**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

**TOPIC: My personal church life**

**…How can I contribute to our church’s spiritual momentum.**

**TRAINER: Pastor Bill Vasilakis**

**Question: How does a church get and keep spiritual momentum?**

**Answer**: By being **comprised of people** who **get** and **keep** their **personal spiritual momentum**.

* If it is happening with us **individually** it will rub of on our brothers and sisters in Christ **collectively**.
* This also operates in the **negative** and I have **witnessed** churches go into **decline** when a **spiritual** **declension** occurs with the five **momentum factors** that we **all** need to personally embrace

Those five factors are:

1. Read yourself **FULL**
2. Pray yourself **HOT**
3. Allow yourself to be **EMPOWERED** and led by the Holy Spirit.
4. Get yourself relationally **CONNECTED**
5. Throw yourself into **SERVING** Jesus

Jesus has given us a **beautiful and powerful picture** of His church as it **should be**.

* It’s found in the **book of Acts** which tells the history of the early church in its first 35 years.
* We see the **undeniable results** of a church that has **spiritual momentum** as we look at **the Jerusalem church**.

# Group work: Describe in your own words what this first church was like.

# List the prevailing attitudes you can see among these first Christians.

# How does our Church rate on a scale of 1 to 10?

# Acts 2 - The Message (MSG)

A Sound Like a Strong Wind

**2 1-4**When the Feast of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Without warning there was a sound like a strong wind, gale force—no one could tell where it came from. It filled the whole building. Then, like a wildfire, the Holy Spirit spread through their ranks, and they started speaking in a number of different languages as the Spirit prompted them.

**5-11**There were many Jews staying in Jerusalem just then, devout pilgrims from all over the world. When they heard the sound, they came on the run. Then when they heard, one after another, their own mother tongues being spoken, they were thunderstruck. They couldn’t for the life of them figure out what was going on, and kept saying, “Aren’t these all Galileans? How come we’re hearing them talk in our various mother tongues?

Parthians, Medes, and Elamites;
Visitors from Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia,
    Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia,
    Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene;
Immigrants from Rome, both Jews and proselytes;
Even Cretans and Arabs!

“They’re speaking our languages, describing God’s mighty works!”

**12**Their heads were spinning; they couldn’t make head or tail of any of it. They talked back and forth, confused: “What’s going on here?”

**13**Others joked, “They’re drunk on cheap wine.”

Peter Speaks Up

**14-21**That’s when Peter stood up and, backed by the other eleven, spoke out with bold urgency: “Fellow Jews, all of you who are visiting Jerusalem, listen carefully and get this story straight. These people aren’t drunk as some of you suspect. They haven’t had time to get drunk—it’s only nine o’clock in the morning. This is what the prophet Joel announced would happen:

“In the Last Days,” God says,
“I will pour out my Spirit
    on every kind of people:
Your sons will prophesy,
    also your daughters;
Your young men will see visions,
    your old men dream dreams.
When the time comes,
    I’ll pour out my Spirit
On those who serve me, men and women both,
    and they’ll prophesy.
I’ll set wonders in the sky above
    and signs on the earth below,
Blood and fire and billowing smoke,
    the sun turning black and the moon blood-red,
Before the Day of the Lord arrives,
    the Day tremendous and marvelous;
And whoever calls out for help
    to me, God, will be saved.”

**22-28**“Fellow Israelites, listen carefully to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man thoroughly accredited by God to you—the miracles and wonders and signs that God did through him are common knowledge—this Jesus, following the deliberate and well-thought-out plan of God, was betrayed by men who took the law into their own hands, and was handed over to you. And you pinned him to a cross and killed him. But God untied the death ropes and raised him up. Death was no match for him. David said it all:

I saw God before me for all time.
    Nothing can shake me; he’s right by my side.
I’m glad from the inside out, ecstatic;
    I’ve pitched my tent in the land of hope.
I know you’ll never dump me in Hades;
    I’ll never even smell the stench of death.
You’ve got my feet on the life-path,
    with your face shining sun-joy all around.

**29-36**“Dear friends, let me be completely frank with you. Our ancestor David is dead and buried—his tomb is in plain sight today. But being also a prophet and knowing that God had solemnly sworn that a descendant of his would rule his kingdom, seeing far ahead, he talked of the resurrection of the Messiah—‘no trip to Hades, no stench of death.’ This Jesus, God raised up. And every one of us here is a witness to it. Then, raised to the heights at the right hand of God and receiving the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, he poured out the Spirit he had just received. That is what you see and hear. For David himself did not ascend to heaven, but he did say,

God said to my Master, “Sit at my right hand
Until I make your enemies a stool for resting your feet.”

“All Israel, then, know this: There’s no longer room for doubt—God made him Master and Messiah, this Jesus whom you killed on a cross.”

**37**Cut to the quick, those who were there listening asked Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers! Brothers! So now what do we do?”

**38-39**Peter said, “Change your life. Turn to God and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, so your sins are forgiven. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is targeted to you and your children, but also to all who are far away—whomever, in fact, our Master God invites.”

**40**He went on in this vein for a long time, urging them over and over, “Get out while you can; get out of this sick and stupid culture!”

**41-42**That day about three thousand took him at his word, were baptized and were signed up. They committed themselves to the teaching of the apostles, the life together, the common meal, and the prayers.

**43-45**Everyone around was in awe—all those wonders and signs done through the apostles! And all the believers lived in a wonderful harmony, holding everything in common. They sold whatever they owned and pooled their resources so that each person’s need was met.

**46-47**They followed a daily discipline of worship in the Temple followed by meals at home, every meal a celebration, exuberant and joyful, as they praised God. People in general liked what they saw. Every day their number grew as God added those who were saved.

# Acts 4 Message (MSG)

Nothing to Hide

**4 1-4**While Peter and John were addressing the people, the priests, the chief of the Temple police, and some Sadducees came up, indignant that these upstart apostles were instructing the people and proclaiming that the resurrection from the dead had taken place in Jesus. They arrested them and threw them in jail until morning, for by now it was late in the evening. But many of those who listened had already believed the Message—in round numbers about five thousand!

**5-7**The next day a meeting was called in Jerusalem. The rulers, religious leaders, religion scholars, Annas the Chief Priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander—everybody who was anybody was there. They stood Peter and John in the middle of the room and grilled them: “Who put you in charge here? What business do you have doing this?”

**8-12**With that, Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, let loose: “Rulers and leaders of the people, if we have been brought to trial today for helping a sick man, put under investigation regarding this healing, I’ll be completely frank with you—we have nothing to hide. By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the One you killed on a cross, the One God raised from the dead, by means of his name this man stands before you healthy and whole. Jesus is ‘the stone you masons threw out, which is now the cornerstone.’ Salvation comes no other way; no other name has been or will be given to us by which we can be saved, only this one.”

**13-14**They couldn’t take their eyes off them—Peter and John standing there so confident, so sure of themselves! Their fascination deepened when they realized these two were laymen with no training in Scripture or formal education. They recognized them as companions of Jesus, but with the man right before them, seeing him standing there so upright—so healed!—what could they say against that?

**15-17**They sent them out of the room so they could work out a plan. They talked it over: “What can we do with these men? By now it’s known all over town that a miracle has occurred, and that they are behind it. There is no way we can refute that. But so that it doesn’t go any further, let’s silence them with threats so they won’t dare to use Jesus’ name ever again with anyone.”

**18-20**They called them back and warned them that they were on no account ever again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John spoke right back, “Whether it’s right in God’s eyes to listen to you rather than to God, you decide. As for us, there’s no question—we can’t keep quiet about what we’ve seen and heard.”

**21-22**The religious leaders renewed their threats, but then released them. They couldn’t come up with a charge that would stick, that would keep them in jail. The people wouldn’t have stood for it—they were all praising God over what had happened. The man who had been miraculously healed was over forty years old.

One Heart, One Mind

**23-26**As soon as Peter and John were let go, they went to their friends and told them what the high priests and religious leaders had said. Hearing the report, they lifted their voices in a wonderful harmony in prayer: “Strong God, you made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. By the Holy Spirit you spoke through the mouth of your servant and our father, David:

Why the big noise, nations?
Why the mean plots, peoples?
Earth’s leaders push for position,
Potentates meet for summit talks,
The God-deniers, the Messiah-defiers!

**27-28**“For in fact they did meet—Herod and Pontius Pilate with nations and peoples, even Israel itself!—met in this very city to plot against your holy Son Jesus, the One you made Messiah, to carry out the plans you long ago set in motion.

**29-30**“And now they’re at it again! Take care of their threats and give your servants fearless confidence in preaching your Message, as you stretch out your hand to us in healings and miracles and wonders done in the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

**31**While they were praying, the place where they were meeting trembled and shook. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak God’s Word with fearless confidence.

**32-33**The whole congregation of believers was united as one—one heart, one mind! They didn’t even claim ownership of their own possessions. No one said, “That’s mine; you can’t have it.” They shared everything. The apostles gave powerful witness to the resurrection of the Master Jesus, and grace was on all of them.

**34-35**And so it turned out that not a person among them was needy. Those who owned fields or houses sold them and brought the price of the sale to the apostles and made an offering of it. The apostles then distributed it according to each person’s need.

**36-37**Joseph, called by the apostles “Barnabas” (which means “Son of Comfort”), a Levite born in Cyprus, sold a field that he owned, brought the money, and made an offering of it to the apostles.

For the CFC to follow the example of the Acts Church we need to **embrace** some **spiritual** **keys** we find in the description of the Jerusalem Church.

When we are **individually** **‘FULL’, ‘HOT’, ‘EMPOWERED’, ‘CONNECTED’** and **‘SERVING’**, we will **naturally** as a church community:

1. **EXPECT AND EXPERIENCE MIRACLES**

... It’s our **birthright** as God’s people and its the **evidential** **hallmark** of Jesus church.

Look at what **Doctor Luke** says about the first church.

**Acts 2:43 MSG** - *Everyone around was in awe—all those wonders and signs done through the apostles!*

**Acts 4:30** – (Now Lord) *Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus*.

* **Discussion** – So what are these signs and wonders?

**1 Corinthians 14:1** - *Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit ...*

... The power To **Speak**, **Know** and **Do**

**The CFC Story** ... take out the **supernatural** and the constant miracles over the years and it would just be a **man made organisation**. The truth is that it’s a **living organism**, the body of our resurrected all powerful Jesus. ...

Every church is to be **headed** by Jesus who wants **continue** His miraculous ministry **by His Spirit** **through His people** who dare to **believe** and **obey** **His** **Word**.

* **Discussion** – How do you view the church?

... Church momentum develops as we

1. **SPEAK BOLDLY**

... We are to **unashamedly proclaim** **Jesus’ story** and share about **our personal faith journey**.

... The **first** **Christians** were **courageous** and **uncompromising** even when they were being **threatened** and people were **menacing** towards them.

**Acts 4:29** - *Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.*

**Acts 4:33** - *With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all*

**Acts 2:42 MSG** - *They committed themselves to the teaching of the apostles*

We share Jesus **truths and perspectives** to our rapidly changing world.

We obey Jesus **irrespective** of what our secular world is saying.

... Jesus **culture** is quite **counter**-**cultural** at times and we must not be **intimidated** by what even the majority of our society may be pushing, if it’s **out of wack** with a Christian world view.

**Acts 4:18-20** - *Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.****19****But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges!****20****As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.*

I have listed some **cultural**, **ethical** and **moral** areas that we need to speak boldly about.

* **Discussion** – How and when do we address these?

Let me quote from Chapter 3 of my book “The Me I Can Be” (read p 44-45)

*“Do you realise how immense the pressures are that are trying to conform you to this world’s systems, so you will reflect its values, ethics, morals, attitudes and behaviours?*

*There has always been an anti-Christ spirit that endeavours to undermine our confidence in the Scriptures and our beliefs about Jesus Christ. Peer pressure and the changing values of our society are powerful instruments in Satan’s hands. Some of these are:*

* *An indulgent greedy materialism and intolerant Christ-rejecting secularism*
* *A militant atheism that ridicules people of faith*
* *An entitlement welfare dependency and limiting poverty mindset*
* *A grievance disposition that is always looking for fault and taking offense*
* *Alcohol abuse and drunkenness*
* *Dangerous, illegal, escapist, pleasure-seeking drugs*
* *Sexual immorality and adultery*
* *The unhealthy idolatry of perfectionist idealised body image that can lead to the deadly illnesses of anorexia, bulimia and morbid obesity*
* *The demeaning pornography explosion, with its easy accessibility*
* *The gross evil of child abuse*
* *The gender and sexuality fluidity myth*
* *The inappropriate use of social media like hateful trolling*
* *Marriage and family breakdown*
* *Violence in all its expressions*
* *Bullying and harassment which can lead towards mental illness and suicide*

*These present evils are wreaking havoc in people’s lives and causing unbelievable pain in our community.”*

We counter these with a **Christian Biblical perspective** and we must speak the **Truth**, but always in a **Loving** way ... Hit the issue, never the person.

... Church momentum grows when we are

1. **UNITED IN PURPOSE**

Working in **love and unity** has been a great strength of the CFC over the past 40 years.

... Let’s never take it for granted.

Luke describes this purposeful unity in:

**Acts 2:44 MSG** - *And all the believers lived in a wonderful harmony...*

**Acts 4:32** - *All the believers were one in heart and mind...*

**Acts 4:24** - *When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God...*

When we collectively WORSHIP Jesuswith all our hearts, the Spirit energises and empowers our WITNESS.

We look for fresh waves of Holy Spirit life to come upon us.

**Acts 4:31** - *After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

Discussion – There is one Spirit Baptism with the accompanying evidence of speaking in tongues; but there are many infillings ... Do you agree? When was the last time you had a fresh wave of the Spirit hit you?

A church that has spiritual momentum will be filled with

1. **LIBERAL GIVERS**

They all saw themselves as people under Christ’s **Lordship** and **control**.

... This included their material life

... **money, houses, food, clothes, goods**

Luke describes their amazing generosity.

**Acts 2:45 MSG -** *They sold whatever they owned and pooled their resources so that each person’s need was met.*

**Acts 4:32** - *No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had*

Cathy and I really try to live this way

(ie) Our House – A haven of hospitality and

 a resort for the weary

(ie) Our finances – Weekly tithes

* + Monthly missions
	+ Facilities support
	+ People in need

The truth is, you can’t take it with you when you **leave** this life

... invest in Jesus’ kingdom both **now** and when you’re in **heaven**.

... take care of your **family** and also Jesus **continuing work** through the CFC.

Quite a few of us have the CFC in our WILLS. A portion of our estate goes into our Perpetuity Fund

... Only the **interest** will be utilised for ministry and mission purposes.

* **Discussion** – Is this a little extreme?
* **Discussion** – John Wesley said, “Earn as much as you can; save as much as you can; give as much as you can.” How does this work practically?

... Finally, a church that is flowing in spiritual momentum will

1. **ANTICIPATE REAL CONVERSIONS**

... We just know that God will work **sovereignly** and **supernaturally** through our **faithful efforts** to be effective **witnesses** of Jesus.

* **Discussion** – Share your experiences about being used of God to witness and lead people to Jesus.

**Acts 2:47 MSG** - *People in general liked what they saw. Every day their number grew as God added those who were saved.*

**Acts 5:31-32** - *God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Saviour that he might bring Israel to* ***repentance and forgive their sins***.[He does this]***32****We are witnesses of these things* [We share and the Spirit supports us]*, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.*

The Challenge

1. To Model the Acts Church
2. To Align to its pattern
3. To increase our Spiritual Momentum

**Personally**:

‘FULL’ - ‘HOT’ – ‘EMPOWERED’ – ‘CONNECTED’

– ‘SERVING’

**Collectively**:

‘EXPECT MIRACLES’ – ‘SPEAK BOLDLY’ – ‘UNITED IN PURPOSE’ – ‘LIBERAL GIVERS’ – ‘ANTICIPATE REAL CONVERSIONS’