

St Luke's Anglican Church Emerald

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**Thirdly, We must recapture evangelism as a daring act of subversion.** Here's where the adventure begins. Even if we start with the question of what works, we'll at some point need to call someone to cross from death to life, to pledge allegiance to God, to repent of sin and trust in Christ, to renounce the Evil One and all his deeds. And that's nearly unconscionable in a pluralistic society that relegates religion to the realm of values and preferences.

Real evangelism is daring for two reasons. First: real, full-throated gospel proclamation dares to say what mustn't be said: in discussing Christ's claims, we aren't talking about *my* truth and *your* truth. No, we're talking about a public announcement that's true for the whole world. This announcement is powerfully subversive because it takes an axe to the great idol of our day—a pluralistic conception that permits us to think of Jesus as our personal Lord and Saviour, or as the King of our own hearts, or as someone who helps us through life, while forbidding us to claim his lordship is objectively true for all people, in all places, in all times. No wonder it feels scary. No wonder we're tempted to qualify our statements with the palatable preface "for me."

Second, robust forms of evangelism are daring because they put forward another offensive claim: that you and I are implicated in the murder of God's Son, our sins are on the docket, and only he holds the key to free us from our prison of guilt and shame. We're all sinners, having fallen short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23). Coming face to face with that reality is subversive in a world where everyone likes to think of himself as the hero.

Courage will be required if we're to recapture the God-intended subversiveness of evangelism. There's something adventurous about proclaiming God's kingdom because we aren't in the realm of *my* truth and *your* truth. Jesus is the rightful King of kings and the Bible tells the true story of the world.

The church's task is to push through the fear and tell the truth with love, embodying the scandalous nature of our proclamation with a striking expression of genuine attentiveness. God gave early Christians the fortitude to preach the full gospel in the face of persecution. Test yourself to see if you are crazy for the gospel. When you are threatened with death for the gospel, you find out for whom you really live. When faced with the risk of job loss, you know for whom you really work. When you may lose fortune and position for the sake of the gospel, you find out whether you are crazy for money or crazy for the gospel.

*Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth [John 17:17]*

**Ordinary 15 (14<sup>h</sup> July)**

Amos 7:7-15

Psalms 85:8-13

**1 Corinthians 16:13-21**

John 17:6-19

**Ordinary 16 (21<sup>st</sup> July)**

Jeremiah 23:1-6

Psalms 23

Ephesians 2:11-22

**Mark 6:30-34, 53-56**

**Navigating the Challenge of Privatised Religion [Part 2]**

JUNE 21, 2024 **TREVIN WAX**

It is important that we navigate the challenges of a privatized religion and recognise the several factors that must influence our mission and evangelism. Firstly, as canvassed in Part 1, we hold out a real encounter with God. **Secondly, 'What works' will often be our starting point but cannot be our ending point.** How do we proceed when most people in our society aren't asking whether a given religion is "true" but instead are asking if it "works," or feels "right" or "good" to them?

Most of our initial conversations with non-Christians will not be about proving God's existence but more about how life is going for them, discussing whether the Christian vision of life is workable, or helping them see that Christianity's overall influence on society is positive, not negative. And yet this starting point mustn't become our end goal. We must press deeper. If we only speak of Christianity on the plane of "what works" and never get to the "truth" question, we leave Christianity without distinctiveness, relegating it to the realm of "good advice" for moral living. As C. S. Lewis wrote:

*"Christianity is a statement which, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important."*

We can discuss how Christianity works as a way of life or its effect on society and culture and assess its legacy. But to perpetually delay the "truth" question tells a lie about reality. Just because something works doesn't mean it's true or good. When the time is right, press in on the one clear and burning question: Who is Jesus Christ?

## A guide for our prayers during the week

### Monday

Our diocese and the gospel

- Bishop Peter
- Other parishes
- Dean for Cathedral – Rev. Ross Nicholson

### Tuesday

Our church and the gospel

- Children and youth
- Families
- Seniors
- Chris

### Wednesday

Our community and the gospel

- St Luke's Op Shop
- Blackwater
- Emerald Churches

### Thursday

Our nation and the gospel

- Prime minister
- State and local government
- Religious Freedom legislation

### Friday

God's world and the gospel

- Islamisation
- War and poverty
- Persecuted Church
- CMS and ABM

### Saturday

Ministry and the gospel

- Bible Studies
- Food for Body and Soul
- Wardens and Parish Council

### Dates to Remember

20 July	Garage sale
27 July	Commission of Cathedral Dean 10 am Lay Ministers Retreat – R'ton 1-4 pm
3 August	Barra Fishing Day

	14 July	21 July
<b>Service Leader</b>	Larry	
<b>Read</b>	Donna, Natalie	
<b>Prayers</b>	Dianne	
<b>Shop</b>	Peg, Therese	
<b>Grounds</b>		

### The BCA Prayer

Lord our God, help us to remember those who live in isolated and remote parts of our land. We ask you to strengthen and encourage all whose ministries are supported by The Bush Church Aid Society.

Refresh them in times of discouragement and loneliness and call others to stand with them in the task of making Christ known.

Grant that, through the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, through caring service and by support for young people, the message of your redeeming love may be proclaimed and accepted by the people of our land. We ask these things through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

### Direct Debit Giving Information

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