



Context is important. A number of years ago, Palm Sunday fell on the same day that we were to put our clocks ahead for the spring time change. However, I forgot to move our clocks forward. The result was that 10 minutes before the Sunday service was about to begin, one of the staff phoned and simply said '*Christ is Risen, so should you be*'. Well, I jumped out of bed in a panic, showered, shaved, combed my golden locks and threw on my suit. Just as I was about to walk out the door I had a brain wave, so I stopped and grabbed 4 coats and every bathrobe I could find in the house. I arrived at the church just as the last hymn before the sermon was being sung. As it finished, I walked straight up the middle aisle throwing coats down in front of me ... just like they did on the first Palm Sunday and yelled '*Jesus is coming, Hallelujah Jesus is riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, so wave your palm branches, throw down your coats and yell Hallelujah to the King of Kings*'. And then I started right into my sermon. The people thought 'what a great introduction Dave planned for the Palm Sunday sermon'. That day I learned two things. Number one, never let them see you sweat, and number two, context is everything. Even when some people heard that I had slept in, because of what I had done and because it was Palm Sunday, they still wondered if I had planned my late arrival and fancy entrance weeks in advance. The context in which you hear something is crucial. This morning as we conclude our series on Stepping Out, can I begin by reminding you that:

I. The Context of Stepping Out is the Easter Story

This year Easter seemed to sneak up on us. Remember that the context of Easter is a simple one, the disciples had traveled with Jesus for 3 years. They had seen things that they never thought could be possible. They had seen a man come rushing at them out of a graveyard, demon possessed, out of his head crazy and with a word Jesus had thrown out the demons and he became a new man. They had seen at least 6000 fed until they were stuffed and all Jesus had used was a little boys sack lunch. They had heard words that had changed the way they thought of God. They had sat in a boat in the middle of a raging storm only to see the gale stop in an instant when Jesus yelled '*Be still*'. And then just the week before, they had seen Lazarus, a man who had been dead for 4 days, walk out of his tomb alive and well. Actually, on Palm Sunday it was Lazarus who led the donkey which Jesus rode into Jerusalem on. And through the crowd could be heard the whisper "isn't that Lazarus the man who was dead and there is Jesus who with a word raised him back to life."

And then, as we will hear this next week, their Jesus was taken by an angry mob and was beaten, abused, laid on the ground and had nails driven through his hands and feet. For six long hours he hung on that cross suspended in space, in the dark, until he yelled '*it was finished*' (Mark 15). (This Easter, watch the 'Passion of the Christ' again and let the reality of the cross strike your heart once again.) Then they took his body to the cemetery, wrapped him in grave cloths and rolled the stone in front of the tomb. With him died all their hopes and dreams - dreams for forgiveness and dreams for a new beginning for Israel and for their own lives. Never had it seemed so black and so hopeless.

And then we read Luke 24:33-39; 45-47. As we read that passage, we need to feel the goose bumps stand up on the back of our necks and feel that rush of amazement, thankfulness and wonder wash over us, and grasp again that nothing but seeing the resurrected Jesus could have taken them out of the pit of despair they were in. Once they had encountered Jesus they could never leave their neighbors, those within their communities, the city they lived in or the parts of the world their feet touch, the way it was before Jesus rose from the dead. Because Jesus rose and because He commanded them to preach in his name to the nations, they felt constrained to do that very thing. They felt that to not Step Out and make a difference in their world was to not take seriously what they had heard and seen as they had touched the Jesus who rose from the dead. That is what I John 1:1-4 is speaking about.

For me personally, that means that because I have had a life changing encounter with Jesus, I can no longer look at my neighbor and my world in the same way. That is why I have been so excited when we looked at how you and I are called to love our Neighbor, simply because God asks us too. It's exciting to hear some of you tell me that you went home and invited the person in the next condo to join you for coffee or that when your neighbor's walk was covered with snow you shoveled it for them instead of complaining about it, or are planning on inviting them to a BBQ this summer. For me it got even more exciting to think that each week as we leave this place, we have the potential to touch over 52 different Communities in our city with the heart of Jesus. Each week we spread out across this City and this Province as we go to work and as Brad said last week, if we see those jobs as being strategically crafted by God to make an impact for eternity sake, then the potential for good and for God is unlimited! To see how our people are giving their time and money to care for folks at the Jesus Loves you Society, Inn from the Cold or helping to plant a church for Brazilians or Ethiopians who are here in town, it excites my heart. For as this happens, Brentview becomes a place not just to know Jesus but a launching pad to touch the world.

II. The Need for a Balanced Portfolio

That leads us to the final level of our calling - to make an impact on the 'Nations' of the world, or as our Mission statement says *to Touch the World*. Can I just take a moment and reintroduce you to some of the missionaries that you support as a church? Let's take a short trip around the world..

i) Around the World in 5 Minutes

Mexico

Dorothy Greatrix and Edwardo Solis with Foundations for his Ministry Ministry in the 'Nut House', among women, prostitutes and their families in Prison/ among Alcoholic men

Brazil

Lyndell Campbell as a Seminary teacher and Church Planter She is not only teaching how to plant churches but is personally involved in planting churches

Ken and Jerilyn Bayer with the Chain of Love
Kids taken off the streets and placed in Family units
And church planting as well

Florinda Serafin
working as a church planter and has amazing conversion stories

Haiti

Karen Huxter with Hands Across the Sea
A modern day David Livingston, 17 orphan kids
Over 300 in the school they established

Canada

Sherly Grunwald with Kidzana
Travels the world helping people learn how to teach kids & families
about Jesus

Bob and Sheila Lever with Wycliffe
30 years of mission excellence

Stephanie Hsieh with Campus for Christ
Connecting the U of C and Hub

Cameroon

Elsie Lewadowski
Field supervisor/teacher for Missionary Kid's
Helping home schooling happen with Missionary kids

Japan

Paul and Vanessa Miller
Campus and church planting

Doug and Sharon Woyke
Church planting

Rob and Lori Long
English teachers

China and Asia

Ed Schuster
Community Development – water, grass, trees & working with orphan kids

Aaron Warner
A Christian working teaching English

Russia

Pastor Sig Schuster with Russian Bible School

But if I spin the globe again and start filling in the places that many of you have traveled on short term trips last year, I would have to add Mexico, Haiti, Israel (Peace and Justice ministries), Egypt, SE Asia, Ireland (Youth outreach), Brazil, Liberia (Mercy Ship medical care had 4 people from Brentview go this last year) and Falklands BC. We did the numbers again, and in the last 14 months there have been 84 of you who traveled the globe for Jesus' sake. Right now we have people on Short Term mission trips in Chile (the Huss family is there right now), Brazil (Mark Kanwischer) and Guatemala (Daniel Sardachuk just arriving back home this weekend).

The fact is, that if I added up the places many of you have served over the years as Career or Short term missionaries and the impact that you have had on people's lives, the sun never sets around the world on the places where you (Brentview) are having an impact. There are generations of Nigerians, Brazilians, individual kids in India or Youth in Ireland, whose eternities have been touched by Jesus through some of you and this church. Is there much more we need to be doing? You bet there is. But to not celebrate the fact that the sun never really sets on the mission field God has called us to be involved in, is to miss the wonder, the grace and the thrill of our calling as a church. It must never leave our heart and soul.

ii) **Strategy**

In order to make the most impact (bang for God's buck) we need to consider having a biblical Mixed Portfolio. Just as in finances, you want to have a varied portfolio. I believe that it is important that we do the same as a church. Where historically most churches' mission money went only to long term missionaries from their own denomination, I feel that today we need to have a growing and varied portfolio when it comes to missions. I think that we need within the *Brentview Missions Strategy*:

1. Long term Career Missionaries

These are Saints like the Schalm's who went to Niagara before roads, wells, and hospitals existed in order to carve their God's name on the hearts of those who became their friends and with whom they did ministry together for over 50 years. They laid their lives and the lives of their kids on the line. Going to places where no white man had ever been before. With the gospel of Jesus and a love for the Nigerian people, they risked all they had (read Gottfried Schalm's book 'God's Pathways in Africa'). They are a modern day Paul and Barnabas. God is going to call some of you to go, teach, and plant churches in the same way Paul and Barnabas did. You will be called to build up the saints in the gospel and then move on and let the national believers take the ministry beyond where we can take it as foreigners.

2. Short term trips

Short term trips make a difference in individual people's lives. Short term missions began in Acts 10 when one afternoon, Jesus came to Peter in the middle of a 'day dream' and said you need to take a short trip for a few days to Caesarea to minister to a man named Cornelius. Like the short term trips we are part of today, Peter's trip had 3 reasons for happening. It was to make a spiritual

difference in the lives of those they traveled to minister to (Acts 10:42-48). It is to make a difference in our lives as we see God do things in our lives and the lives of others (11:16,17). It makes a difference in the life of our church when we come home (10:45). One of the most exciting things that I hear when so many of you come back after a short term mission is that you are invited back, because you didn't go for a holiday, you went to make a difference.

3. Support Indigenous Missionaries

This is something we are working on. While I believe God will continue to ask some of you to go as Career Missionaries, I also understand that economically it makes sense to support national pastors and teachers as well. For example we have been talking to some folk in India and after having personally check out their organization, we know that we can train an Indian pastor for under \$2000, and it costs about \$1500 to completely support a pastor and his family to do a church plant in a new town for an entire year. So maybe part of our strategy is to do what the apostle Paul did. He found local, national pastors like Timothy and Titus. He helped develop them, put helpful supervision in place for their spiritual care and then helped support their ministry, because as local people they knew the language and culture better than he did.

4. Encourage Tent Making Ministries

The scripture talks about Paul and Aquilla and Percilla who were tentmakers by day and evangelists by night (Acts 18:2). For many of you who are looking at working in different countries around the world you know that while many countries are off limits too missionaries from North America, very few countries are off limits for well educated business people or teachers. You have the ability to travel, work and quietly share Jesus with those around you. For example, Rob and Lori Long.

5. Care for the Under-resourced

Almost from day one of the New Testament church, you will see that Christians' hearts turned to meet the needs of people who were in need (Acts 4:36, 37; 6:1-6). One of those places God seems to keep pulling our heart as a church is Orphan kids in Brazil, Haiti, Ukraine and South Africa. Last Summer, Carleen Koop lived out a dream she had since she was 15. It was to travel to South Africa to an orphanage for children who have been abandoned because their parents died of HIV. Her heart was to care for kids who never had a childhood and simply to give them love. But before she went, she encouraged the kids in our family ministries to join her in raising some money for something called 'Operation Build a Farm' which was to develop a farm to help feed the kids at the orphanage. Their goal was \$300 to be raised by the kids through doing things at home to earn the money. The Stang kids went around and asked others to donate toward the project. The Huss kids had a Lemonade stand to raise money. The MacDonald kids sold snacks to construction workers and had an on line 'Non-party'. The result was that our Family Ministry raised over \$600 to go to helping Build a Farm for the orphanage in South Africa. The scripture says '*..true religion, the kind God accepts, looks after orphans and widows in their distress..*'

James 1:26, 27. So part of our call is to give a 'hand up' to those who are need in our world.

6. Open Door International Ministry

One of the glorious things about Pentecost is that people from around the world came to Jerusalem and as Peter preached the gospel, they found Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. We at Brentview have been placed on the corner of Crowfoot and the World. As we said the other Sunday, we represent people from probably 40 nations of the world. We need to keep swinging our door wide open so we can increasingly be a place where people from around the world feel at home and get to know out Jesus.

Because of the Context of Easter, we as a church need to carry a balanced portfolio of:

- Long term missionaries
- Short term trips
- Support Indigenous Missionaries
- Encouraging Tent making ministries
- Caring for the Under
- Open an door for International ministries

III. That God is literally Changing the Course of History around the World

We need to remember that God is doing some amazing things around the world. People's live are being changed by the love of God. Communities are being restored. And as we place our hands together we are literally changing the course of history around the world one person at a time.

Psalm 2:8 We need to ask the Lord to help us make an impact on our World, and then walk through doors he opens.

Let me end with this picture. The other day I received a note from Laura Eeles who comes to our church. She said *"Last night at the prayer service I got this picture in my head, and I think it was from God. Brentview was all lit up, and the rest of the city was dark. Then pieces of Brentview started to be taken off and being placed all over the world. The world was dark, but slowly there appeared little lights all over it, with people from Brentview going out to all parts of the world. Eventually the world was covered in light, and the promise God gave Abraham popped into my head when He told Abraham that someday the whole world would believe."*

My call to you is to join us in writing new headlines for our World.

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