

It's Time to Cast Out Your Nets

"Does anybody really care?" Do you hear it? That's the cry of the lost soul—and it's all around us. "Will someone please help me?" "Can anyone tell me that life is worth living?" "Please love me and accept me just the way I am!"

Rarely do we hear the cry spoken. But we see it in the depths of the eyes of the mother living next door who is wondering if her husband will come home tonight. It is painted across the face of the child who woke up this morning not knowing if there will be food on the table. It echoes in the silence of the young 17-year-old on her way to the clinic to abort her second child.

"Does anybody really care?" If we listen, not with our ears, but with our spirits, we will discern the cry of the human soul. It has coffee with us in the morning. It carools with us throughout the week. It sits at the desk next to ours; it lives next door. And although it is not articulated, it speaks volumes.

It was my cry for years. When I was the tender age of 5, the man whom I perceived to be "Superman," my own personal hero—my father—committed suicide. At the age of 6, I began to be sexually abused. These events catapulted me into a frantic search for love—often in all the wrong places. My heart's plea was, "Somebody please love me. Somebody please care."

Of course, I didn't dare verbalize my anguish. In fact, I learned to mask my desperate condition behind a veneer of strength, toughness, perfection, over-achievement and beauty. But the cry of my soul was inescapable and unavoidable. Underneath the facade, there was a little girl crying out to be loved.

Ultimately I found there was only one solution—only one antidote to fill the void we all possess in the deepest parts of our souls. His name is Jesus. He came to reconcile you and me to a God who is passionately in love with us (see John 3:16).

But someone had to introduce me to Him. Someone had to discern the cry of my lost soul and tell me about Jesus.

You Are the Preacher

Unfortunately, a tragic misunderstanding has pervaded the church. Romans 10:13-14 declares, “For ‘whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (NKJV).

When we see the word “preacher,” we tune out. *Phew! He’s not talking about us!* We tend to think that only a handful of people, a select group, are set apart to be preachers. But that’s a false concept.

The word “preacher” in this verse comes from the Greek word *kerusso*, meaning “to be a carrier of divine truth, to proclaim or publish.” According to the Word of God, when we get saved the truth is *in us* (see John 14:17). You and I are carriers of divine truth. Therefore, we are preachers!

You might not have a soapbox and a microphone, but you are a preacher—a carrier of divine truth, the vessel God has chosen to reach a lost and hurting world. It is your responsibility and mine to proclaim the message that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that He has come to give us life more abundantly; that He heals, delivers and saves.

That responsibility is inherent in Jesus’ first words to His disciples: “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19). Our decision to follow Him is a decision to let

Him teach us a new trade. The Lord calls us to go fishing—to learn how to put out the “bait” of the gospel to hurting men and women and draw them to their Savior.

It is also stated in the last words Jesus spoke on earth: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:19-20). Remember, this is the Great Commission, not the “great suggestion.” Jesus left us with a charge, a command, to *go fish!*

Can you not hear Him as He pleads with you to go to the neighbor who’s been taking Prozac for months to battle her mental anguish? To the inner-city boy who does not know his daddy and is searching for identity? To the woman in your office divorcing her fourth husband, who wonders why she is so unlovable? *Go fish!*

We are God’s carriers of divine truth. We are His mouthpieces to tell others about His goodness, His love, His mercy and His restoration. We are His hands to show compassion and wipe away their tears. We are called by God to go fish—to pour out His love and show forth His glory to the broken people around us.

I can hear someone shudder right now, “No, not me. It must be someone else who is called.” *Wrong!* John 15:16 states, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.” The truth is you are called, anointed and ordained to bear fruit—to win souls to Christ.

Everything We Need

Be assured that when God calls us, He equips us. He does not command us to do something and then not give us the ability to accomplish it. Everything we need to be a carrier of divine

truth, to fish for men and women with the gospel of Jesus Christ, we already possess! According to His Word:

- * His fullness fills us (John 1:16)
- * His power is in us (Acts 1:8)
- * His anointing abides in us (1 John 2:27)
- * His ability is within us (2 Cor. 3:6)
- * His wisdom is available to us (James 1:5)

Still I can hear someone protesting, “But God, I *can’t*! I can’t sing. I can’t preach. I’m not talented enough. I have the wrong personality. Not me.” May I remind you: The devil is a liar!

One of God’s greatest servants once made the same protest: “Not me. I can’t do this.” His name was Moses. After Moses explained to God why he could not carry out the plan and purpose that was ordained for him, God responded by asking, “‘What is that in your hand?’” (Ex. 4:2).

I want you to stop right now and look at your hands. Examine them carefully. Maybe they are young and strong; perhaps they are frail and weak. Whatever the case, God is requiring something of you that is already in your hands.

Moses thought what he was holding in his hands was only a common shepherd’s staff. But God knew he possessed everything he needed to do a great work for God.

In the body of Christ, we often are so preoccupied with studying what we lack that we do not discern what we possess. In the hands of Jesus, two fish and five loaves fed a multitude (see Matt. 14:14-21). In the hands of a widow, a bit of flour and oil was the catalyst for a miracle that sustained her through a famine (see 1 Kin. 17:8-16). In the hands

of a young shepherd boy, a few pebbles killed a giant and conquered a nation (see 1 Sam. 17:40-51).

I ask you, What is in your hands? Is it your time? Is it your money? Is it your talent or your love for God? Is it your testimony or your gift of gab? Is it is your skill at crafts or cooking? *What is in your hands?* You must use what God has given you!

I shared these thoughts with an elderly woman one evening. In sheer frustration she confessed to me, "I have nothing. I can't do anything to reach people with the gospel."

I began to ask her questions. "Can you cook?" I asked. Her response was an emphatic, "No!"

"Can you sew?"

"No!"

"Can you pick up people in your car and bring them to church?"

"No!"

The questioning went on and on Finally I blurted out, "What *can* you do?"

A little smile crossed her face. "I play jacks," she said.

"You play jacks?" I responded with delight, remembering the game I used to play as a child.

"Yes, I play jacks."

"Wonderful," I said. "Meet me on Saturday morning at 9:00 a.m. sharp, and bring your jacks."

That weekend, I took her into the inner city and sat her on the corner of a field where a crowd of children were playing. I told her to start playing jacks. Within moments, the children began to gather around her, curious about the game

and anxious to try it. Before long, kids were everywhere—hanging on her, tugging at her and trying to figure out this intriguing new pastime.

She began to tell them a story about Jesus, explaining that He was the Son of God. She was, to her own amazement, sharing divine truth! She was “fishing for men.” And since that first Saturday, this jacks-playing preacher I lovingly call the “Jacks Lady” has won countless children to the Lord.

Souls in the Balance

It was 1986 when I stopped to carefully examine my own hands. I had never spoken publicly to a group of people. I had yet to author a book. I was not the co-pastor of a fast-growing, multiracial congregation. My resume was not impressive. But I heard a staggering statistic that changed my life forever.

While preaching about evangelism, my pastor quoted a survey that said that less than 6 percent of all born-again believers would ever win someone to the Lord in their lifetimes. My heart sank deep within me. What about the multitudes of people who were as I had been—shrieking with the cry of the lost soul?

Was the church too busy to hear them? Were we so preoccupied with our own cares and concerns that we ignored them? Was it easier to never acknowledge them so that we would not have to take responsibility for them? Were we driving by the congregation to get to the church?

I could only conclude that the answer was “yes.” In that moment, time seemed to stop. Everything lost its value in the shadow of the balance of “lost” or “saved.” Would I be a part of the 94 percent who would never share the gospel of Jesus Christ with anyone? I lifted my hands to heaven, and as I looked at them I declared, “God, use what is in my hands for Your glory.”

The next week I put on a pair of roller skates and a bright orange wig, painted my face like a clown, and went fishing. I skated through an apartment complex, announcing to the children that Jesus loved them. I was determined to become a soul-winner. In restaurants, at the bank, in the supermarket I was a carrier of divine truth.

In 1993 I went into a riot-stricken area of Los Angeles. With a makeshift platform on a trailer bed, I shared divine truth and saw over 50,000 people in less than 13 weeks accept Jesus as their Savior. Christians often hear these testimonies and credit me as if I have done something heroic. All I have done is discover that I—like you—am God's vessel, a carrier of divine truth. And I admit there may be some selfishness in my motive. Every time I minister to a little boy or girl, I sense that I am rescuing a "little Paula."

You and I need to get out of our comfort zones and recognize that God has already given us everything we need to reach and heal our broken world for Christ. He has already equipped us to be "fishers of men." It's time to discover what is in *your* hands and cast out your net.

Paula White is the co-founder with her husband, Randy, of Without Walls International Church in Tampa, Florida. She ministers to women across the country in churches and conferences and is the author of He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not (Creation House).