

It's Time To Tell Somone!

If you got past the ubiquitous news cycles this week about mandates and vaccinations, you may have noted the concern of many with the recent market sell-off. Financial experts called it "brutal," with the Dow Jones Industrial Average dropping 600 points and the S&P 500 Index falling 1.7% on that one day! Fortunately, there was an encouraging rebound the next day.

The context for this financial uncertainty showed stocks finishing lower each of the past three weeks. An ominous warning from the investment bank Morgan Stanley predicted that stocks may still fall 20% or more, due to slowing economic growth, falling consumer confidence and growing product scarcities.

Added Troubles

But economic concerns are not our only troubles. We also face problems running the gamut from record-breaking heat waves to wildfires to water shortages, from rising authoritarianism to a pandemic rampaging our planet, not to mention the effects of menacing volcanoes and earthquakes on land and in our oceans.

From a spiritual standpoint, these added interlocking troubles may actually be good things. They press our populace to see how frail our abilities to protect and provide for ourselves really are, and may actually cause us to repent and return to God and His design and purpose for each of us. Through these end-times trials (Matt. 24:7-8), many may be drawn to know "the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation" (2 Cor. 1:3-4, MEV).

God is Still Reaching Out to Us

I do not think it is just a coincidence that two major evangelistic outreaches are soon to happen here in Southern California. God is reaching out to us!

First, Franklin Graham recently finished his God Loves You Tour, with large events in cities along the historic Route 66, from Illinois to California, which concluded on October 2nd in San Bernardino at the National Orange Show Events Center. There was live music with the Newsboys and other musicians, encouraging testimonies and a powerful message of hope from Franklin Graham.

Second, Pastor Greg Laurie returned to Angel Stadium in Anaheim on October 3 for another significant SoCal Harvest Crusade event, after a one-year hiatus due to COVID-19 restrictions and regulations. God has used these life-changing events to affect thousands of people for good and for God. Musical guests at this free event included For King & Country and Phil Wickham.

Laurie and his team have learned that there are a lot of unbelievers who won't go to church when Christians invite them. Something about the idea of going to church intimidates them. But when you invite them to a stadium, an arena, a local theater or even to your home, they are more likely to attend.

Are Mass-Evangelism Events Effective?

Greg Laurie is a local pastor with the equipping gift of an evangelist (Eph. 4:12). He has acknowledged, "There are critics of mass evangelism, or crusade evangelism, who say it is not effective. They say it is much better to share the gospel one-on-one because trying to gather people in large groups is really not an effective way to reach people."

He disagrees, pointing out how we can find two forms of evangelism in the book of Acts. First, there are examples of personal evangelism. In Acts 1:8 (MEV), Jesus told the disciples they were to receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them and each was then to be enabled to be "witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." It was all inclusive. Christ-

followers, age nine to ninety-nine (or older!), were capable to be witnesses and were commanded to do so.

Second, in the book of Acts we also see examples of what some might term as mass evangelism at work in Paul's public ministry in both Acts 22:1-16 and 26:9-18. In both instances, he testified of four things about himself:

1. "I have not always been a Jesus-follower" (telling about his life "B.C." – before Christ): Acts 22:3-5 and also in a different setting in Acts 26:9-12.
2. "God began to deal with my rebellion." He became aware that something was wrong and life wasn't working for Him (Acts 22:6-9; Acts 26:13-15).
3. "Then I received Jesus as my Lord." He explained how he became a Jesus-follower (Acts 22:10-13; Acts 26:16).
4. "I now live to obey His commands." He told what it is to be a true disciple of our living Lord Jesus (Acts 22:14-15; Acts 26:16-20).

Laurie says, "We have found that some 85 percent of the people who make a decision for Christ at an event like SoCal Harvest were brought by a friend. So essentially, one-on-one evangelism – that is, personal evangelism – was coupled with large-scale evangelism."

Perhaps you would like some training in personal evangelism as you prepare to invite someone to attend one or both of these large evangelistic events with you? Laurie's SoCal Harvest event team has prepared a FREE online evangelism course called "Tell Someone." It will equip you to confidently share your faith in Christ with boldness and tact. You can get started at .

How Do You "Do It?"

A story is told of Dwight L. Moody, the famous evangelist of

the late 1800s in Chicago. He too was a pastor/evangelist who held large evangelistic meetings, winning many souls to Christ. But there were those who took issue with his methods and told him so.

On one occasion, he humbly responded that he had worried about his efforts of mass-evangelism as well. So he asked the protester how he did evangelism. He responded that he did not presume to do evangelism, that it was up to God. To which Moody replied that he liked the ways he did it better than the way the protester didn't do it!

May I suggest that God is reaching out – yet again – to SoCal in these two major evangelistic outreaches and other similar events in these critical days of distress and distrust in our nation. I urge you to join me to pray much, prepare to share much and to partner with what God is doing in these last days! {eoa}

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