

**INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF CHRIST  
A/K/A/ BOSTON CHURCH OF CHRIST MOVEMENT**

**AUDIO TAPE TRANSCRIPTS**

**KIP MC KEAN: EVANGELIZATION PROCLAMATION**

Abraham Lincoln had the custom of going to church every Sunday. I think that's a good custom. And his favorite speaker was a man named Dr. Gurlick. And you try to go to Dr. Gurlick's church as many Sundays as possible. And back then, as well as now, he was always accompanied by a group of Secret Service Agents. And, of course, they had to go to church, too. Then on one particular Sunday, as they were walking out, one of the S.S. agents was walking out beside Pres. Lincoln. He said, "President Lincoln, what did you think of that sermon?" And he replied, "It was eloquently delivered and well thought out." "So, you thought it was a great sermon?" "Absolutely not. It failed to ask or motivate me to do something great."

Abraham Lincoln was the author of what we have now come to know as the Emancipation Proclamation. In this week's bulletin **I have written prayerfully a document that also will be viewed as one that had historic impact.** If you will open the centerfold of it, this is called the Evangelization Proclamation. All of the World Sector Leaders have signed it, not just in pen and ink, but with their lives and with their blood. This Evangelization Proclamation is at the present time being read to all of the churches in our fellowship around the world, recalling every disciple individually, not simply to dream great dreams, but to do something great.

I would like to begin my lesson by reading the Evangelization Proclamation:

**On this 4th day of February in the year of our Lord 1994, we the World Sector Leaders issue this Proclamation. We place before each true disciple the unanswered and most ancient of Christian challenges, the completion of the Great Commission. We affirm and assert that Jesus' last command to the eleven faithful disciples was to evangelize the world in their generation. Obeyed by the Apostles, this guiding command extends to each succeeding generation, yet has not been accomplished again for almost two millennia. As God's modern day movement, the time is now for each true disciple to go far beyond any feat of faith or deeds of daring witnessed to this hour. In this proclamation, we issue such a challenge.**

**"Miracle" is the defining word of the decade and a half since our attack against the darkness was launched. In Boston scarcely more than 14 years ago, 30 would-be disciples gathered in the living room of Bob and Pat Gempel. They came together, bonded by the blood of Jesus, the Spirit of our God, the Bible as the only inspired and inerrant Scriptures and a conviction that only the totally committed could be members of the Lexington Church of Christ (later named Boston). In the next few months, the Bible doctrine from Acts 11:26 of saved = Christian = Disciple was crystalized. The Spirit then gave us a deep conviction that only these baptized disciples comprise God's Kingdom on Earth. This was and still is the true church of Jesus.**

**Thirteen years ago, prompted by the Holy Spirit, the elders and evangelists**

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**of the Boston Church of Christ made the radical decision that young men and women who desired to be leaders in the church should be trained in a local congregation, not in a seminary. We also believed that because of doctrinal and lifestyle differences we could not in good conscience send our young, newly trained leaders into existing mainline churches.**

**Twelve years ago we embarked on a historic and revolutionary path to send mission teams of disciples from Boston into the world's largest and most influential cities. We called the churches planted in these cities "pillar churches" because they would become the principle supports for an international brotherhood, and in turn would evangelize the capital cities of the nations in their regions of influence. The capital city churches would then evangelize all the cities and villages of their nations. With this dream and our prayers, God moved with the twin church plantings of Chicago and London.**

**Eleven years ago God's hand touched New York City. Though this city of darkness had a population of 18 million in the metropolitan area, only 18 disciples were sent from Boston. We believed only one church of disciples, no matter how small, would be sufficient for God to use them to saturate the city with His word if they remained faithful to the command to make disciples, who made disciples, who made disciples. This radical doctrine was confirmed in scripture by example: Jerusalem, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and the great metropolis of Rome had only one church.**

**Ten years ago a remnant of disciples from various churches of Christ, Christian churches and other denominational movements left everything and moved to Boston or our plantings. We were widely labeled the "Boston Movement."**

**Nine years ago, Toronto became our second foreign planting. At that time, the Boston Church first exceeded 1,000 in attendance. Now 21 churches have over 1,000 on Sundays. Actually, it's 22, Amen? Eight of these churches are on foreign soil. God's grace was further evidenced as London and Toronto were the first to break this barrier.**

**Eight years ago a miracle happened in Johannesburg, where in the church blacks and white not merely coexist, but for the first time hugged one another in the midst of apartheid and in the threat of extremists. Paris and Stockholm were also miracle churches which proved language an inconsequential barrier to the preaching of the cross.**

**Seven years ago came the first reconstructions. At the request of leaders from the mainline churches, the elders and evangelists of the Boston Church sent trained preachers into these congregations to call out more of the remnant. Revolutionary, Nehemiah-like sermons were delivered to these existing mainline churches, and those individuals who responded by renewing their initial disciple's commitment or were baptized as disciples formed new congregations that were now no different from the other Boston Movement churches. Each was composed solely of baptized disciples. Kingston and Sydney were the first of some twenty reconstructed churches. Also at this time also was the miracle of Bombay where God**

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**began to annihilate the demons of poverty, disease and apathy. Now, seven churches minister to the almost one billion people of India. H.O.P.E. Worldwide was formed to become the benevolent arm of our brotherhood.**

**Six years ago came the plantings of Mexico City, Hong Kong, and Cairo. After many months of study, counsel and a final all night of prayer, the world sector leaders were selected. The nations of the world were divided into sectors, and each world sector leader couple was given a charge to evangelize their sector in this generation.**

**Five years ago Manila, Tokyo, and Los Angeles began. Literally thousands, as in the Book of Acts, were baptized in these three cities giving us the vision of super-churches in each of the metropolitan cities of the world. The Los Angeles Church now has an attendance of 6,000 on Sundays.**

**Four years ago an attack was launched on Satan's throne in Bangkok, where one in six women is engaged in prostitution, and AIDS is clearly becoming the Black Death of the Nineties.**

**Three short years ago God melted the Iron Curtain. The Moscow Church of Christ was planted and already has over 2,000 in attendance, and five daughter churches in the Commonwealth of Independent States.**

**Two years ago came the first fifth-generation church: Boston planted London, London planted Sydney, Sydney planted Auckland, and Auckland planted God's church in the Cook Islands.**

**Less than one year ago at the World Missions Leadership Conference, all the evangelists, women's ministry leaders, and elders in all of our churches gathered in Los Angeles Sports Arena along with 10,000 other disciples as we formally adopted the name "International Churches of Christ." God in his grace and mercy has blessed his modern day movement of true Christians as our churches now number 146 with an attendance of over 75,000! True churches are now established in 53 of the 216 nations of the world.**

**Today, compelled by the Spirit and five billion lost souls, we lay before the brotherhood a simple but comprehensive strategy for the completion of world evangelism. Presently, there exist 160 countries with a city of at least 100,000 people. Disciples are in only 49. Therefore, in the presence of God and Christ Jesus who will judge the living and the dead and in view of his appearing and his kingdom we give you this charge: Give to God your dreams, energies, health, finances, intellects, families, and yes even your life, to plant churches in the remaining 111 nations by the year 2000. Let us reach the remaining small, unevangelized nations early in the next millennium.**

**To make possible the evangelization of all nations, an historic financial plan has been instituted. No longer will it be the sole responsibility of American churches to finance missions, but all first-world churches will join together to take up a yearly missions collection that will be used to finance new and existing third-world churches. This allows the Kingdom to make more rapid**

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**progress with the difficult third-world plantings. The second-world churches will likewise give a missions contribution which will allow them to become self-supporting and evangelize their respective nations. Since the first-world finances will only manage to initiate third-world plantings, the third-world churches must also sacrifice in unprecedented ways to contribute toward their own mission works even to the point of some of these churches being led by unpaid disciples. For these dreams to become reality, nationals must ready themselves now to return to their homelands. Of ultimate necessity for all of us is fervent prayer unseen in our day. Only zealous prayer will allow God to empower, embolden, and employ each of us to fulfill our individual destiny, and thus this global proclamation.**

**Though unprecedented, our past efforts are but a flickering flame in a universe of demonic darkness. If we are to change the course of human events, we must remember that like all flesh our time on earth is but a mist. The tombs of Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius, Lincoln, Lenin and Ghandi are but dust and darkness. Like the faithful eleven our overriding inspiration lies in the empty, light-filled tomb of Jesus. This is our one and only sure hope--eternal life. To complete the commission, all of the eleven but John died a martyr's death -- this was and still is the ultimate price for world evangelism. Therefore, let us therefore go forth together with a resolve that even the gates of hell will not prevail. Only heaven awaits. And to God all be the glory! Amen.**

(Cheering, applause.)

Fold hands and pray. Father God, let this day be a day of decision individually for each true disciple in here to take up the plea and the cause and the proclamation to get the word out all over the world. Father, we don't want to be a church that doesn't call our people to anything great. Because, Father, we want to preach your word and your word calls us to our true destiny which is greatness on earth and, therefore, greatness in Heaven. Heavenly Father, I pray today we will set aside all personal dreams and take up the single Kingdom dream of evangelizing Los Angeles, evangelizing the United States and evangelizing our world in this generation. Father, we give you this lesson. Change our hearts. Change our lives. Change our minds. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen. (Amen)

Turn to Romans 1:14. Paul says, "I am obligated to both Greeks and nonGreeks, to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel. Also to you who are in Rome. I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes. First for the Jew and also the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness from faith from first to last. Just as it is written, the righteous will live by faith." Right here, Paul says I feel an obligation. I feel an obligation to both Greeks and nonGreeks. I feel an obligation to everyone. He says it is not something the Lord has pushed me to. He said, I am eager to do it. He said, I want to tell you something. I want to make it real clear. I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God. Amen? (amen)

My first challenge to you individually this morning is do not be ashamed of the gospel. You know, the word "gospel" in Greek literally means "good news." And those of us with religious background, we probably heard of gospel singers. And, boy, didn't the Central Choir give us some awesome gospel singing, amen church? (amen)

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We've heard of gospel music, but we don't really know what is the gospel? Let's turn to 1 Cor. 15:1 "Now brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preach to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved. If you hold firmly to the word I preach to you, otherwise you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first import. Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and he was buried and he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures."

You know, a lot of times we say, "oh, yeah, we got to preach the gospel to the lost." And truly, that is the commission and the mission of the church. Amen, church? (amen) But interesting to me is right here in 1 Cor. 15, in the midst of these people having all these problems in Corinth, Paul says "I want to remind you Christians of what the gospel is." The reason you got so many spiritual problems is you don't have your mind set on the gospel, which is of first importance. Are you with me here, church? (yes) He says, listen, here's what the gospel is. The gospel, simply put, is this: is that God sent Jesus to earth to show us how to live. He lived a sinless life. And then sinful men and sinful women put him on the cross. And there he died for our sins. He was buried. But on the 3rd day, he arose from the dead. Amen, church? (amen) That is the ultimate proof that Jesus is God. It is medically impossible to rise from the dead. So if that happened, that means that God intervened. Amen?

Jesus dying on the cross had to be done because there had to be a sacrifice for our sins. That's how much love God had for us. He said, I'm willing to let my son take upon himself all the sins of each one of us and he will die as a substitute for your death, which you deserve. But I want to show you how much I love you. And then I want to show you how powerful I am by having him rise from the dead. Amen?

You see, any time you've got spiritual problems, it's because you have lost the gospel as your primary focus in your life. See, the gospel is good news. Are you with me here? You know, it's kind of cool. I was over at the Upside Down Club on Friday (cheers) and it was kind of exciting cuz a good brother, Jim Zeemer came on up. He didn't just come on up. He ran on up, kind of grabbed me and said, "brother." He's just back from his honeymoon after one week. "Brother, marriage is even better than I thought it was." (amen) I said, "well, Jim, it's good to see you." He said, "Karen is fantastic, fantastic wife." And on and on and on. I listened to him for the next five minutes. See, to Jim, marriage is good news. That's how it needs to be in the church. Are you with me right here?

Now I don't know if you know it, we've been having a basketball league go on in our church. (cheers) And I want to say this, if you lose, you can still get to heaven. That's the good thing. But, you know, you can tell who won and who lost afterwards, can't you? You can tell who played a great game and who didn't play a good game. "Well, brother, how'd you do?" "Well, it was real fun playing." "Did your team win?" "Didn't make any difference to us, we were just in there for the fellowship." (laughter)

You know, when you win, you're excited about that, aren't you, church? I mean you can talk to my little son, Eric. Hey, his team's 8 and 0 right now in basketball. Eric's averaging 17 points a game. Not just leading his team, but leading the 14 team league in scoring. Let me tell you, you ask Eric about his basketball team, he'll go on and on and on. It's good news. He's fired up about it.

You know, if something is good news, you are flat fired up in the Lord. Are you fired up about the gospel this morning? (Yes) Some of you may be asking "well, how can this become good news of my life?" Turn over to Acts 2. In Acts 2, Peter preaches what we call

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the first good news gospel sermon. He concludes in verse 36, he says "therefore, let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ. When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'brothers, what shall we do?'" See, they came to faith. In a lot of churches, they say all you gotta do is just believe in Jesus, say a prayer and you are a Christian. That is a bunch of gunk. That is cheap grace to the max. Paul said in 1 Cor. 15, he says "Listen, you know the gospel I preached. You will be saved if you hold firmly to the word you received." You've got to live a life in response to the good news. You can't just believe. James says even the demons in Hell believe in Jesus. We've got to get it on straight here in Christian Southern California about it really means to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

Right here, when they heard the preaching of Jesus, that he died for them, they were cut to the heart. They felt terrible because they realized their sins had put Jesus on the cross. "They were cut to the heart and they said, 'what do we do? We believe.' And Peter said" what's he do in verse 38? "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Verse 41: "those who accepted his words were baptized. About 3,000 were added to the number that day. And they devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and to fellowship and to the breaking of the bread and to prayer."

Right here we see the people had faith. Because they really believed. Their hearts were touched that their sins had put Jesus on the cross. The bad news of their life hurt. Pain. It was hard to deal with, but they said 'hold it, we see that God loves us so much. What do we need to do?' He said, 'listen, if you believe, then you've got to repent. You've got to turn from your old way of life where you were the God of your life. And you've got to make Jesus the Lord of your life. You've got to make the decision to be a disciple of Jesus. And then and only then are you ready to be baptized to get your sins forgiven and the gift of the Holy Spirit.' Then he goes over our head and says next that about 3,000 people were baptized that day. Would that have been a great day? I mean, right here we have about 6,000 this morning. About half of the group in here would have been baptized at one time. Now I want to tell you something, you get fired up over one baptism, don't you? Could you imagine 3,000 people being baptized on the same day at the same time? Does that fire you up, church?

You know, I need to speak very straight forwardly to the L.A. church right here. If you are visiting, it is great to have you here. I pray you receive the gospel this morning. I pray you think this is good news. I pray you see and you feel something special in our fellowship because we simply want to be a Bible church that pleases God.

**First of all, I've got to say to us that I feel we have lost the sight of the gospel as being of first importance. I think we've become ashamed of the gospel. In the month of January, the great L.A. church only grew a little bit more than 100 disciples.**

**We've got 33 sectors in our church. Thousands of disciples. We only grew 100?**

Now there was one sector in particular that was an exception to what the rest of us did. Now I'd like to lift up the South Hill Sector of the Eastern Latin region. (cheers) It is led by Steve and Jackie Gansert. See, at the beginning of the year in there sector they only had 109 disciples. But in Jan. they had 17 people baptized into Christ. (cheers) You say, well, that's just numbers. No, it's not numbers. Those are people. Those are souls. Those are faces. Those are stories.

There's Anthony Nichols, he was baptized there from Mount Zach. He's from the Mt. Zach

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team, is that awesome? Brian Giarra, I mean, he was just gotten into the Kingdom and got baptized in Dec. Robert Lopez was baptized in Dec., brings his friend, Brian, into the kingdom in Jan. Is that hot? Ms. Giavanni Garcis, all conference soccer player in Mt. Zack. Rubin Anniah, here's a man who served over in Dessert Storm, over in Saudi Arabia. I mean, he saw it all. He lived every night thinking, hey is this the night I go to bed and I don't wake up on this earth? Those scud attacks, oh they're just on tv for most of us, but let me tell you something, this man was over there. And I'll tell you something, something hardens you up, it's the evils of this world because you start thinking that there is nothing, nothing that can be done about it. Let me tell you something, God softened his heart and now Rubin is our brother. Is that awesome? (cheers)

I think of Veronica Gonzales, a nursing student. Then there's Juan Magdelino, studying to be a doctor. He was living with his girlfriend. He saw the gospel and the Bible says, listen, if you really believe in Jesus, you're going to repent of your sin. After he studied that study, he moved out from his girlfriend's. See, we're hard line here in the L.A. church of Christ. (cheers) Whatever the Bible says, that's not only what we believe, that's what we practice. Cuz a lot of us come from religious background and we've seen too much hypocrisy and that's what turns us off in the first place.

He separated, Juan got baptized. And then a few days later, his girlfriend, Sylvia, got baptized into the Lord. Is that awesome? (cheers)

A similar situation: Rubin Gutierrez was living with his girlfriend, Patty Orleans. This is a little bit more challenging situation. Here's a 21 year old girl that has 3 kids. Two of them are Rudin's. They read what it says in the Bible. They see how radical the Bible is about light and darkness, heaven and hell, Jesus was flat hard line and didn't mince words. You're either pure or you are impure. After they studied out, they separated. They both now have been baptized. Is that awesome? And now are making plans to get married. Is that flat awesome? (cheers)

Now remember, all these people were just baptized this month. There are not numbers, these are people. Rubin was so excited about what's happening in his life, he went to his best friend and he got baptized this month. Then there was Corliss Kimberly, a single mom. She says I've got to get baptized because I want my son to grow up and be a disciple. Then there was Lorna Pacquez. She was a very skeptical person. She had been invited by many members of the L.A. church. Then the Lord had her start working with one of the disciples, Mike Quang. And she looked and looked and looked to see if there would be hypocrisy at work when there wasn't any other Christians around. Well, she couldn't find any problems. She said there must be a true church and she was baptized into Christ. (cheers)

Then there's Rebecca Zubrow, a fiery personality. This is a cool story because she just this past month, Nicky Stevens was restored to the church. This was Mickey's old friend in the world and Rebecca got baptized in Jan. Antonette Delgado, her father is an admiral in the Navy. He threatened to disown this girl because she was giving up the family heritage religion. Can you relate to that a little bit? The girl says, listen, I love Jesus more than my family, but I'm going to try to be a lot better daughter than I have been. She took a stand. Antonette got baptized and now things are getting a lot better with the parents. Amen? (cheers)

Emily Tomenez, this is cool because she's Belinda's sister, so the family is starting to get reunited. Leo Popovitch, that's Julie's brother -- another family's getting reunited. (cheers) Then there's Michael Dunn. He was religious. His wife got baptized in Dec. He says, listen,

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I don't know if it's really for me. He kept studying. He was baptized in Jan. Then the Lord kind of looked like he was going to take his job away and put him in another place. He says, listen, I'm committed to work here with the L.A. church. And it looks like he's got another job lined on up.

Let me tell you something. These people are flat awesome. They're all races. All ages. All backgrounds. Religious and irreligious. But they're all brothers and sisters now because someone loved God enough. Loved the gospel enough to share their faith and say, listen this is for you. I'd like for those 17 people to stand on up at this time for the church to recognize them. (cheers, applause)

Thank you. You guys keep calling us higher. My challenge is for the other 32 sectors: let's get with it. Don't be ashamed of the gospel. It is challenging your life. It's changing your habits. It's changing your hearts. It's changing your homes. It is flat the best news in the world today.

You know, in that first verse in Romans 1:16 says the gospel is the power of God into salvation. In the Greek, the literal root of that word power is "dynamous". The same word we get dynamite from. See that is the dynamite that it takes to get us moving and get us changing because you know that a lot of us have tried to make ourselves better people through the years. And we just couldn't change very much for very long. Let me tell you something, if you respond to the death and the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ and you make him the Lord of your life, your life can and will change. Because every member of the L.A. church believes that Jesus is the Lord of their individual lives and we're not ashamed of the gospel. (amen)

Turn to 2 Timothy 1:7. It's a great verse. You know, Paul trained a young man named Timothy for the ministry. A lot of think we need to be disciplined, oh maybe the first 6 months, maybe 9 months that we're a Christian and after that, we got the hang of it. Well that's at least the way we act. You know, this is the last letter that Paul writes to Timothy. Paul's in his 60's, Timothy is about 35 or 40. He's ready for the masters league. Paul says in verse 7, "for God did not give us the spirit of timidity but a spirit of power, of love, of self-discipline." Well, why did he write that to Timothy? Because he was giving in to the old life of timidity. Are you with me here, church?

He said, "so do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord or ashamed of me as prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel. By the power of God who has saved us and called us to a holy life, not because of anything we have done, but because of his own purpose and grace." See, God's got a purpose for all of us. Once we get in the kingdom. "This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but now it has been revealed through the appearing of our savior, Jesus Christ, who has destroyed death, has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, through the good news." Amen?

My second point is simply this: do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord. Have you ever been ashamed of somebody? When I was counting the costs at 17 years old, a college freshman, I had many bad sins in my life. Impurities. Lustfulness. Selfishness. Rage. Of all the ones that really hit me was how I treated my little brother for so many years. He was only 1-1/2 year younger than me. His name is Randy. And I remember when we were growing up together, we were best friends. I mean, it was just me and Randy, Randy and me. Cuz we moved around a lot because my dad was in the Navy. It was all we had. And then I got in Jr. high school and I began to understand that some things were cool and some things weren't. Some people were cool and some people weren't. And if you wanted

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to be cool, you hung around the cool people at that lunch table. That's how early it's indoctrinated into you. Randy always loved to be with me. I was like the guy he looked up to. I remember one time, it was in 8th grade in particular where some of my friends -- Jimmy (?) and some of the other guys -- were going to an amusement park. And Randy says, hey, can I come with you? Just go along. Just wanted to tag along. No, you can't come, fat pig. See, Randy was overweight. He was chubby. I can still remember in my mind's eye what a hurt expression came over his face. Shakes me up even now just to think about it.

And, you know from even my flesh I'm such a people pleaser. I so much want to be accepted and loved and Randy was going to pull me down. It wasn't any particular time, but near about that time our lives started going in divergent directions. Couple years ago I was asked in a small group of -- in a discipling group -- well, Kip, who was your best friend growing up? Oh, I said, my best friend was Randy. Randy was in the group. He said, well, you weren't my best friend. Just blew me away.

You know, I think about it and I think about how much I love Elena right now. Elena is my wife and I love her more than any other human being. I think, you know, when she goes to all these actress parties and all these different things that she would say to some effect, well, Kip why don't you stay over here. I need to go talk to some of these cool people over here. Please, don't wreck up my scene. I'd be totally hurt. Devastated.

You know, a problem with our Christianity is we view Christianity only as a commitment. And, yes, it is a commitment. It's the most important commitment you make in your life. But Christianity isn't first and foremost a commitment, it's a relationship. See, when you get baptized, all your sins are washed away. You remember that? Wasn't that great, that song "Oh Happy Day When Jesus Washed My Sins Away?" I mean, everybody's going at it. Over here. Even Al Baird was kind of clapping almost in time right there. (laughter) I mean, we remembered that day we were baptized. If you've never been baptized, I mean there's not another day like it, is there, church?

But, you know, for a lot of us, we think about commitment. But in actuality, it's a relationship that begins at that point cuz our sins are taken away and for the first time, we've got a personal relationship with God. Not as our master, but as our father. And the great thing is, no matter what our sins were, no matter what our past was, God is not ashamed of us. He says, that's my son. That's my daughter. Those are all the family of God. He's proud of us, amen? (amen) Doesn't that make you feel good to know that God is proud of you?

And, I've thought about this. Looking at this particular verse right here, he says that in verse 12, "that's why I'm suffering as I am, yet I am not ashamed because I know whom I have believed." See, I think a lot of us do not share our faith every day. Because we forget who we know. It isn't just a commitment we have to the L.A. church. It isn't just a commitment we have to be a disciple. We're talking about we know God as our Father, that's what fires you on up or not?

And God has said, "Listen, I am going to take care of you. I'm going to change your life. I'm going to heal your wounds. Your life is going to radically change. You are going to be happy." And to top all that, you get to go to heaven. That's flat awesome, isn't it?

You know, I started to think. Basically I came up with 3 reasons why we don't share our faith. Now I need to say something. What does it really mean to share our faith? Is

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inviting someone to church sharing our faith? Well, it is to a degree. But I think too many of us stop right there and that's why we don't get a lot of our friends there. It's because we don't start saying, "hey, you gotta come to this church. It has changed my life. The way they preach the Bible, the way they live their lives. They're not hypocritical, they're really trying. They're not perfect, but they're really trying. This is a group of people that have a dream. They want to change L.A. They want to change the world. They want to make a difference with their life. Your life can be changed."

You know, I think that's why a lot of us don't get people to church. Or that's why we get people to church and they go "well, that's a great service. It was really warm. It was cool, but I don't know if I've got the time on my schedule." See, all we're doing is inviting people to church. We're not sharing our faith, sharing our lives. I remember one time. I had just been baptized for a couple weeks. And I started to like this one girl in the fellowship named Joey. She's a Christian. And I was so excited because I got my best friend in the world to church for the first time. Name was Paul, Paul McGrady. And after church, we're going home and I said, "so what did you think, Paul?" Joey's walking on one side and Paul's walking on the other. He says, "well, it was good. I kind of liked it. It was kind of different right at the end of church when they had that baptism when they went all the way under." I thought, yeah, that was kind of cool. And he said, "you know, did you ever do that when you were younger?" And I said, "well." And then Joey looked over and she said, "you mean you haven't told him you were baptized yet?" I go, "well, it's not exactly that. I was kind of saving it on up for....." I'm going. Paul says, "you were baptized? You mean you got baptized like that, all the way under? And you made that kind of...why didn't you tell me?" I said, (mumbling). Two months later Paul was baptized into Christ. (amen)

See, I think there's a world of difference between inviting people to church and sharing our faith. That's why I've come up with 3 reasons. And I want you to search your heart. When is the last time you *really shared your faith*? Not just about coming to church, but shared your faith, pleaded with them? Got in there? I think the ultimate reason,

1. you're losing your faith. Your relationship with God is starting to slip away. See, it's a matter of not being ashamed of who you know.
2. The second reason you're not sharing your faith, possibility is -- number 1 is you're losing your faith, #2 is you have lost it.
3. You never had it at all.

Now, which one is it? If the L.A. church in some sectors of it, like South Hills, they're cranking. 109 disciples are out there living life, preaching the word and 17 people are added to the worldwide kingdom of God. And the rest of the L.A. church can't even get 100 additions? It's time for a lot of us to do some serious thinking and to be challenged: do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord.

Turn to Acts 4. In Acts 4, we find Peter and John have been arrested. They go before the Sanhedrin. Who is the Sanhedrin? They're the most respected, learned, powerful men in all of Israel. Israel is a theocracy, so they are politicians. Their leaders, if you will, are the same as religious leaders. Look at what they say in verse 12: "Salvation is found in no one else. There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus." What was the distinguishing mark of the first century Christians? Boldness and courage. Education should not intimidate us because all the educated people need to get educated, amen? They need to be saved. Success should not intimidate us. Prestige, influence,

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athletic ability, clothes or physical appearance should not intimidate us. Everybody needs Jesus Christ and the good news in their life. (amen)

You know, I think about a song that was very popular this past year. It was my son, Sean's, favorite. It's by Sole Asylum, "Runaway Train." You know, L.A.'s the place that -- at least in the last year or so -- everyone wanted to come to. All the dreams. People said, "come to California, come to Hollywood." And you had so few people who didn't begin to realize their dreams. In the middle of this song, it's called "Runaway Train," the singer goes "so tired that I couldn't sleep, so many secrets I couldn't keep. Promised myself I wouldn't weep, one more promise I couldn't keep. It seems no one can help me now. I'm in too deep. There's no way out. This time I've really led myself astray. Runaway train, never going back. Wrong way on a one way track. Seems like I should be getting somewhere. Somehow I'm neither here nor there. Can you help me remember how to smile, make it somehow seem all worthwhile? How on earth did I get so shaded, life's mysteries seem so faded. Runaway train, never going back. Wrong way on a one way track. Seems like I should be getting somewhere. Somehow, I'm neither here nor there."

Do you realize that describes every one of our lives before we became a disciple. And you gotta understand people are people. We can't become intimidated of them. We cannot be ashamed because

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