



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC	Extraction: Be the Agent of Change	SPEAKER	Elder Lok Vi Ming
THEME	Critical Concerns of Our Times	DATE	19 & 20 August 2023

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Elder Lok Vi Ming led his sermon by celebrating and dedicating the ministry of Bethesda Care Services (BCS) to the Lord. BCS started in December 1996, and the Lord continues to grow this ministry from strength to strength. Elder Lok exhorts us to be the agent of change, helping those in need in the community through BCS' programmes and initiatives.

EXTRACTION: BE THE AGENT OF CHANGE

Qualifications of an agent of change

We have the good news of Jesus and we can share God's love with our community, being the Lord's agents of change who will make a positive difference in the lives of people in our community, especially those who do not yet know the Lord. The qualifications of such an agent of change are in Philippians 2:14-16. When people see our lives and the good that we are doing, they give glory to God because they know that we are Christians.

Extraction Missions (BCS)

The missions in focus for BCS are:

- (a) **Elderly:** In Singapore's rapidly ageing population, the top 3 issues for the elderly are medical problems, family difficulties and loneliness. From 2017 to 2021, there has been increasing demand for BCS medical escort and meals delivery services with 93% increase over 5 years.
- (b) **Youth:** There is increase in Singapore's youth mental health issues (such as depression, anxiety and loneliness), and youth delinquency (such as drug abuse, sexual offences).
- (c) **Low-income families:** Inflation has outpaced wages particularly for low-income families in the past 4-5 years. They are among the hardest hit by inflation and sluggish income growth, which has pushed them to spend almost all their income every month.

Isaiah 61:1 reminds us of the goals of the extraction missions. It requires us to invest our resources and time, causes inconvenience, and may even potentially result in damage to our careers and relationships.

Key Points for the Extraction Missions

(a) Impact/Change

Elder Lok shared examples of 2 youths who benefited from BCS' youth programmes, and Mother Teresa's ministry. Making an impact does not have to be something very big; we can make an impact from the portion that we have been given and can handle. As Mother Teresa said, "Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love." God is working with us and it is His agenda that we are carrying out – He will bring it to pass.

(b) Motivation/Responsibility

Elder Lok shared examples of 2 BBTicians who volunteer for medical escort and meals delivery services and tuition respectively, and their passions for helping. The reverential fear of God gives us wisdom to discern where to invest our resources and time. Further, we should have the positive type of fearing failure that makes us want to do our best for God.

Conversely, complacency/ excuses, and lacking faith in God, will destroy motivation/ responsibility.

- Complacency/ excuses: We should stop making excuses for each other and stop offering or drinking the kind poison (excuses offered with good intentions) that lead to complacency. Instead, let us encourage, inspire and challenge one another to do God's work.
- Lacking faith in God: Matthew 25:14-28 illustrates the wicked and lazy servant who was not faithful with the talent which his lord had given to him. The servant not only failed to carry out his lord's instructions, he also wrongly accused his lord of being unreasonable, unfair and unjust. We are stewards, trustees of the talents given by our Lord, and should fulfil our Lord's instructions to use our talents for His purposes (Isaiah 61:1). Beware of a "do nothing" faith, and we must be careful not to misrepresent our Lord's power, goodness and provision.

(c) Identity

Our actions are frequently influenced by the roles we play and the identity we hold. Elder Lok gave an example that the role of a policeman in uniform is to uphold peace and order. When we wear our "uniform" as a priest, a king, a child of God, it should shape our identity and behaviour. We should not act like a "reservist" Christian who does nothing. Instead, as Christians we put on the armour of God (Ephesians 6:11), becoming imitators of God (Ephesians 5:1) and doing what God has called us to do, such as fighting poverty, releasing prisoners from darkness, restoring relationships and reaching out to those who need help.

CONCLUSION

We should develop the discipline of doing what God wants us to do, all the time. As Billy Graham said, "We are the Bibles the world is reading; We are the creeds the world is needing; We are the sermons the world is heeding." God has called Christians to undertake His mission of going out into the world to help the lost and unsaved.

QUESTIONS

1. Have you (or someone you know) volunteered to help in any community services before? What were your (or that person's) motivations or reasons for volunteering?

2. Our thinking of God will affect our actions. Elder Lok said that when we are asked to do something for God, 2 questions to ask are "Who are you, Lord?" and "What shall I do, Lord?" Reflect on an instance when you struggled to respond to a call to do something for God (which required some sacrifice on your part). What is God revealing to you through your answers to these 2 questions?

3. Consider prayerfully – are there any areas of BCS community services that you feel a burden for? Share some of your concerns / struggles, and how can the CG members pray for you?