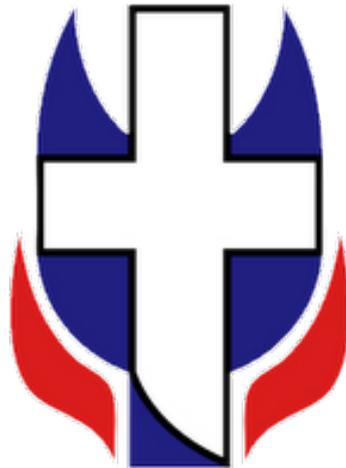


# **Church Development**



**A booklet for use in the UPCSA  
And particularly in Church Growth Forums**

**Vol. 2**

**Compiled by the General Assembly Church Development and  
Planning Committee**

2012

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## **PREFACE:**

It quickly became clear to the Church Development and Planning Committee (CDP) once the first volume of the Church Development booklet was complete that a second volume would need to be produced because there were a number of matters that the CDP Committee felt needed to be addressed.

The format to this second booklet is identical to the first, i.e. each chapter offers a brief introduction to a key focus area in the life of the Church followed by some discussion questions that are intended to draw the reader and participant in the Church Growth Forum or any other appropriate gathering, deeper into the topics at hand.

As Convener of the CDP committee I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all the contributors to this booklet, for the time and thought they put into producing the various chapters – The Revds Theo Groeneveld, Vuyo Mbaru, Vusi Mkhungo, Brent Russell and Mr Craig Smith.

Rev Chris Judelsohn  
Convener

# 1.

## GROWING THE CHURCH 1:

### Faithful Preaching by Gifted Preachers – Acts 2:14-41

The word of God is central to the work of the church and Jesus is central to the great storyline of the text. In every passage in every event God is revealing the eternal story of Jesus. The word is the means by which we hear the story and come to trust in Christ. **Romans 10:14–15 ESV** *How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”* The centrality of proclaiming the word is the key to the rise and the fall of the church.

Of course it is easy to get lots of people into a building by saying the things their itching ears wish to hear, but that is not the church. For God’s people to be motivated to mission, encouraged into care and filled with God’s spirit we need to have faithful preaching of God’s word by those who are gifted to do so. **Galatians 3:2 ESV** *Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?*

What does faithful preaching look like:

1. **Expositional** – we preach the scriptures and not the opinion of man. We take the text and its context and explain the scriptures. We trust the scriptures to point us to Christ.
2. **Christ-centred** – If we do not preach Jesus we must pack up shop and go home. Too much modern preaching is moralism, feel good motivational speaking. We need to hear Christ and his call to repentance that we might come to him and have life!
3. **Spirit-filled** – The preacher has to be dependent on the work of the Spirit. We may call people to repentance but it is the Holy Spirit who transforms hearts.
4. **Relevant** – good preaching connects with the everyday person in the street, it does not use high language preached from soaring pulpits by men in funny clothes from centuries ago. It is important to realize the ordinary way Jesus engaged with the context of the people around him and we must do the same. The question is not whether we will be contextual, only which context and which century.

#### Discuss:

1. How important do you believe the preaching of God’s word to be?

2. How is the preaching you hear regularly matching up to the testimony of the biblical text? Is it presenting the fullness of Jesus message or just the comfortable subset? 1 Cor 1:21-25
3. How is the preaching in your context full of Jesus and full of his gospel? What are some of the ways the message could be made more relevant to the context? Acts 17:22-34, 1 Cor 9:19-23

## **NOTES:**

## 2.

# GROWING THE CHURCH 2:

### Community as a Christian Identity– Acts 2:42-47

The church of Jesus has always been marked by deep and genuine community. It starts with Jesus and the twelve disciples he lived, ate and ministered alongside. It continues in the book of Acts where the church was gathering around meals, sharing resources and money and were devoted to each other in brotherly affection. The church is the people of God, a united body of those called by Christ to follow him. Community is not something we do as an additional part of the Christian faith. Community must be something we are as the people of God on mission together.

The centrality of community should be obvious when the God whom we worship is in himself a community of love and fellowship between Father, Son and Spirit.

The 12 disciples spent three years walking with Jesus, sharing the joys and frustrations of ministry together and being there for each other. Whilst many churches work on the attraction model of a single large worship gathering being the centre of life of the church, it seems that in the churches worldwide where the gospel is finding deep root and people are really committing to follow Jesus, community plays a decisive central role. This is possibly even more important in urban and suburban contexts where people are often very isolated despite living in close proximity to others.

Christian community is more than friendships within the church; community is following Jesus together so that we can fulfill the biblical instructions of:

Praying and caring for one another. Building each other up and encouraging each other. Instructing, comforting, serving, forgiving and living in peace with one another. Carrying burdens, speaking truth and abounding in love. Jesus reminds us in **John 13:35** *By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.* That is only possible in real, authentic and gospel centred community.

#### **Discuss:**

1. What are some of the characteristics of genuine biblical community?
2. In what ways is the community of which you are part looking like the biblical community presented to us in Acts 2:42-47? In what ways does your community need to grow and how could this be achieved? Acts 2:42-47, James 5:13-20
3. What makes it difficult in your context to create this kind of genuine, gospel centred community and how is Jesus calling the body to overcome these obstacles?

# NOTES:

### 3.

## GROWING THE CHURCH 3:

### Disciple as a Christian Identity – Matthew 28:19-20

A third principal of growing churches is a deeply embedded identity that we are disciples of Jesus. We're saved not to believe in Jesus but to follow Jesus to serve and love as he did. **Matthew 16:24** *Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*

Worldwide churches that are growing have realised that what many in the modern paradigm called Christian bears little resemblance to the description found in the scriptures. Jesus is clear in **Luke 6:46** *"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?"* Disciples are those who are following Jesus, listening to his voice, obeying his commands and living like he lived. John instructs us **1 John 2:6** *whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.* Growing churches constantly and deliberately guide their people into maturing discipleship.

Discipleship must not become something we do, it has to be something we are. Churches that have a healthy model of discipleship as the basis for following Jesus are those who are being most effective in their fulsome worship of Jesus through taking the gospel into the world.

Many churches worldwide have abandoned the call to follow Jesus and have become comfortable in easy-believism. Many claim to love him but don't do what he commanded. Many in the church are happy to pay staff to preach, care and serve the community around the church. But Jesus calls us all, we're called to deny ourselves and as he laid down his life, to lay down ours in the pursuit of his glory. Our cross is to deny the world and its vain offers and to follow closely behind Jesus, to follow him to a life of sacrifice and service – and disciples willingly do this because they understand the work that Jesus accomplished and they are compelled by his grace.

When we lose discipleship as an identity and make it an optional extra or a "higher grade" version of being a Christian, we set the bar too low and we allow people to become worldly, shallow and uncommitted to the Lord of all. Jesus commanded us to make disciples, not Christians.

Genuine discipleship is a living out of our confession of faith in Jesus as lord over all things, including death and our sin. But when we claim to believe in this Lord and yet live a life that reveals that we in fact are lord and master of our own destiny, we deny the faith. A church that desires to grow needs to deeply root its people into their identity as a community of disciples following Jesus, biblically there is no other option.

**Discuss:**

1. How seriously does the modern church take the call to make disciples of the nations? Do you think we've made too big a distinction between converts and disciples? Can one be a convert and not a disciple?
2. How well are you as an individual doing at making disciples who are biblical in their action, worldview and thought life? Read Matt 28 and Rom 12:9-21
3. In what ways is your church equipping people to be making disciples of others?

## **NOTES:**

## 4.

# GROWING THE CHURCH 4:

### Witness of Jesus to the World – Acts 1:8

The way that the church grew in the early years in the book of Acts was by people taking the gospel out into the world. And we're reminded that as they lived radically different lives... *the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved- Acts 2:47*. It is simple maths: Unless people are being called to repent and trust Jesus the church cannot grow. In many churches there is love for the poor, housing the homeless and feeding the hungry. But we've lost the heart of the gospel and we do not proclaim it: Jesus came to save sinners of whom we are the worst! Many of those who follow Jesus have lost the impetus to be witnesses of Jesus. We've applauded ourselves because we're doing 'outreach' (whatever that might mean) or something similar but we're not taking the gospel to the nations. Jesus tells us to go *therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*" **Matthew 28:19–20**.

That command has neither been modified nor revoked and churches that take this call seriously and are ready to put their pride on the backburner and trust Jesus to give them the words to say, are growing. Yet many churches are not effective in this call. In fact it could easily be argued that most churches are just not doing this at all. At a recent meeting I asked a group of senior church leaders if they had had a conversation in the last 12 months where someone could have been led to faith – less than half responded positively! That is a sad resume for the church!

There is a lack of obedience to the gospel by leaders and the churches they serve. At points there may be expectations that someone else will do the work. Sometimes it can be because we're not built up with confidence in Christ. But, perhaps we've simply been lulled into believing that there is no desperate need for us to be witnesses to Jesus. Yet, now more than ever, with nearly 7 billion people on earth, Jesus' point is true *the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few*. **Matthew 9:37**

Our gospel message must be tempered with genuine love, service, affection and compassion for the world. It must be sustained by a genuine desire to end poverty, oppression and injustice and it must be spoken. It is the glorious gospel of Jesus that remains the cornerstone of the Church's message to the world.

#### **Discuss:**

1. How is your church actively engaged in gospel mission into your neighbourhood and community? How could your church improve in equipping the saints for ministry?
2. How has the church separated social outreach from the evangelism and witness? How do you think the two should be more integrated? James 2:15-17, Acts 3:6

Discipleship is both for the unbeliever as they are discipled towards Christ, and the believer who is discipled in Christ. What is stopping the church taking the call to make mature disciples seriously? Matt 28, Eph 4:11-14, Col 1:28

## **NOTES:**

## 5.

# SOLA FIDE – BY FAITH ALONE

*Sola fide* is one of the five *solas* (Latin word for ‘alone’ or ‘only’) that came during the Reformation period, to define and summarize the key issues of the Protestant Reformation. Each of these Latin phrases represents a key area of doctrine that was an issue of contention between the Reformers and the Roman Catholic Church, and today they still serve to summarize key doctrines essential to the Gospel and to Christian life and practice.

*Sola fide* (by faith alone) is historically known as the doctrine of justification by faith. It is a Christian theological doctrine that distinguishes most Protestant denominations (including Presbyterians) from Catholicism. This doctrine asserts God’s pardon for guilty sinners is granted and received through faith alone. All humanity is fallen and sinful and is not capable of saving him/herself, but God, on the basis of the life, death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, grants sinners justification, which is received solely through faith.

The teaching that we are declared righteous by God on the basis of our faith alone and not by works is a key doctrine of the Bible. While other denominations and religions teach humanity of what works they must do to be saved, the Bible teaches that we are not saved by works, but by God’s grace through His gift of faith (Ephesians 2:8 – 9). Biblical Christianity is distinct from any other religion in that it is centered on what God has accomplished through Christ’s finished work and not on human achievement.

All in all, the doctrine of justification by faith alone is simply recognizing what is taught over and over in Scripture, that at some point in time God declares ungodly sinners righteous by imputing Christ righteousness to them (Romans 4:5, 5:8 and 5:19). This happens apart from any works and before the individual begins to become righteous.

According to Martin Luther, justification by faith alone is the article on which the Church stands or falls.

### **Discuss:**

- 1) For your salvation, do you rely by faith on the Lord Jesus Christ alone? (Acts 16:31)
- 2) Do you depend on yourself (e.g. your good life) as well? (Philippians 3:4 – 9)
- 3) Do you rely by faith in someone else apart from Christ (e.g. Mary, the saints, etc.)?  
  
(Acts 4:12)

# NOTES:

## 6.

# SOLA CHRISTOS – BY CHRIST ALONE

In this day and age we have an obsession with 'lite' things that look like the real deal but have half the calories. Sadly the church has often become Jesus-lite. It may still look like the real thing, but the one person who should be the centre of everything is often conspicuously absent.

Scripture teaches that Jesus is the centre of all things and the fullness of God: Colossians 1:15–17 *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”*

This means that everything we do revolves around Christ. Whether it is preaching up front, teaching children, spending time in rest or working a 9 to 5 job. Jesus is the centre of the life of a disciple.

Jesus is the head of the church and anything that does not point to the head, Christ, needs to be cut out or reshaped into something that is Jesus-full! We have nothing else to proclaim and nor do we need anything else to proclaim other than Jesus crucified for sin: 1 Corinthians 1:23–24 *We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

Those looking for truth need us to preach and teach about Jesus. This narcissistic world needs Jesus, not self-serving religion. The hurting need Jesus power and healing, not self-help. The sinner needs Jesus and not do-good moralism. The lost need the Truth and not feel-good story telling. Those who are despondent need the work of the Spirit of Christ and not a pep-talk. Everything we do needs to point people to Jesus and so Hebrews reminds us to *“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

Our job as Jesus leaders, full of the Holy Spirit is to point people to Jesus as John the baptizer did, and we must become less that He might become more. Jesus is everything. He is a treasure of greater worth than anything and when we're all for Jesus, everything else pales into insignificance! Jesus leaders should have that kind of passion and priority so that they might lead people to Him!

### **Discuss:**

1. In what ways has Christ and his gospel been pushed out of our churches?  
Read: Galatians 1:6-10

2. What do we lose out on when we side-line Jesus or make him less central than he rightfully should be?
3. How do you as God's leader need to grow in your teaching, proclaiming and discipling people around the centrality of Jesus in their lives?

## **NOTES:**

# 7.

## SOLA GRATIA – BY GRACE ALONE

Another of the 5 *solas* (Latin for ‘alone’ or ‘only’) used as slogans during the Reformation period to define and summarize the key issues of the Protestant Reformation was *Sola Gratia* or ‘by grace alone’.

It refers to the fact that we are saved by God’s grace only, not by anything we can say or do. Of course, faith in Christ is necessary for us to receive the gift of salvation (see *Sola fide*), but faith does not give us salvation, *per se*, rather, faith is simply the means that the Holy Spirit uses to unite us to the work of Jesus that won salvation for us. In other words, God’s free love and mercy of us, which we do not deserve or earn in any way, allows us to be made right with him. This is his grace.

***“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”***  
***(Eph. 2:8 – 9)***

The Word of God makes simple that our righteousness is as filthy as rags (Isa. 64:6) and that there is nothing we can do to earn our own salvation. Anyone who thinks that there is anything s/he can do to earn salvation, then that is what is called “works of righteousness”. This view of the works of righteousness was rejected by the reformers because it means that our good works can somehow get us into heaven. This is in direct contradiction with what Paul writes to the Ephesians above because he makes it clear that it is ***“not by works, so that no one can boast.”***

Humanity has always boasted in its own achievements and succumbed to the lie that our worth and value and salvation depends on what we can do and achieve. If we do good things or make a positive contribution to society, then we will earn our heavenly rewards. That is not true. The reason we do good things and partner God in transforming society, by working for justice and peace and transformation, is because it is what we are called to do as God’s people. Our value and worth is founded in being children of God, not in our achievements, and our eternal life, now and in the future, is founded on God’s grace, not our achievements.

The point that the reformers were making, based on scripture, is that we cannot save ourselves. We simply do not have the capacity or ability to do so. Rather, the good news is that God has done everything necessary through Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection to get us in good standing with him and to free us from slavery to sin and all that desires to destroy us. It is called grace.

### **Discuss:**

- 1) How do you respond to the statement that there is nothing you can do to be made right with God?

- 2) Do you think that there is a general belief amongst people today that if they do good things then will get to be with God for eternity, i.e. that they will earn their way into heaven?
- 3) Read Ephesians 2:1-10. What do you think the appropriate response of a person should be who understands the grace of God as outlined above and found in the teaching of this text?

## **NOTES:**

## 8.

# SOLA SCRIPTURA – BY SCRIPTURE ALONE

*Sola Scriptura* (“by Scripture alone”) is the doctrine that the Bible contains all knowledge necessary for salvation and holiness. *Sola Scriptura* is not a denial of other authorities governing Christian life and devotion, rather, it simply demands that all other authorities are subordinate to, and are to be corrected by, the written Word of God.

According to *Sola Scriptura*, the Church does not speak infallibly in its traditions, but only in Scripture. As John Wesley stated in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, “In all cases, the Church is to be judged by the Scripture, not the Scripture by the Church.

*Sola Scriptura* was a main cry of the Protestant Reformation. We know that the Bible is the Word of God. The Bible declares itself to be God-breathed, inerrant, and authoritative. We also know that God does not change His mind or contradict Himself. While the Bible itself may not explicitly argue for *Sola Scriptura*, it most definitely does not allow for traditions that contradict its message. *Sola Scriptura* does not nullify the concept of church traditions; rather it gives a solid foundation on which to base church traditions.

The only way to know for sure what God expects of us is to stay true to what we know He has revealed – the Bible. Scripture’s authority is universal, because it is God’s Word, it is His authority.

### **Discuss:**

- 1) Read the following passages of scripture and comment on what we learn about it?:  
2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16
- 2) How does the context or circumstances or environment or community in which your congregation worships affect how the authority of Scripture is viewed? In other words, is the context of your congregation rural or urban, wealthy or poor, young or old, Christian or unbelieving, educated or uneducated, skilled or unskilled and how will this affect how you can teach and inspire members to live lives in accordance with the Scripture’s.
- 3) When and how is the best way to teach the congregation about the authority of God’s Word? How often, who, when, what, how... etc will this teaching occur and what will it look like?
- 4) Having discussed what *Sola Scriptura* is, what steps are you going to take to teach your congregation and therefore allow them to grow in faithfulness, wisdom and knowledge to God according to His teachings in Scripture?

## **NOTES:**

# 9.

## SOLI DEO GLORIA – TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY

*For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.  
To Him be the glory forever! Amen. (Rom11:36)*

The Fifth Reformation Principle is Soli Deo Gloria - "To God alone be the Glory." But this idea doesn't only come from the Reformers... It is found in the Old Testament in the Shema (the saying that Moses gave the Israelites in Deut.6:4): "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.*" The key point of the Shema is that in the original Hebrew, the word for "one", really means "only one." God wanted to be Israel's "Only One." In the New Testament Paul articulates it very clearly too. God is the source (from), the means (through) and the destination (to) of all things(Rom11:36). In 1Cor10:31 he reminds us: "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

The Reformers articulated this as "Soli Deo Gloria" and composers like Bach and Handell would write the letters "SDG" at the bottom of their compositions to declare that all the glory belonged to God. Later on the Westminster Shorter Catechism would state it very beautifully: "What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever."

### Discuss:

1. Discuss how the idea of God being the "only one" brings Him glory. It might be helpful to explore the idea of what happens when He is **not** the only one...
2. Jesus makes a difficult statement in His conversation with the Samaritan woman when He says that "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (John4:24). How does 1Cor10:31 help us in understanding what Jesus meant by "spirit and truth"?
3. If we think of composers like Handell and Bach who wrote such amazing music pieces and then wrote "SDG" at the bottom of their compositions, how do we need to behave as we preach and exercise leadership?
4. In 2011 Seth Mosely and Jason Ingram wrote a song entitled "I am second" which has led to a website where a number of famous sports stars, musicians and personalities give their Christian testimonies and conclude with the words "I am \_\_\_\_\_(their name) and I am second." (<http://www.iamsecond.com>) Have a look at the song below and discuss whether this captures the idea of "Soli Deo Gloria."

There's a me that I don't really like –  
a me that says I'm in control til the day that I die  
And I don't know why I push - I pull - I fight - I fall  
I end up crawling back to that place where I figure it out that I, that I, that I

*I'm second to One: Redeemer, the way, the light*  
*I'm second to One: The Saviour - No compromise*  
*I'm laying everything at the foot of the cross*  
*My pride, my life, my all - I am second to One - **And He is second to none***  
There's a change when I swallow my pride and I surrender  
There's a peace when I open my eyes because I remember  
To live's to die, to fall's to rise, to kneel's to find the Saviour  
Here I am and I've figured it out. Tonight tonight tonight...  
*I'm second to One...*  
He said "You come alive when you lose your life"  
so I lay it down Yeah I surrender all

## **NOTES:**

# 10.

## THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

To understand the role of the Church, firstly we need to understand the Church.

**What is the Church?** It is the community of people or believers gathered together and worshipping God through Jesus Christ. It is a living witness to Christ's promise that He will be with us until the end of time (Mt 28:20). It was established by Jesus Christ. It is both human; made up of people like you and me, AND divine: it is the body of Christ. Christ is the head of the Church. We are Christians, or followers of Christ, because of our King Jesus Christ.

So, **what is the role of the Church?**

Christ established His Church to continue His mission (Misseo Dei) on earth throughout the ages, generation after generation, from one culture to another.

The Church has different roles in our communities:

- Its main role is to proclaim the Word of God. The proclamation of the Word is done through numerous ways; such as announcing (Preaching) and practicing what Jesus Christ did. In this way it continues the work / mission of the Lord. Christ brought new life to people by healing, raising the dead and feeding the hungry.
- It has an authority to teach as it was given by Jesus Christ: "All authority in heaven and on earth are mine. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...teaching them all that I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19-20).
- It proclaims the moral order of the universe. The moral order is something like the plan of an architect for a great project. God is an architect, and the human race is His great project. God has a design for His universe. Since we are free and intelligent we can discover the moral order and choose to abide by it, or we can ignore it and make up our own plan. It is risky to try to improve upon God's moral order. The Church has to state publicly and explain each aspect of the moral order clearly.  
The moral order is based upon the dignity of every human person. That dignity flows out of the fact that each of us is created in the image and likeness of God, with an immortal destiny. All our human rights flow out of this dignity. Only God can give us this dignity, no one else.
- It is the role of the Church to accept and love people and share with them.
- It is the Church's responsibility to reconnect people with God through the Gospel, i.e. the reconciliation that God offers through Jesus.
- It is a community in which joy and hope is found as the Church offers love and happiness.
- It is the role of the Church to speak for those who cannot speak (voice of the voiceless). Where we live there are people who do not have a voice (such as the poor and outcast).

**DISCUSS:** (Think of your Church / Congregation)

1. Does it share the same roles described above? If not, what do you think the problem is?
2. Read Acts 2:42-48 and discuss the different roles of the Church described in the passage.
3. How can you transform your Church / Congregation to be more the Church discussed in Acts 2?

## **NOTES:**

# 11.

## SERMON PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION (PART 1)

*Three inch letters on the pulpit at Saints Presbyterian Church in Centurion Pretoria:  
"Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." (John 12:21)*

### **The Message Process:** (Read Romans 10:14)

- *Sender:* All loving, all giving, all powerful God. (Col. 1:12-20)
- *Messenger:* You – A beggar showing other beggars where you found bread (Eph. 3:8-9)
- *Message:* Jesus Christ is the ONE who saves. (John 20:30-31)
- *Receiver:* A congregation that lives in a tough reality (Rev. 2:2; 2:9; 2:13; 2:19; 3:1; 3:8; 3:15)
- *Result:* Faith and a Relationship based on Scripture (Acts 17:11; Luke 24:27+32; 1 Thes 1:4-6)

### **Dangers:**

- *Error:* Incorrect facts or Doctrine (Galatians 1:9)
- *Wrong motives:* To assert power, further your own agenda, satisfy pride and arrogance
- *Lack of seriousness:* Not preparing well enough (1 Pet 4:11)
- *Innoculation:* Repeated tiny doses of the real thing makes people immune
- *Mumps and Measles:* If I have measles and tell you I have mumps, what will you get?
- *Eisegesis vs Exegesis:* "Eis"=into and "Ex"=from. We should read from the text not into it.
- *The Thrill of Preaching:* Loving the adrenaline rush and people's admiration

### **So why do I preach?**

- 1 Cor. 9:16

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- Jer. 20:9

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### **Remember the Process of Interpretation – You are a Translator and Travel Guide:**

- There was an original author, context and audience. (*Get into their shoes.*)
- Your congregation live in a different world. (*Help them cross the bridge*)
- There are different kinds of literature (*Don't read poetry like history*)

### **How do I prepare?**

- *Be close to God* in prayer and dependence throughout the process: (John 15:5)
- Try to *begin with a text* and not an idea (avoids Eisegesis)
- *Read the passage again and again* in many translations.
- *Write or type it out and break it up* into its main parts. Link thoughts and repeated phrases.
- *Don't use a verse outside of its context.* (e.g. Gal. 5:12 is pretty scary by itself!)

- *Ask questions!* “Why does the author tell us this? Where is this leading?”
- *Summarise* the passage in as few words as possible without losing key thoughts
- Identify the *structure* and find the *key issue(s)*
- Use commentaries to understand *what the passage meant* to the first readers.
- Grapple with what the passage *means* to you and your congregation *now*.
- Prepare your message – (See part 2)

**Discuss:**

1. Discuss the following definition of preaching, especially the underlined words:  
“Preaching is a Holy Spirit empowered proclamation of Biblical Truth in an incarnational way that uplifts Christ and results in true spiritual growth.”
2. As an example of crossing the bridge of time and culture and bearing in mind that in Paul's time in Corinth the prostitutes showed off their hair to attract “customers” how do we preach about “hats in church” (1Cor.11:3-15)?

## NOTES:

# 12.

## SERMON PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION (PART 2)

*"I'd rather see a sermon (lived out in a life) than hear one."*

We follow the journey from Text to Desk to Pulpit and remind ourselves that all is done in prayerful humility and dependence on God's empowering wisdom and guidance.

**Text:** (To re-cap...)

- It is best to try and work from a text rather than a theme or idea.
- Some preachers preach from the lectionary which provides set readings
- Try to preach series through Biblical books as this empowers our congregations.
- Be sure you are very familiar with the text – make it an old friend!
- Make sure you understand what the text meant and means (see Part 1)
- Be able to summarise the core *message* of the passage in 25 words or less.
- In the beginning, preach from only one passage.

**Desk:** (Prepare your message)

Try using Glen Craig's four basic building blocks for preaching.

1. **Start a fire!** Create the itch! Catch their interest! Why should they listen?
2. **Build a bridge!** Take your hearers into the text –  
Let them see it, feel it, touch it, taste it.  
Show your hearers that you understand where they are too.
3. **State your case:** (Pack your facts in an orderly and useful case)  
Show how the text leads to its conclusion.  
Be logical, persuasive, compelling  
Help them see the connection between the passage and your points
4. **Lead to action!** How should our lives change?  
What is this passage calling us to change?



Don't forget:

1. Humour, Illustrations and Stories.
2. Keep your structure clear.
3. Summarise at the end.
4. Make sure that you ultimately point to Christ.
5. Work hard, be diligent in your research, and choose words carefully.
6. In the beginning write out the sermon in full – you can then preach from summary notes if you want, but start with word for word...

**Pulpit:** (Deliver your Message)

Preparation: Have your own soul right with God. Be prayerful and thoughtful.

1. Short is better than long
2. Eye contact is very important.
3. Put people in the passage. Talk to them and not at them.

4. Project your voice well. People get frustrated if they can't hear you. Don't rely on microphones
5. Pace well. Speak slower in important bits, faster through simple details. Avoid sing-song tone.
6. Conclude well! Remember you want them to decide to do something!

**Discuss:**

1. Divide into small groups of 2 or 3 and put together a 4 minute sermon on John 4:1-30 using the principles in part 1 and 2.

## **NOTES:**

# 13.

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Jesus was a revolutionary in so many ways, confronting the norms and values of his day. He did this with regards to how society treated women and the sick and the so called, 'sinners' or outcasts. He also challenged adults on their treatment of children.

In Matt 19 we have an account of children being brought to Jesus to be blessed and how his disciples stopped them. Jesus saw what had happened and rebuked his disciples saying, ""Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." He then laid his hands on them and blessed them. This was an extraordinary thing for Jesus to do because children were not held in high esteem in the Ancient World. Also in Matt 18 we are told how Jesus used the faith and trust of children as an example of how others should believe. It is clear that Jesus did not think that children were a nuisance or were believers 'in the making', but rather he affirmed their personhood and their faith.

Although we affirm that the primary place where children should be taught about Jesus and faith is the home, the Church also plays a vital role. Research has shown that the most opportune time to instill faith in a person is between the ages of 4 and 14. Many refer to this as the 4-14 window. Surely the Church should be putting a great deal of energy and focus and resources into the ministry with children?! This is not about indoctrinating or forcing children to believe something they normally would not, but it is about exposing them to Jesus so that they can choose whether or not to pursue a relationship with him.

It is also very important to recognize that children are not the church of tomorrow, as some may say, but rather that they are the church of today and the leaders of tomorrow. We must not miss the opportunity to minister to and care for the hearts of the children in the church.

### **Discuss:**

- 1) Read Matt 18:1-6 and Matt 19:13-15 and discuss.
- 2) Do you think the Church, in general, and your congregation in particular is doing enough in ministering to children?
- 3) Why do you think we often struggle in the church to make children a priority?
- 4) What, if anything, can you do differently in your congregation to make this ministry more effective among the children and more accepted by the adults?

# NOTES:

# 14.

## CONFIRMATION

Confirmation refers to the decision a person makes to respond to God's grace with intentional commitment, publicly reaffirming his or her baptism vows before the congregation. Generally Confirmees are youths between the ages of 15 and 18. Any adult can be confirmed at any age. The Confirmees are usually youths that have been nurtured in the church since their baptism as an infant.

It is considered good practice to offer deliberate periods of preparation and teaching to the Confirmees before the service. Teaching should center on the meaning of the Christian faith, the history and teaching of the UPCSA and an explanation of the full membership vows they will be taking. A solid framework of doctrine will allow the Confirmees to have a proper understanding of what it means to be a follower of Christ.

Confirmation is seen as a rite, not a sacrament, and is considered merely symbolic, not an effective means of conferring divine Grace. The result of the Confirmation process should be that the Confirmee has a self-understanding and appropriation of the Christian doctrines, spiritual disciplines and life of discipleship. For this reason, Confirmees should only enter the process when they feel ready and preferably not because it is expected of them, or because they are under family pressure to do so.

### **Discuss:**

- 1) What would you consider to be core material needed to be taught during the journey of Confirmation?
- 2) How does the context or circumstances or environment or community in which your congregation worships affect how Confirmation is viewed? In other words, is the context of your congregation rural or urban, wealthy or poor, young or old, Christian or unbelieving, educated or uneducated, skilled or unskilled and how will this affect how you teach on and encourage people/youth to be Confirmed.
- 3) When and how is the best way to teach the congregation about Confirmation? How often, who, when, what, how... etc will this teaching occur and what will it look like?
- 4) Having discussed what Confirmation is, what steps are you going to take to teach your congregation about it and therefore allow them to participate in this important process in the lives of congregational members?

## **NOTES:**