

be an evangelist, because through word and deed you are an instrument and an expression of what God is doing to make His Kingdom come on earth.

### The Revolution Will Succeed

To be Christian is to participate in a revolution designed by God and also to give to the rest of the world the good news that this revolution will succeed. We have the promise from Scripture that in the end, the Church, that body of believers working to sign, to signal, to witness the transformation of the world into the kind of world God wants it to be, will win out over the forces of darkness: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever" (Revelation 11:15). Evangelism is making this good news known. Anytime you speak or live out that good news, you are an evangelist.

During the sixties, while I was teaching at the University of Pennsylvania, I was caught up in the great social causes that inspired the students of that time. Young people in my classes were filled with hope and optimism and were convinced that a new social order marked by justice for all was about to break loose. I personally identified with their confidence that racism, sexism, militarism, and other forms of oppression could be overcome. I shared with them the vision of the future so powerfully articulated by Martin Luther King, Jr. in his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

But things did not change as quickly as those students thought they would. The government and the economic system were not as easily amenable to transformation as those young people imagined they would be. I watched as students became disillusioned, gave up their idealistic visions of the future, and turned to the narcissistic aspirations of puppyism. They stopped believing that the world could be made good and settled for dreams of personal, professional, and materialistic success.

Now when I meet some of my former students from the sixties and early seventies, they are surprised that I continue to plug away for the old causes and that I am still enthusiastically committed to changing the world. I tell them of the good news that there is still hope and that things will change, and I try to convince them that the kingdoms of this world *will* become the Kingdom of God. But they usually just smile wistfully and dismiss me as naive. Evangelism is declaring to such skeptical and sometimes cynical former revolutionaries the good news that "it's not over 'till it's over." Evangelism is preaching that, when history is over, it will be the story of a God who triumphed and made the world into the peaceable kingdom described by the prophets (see Isaiah 65:17ff). Evangelism is being, in Desmond Tutu's words, "a prisoner of hope." In the midst of all this optimistic hope, we must not be deluded into thinking we can complete this transformation of society. That is what the second coming of Christ is all about. Christ is initializing a social revolution through His people, but it is a revolution that will be brought to completion (Philippians 1:6) only when He returns – and He *is* coming back in bodily form.

During World War II if you had asked members of the French Underground how they expected to overcome the powerful Nazi army that dominated their country, they would have said, "You should know that even as we speak a huge invasion force is being assembled on the other side of the English Channel. We do not know when it will happen, but someday soon they will sweep across the water, join us, and carry us to victory."

In a parallel manner, when I am asked how I expect the people of God to overcome the evil forces that seem in control of the principalities and powers and the rulers of this age, I say, "You should know that even as we speak a huge invasion force, consisting of Christ

and His mighty army, is being assembled and someday (I know not when) a trumpet will sound, and His force will sweep into time and space and carry us to victory." That is part of the good news we declare to the world.

Ironically, it is when an individual stops worrying about his or her personal salvation and gets caught up in the work God wants to do in the world that a sense of personal salvation becomes a felt reality. Jesus made that very clear when He said: "Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it" (Mark 8:35).

The more preoccupied with self you become, the more sense of spiritual fulfillment associated with personal salvation slips away. On the other hand, the more you surrender to Christ and join in God's crusades for justice and love in the world, the more you realize all the individual blessings God intends for you. When Jesus called people to follow Him, it was primarily to take up the cross (i.e., make the necessary sacrifices) and become His disciples. He promised spiritual rewards for those who would join Him in declaring and building the new social order.

Evangelism is an announcement, in word and deed, that the whole world has shifted on its axis, that the whole direction of history has turned, that Jesus Christ reigns. Now. Evangelism is declaring that the Kingdom of God is already dawning among us. It is the declaration of a new social order that is breaking loose in the here and now. You will find, in your ministry of evangelism, that people will respond far more readily to an invitation to find meaning for their lives in trying to change the world and impacting the lives of others with loving service than they will to threats of damnation.

Adapted from The Survival Guide for Christians on Campus by Tony Campolo and William Willimon, pages 122 – 131.

### Vision

*Establish the Kingdom of God in the African political, economic, scientific and leadership arena*



### Mission

*Focus on the African leaders to make of them agents of the transformation of the continent*

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