



Letter # 26

11 September 2020

Greetings! Generally speaking salespeople tend not to rate high on one's favourite people with which to deal. Let's face it – most of us I am sure have been at some point frustrated, annoyed, felt manipulated and maybe even experienced outright rage by that real estate person, car salesperson, or indeed some other salesperson. They seem to be tarred with the same brush – or that's the way it seems and commonly the way we treat them so often - despite that being far from the truth in the majority of cases! I know that feeling from both sides! As a former salesperson of both tangible goods like Encyclopaedias (remember them?) and vacuum cleaners to the less tangible and arguably more important like life assurance and superannuation, I can attest to the sense of not being liked and at times totally rejected. I wonder if our approach to sharing the Good News of Jesus is sometimes caught up in this mindset? That is – we fear rejection like many salespersons do – especially at the start of their careers – so we figure it is better for us not to try! As Christians, are we not meant to be salespeople for Jesus? Certainly, we are told that we are to be His witnesses (Acts 1: 8) – to share His story – and Paul says we are to be ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5: 20). While both these roles infer communication, conversation, and connection and while we do have something worthy of anyone's investment, there is a difference of mammoth proportions. What we have to offer is FREE – at least from a monetary perspective! So maybe there is another approach to that of 'selling'. One of my colleagues earlier this week shared that maybe "instead of being a salesperson for Jesus, we could consider being a free sample to be given away".

I am sure most of us have been wandering through supermarkets or shopping centres and have come across those people trying to hook you into buying whatever it is that they are selling. Or maybe you have visited a winery and been asked to sample a few different varieties to help you determine which one best suits right with your palate? My interest and intrigue is aroused by those who offer free samples of their product. Be it wine, cheese, cold meat, or some cooked delicacy, a sample gets my attention if nothing else. Perhaps a paradigm shift from 'selling' to 'giving away' may produce a more captivating audience. Of course we know that the life that Jesus offers is a free gift – again John 10: 10 confirms - "I have come that you might have life and life in all its fullness". Paul reminds us that it is by "Grace – a free gift – that we are saved" (italics added) (Eph. 2: 5). Can we be a people who, having received God's abundance of peace, power, hope, love, joy – LIFE – and all FREE, respond by becoming a FREE SAMPLE to be given away to whosoever will may come.

COVID-19

A number of new cases have emerged in Queensland in recent days, although thankfully nearly all of these were diagnosed whilst already in quarantine. Nevertheless, the events in the South East Corner have highlighted the need to be still vigilant. This has come from our Synod staff who are engaged in monitoring the continuing outflows from this pandemic. "We are not immune. This is not a drill. We have seen that the virus can be circulating in the community without our knowledge. Impact on workforce has been illustrated by the Ipswich hospital – 5 actual cases, but 220 staff quarantined until testing. This is a serious disruption to health services, and to the lives of staff and their families. Victoria have had to maintain strict quarantining for the whole of their community as a result of unmanaged transition. We do not want to be subject to the same approach, and therefore prevention is still absolutely essential." One of the recent developments within the Synod office is the drafting of a 'decision-making matrix' which once vetted and approved hopefully will be a guide to manage the messages and decisions to be made at Synod, Presbytery and Congregational levels. It is a map to ensure we have consistent expectations when quick decisions about the operations of the church need to be made. Watch this space.

Of course our borders are still closed to the south. While this may be reasonable from a health perspective, there are people whose livelihoods are being severely threatened as a result. Emotional stability and Mental Health is growing to be perhaps an even bigger threat to our community than the outbreak of COVID itself – or that is what some are contending! The inability to go interstate to see loved ones and unite with family and friends is proving problematic for many. Whatever we may personally think, there is no doubt that the impact of COVID-19 will be with us for a long time.

CHURCH

Those tuning into 91.5fm each Sunday morning are being blessed now by a smorgasbord of input in the form of messages emanating from a much wider cross-section of our Region's church leaders. This Sunday, the Very Rev Dr Adrian Farrelly – our local Catholic Priest – delivers the message while next Sunday we will hear from Rev Daniel Saunders from the Presbyterian Church. We are committed to continuing this service for the long term despite many churches recommencing worship face to face as we are still receiving positive feedback from many – some unchurched - who are enjoying this time each week. One of our own shared with me, this last week, that every Sunday at the moment they are worshipping in their car as they listen to church on the air.

Some of you will know of the less than professional screen from last Sunday (Gympie). As part of our migration to a live stream capability we are transitioning to another platform for our data. Called **Pro-Presenter**, this provides us with closer local assistance for most things should they go wrong, and is more readily adaptable to live streaming. It is a cheaper long term cost than Easy Worship and is far easier to navigate with many more options should we need them down the track. This platform has been purchased and is now operational. It will require some learning and some visual training assistance is being prepared for those needing to learn over the coming few weeks. In the short term Cherylie will know how to operate it as do I. This week we may use power-point exclusively!

Your Leadership Team met last Tuesday night and here are some of the highlights:

CONGREGATION PROFILE

Preliminary work has begun by your Leadership Team on the preparation of the Congregation Profile required in order that a new Minister can be ultimately called to partner Jim in serving you for your next Chapter of life and witness. Once this is at a stage for wider distribution it will come for endorsement at a congregation meeting, before going to Presbytery and then on to the Synod Placements Team.

10AM SERVICE

The re-commencing of this service has been mixed. Our worship team has been depleted a little and for a variety of reasons some are choosing not to return just yet. It was felt that it may be worthwhile to re-consider our approach to this service. Accordingly while we are committed to maintaining the 8am service, we are not continuing with the 10am service for a season, after this week. At this stage we are unclear as to the duration of this season but we want to take this time to discern what God wants for us going forward. Our kids are growing and needing their own space which we are struggling to provide, and most of our core people from this service are desperately keen to ensure we don't go back to what was! We are keen for something fresh and new but we just don't know what yet! So our plan for this next season is to offer our 10am worshippers the option of:

- Participating in our 8am service – subject of course to numbers!
- Joining the combined team at CCC Hall – 9.30am each Sunday. This really is a continuation of the journey many of us have been on for the last 6 months. This service offers in most aspects the same style of worship but is combined with the Church of Christ and Community Church folk.
- Continuing to view live stream church on Gympie.church online

At the same time, we want to encourage this group to come together periodically (maybe once a fortnight) for fellowship – maybe over a barbeque / perhaps down at the park or wherever – to stay connected and to share in who we want to become. I pray that we all may rise to this as and when these opportunities are made known. Stay tuned for the first one which may well be soon! We would value any feedback as we seek God for His purpose and plans.

TIME OF EARLY SERVICE

Given the above there was a suggestion that consideration be given to starting the first service a little later – 8.30am? Some of our people are finding it increasingly difficult to be ready and at church for a 8am start and the extra 30 mins may be the difference between them coming and not being able to come. Before progressing this, we would value your feedback. Is this something you could get excited about or would you prefer to leave it as is? At the next meeting, scheduled for Tuesday 22 September, we will discuss this further. If implemented, the first Sunday of change would likely be 4th October!

Other ministries / notices you may like to know about:

KIDS GAMES CAMP

Following on from the success of last year's Kid's Games camp, the Cooloola School Chaplains are again bringing it to Gympie in the September school holidays. It will be held at **Gympie South State School, on September 29 & 30, from 9 am to 3 pm. \$40 per child**, with family discounts and financial assistance available. Please contact the office or talk to Dave if any are interested or if you know of any who may be. If the registration costs are an issue please talk to us!

SHOE BOXES

Great news! Freight related costs have been covered! Praise God. Nevertheless donations are still welcome as any money above what is needed for our 50 boxes (faith statement), will be donated to Samaritan's Purse to cover freight to send boxes that come in to them without freight covered. We are still in need of some of the highlighted things from last week but folks it is critical that we receive all donated goods to either the Gympie Church office or the Imbil Church by **Friday 25th September** at the very latest. So we have a couple of weeks – let's do everything we can to get those 50 boxes all filled. Thank you all in advance!

NOTIFICATION OF ATTENDING

Cherylie has offered to receive your RSVP's to attend church of a Sunday any time during the preceding week. If they find they're unable to come after RSVPing – they can let me know if possible.

GIVING

Offerings this week - \$5,106.00. God is continuing to surprise and equip us all, despite the current times. Thank You Jesus and a huge thank you to all for your continuing diligence and faithfulness in your financial gifts to God.

PERSONAL

I was relieved of Jury Duty! Sandy and I were amongst a number of folk who attended the Suicide Prevention Day during the week. R-U-O-K? What a great question to ask anyone at any time but particularly during this week. I received a facebook message with just those letters! WOW!

SCRIPTURES Philippians 3: 8 ♦ Psalm 144: 2 ♦ Isaiah 58: 10 ♦ Luke 5: 4

Be Blessed!

Dave

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