



Module 2

Module 2 : TODAY - "THE GOSPEL IN TODAY'S MIDST"

Aims :

- Becoming aware of the challenges and needs in our midst today.
- Discovering ourselves as a GENERATION, as well as INDIVIDUALS.
- Discovering the Gospel's relevance in this context.
- Discovering ourselves as hope-givers of our generation.
- Bringing across the gospel in a way that "scratches where it itches".

Chapters :

1) TODAY, ... The Cries & The Hope

- .. Looking and recognizing the cries of our generation. Identifying our needs and trends.
- .. What then is our GOSPEL? Is it relevant?
- .. In what way can we be RADICAL Christians - making an impact in our land?

2) TODAY, ... There Is Healing!

- .. We, Christians in this generation - where is our place in the Goodnews?
- .. Being a Healing COMMUNITY.
- .. Changing the world - is it only a dream?

1 : TODAY - "The Gospel in Today's Midst"

We will consider in this section, the people in our campus whom we are trying to bring the Gospel to - their cries and needs as a whole generation, and find the relevance of the Gospel to them!

Our "generation" which currently makes up the young-adults as well as the teenagers of today is indeed a unique one, and often considered so by the others who feel we are somewhat different from them (the older generation). Many writers and philosophers have termed our generation as Generation "X". There are people on both sides of the coin - those who look at the generation in a negative manner, as well as those who look at us positively.

- The NEGATIVES have this to say :
 - .. X often stands for a negation, and thus feel we are good for nothing.
 - .. X also often stands for a blank, and that's what they come up with when they think of us.
 - .. X is also used when we want to cancel or eliminate something out, and that's what they wish they could do with us.
 - .. X finally represents an unknown, and we are like a faceless generation to them.
- The POSITIVES have this to say :
 - .. X is an algebraic alphabet which can mean almost anything in an equation, and thus they see us as people with many potentials.
 - .. X is a letter with it's two feet firmly planted on the ground, representing solidity (or realists) with a hope for a more stable future. We will probably not be so naive, and idealistic as our predecessors, and will look for real answers to real questions.

The issue for now is, what are the cries and needs of our generation? Is the Gospel really relevant to these cries? How can we scratch where it itches. To answer these, we must picture our world (generation) and brainstorm what they are really like (both the negatives and positives).



In the worksheet on the next page, brainstorm words that depict our generation.

Identify the CRIES & NEEDS of our generation.

Also brainstorm, how the Gospel is RELEVANT to the cries and needs of our generation.

~~OUR GENERATION~~



How is the Gospel Relevant?!

Below are some of the cries of this generation that have been identified.

THE CRIES OF TODAY

In highlighting the cries of our generation, I am not discounting that our generation has got its strengths and weaknesses. That is not my focus here. Rather, in discovering the relevance of the gospel, the focus will be on the needs and what our generation is really searching for.

Ours is indeed a generation that has gone on a long and difficult pilgrimage. We have had to look to high dreams of the future that did not really come through; face expectations from a previous generation that did little to nurture and understand us; as well as live amidst the pain of broken systems - family, social, political as well as religious.

That is why we are often called a "brittle" generation, with a lack of HOPE and a lack of LOVE. It is a generation that has gone through a lot of SUFFERING and is rejecting the greedy and individual nature of the "me-generation".

We are characterized by :

- ALONENESS

- .. No one NEEDS you and you NEED no one (supposedly).
- .. Being alone and not being able to TRUST anyone.
- .. It is not emptiness, rather life is full of activities WITHOUT family and friends.
- .. DISTRUST of people and FEAR of being hurt.
- .. SURVIVAL technique that comes across as INDEPENDENCE.

- ALIENATION

- .. A state of deprivation, lacking the most fundamental and necessary social connectedness.
- .. Life is often HOSTILE and DANGEROUS.
- .. Often, it is like being STRANGERS in a foreign land.

- ABANDONMENT

- .. By parents, loved ones, teachers, political leaders, culture.
- .. Being UNWANTED.
- .. No one IS THERE for us.
- .. There is a lack of MORAL GUIDES.
- .. An absence of concern for the SPIRITUAL WELL BEING of persons.



What is your own experience of aloneness, alienation or abandonment?

DOES THE GOSPEL "SCRATCH"? - It's relevance!

Does our gospel really work? Is it only something to save our souls, but hardly touching the core of our neediness?! When Jesus claimed that He came to give us abundant life; that He is the way; and invited us to come to Him for rest; was it only a psychological gimmick, or a proposition for us to accept Him as Lord and that's it!?

I believe that the Bible speaks directly to the pain of our generation. The gospel message is targetted on our yearnings and needs. St. Augustine said of God, "Ever Ancient, Ever New", and I believe that the gospel's power is that - old, yet NEW!!

● OUR GENERATIONAL NEEDS

- .. A need for HOPE
- .. A need for MEANING in Life
- .. A need to belong to COMMUNITY
- .. A need for EMPOWERMENT
- .. A sense of DIRECTION in life.

* Let's examine Jesus' touch - Mk 2:15-17
Lk 4:31-37
Lk 7:11-17
Lk 13:10-17
Lk 15:1-7
Lk 19:1-10

Read these passages and discover how Jesus touched the needs of the people.

● OUR GOSPEL'S RELEVANCE

- .. For alienation - RECONCILIATION.
- .. For betrayal - PROMISES from God and RESTORATION of broken trust.
- .. For our vulnerability and insecurity - A sense of SAFETY within a protective, healing COMMUNITY.
- .. Lacking a defined identity - A NEW IDENTITY in Christ.
- .. Burned by pathological models of authority - Reveals an AUTHORITY that is POSITIVE.
- .. Feel unwanted and unneeded - A place of BELONGING, a place for INVOLVEMENT, a place where lives can be used in SERVICE of a purpose larger than themselves.



How relevant has the gospel been thus far in your own life?
What are the questions that you yourself have been asking?
How are you going to move on, or seek answers?

BEING RADICAL CHRISTIANS

Your mission and mine is to allow our lives to be a PILGRIMAGE where we can discover the POWER of the gospel in our lives, and we can then HOLD OUT THE WORD OF LIFE (Phil2:14) to our generation.

- **RADICAL**

"Radical" in its original meaning comes forth as "people who go to the root". They are quietly beginning to UPROOT the present system by creating an ALTERNATIVE.

- **EMBODIMENT ("lived out") APOLOGETICS**

Now is not the time for propositional apologetics, where we argue a person into the kingdom of God. Our generation is asking for a TRUTH THAT WORKS.

Our lives need to be the OPEN BOOK, as living and working proof of the relevance of the gospel mentioned in the second section, earlier.

Our lives need to be INVITING - giving our friends a place of ACCEPTANCE and a place for INVOLVEMENT.

We ourselves cannot "eat so many dogs" in this "dog eat dog" world. Rather our lives can be STRETCHED OUT in SACRIFICIAL LOVE moving from a "me-generation" to a "we-generation".



How much does your life EMBODY the gospel hope?

Are you willing to be a RADICAL for Jesus?

What about the COST - the sacrificial LOVE?

Look at where you are now and then decide : "Are you going to let Jesus TAKE IT ALL - your whole life?"

You and I are called to be STEWARDS to this very generation that we ourselves come from. We also bear the same scars, and cries, and needs. Yet, we have found our HOPE IN CHRIST ALONE, how can we then hold forth this hope in a way that is relevant for the rest of our generation to see? How can this HOPE BECOME ALIVE in and through us?

TODAY (2) - "Today, ... There is Healing"

OUR PLACE IN THE GOOD NEWS

We have already ascertained that the Gospel is relevant. We also have said that that Gospel needs to be felt - not "told", but lived out. The challenge prior to this is "Are you willing to be RADICAL for Jesus?"

Today, ... because of the gospel, there is HEALING for our generation. We are from this generation. We too feel its brokenness. How can we talk about healing to others? Of course, no healing can be complete in this side of heaven - but because of Jesus, we ourselves who are raised up from this generation can rise up to become "WOUNDED HEALERS", givers of hope.

● LEARNING FROM A LEGEND

Everybody is waiting for a Messiah to deliver them from the pains of this world. A Messiah who will let peace and justice take their rightful place. If our ministry is meant to hold the promise of this Messiah, then whatever we can learn of His coming will give us a deeper understanding of what is called for ministry today.

There is a legend written in the tractate Sanhedrin which I have copied for you in the appendix on page 49. Read it, and learn of how it is that the Messiah actually came in this legend - was it in glory, in power, in working miracles, or was it in some other way?

How can wounds be a source of healing?!

Open wounds stink and do not heal. But within us there must be a WILLINGNESS to see our pain and suffering as arising from the depth of the human condition which all men share. We need to rise above ourselves and search for hope, and while on that journey of healing, be available to others as well who are on this pilgrimage too. How can we do this?

We need to withdraw into ourselves - To ponder, to wrestle

- To wait on the Lord for healing grace
- To create space within ourselves for something other than our own concerns.

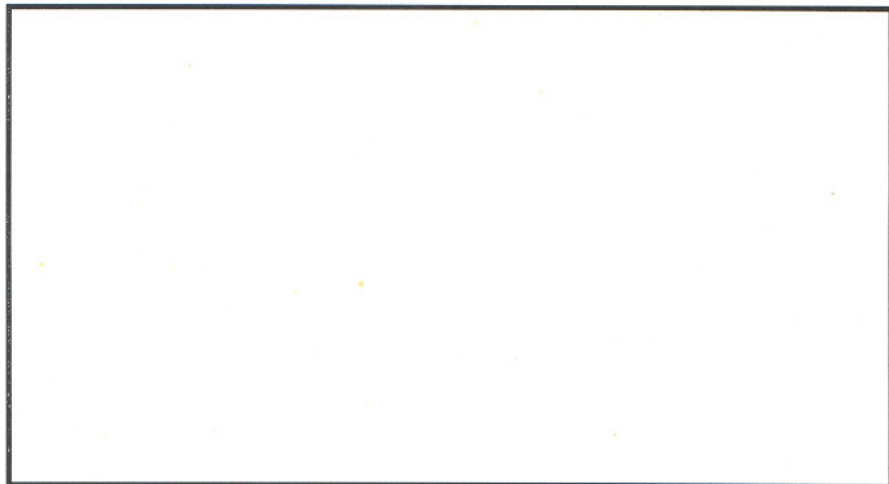
It is then that we find that we have space within ourselves to be a 'wounded healer' to others!



Are you willing to allow your own wounds to be a source of healing for others?

- LEARNING FROM JESUS

- * Let us look at Jesus. In the appendix, (page 50), there is a meditation prepared on Phil 2:5-9. Reflect on these verses - how did Jesus bring healing to a broken generation? Write your observations in the little box below :



- ◆ PRACTISING "INCARNATIONAL" EVANGELISM (Jesus' way)

- .. Radical Identification - going into their world
- .. Radical Humility - willingness to be open, to be taught by our world
- .. Radical Giving - emptying ourselves of self

- ◆ SHOWING OUR WOUNDS AND SCARS -

- .. The power of testimony and witness impacts this generations much more than theories and talk.
People want to see whether we ourselves - are wounded, and if we are how did the gospel give us hope.



All this sounds straight forward. Yet, we who are in this generation know that TRUSTING and OPENING ourselves to others is going to be painful. Am I willing to practise the "discipline of trust" in relation to those I am befriending?

How will I start?

A HEALING COMMUNITY

Becoming a HEALING COMMUNITY will never happen if we do not relate for "REAL"! And the cornerstone for such incarnational evangelism as we talked about is :

- * Authenticity - our faith is real in our lives, and touches the very core of it.
- * Trust - demonstrating integrity, truthfulness, loyalty and confidentiality.
- * Caring - We are genuine, showing unconditional love no matter what the other person's belief.
- * Transparency - Others are able to see our lives through our vulnerability and openness.

● FRIENDSHIPS

- .. Community begins with friendships. This is the antidote for a generation ALONE, ALIENATED & ABANDONED. This is because one encounters others as AUTHENTIC persons.
- .. Friendship transports a person from concern for self to concern for ANOTHER.
- .. Friends are willing to "bear one another's burdens" (Gal 6:2).

● "PROCESS" EVANGELISM

- .. Authenticity, Trust, Caring and Transparency can only be demonstrated, lived out and proved OVER TIME.
- .. We need to focus less on ONE MOMENT IN TIME, quick conversions.
- .. It is a process of RELATIONSHIPS - daily, consistent, practical demonstration that Christianity works and that GOD'S LOVE is real through the TRANSPARENCY & LOVE of God's people.
- .. We need to be a "church SCATTERED" as opposed to a "church GATHERED" in the world!

I believe that as Isa 61:1-5 puts it, ... when the gospel comes into our lives it brings "beauty for ashes"; "oil of joy for mourning"; "a garment of praise instead of despair" that we might be OAKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. Yet, oaks take a life time to grow. Nevertheless, how can we be agents of healing to our generation?

● ENCOUNTERING HOPE

- .. One of the characteristics of our generation is its HOPELESSNESS. The healing community plays a part in restoring hope within our generation. Christianity is always a "looking forward". The CROSS -- RESURRECTION -- PENTECOST -- CHURCH -- SECOND COMING.
- .. We are now "heirs with Christ", and "children of adoption"; "no longer servants but friends." Our emphasis has been 'what we have been saved FROM' rather than 'what we are saved FOR'. The latter emphasizes our FUTURE, and it gives rise to HOPE!! It gives our life a new direction.



Who are the "friends", you want to grow with and at the same time bring hope to?



Where are you now in the PROCESS (evangelism)? What do you need to work on?



What are some of the "ashes" in this friend's life? How can you bring HOPE to the situation?

CHANGING THE WORLD - Only a Dream?

Is it only a dream? Changing the world, is it an impossibility? The greatest enemy we must fight is DISILLUSIONMENT and DISCOURAGEMENT, which has held us back from impacting our world for Christ. Satan has won half his battles through our own withdrawal from our involvement in this generation. We too have joined the race of "looking after ourselves". Yes, we will face battles, and warfare even as we surge on for the Gospel. Are we willing to put on the whole armour of God (Eph 6:10-18), and march on to victory?!!

Needed are :

- PEOPLE OF COURAGE

- .. Needed are people who are willing to pay the COST of INVOLVEMENT.
- .. Needed are people immersed in the ORDINARINESS of life. THE HOLD UP MIRRORS TO A BLIND SOCIETY IN DESPAIR.
- .. They do all this QUIETLY, without fanfare. They are like the LEAVEN that spreads through the whole dough, making slow but sure IMPACT!

- PROPHETS OF OUR TIME

- .. "Who will go for us" (Isa 6:1-9)

Meditation 2 :

- * Now, let us look at another character - Mary Magdalene (Jn 20 - refer to the second meditation passage on page 51).

How did she embody courage, hope and act as a wounded healer?

- .. She was there all the time, when everything was happening to Jesus, even at Golgotha.
- .. She saw her Saviour die.
- .. She didn't understand, and maybe even felt a little hopeless then, but she went again on the third day.
- .. Yet another disappointment awaited her, ... the body of Jesus was gone!
- .. After the disciples had left, still not knowing what had happened, she remained at the empty tomb crying her heart out.
- .. It was then that the miracle happened - she met Jesus who was RISEN!!
- .. What joy, and what news to tell!!


It would not have been if she had not had the **COURAGE** to face her pain, and **REMAINED SEEKING AN ANSWER**. And then, **SHE WENT** to tell the world about it!!



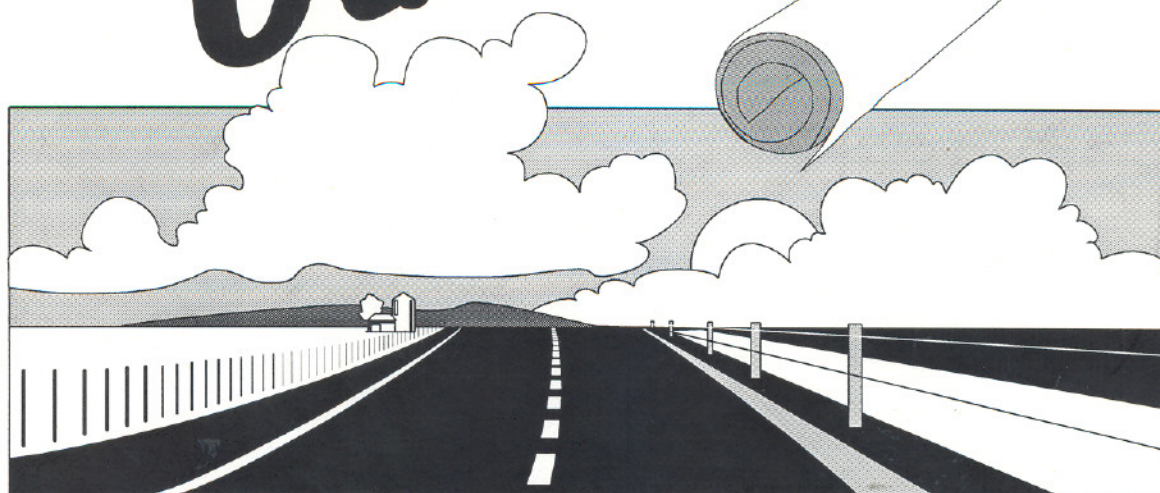

Are you willing to pay the cost?

Are you willing to be a prophet of our time?

Are YOU WILLING?



Campus



Module 3

Module 3 : CAMPUS - "Lighting Our Campus"

Aims :

- Tailormaking principles learnt in Modules 1 & 2 to the campus context
- Assessing our campus "climate" and identifying needs.
- Assessing our resources.
- Developing a strategy for our campus.

Chapters :

1 (i) IDENTIFYING YOUR CAMPUS PROFILE

- .. Assessing our campus "climate".
 - Where are the pre-Christians : attitudes / openness?
 - Identifying needs in our campus

(ii) ASSESSING OUR LAMPS

- .. Where are the Christians / CF?
 - Identifying strengths and weaknesses
- .. Assessing resources available.
 - Current evangelistic programmes / strategies : effectiveness, strengths, weaknesses.
 - Is anything missing?

2) LETTING YOUR LIGHT SHINE

- .. A programme for the whole year.
- .. Motivating and mobilising people to be involved.
- .. Suggestions for specific training needed in the campus.

1. CAMPUS - "Lighting Our Campus"

INTRODUCING THE SERIES ...

The Campus ... People need the Lord

In this module, we'll like to take you into the world that you are currently in ... the campus world. Each one of you have been placed here for only a short period of time, not merely to acquire an academic qualification but to be a part of God's mission in reaching out and touching lives for Christ in your particular setting. The campus is a unique place, each campus being different because of its unique make-up, composition of people, location, types of courses offered, etc. etc. Each campus CF is unique, having its own history; each one facing many challenges in its own way and time. However, what commonly happens is that whenever we think about "missions", our attention immediately turns to the needs of the world outside of campus. We forget that where we are, is a real world with real people, struggling with real needs and issues ... where we are, people need the LORD!

Shining like stars ... holding out the Word of Life

God's calling to us remains the same, wherever we may be: to be effective SALT that has not lost its saltiness; to be LIGHT that is rightly placed on its stand, not hidden under a bowl (Matt 5:13-16). In the words of apostle Paul, as God's children living in a crooked and depraved generation, we are to shine like stars in the universe as we hold out the WORD of LIFE (Phil 2:15-16). Each one of us are called to "light up our corners of the campus" no matter how dim you think your lamp may be!). As a Christian Fellowship, the "brightness of our witness" is enhanced as different corners are lit and we unite in this one mission to the glory of our Father. This call is not new but it must be answered by students of each generation, responding to the needs of their times, clothing the goodnews of the gospel in a way that "scratches where it itches" for fellow students. "Students Reaching Students for Christ" has been the heartbeat of student movements worldwide throughout the generations. Will you answer this call for your time in your campus?

Discovering God's Vision & Strategy for Your Campus ...

Having considered the GEMS of the gospel and its relevance for the world TODAY, we now want to see its practical applications in the campus context. We want to learn to tailor-make these principles by learning to see the "big picture" in each campus and discovering God's vision for reaching the campus. There will be time for personal reflection on the questions raised followed by a time for discussion and sharing with others your findings. It is as we begin to share with each other that our "discoveries" become sharpened; and as we pray together that we become certain of God's vision for the campus.

We need to begin by learning not to rely on our own ideas & efforts but to come to God for direction.

o ASK GOD :

- ... To instill in us a desire for penetrating the major areas of our campus - geographically, academically and socially.
- ... To show us His vision for the campus.
- ... To guide us as we discuss how we are going to carry out that vision.

o A human witness is the hand by which God touches, the mouth through which Christ speaks, the tools to carry out his plans. The Holy Spirit gives the divine strategy to the waiting, obedient fellowship. God's strategy may seem foolish to men, for his ways are higher than ours.

Second, we must not confuse strategy with tactics. Strategy includes methods, but much more. Strategy involves vision - a clear-cut sense of what we are sent to do and the best principles of achieving our objectives. Methods can become tyrants unless they are made servants of strategy. The strategy to which we are called today is one of total evangelism. This includes 3 things : goals, agents, and methods.

The assignments for Sessions 1 and 2 are related and self-explanatory. May the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep guide and lead you.

1. CAMPUS - i) Identifying Your Campus Profile

AIM:

Learning to look at the big picture and then coming before the Father with what you see. The questions are designed to help give a big picture of the campus situation : composition and location of students; trends and major sources of influence among students; "common grounds" which Christian & pre-Christian students share.

A: STUDENT COMPOSITION

1. What is the total student population in your campus / faculty? What percentage are Christians?
2. Where are the students located ? (Identify the areas where students are staying; on campus & out of campus)
3. Are there significant minority groups? Who are these? What are their specific needs / influences?

B. CAMPUS ATMOSPHERE

1. What is the general campus mood / atmosphere?
2. What / Who are the main sources of influences on the students? (i.e. Influencing thought patterns, values, lifestyle, opinions, etc.)
3. What do students (both Christians and pre-Christians) do during their free time?
4. How have things changed on campus in the last few years?
5. What religious organisations are on campus, how big are they and what influence do they have?

CONCLUSION : Having thought through Parts A & B, list down :

WORDS that describe your campus atmosphere in general

What you see are some **SPECIFIC NEEDS** among pre-Christians in your campus.

CLOSE THIS EXERCISE BY SPENDING SOME TIME TO PRAY ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN.

ii) Assessing our Lamps

AIM :

To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Christian Fellowship in evangelism; needs among Christians in this area and what resources we have / can work from.

C : STUDENT CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP - Strengths & Weaknesses

1. How many students in your fellowship are core members and how many are on the fringe?
2. Has the group been reaching out or reaching in? Why?
3. What structural strengths & weaknesses does the fellowship have? (E.g. solid network of small groups; leaders do all the work; most of the members are seniors; etc.)

D. HOW HAVE OUR LAMPS BEEN SHINING?

1. What is the current evangelistic emphasis / programme in your campus?
2. How would you assess its effectiveness in terms of :
 - a) number / percentage of Christians involved?
 - b) number / percentage of pre-Christians reached / becoming aware of God or being more open to the gospel?
3. What are the strengths & weaknesses of the current programme? What do you see lacking?
4. How do the pre-Christians in your campus perceive the Christians / the Christian Fellowship?

Having looked at Parts C & D, where do you think the Christians & the CF are in our mission of reaching other students for Christ in the campus. What are some needs among the Christians / areas they need help with? What current strengths in the CF will be crucial as you think about reaching out? Add these WORDS / NEEDS to your picture (from Parts A & B) of your campus profile.

Allow this picture to "remain in you". Share your findings with others in your campus (1 or 2 to start with) who are also concerned about reaching out. Listen to their findings and pray together, asking the LORD to show you His direction and plans.

2. CAMPUS - Letting Your Light Shine

Working Out The Strategy

You are now ready to work out a strategy for your campus. Bear in mind that there are 2 groups of people involved here : the Christians and the pre-Christians.

One writer observes that "there was a time when we could preach at people and they would respond to the gospel. But preaching at people doesn't work too well anymore. We can't just come at people. We have to go with them. We have to get into their world, just as Jesus came into our world and became one of us so that we would come to Him." He describes a 5-step process he uses in this approach to evangelism

1. Do what they do.
Doing things together creates "bonding" . A powerful step of trust-building.
2. Enjoy and accept them.
Sincerity is most important. Evangelism is most effective when it is natural and unprogrammed.
3. Affirm what is good in their values.
Can be difficult because Christians have a tendency to be judgemental.
4. Share the story of Jesus in their terms.
The tricky step but also the transitional step.
5. Invite them to follow Jesus in a way to which they can relate.

Assignment :

With all the information at hand, and the resources currently available,

- o WORK OUT AN EVANGELISTIC STRATEGY for your campus for the whole academic year.
Plan towards an evangelistic event.
What will be your strategy leading up to the event and after the event?
- o HOW WILL YOU MOTIVATE AND MOBILISE YOUR CF MEMBERS TO BE INVOLVED?
What are some specific training that may be needed for your campus?
- o EVALUATE YOUR STRATEGY
 - ... Are your goals realistic?
 - ... Is your strategy workable?
 - ... Content - wise, are you being faithful to the full content of the gospel?
 - ... Persons-wise
 - do your plans allow for an atmosphere of building relationships & caring ?
 - is sufficient consideration given to the context of the persons we are reaching out to?

In the session 5 of The Gospel (Following Through), we shared about the need for a support group as you involve yourself in this mission on campus. As you apply this strategy to your campus situation, be open to see where there may be need for change and adjustments; where it has been effective in motivating and touching lives, etc. This is where, a support group that has been praying for you and with you can help to sharpen each other to see and discern. Constantly be open to see how God is working His will and purpose out in your campus. Do not be easily discouraged / tempted to give up ... that will be satan's aim as he seeks to steal, to kill and to destroy what God is doing to establish His Kingdom on earth where you are. God bless you with "Hearts Courageous" to march on and follow where His Spirit leads.

Working out the Strategy for Your Campus ...



Appendix



Module 1: GEMS (Chapter 2)

Some observations by students from a training camp on the three methods commonly used :

METHOD 1	METHOD 2	METHOD 3
<p><u>WHO?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For people who have many gods to choose from. - People who are strangers to God - People who live simple lives - Intellectuals - People who like profound thoughts <p><u>CONTENTS STRESSED</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only ONE God - God's character - Existence of EVIL everywhere, no way out - Christ's mission, death & resurrection - The CHOICE we must make - offer of new life, through repentance & faith <p><u>LINK / APPROACH</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To point out ONE God, what He is like - LOGICALLY lead to man's condition, & then the need for Christ's atonement - Stress on CHOICE <p><u>START</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have you heard? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Old people - Young people , children - People who are more mature - People who like rules - People who are already seeking for something - Westerners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God has a PLAN for our lives - Often unfulfilled because of our SIN, and thus separated from God - Only way out : Christ's death in man's place - Our part : Receive Christ as Saviour by faith <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God has a WONDERFUL PLAN - UNFOLDING why people do not experience this plan - Matter of fact, and following LAWS - Points one by one to God, to man to Christ. Explains all clearly. - Challenge to receive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have you heard? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For friends - For those easily influenced, and soft - Even for those unsure of their salvation - People who like proof, scientific minds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heaven as a GIFT, cannot be earned - Man's condition - SIN and inability to save self - God's mercy through Christ - Faith in Christ alone - Commitment of self to Him in repentance and trust <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attracts interest by talking about GIFT - Points out GRACE by showing God's character of both mercy and holy. - Point's our man's DILEMMA, and Christ as the ANSWER - LIKE A SALESMAN, SYSTEMATICAL explains faith, and then goes on to SELL the gospel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Questions

Four Noble Truths

1. The existence of suffering.
Birth, old age, sickness and death are painful. Not having what we desire is painful, and having what we do not desire is also painful.
2. The cause of suffering.
It is the craving desire for the pleasures of the senses, which seeks satisfaction now here and there; the craving for happiness and prosperity in this life and in future lives.
3. The ending of suffering.
To be free of suffering one must give up, get rid of, extinguish this very craving, so that no passion and no desire remains.
4. The way leads to the ending of all pain.
Ending of all pain by way of the Eightfold Path.

The Eightfold Path

1. Right view
You must accept the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.
2. Right resolve/thought
You must renounce the pleasures of the senses; you must harbor no ill will toward anyone and harm no living creature.
3. Right speech
Do not lie; do not slander or abuse anyone. Do not indulge in idle talk.
4. Right behavior/action
Do not destroy any living creature; take only what is given to you; do not commit any unlawful sexual act.
5. Right occupation/livelihood
You must earn your livelihood in a way that will harm no one.
6. Right effort/endeavor
You must resolve and strive heroically to prevent any evil qualities from arising in you and to abandon any evil qualities that you may possess. Strive to acquire good qualities and encourage those you do possess to grow, increase and be perfected.
7. Right contemplation/mindfulness
Be observant, strenuous, alert, contemplative, free of desire and of sorrow.
8. Right meditation/concentration
When you have abandoned all sensuous pleasures, all evil qualities, both joy and sorrow, you must then enter the four degrees of meditation, which are produced by concentration.

The Four (*Three) Dharma Seals

1. All *sankhara* (phenomena) are impermanent
Change and impermanence are fundamental features of *everything*.
2. All *dhammas* (basic component of reality) are not-self
Since everything is changing and impermanent, there is no "self" ("self" here means real and unchanged substance)
3. *Dukkha*
It is because of the fact that things are impermanent that they are also *dukkha*: potentially painful and frustrating.
4. Nibbana (Nirvana)
Nibbana is the unconditioned dhamma. Nibbana is beyond change and suffering, it has nothing in it which could support the feeling of I-ness ("Self").

Conditioned Arising (Dependent origination)

In its abstract form, the doctrine states: **"That being, this comes to be; from the arising of that, this arises; that being absent, this is not; from the cessation of that, this ceases"**. This states the principle of conditionality, that all things, mental and physical, arise and exist due to the presence of certain conditions, and cease once their conditions are removed: nothing (except Nibbana) is independent. The doctrine thus complements the teaching that no permanent, independent self can be found. **"Emptiness"**

Law of Karma

The law of karma is seen as a **natural law of inherent in the nature of things**, like a law of physics. It is not operated by a God, and indeed the gods are themselves under its sway. Good and bad rebirths are not, therefore, seen as 'rewards' and 'punishments', but as simply the natural result of certain kinds of action. Karma is often likened to a seed, and the two words for a karmic result, **vipaka** and **phala**, respectively mean 'ripening' and 'fruit'. An action it is thus like a seed which will sooner or later, as part of a natural maturation process, result in certain fruits accruing to the doer of the action.

Religious merit

In Buddhism, a 'good' action is generally referred to as *kusala*: 'skillful' in producing an uplifting mental state in the doer, or 'wholesome', in that it involves a healthy state of mind. A 'bad' action is *akusala*: 'unskillful' or 'unwholesome'. The main criterion in deciding whether an action is 'unskillful' is to see whether it conduces to the harm of oneself, of others, or of both, and whether it is 'destructive of intuitive wisdom, associated with distress, not conducive to Nibbana'. Correspondingly, a 'skillful' action does not conduce to any such harm, but does conduce to the growth of wholesome states of mind.

A 'skillful' action is also described as *punna*: that which is 'auspicious' or 'fortunate', as it purifies the mind and thus leads to **future good fortune**. *Punna* is generally translated as 'merit', but this imports an idea of 'deserving' into Buddhism, when what is alluded to is the **natural effect of certain actions**.

Module 1 : GEMS - Chapter 4

Case Studies :

- An Analysis of Persons & Emphasis On Certain Gospel GEMS

Chin Ngan

- o Description :
 - Feels hopeless because of previous disappointments. Covers it up by his cynicism.
 - Feels the pain of being abandoned by father, rejected and made to feel a failure by mother.
- o Gospel Emphasis :
 - Christ bearing our wounds.
 - His resurrection gives us hope - hope for restoration, for progressive wholeness.
 - God's priceless love - caring enough to give His only Son, because Chin Ngan was precious to Him. There is no rejection from the Lord.
- o Be Careful :
 - To point out the cost of following Christ, we too must bear our cross.
 - That being in Christ doesn't stop us from experiencing pain.

Lynette

- o Description :
 - Complacent and expects life to continue so.
 - Sheltered from life's bashings, thus unable to identify with its pains.
 - Therefore too, unable to see her own sinfulness and need of grace.
- o Gospel Emphasis :
 - Where does life end? Eternity! Where is she going?
 - Who controls her destiny? God, not herself and her wealth.
 - Confronting her sinful state, falling short of God's mark however good she may be.
 - Helping her see her real needy state, and how pitiful we all are without Christ.
 - Pointing to Christ, who longs to give her the real life - secure in Him, sure of destiny.

Note :

For both these persons, the complete Gospel message needs to be shared. But these may be certain areas you can consider emphasizing or even starting with. Remember, do not compromise or short-sell the Gospel!

A Legend told of how to find the Messiah

Rabbi Yoshua ben Levi came upon Elijah the prophet while he was standing at the entrance of Rabbi Simeron ben Yohai's cave ... He asked Elijah, "When will the Messiah come?"

Elijah replied, "Go and ask him yourself."

"Where is he?"

"Sitting at the gates of the city."

"How shall I know him?"

"He is sitting among the poor covered with wounds. The others unbind all their wounds at the same time and then bind them up again. But he unbinds one at a time and binds it up again, saying to himself, 'Perhaps I shall be needed; if so I must always be ready so as not to delay for a moment.'"

(Taken from the tractate Sanhedrin)

Comments :

- .. *The Messiah binds up his wounds one at a time, waiting for the moment he will be needed.*
- .. *He is the 'Wounded healer' - he has to look after his own wounds but at the same time be prepared to heal the wounds of others.*
- .. *He is both a wounded minister and the healing minister.*

"Today, ... There is Healing"

1 : JESUS - Our Healer

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ

Jesus :

Who, being in very nature God,

did consider equality with God something

to be grasped,

but made himself nothing,

taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself

and became obedient to death -

even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest

place

and gave him the name that is above every

name,"

(Phil 2:5-9)

2 : MARY MAGDALENE - "A Wounded Healer"

"Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!'

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in.

Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

Then the disciples went back to their homes, but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

They asked her, 'Woman, why are you crying?'

'They have taken my Lord away,' she said, 'and I don't know where they have put him.' At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

'Woman,' he said, 'why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?'

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.'

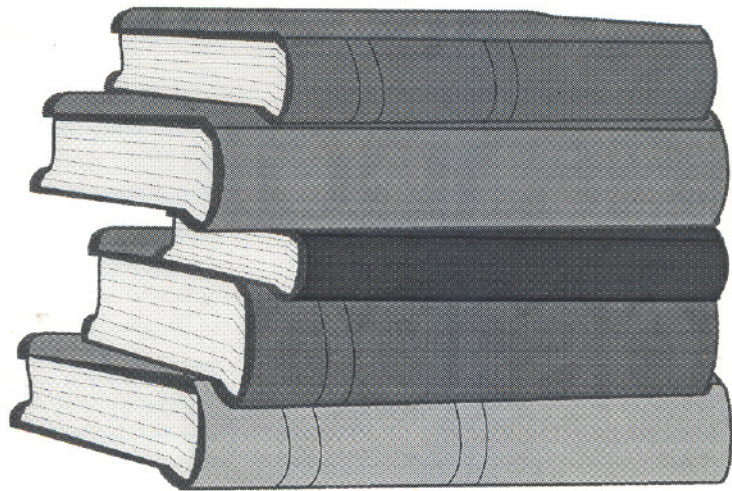
Jesus said to her, 'Mary.'

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, 'Rabboni!' (which means Teacher).

Jesus said, 'Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father, Go instead to my brothers, and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

(John 20:1-17)

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