You know these days a lot is being said about works and good deeds and mercy and love and care and serving and all of that is good. But none of that by itself will bring people to Christ. What all of that does is build trust. It's part of the gospel, but on it's own it isn't the gospel. The gospel is a message. So that's why in the book of Romans Paul writes,

14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

15 And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

(Rom 10:14-15 TNIV)

So without a clear presentation of the gospel message, people cannot meet Jesus and receive the gift of eternal life.

Sometimes that will require a lot of discussion, a lot of debate. It will require you to know about logic, worldview, about debating, about prayer so that you can persuasively present and defend the gospel.

TNIV Acts 19:8 Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. (Act 19:8 TNIV)

Part of the message is a message to **repent**.

Matthew 4:17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." (Mat 4:17 TNIV)

Why a message of repentance? I know it isn't PC to say to someone that they're wrong or that they're behavior is immoral or whatever, but the truth of the matter is that we are all rebels against God. We have denied his lordship and leadership in our lives, we have rejected the gift of His Son Jesus and we are living lives of sin. So if our gospel message doesn't call upon people to repent of their sins, then it is not the gospel.

The message of the kingdom is **good news**.

Matthew 4:23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. (Mat 4:23 TNIV)

The news is so amazing that Jesus compares receiving or entering the Kingdom w/ these two stories.

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. 45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. (Mat 13:45 TNIV)

In our presentation of the gospel, we must show the beauty and worth of the gospel, of Jesus, of heaven.

The message of the kingdom is an invitation to **live according to a new leader, namely God**.

TNIV Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of my Father who is in heaven. (Mat 7:21 TNIV)

All of us live for ourselves. We're the boss. But the message of the kingdom says, lay down your life for the king as he laid down his life for you. And sometimes we share forgiveness and love and a great life to be had when we share the gospel, but we fail to mention the cost. It will cost you everything. You will have to give up everything. To much of our gospel is, You can have the best of both worlds. And we treat the gospel like an insurance policy. A Get Out of Hell Card.

But think about it, no one gets jazzed up about life insurance. I don't care who you are, no one gets excited about life insurance. You get it, you file it away and you rarely think about it. Some of you are car nuts and I bet that not one of you gets excited about the spare tire in your trunk. You don't say, "Yo, guess what I just upgraded on my ride? You'll never guess....my spare tire." We get jazzed about a new set of rims, new headlights, a new performance kit. And in life we get excited about game winning buzzer beaters, super bowls, about jrs first steps, about a new golf course, a potential diet, a promising career move, a successful diet, a turned over leaf. These are the things that pump us up.

When you and I think of the gospel as a get out of hell insurance plan, I guarantee you will not be excited. But, if you think of it as, "There is a life that God has for you that is a life that you could never have scripted out for yourself. It is a life of forgiveness, where bygones will really be

bygones, where the slate will be wiped clean in here and up there. There's a life of eternal hope, of potential of promise. It's a life that you'll trade in everything for and you won't regret it for a second. There's a life, where you can know one on one, face to face, the loving creator of the universe. There is a life, where you can make an impact, a difference, living on the cutting edge of faith, not knowing what's around the corner, but it don't matter cuz you're walking in the will of almighty God. This is the life God wants for you.

Ravi Zacarias said this.

"Jesus didn't come to make bad people good. He came to make dead men live." That's the life God has for you.

This is how we must live out our lives. This is how we must share the gospel message.

The mandate of the Kingdom

We must obey the mandate. And I want to focus just on one word. "GO."

(Mat 28:18-20 TNIV)

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

You and I possess an incredible message of hope and truth and what do we do? Instead of going, we stay. We don't get up, we just remain seated. We don't make the extra effort. We're not willing to spend the extra dollar. We're not willing to be trained. We're not willing to pray for the lost.

If you consider yourself a Christian, then we are commissioned, called, and commanded to go. That's our mandate.

Go and ring a doorbell. Go and start a conversation. Go and see your school and place of work and your neighborhood as a mission field. Go and begin to pray for these places. Begin praying for the friends your kids bring over. Go along for drinks if your conscience allows it and build relationships with friends. Just don't get hammered. Go and join a sports league. Go and talk to other parents at hockey or swimming or tutoring. Just go.

People of God. You and I have the most incredible message in our possession. A message that can change the course of a person's life for eternity. But the message is impotent and powerless if we do not go. Friends, how about we say it like this. Unless God says, "STAY!", we are to go. Unless God says, "Don't share my message of love and forgiveness and eternal life," share it. Unless God says, "no, you are exempt from evangelism and missions," get involved in missions and evangelism...for Jesus' sake.