

Faith Outreaches provide an excellent means for testing and increasing our faith. Stepping out of the comfort zone encourages us to *renewly* seek God's will and then look for ways in how to apply it. When we extend God's help in this way, we benefit from the intrinsic rewards gained as a result of fulfilling our purpose of helping others, but also from seeing our material needs being met at the same time.

Faith Outreaches are a helpful tool for realising the practical and spiritual benefits of Living-by-faith... and following God on a daily basis in all aspects of our lives. Finally, Faith Outreaches are a great way to prepare us for some of the core challenges we are likely to face in the years that lie ahead, as a result of world development.

If you would like to find out more about Faith Outreaches, or if you would like to accompany us on a Faith Outreach at some point, you can reach us at gethelpdefaith@gmail.com.

Good luck!



In our collection, the term 'Faith Outreach' is used to describe times when we put everything down and leave where we are staying (whether a camper van, or shared accommodation) for a period of time, stretching from as little as a few days to a few weeks, and sometimes for a month or more. Often we head off with just the clothes on our backs and possibly a few items in a backpack (e.g. a bible, toothbrush, pen, etc.). On other occasions it has included taking a tent or sleeping bag, and possibly even tents to distribute. Faith Outreaches can be in urban or rural settings, and sometimes they can include a mixture of both.

Introduction

Many people would argue that modern-day Christianity, as taught by most churches, gives little resemblance to the way of life practiced and taught by Jesus, his disciples and the early Church. In the different West, in particular, the way of life of professing Christians proper to our era for financial security and social responsibility, which can encompass out of the comfort but a faith a hard, even alien, prospect for most people to consider. However, 'waking up' is what Jesus taught his followers to do, and it is what we should be doing and teaching others to do.

Every aspect of our life is improved when we allow it to be governed by faith rather than fear. Wherever it is not faith is described as a habit, meaning 'waking the mind'. The term 'Living by Faith' is often used within Christian circles. However, when was the last time (if ever) that we took the time to seek God what we should be doing today, with a sincere willingness to do just that?

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In 2004 a human implantable microchip called 'NexChip' was offered to children in the Biggles Beach Club in Bournemouth for buying and selling of drinks. Only around 10,000 people worldwide ended up allowing themselves to be implanted with this device (used for a variety of medical, financial and security applications) before it was withdrawn.

However, what this device is that for the first time ever technology now exists to make this prophesy about the 'cashless society' come to pass.

What is seriously concerning to us is that the vast majority of believers (and non-believers) are not properly prepared for this. For believers, one reason for this lack of preparation is due to a teaching that believers are all 'saved' (taken out of harm's way) before the 'Great Tribulation', during which the prophesy about the cashless society is fulfilled.

So, in these people's minds, there is no need to prepare for this eventuality. It doesn't take much to see that this belief is based more on wishful thinking than on sound doctrine. A lot of professing Christians today don't want to consider that God may allow there to be put in a situation where they will actually suffer for their faith. This has led to the Church denying that we will go through the predicted 'Great Tribulation' because of a verse that says we are 'saved from wrath'. However, it is worth pointing out that there is a big difference between a time of testing for all (the 'Great Tribulation'), and the time when God pours out his anger (the 'Day of Wrath') on those who have rejected him, which happens soon after the Great Tribulation.

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Hebrews 11 is a must-read on the subject of faith. Verse 1 says: 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' We tend to become extremely wary of what we can see and touch. Often the way of faith is to step out into uncertainty first. However, the world is set up around clearly labelled boxes, definitions and parameters, all of which can end up restricting our ability to reach for new spiritual heights.

'That without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him'; (verse 6) 'If we've got to fear we diminish our experience of life. Jesus said: "...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). How many of us truly believe this? And how many of us have taken the time to explore what this entails, and how we might by Christ and his love follow.

Jesus said we can't serve two masters (God or money) and that we have to make a clear choice about which one we will work for (Matthew 6:24). He directed us to 'seek first the kingdom of God and all its righteousness', making it clear that if we do, our basic needs of food and clothing would be met on a daily basis. We are told not to worry about tomorrow (Matthew 6:34); that we should pick up our cross daily (Luke 9:23); and that we should not ask for our 'daily bread' (Matthew 6:11). In effect, we are being taught to live 'hand-to-mouth' in complete dependency on God.

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BREAK FREE OF THE SYSTEM!



"faith outreaches"

It is understood from scripture that the period of 'Great Tribulation' is marked by 7 'trumpets and thunders' in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 that the rapture occurs with the 'trumpet of God'. In 1 Corinthians 15 we get a more accurate picture of when this trumpet is... it is the last trumpet. So, it is clear that, if the Tribulation is marked by 7 'trumpets, and that the trumpet is at the last trumpet, then this occurs at the end of the Tribulation. This is in what with Jesus and himself in Matthew 24:29-31. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days..."

It follows, that if believers are called to go through the period during which this prophesy about the cashless society comes to pass, they will need to do everything they can to prepare to live without buying and selling ahead of time.

So, why is it more being done to teach people (both in and out of the church) about this urgent need and eventuality?

In light of this, we believe that Faith Outreaches are helpful in bringing into sharper focus the reality of God's supernatural provision, when we choose to step out in faith and seek to serve other people... but are also a form of necessary preparation for what is destined to come, quite possibly in our own lifetime.

If we are serious about not wanting to get micro-chipped in future, we are probably just kidding ourselves if we are not willing to take the necessary steps to learn to live without money ahead of time. This is simply putting about without when considering whether to experiment with Faith Out-

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Are we open to hearing Him say that we should drop our 'nets' (jobs, ambitions, careers, business etc.) in order to follow Him wherever He leads?

If we are accustomed to planning more than our net worth it is possible that we have stepped trusting God and have started trusting in ourselves instead!

This article is an attempt to draw people back to the Way of Truth and Love inside 2000 years ago, and to demonstrate that these truths are as applicable and accessible today as they were when they were first taught, even though it can be hard to believe this.

We will start by looking at the scriptural basis for Faith Outreaches, followed by a look at the practicalisation of experimenting with Faith Outreaches. If you are someone who does not consider yourself to have an active faith in God you may wish to skip over the next section (looking at the scriptural basis for Faith Outreaches) to the 'Practical Considerations' section. We are confident that you will find at least some thoughts and ideas expressed in this article to be helpful in your search for an alternative way of living and being.



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While there are many individuals (and communities) who have opted out of mainstream society to varying degrees, there is a whole range of people who are willing to forsake all their possessions and attachments in order to go wherever the Spirit leads. Doing so is not only 'good news'. The freedom and fulfillment of being led by God is quite literally, 'out of this world' (while being in it at the same time!). It is also helpful preparation for an eventuality we are already seeing the beginnings of, which will turn out to be a bit more than merely a change.

There is a prophecy in The Revelation (chapter 13:16-18) that we find 'markings' system which forces people to work in a 'mark' (Revelation 2:4) and to 'break it off' (Luke 14:33) again by focusing us into greater dependency on God. They can provide us with a great opportunity to consider why we're doing what we're doing, and if it's really there will be many different forms that future Faith Outreaches take as well.

Practical Considerations

Finding people (even just one other person) to accompany us on a Faith Outreach is advisable. Being in a community of people who have dedicated their lives to listening to God and following Him is helpful in this regard. However, for people who do not live in such a community and who may have jobs and other responsibilities, it may not be a case of leaving in some time (e.g. a few days) but rather a case of leaving in our hearts, family, or ourselves.

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There is an invisible work going on here which can be a bit hard to put into words. It is something we can't 'double-check' as well. For example, if we go into a free work opportunity secretly hoping that we're going to be something in return, this usually backfires in some way.

If we are doing something with a motivation other than love, we won't actually enjoy what we are doing, and it will feel just like a system job. In addition to this, the person we are hoping is more likely to pick up at some level that our motivation is not pure... or God may decide to set up a situation where we don't receive the thing we're secretly hoping for... probably to show us the wisdom of trusting Him more fully!

This work of trust and motivation is something which is natural for us to struggle with, but which we are likely to make improvements with the better of the love, the more we experiment with Faith Outreaches, and with the 'Seek-First'-The-Kingdom principle in different aspects of our lives.



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Many people end up staying in their jobs, relationships, or familiar environments, because they struggle to believe there is an alternative. They don't believe they have a choice. Just consider for a moment that this is not true - there is a force of them being created out of us, and we are not the only one who has ever thought of them... who lovingly created us for a specific purpose, and whose absolute pleasure it is to look after us, if we are sincere about finding out what our purpose for being here is. The problem is, if we are fearful and don't trust that what has just been shared is true, then we are more likely to structure our lives in such a way that we can experience the truth, which can create a self-fulfilling prophecy... or place us in a Catch-22 situation.

If you found out that everything you really need in life is provided for when you start your true purpose, then it is unlikely that you would want to go back to a state of existence that hinders this reality. However, many people argue that because they haven't experienced this it doesn't exist... rather than seeing their limited vision, or disbelief, is probably the reason why they haven't experienced it. This is a simple thing that can change when we choose to re-examine our beliefs and circumstances. Often this starts with a simple acknowledgment that we may have a bias - that we may be wrong - and that there may be another way of going about things other than this. This takes faith, but it also takes honesty.

God is not a theoretical construct, or an argument to be won. God is the Spirit of Love and Truth who created everything, when we are each in a very deep, personal relationship with (whether we realise this or not), and whom we can experience right here and right now.

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Some past means have included making signboards (often using cardboard boxes out on the street offering free work, free bags, or even counselling. On other occasions we have used chalk to draw catchy images, or to make signs for use in a local community - e.g. collecting rubbish from communal areas and displaying it helpfully. As you can imagine, the possibilities are endless.



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There are many reasons for going on a Faith Outreach, but the primary reason is to experience God's Kingdom and to share this with others, while trusting that our basic needs (food, clothing, shelter etc.) will be looked after, usually without us knowing how this will be the case (once the faith part).

If we have doubts as to whether 'God' may be little more than a religious construct, then stepping out in faith, away from familiar surroundings and comfort, can be a great way to shatter the misconception, as long as we remain genuinely open to being proved wrong.

Our Christian work can (ironically) get in the way of us being a Christian. This can lead to periodic burn-out. Faith Outreach is a way to break out of this cycle and to 'break it off' (Luke 14:33) again by focusing us into greater dependency on God. They can provide us with a great opportunity to consider why we're doing what we're doing, and if it's really there will be many different forms that future Faith Outreaches take as well.

Practical Considerations

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In Matthew 10, Jesus sends out his 12 disciples (and later on, in Luke 10, Jesus sends out another 70 disciples) with various guidelines, including the instruction to share the message with people and not to take any money, or brought for how they will be provided for during the journey.

He says, "...for the workmen is worthy of his meat" (Matthew 10:10), which goes to show that if we work for God, He will provide us with food and anything else we need, in order to get the job done.

How many of us believe that God is able to provide everything we need? How many of us want to let go of the things we don't really need, which are probably responsible for why we are choosing not to be dependent on Him? Jesus' words here are a challenge and the better of the love that the Son of Man has towards us to try his best. (Luke 9:25). Count that if we are honest (like sleeping rough) by getting in the way of us walking in the footsteps of Christ?

Jesus said: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). The real question is, do we actually believe this?

In Hebrews 13:8, Paul says: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever". The truth is relevant today as it was 2000 years ago. The only thing that has changed is that there are considerably fewer people who actually believe this now. (Luke 18:8)

We are sending this article out to a kind of message in a bottle hoping that it will find the rare individual who does believe, and who has the courage and desire to act on this belief as well.

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We have found that it is usually best to say less about our beliefs to the people whom we are helping and to let the action do most, if not all, of the 'preaching' for us. However, because it is usually better for someone to have a complete picture of what we are doing, we have decided to include this, often leading to help them with an ongoing attached, this often leads to them feeling curious about what we are doing, which in turn prompts them to ask us questions... which can lead to us revealing more about why we are doing what we are doing.

The beauty of the Seek-First-The-Kingdom principle is that helping and being helped is its own intrinsic reward. We get genuine satisfaction from seeing people's lives touched when we choose to help them out, and the joy of getting something in return from them. And the additional reward is that we usually find our own needs get met as well.

Often, but not always, comes from the people whom we are helping, who feel inspired to offer us food, drink, shelter, clothing, etc. However, on many occasions it has been experienced that it doesn't exist... rather than seeing their limited vision, or disbelief, is probably the reason why they haven't experienced it. This is a simple thing that can change when we choose to re-examine our beliefs and circumstances. Often this starts with a simple acknowledgment that we may have a bias - that we may be wrong - and that there may be another way of going about things other than this. This takes faith, but it also takes honesty.

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God is a Living God, and the way we can experience the truth of this is for us to live our lives to the full, believing this. On a practical level, we have often found that the first 2 to 3 steps of a Faith Outreach can be the hardest, during which those who are most likely to think about giving up. Challenges can range from going through caffeine withdrawal... to struggling to get a clear message from God may be a real challenge, and the last goes on. However, before following in the love, we would encourage people to at least think twice about doing so. Very little in life is worth having if it costs too easily, and on the other side of challenges are rewards which we usually find are well worth going through the challenges for. Changing our circumstances, our diet, our normal routine, or whatever, can be challenging... but it can also help us to develop more resourcefulness while enabling us to get a more balanced view of our lives. It is important to be aware of our limits, but it is equally important to place limits on ourselves which are not helpful. God knows our limits a lot more than we do, and being stretched is usually the way we find out just what we're capable of... with God's help, of course!

If we act in faith then God provides us with the means and strength in order to meet these challenges head on, and to come out on the other side both stronger and wiser.

A large part of this entails going to our fears and surrendering our various opinions. Faith Outreaches are a great way of doing this, often leading to us being able to experience a greater dependency on God. If we don't have a clear about where we're going to be in 24 hours, how we are going to get it, or what we are going to be doing, often has the effect of inspiring us to pray a lot more of the Catch-22 just for starters!

The way out of the Catch-22 is for us to realize God's help in stepping out. We need to learn and be in order to find freedom, both intimately and circumstantially. When we ask in faith help we are considerably more likely to receive the tools and strength to make us to break free of the Catch-22 of the System... a system based around the perceived safety of comfort, content, disease and fear, and to take God out of the picture in order to help keep us imprisoned. The key to breaking free rests in whether we want to be free. If we do, then there is more chance that we will not let the prison walls and come to realize that they are often just constructs of our own imagination. The more we do this, the more likely it is that we will choose to step through these imaginary walls, in order to experience the freedom that is available to us on the other side.

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Another highlight of Faith Outreaches is the strengthening of emotional and spiritual bonds between the people who go on them. Witnessing these treasures first-hand can help us to develop an accurate expectation for any future Faith Outreaches we go, which can help us through any challenging times we may face on these.

'Seek First The Kingdom' (aka Being Useless!)

Doing useful has more to do with following God's provisos, rather than necessarily doing something that is often does result in us being happy and in some way. The main reason for getting up, what we do, and the results of the situation, and how we are being called to be free from them!

There have been some Faith Outreaches where we have helped to focus more on 'useful' time together, working on interpersonal relationships. However, often the spirit has prompted us to do some form of 'teaching out' or people together, hence the term 'Faith Outreaches' are many forms this outreach has taken in the past, and it's likely there will be many different forms that future Faith Outreaches take as well.

There is a time to draw on the experience of what has worked in the past... however this can also get in the way of things working well in the present, if we are not open to hearing God saying something different to us. There have been times when we had left it up to us to decide the means through which we help people, and how we set about communicating this opportunity to them... although in other circumstances we have found that God has given us clear pointers about a particular approach to take.

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On the occasions where we have felt lost to take a hard line against ourselves this was to create a scenario where waiting on God for his provision was made a lot easier. This has been the focus of our using money at all levels of our faith, or someone offers it to us or not asking people for help etc. There have been other occasions where we have felt that God was leading us to apply a softer approach.

On a recent Faith Outreach we received the words "open formula" in a report after, when we had started out with a more structured approach.

This prompted us to think our approach which led to us experiencing with things like back-knocking. Which approach to take may depend on the level of faith and experience of the people taking part, but not always. It is important to remember that God has a much closer idea than us about what we are able to handle... and what we are not!

To explain more about the listening and prayer mentioned above... usually this involves trying to calm and quieten our minds in order to hear what God wants to say to us, similar to meditation. At the start of a particular Faith Outreach involving four of us, we had one of these listening times together during which we asked God for listening in order to help decide what our first moves should be. In a 'leading' report of what we received in a leading time, whether it be a word, a vision, bible verse etc.). One of us received a vision of a bottle one of us received an image of a spirit, and one of us received the word 'testimony'. We were quite close to a river at the time, so we took the word vision to mean that we should walk along the river in the direction of the city centre.

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Around an hour later, after waiting a few miles, we saw a road sign for 'Fortitude Valley'. It was the first time any of us had been to the city so we didn't know this place existed... which, as you may have guessed, led us to conclude that the 'Fortitude' leading was a prompt for us to go to Fortitude Valley!

When we arrived in the centre of this suburb we wandered down the main pedestrian street. Amazingly, right in the middle of the shopping precinct was a large mosaic sign. As it happens, we saw down a bench close by and got talking to a guy whom we later found out owned a Turkish restaurant, and he invited us to have some free food and coffee there. We enjoyed it and around this area for the rest of our stay, during which time we had many inspiring interactions with people, and positive things happen, as a result of our decision to follow these leadings in faith.

There may be more clarity from God in certain situations than others, and the various reasons. There have been many times when we have not received such clear leadings as we did in the Faith Outreach mentioned above, or have misinterpreted leadings, which is just part and parcel of experimenting with Faith Outreaches. Every Faith Outreach is different and it is important to see every when things don't seemingly work out, as often they are just doing so for the rest of our journey.

Challenges and Expectations

It is hard to prepare people for all the challenges they are likely to face during a Faith Outreach. However, just knowing that it will be challenged is part of the preparation.

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If we act in faith then God provides us with the means and strength in order to meet these challenges head on, and to come out on the other side both stronger and wiser.

On a practical level, we have often found that the first 2 to 3 steps of a Faith Outreach can be the hardest, during which those who are most likely to think about giving up. Challenges can range from going through caffeine withdrawal... to struggling to get a clear message from God may be a real challenge, and the last goes on. However, before following in the love, we would encourage people to at least think twice about doing so. Very little in life is worth having if it costs too easily, and on the other side of challenges are rewards which we usually find are well worth going through the challenges for. Changing our circumstances, our diet, our normal routine, or whatever, can be challenging... but it can also help us to develop more resourcefulness while enabling us to get a more balanced view of our lives. It is important to be aware of our limits, but it is equally important to place limits on ourselves which are not helpful. God knows our limits a lot more than we do, and being stretched is usually the way we find out just what we're capable of... with God's help, of course!

For people who have never tried something like this before, having the experience and following of others who have can be both practically helpful and spiritually reassuring. However, while this is the case, it is a 'must'. There are scores of people throughout history who have left everything behind to lead on in a God-led adventure of faith by themselves, either for a while or permanently. It all depends on our level of faith and whether God is leading us to do this. That's the most important aspect of work out - the faith part - is the most naturally follows on from there.

It is working out what to take, who to take, where to go etc., it is helpful to take some time to discuss what the needs of the situation are, including any factors that may influence where we go and how long to go for. In addition to considering these are the means of finding God's will which may provide guidance and direction (like circumstances, or a direct revelation we may receive through listening and prayer).

On most Faith Outreaches we have had without any money or food on our persons. During some Faith Outreaches, we have started out by supplying a particular approach but ended up rejecting this.

In other situations, the reverse has been true - i.e. we have ended up using a harder line on ourselves.

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