

The Good News of the Kingdom

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According to Jesus, the good news of the gospel was that in Jesus, the Kingdom of God had touched down in our world. The phrase "Kingdom of God" (or "Kingdom of Heaven" in Matthew) is about God's Kingly Reign coming down and being applied in our world. It has to do with the dynamic of God's Kingdom Authority being applied. So as Jesus set foot in human history, He started a revolution of bringing God's Kingly Reign to bear on our broken, sin infected world. Like King Richard the Lionheart who returns to England to take back his throne from the evil Prince John, Jesus has come into our world to take back his throne over our lost planet.

In the evangelical Christian church, we have been blessed with diagrams and outlines that help us understand the good news of Jesus. Tools such as Campus Crusade's "4 Spiritual Laws" and the Navigator's "Bridge Diagram" have given us simple, clear ways to present the gospel and invite others to follow Jesus.

However, what is becoming more and more apparent is that the conception of the gospel that underlies such gospel outlines is incomplete. In all cases, the main idea is that Jesus died on the cross for our sins so that we can be forgiven and receive eternal life and go to heaven after we die. While this is true, it misses out on the fuller dimensions of the gospel as rendered in the Scriptures. It's not just about individuals gaining forgiveness so that they can secure their destinies in heaven. It is also about God's Kingly Reign, His Will, coming to bear in all areas of life here and now. It's not just about saving the soul but about caring for the body, about healing brokenness, about reconciling divisions and conflicts. It's not just about evangelism but also

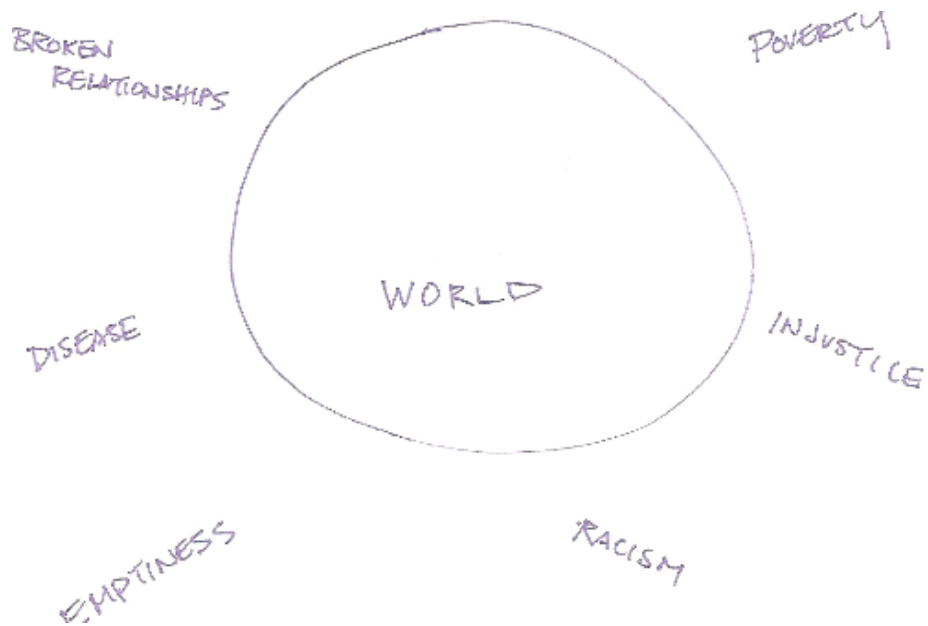
about seeing justice overcome injustice, seeing the poor are fed, healing divisions of race and social class, seeing brokenness and pain healed with the love and power of Jesus. Wherever there is need in brokenness in our world, the good news is that Jesus has come to begin the process of make it right. Rather than the gospel being about how we get to heaven it's more like seeing heaven break into our world.

Therefore, preaching a gospel that only proclaims a pathway to forgiveness and heaven is woefully incomplete.

This is one attempt of rendering the gospel of the Kingdom through a pictorial presentation such that the fuller dimensions of the gospel are presented.

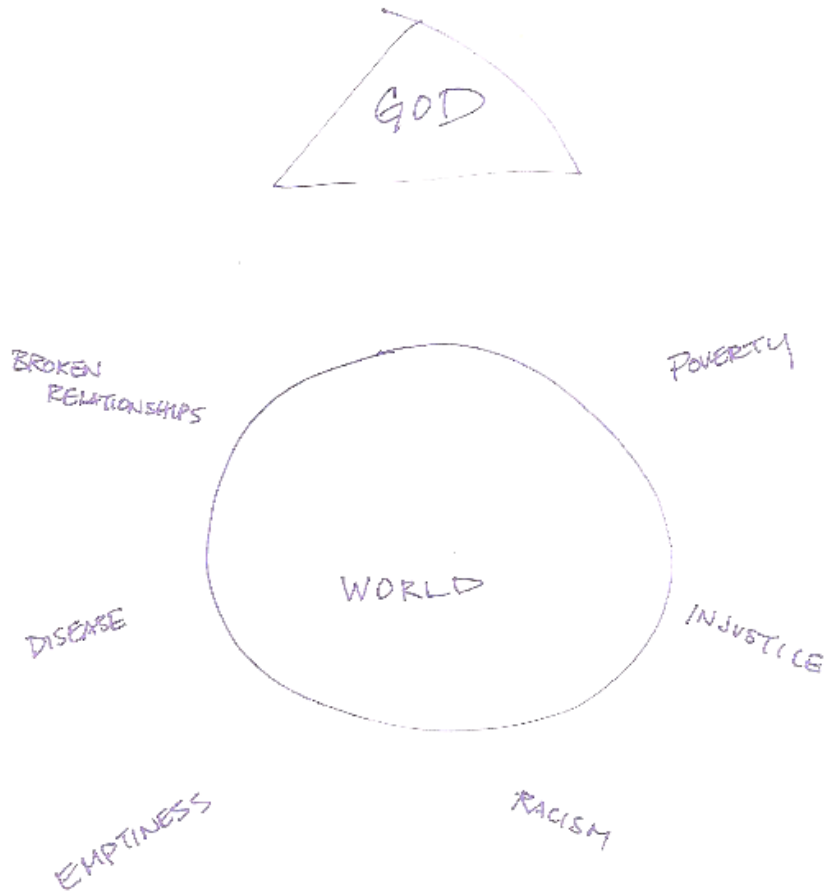
I recognize, however, that no gospel outline can do justice to the true message of the gospel. On one hand, the message of the gospel can and must be accompanied by the demonstration of the gospel. No verbal message is enough. People must see that the Kingdom is really here and growing. If our lives and the lives of our community do not demonstrate and embody the message, then no one will believe the truth of our gospel. Furthermore, as I study what the message of Jesus is from the Scriptures, I am awestruck at the profound depth and riches of what God has done for us in Jesus and what it means for us to be united with Him. On one hand, we need not make the gospel complicated – the gospel is about God coming to us in Jesus to save us from our sins. However, the Scriptures gives us so much insight on what that means that we can spend a lifetime plummeting the riches of God's gracious work in Jesus.

The following is one attempt to present the gospel of the Kingdom in a way that connects with our world today.



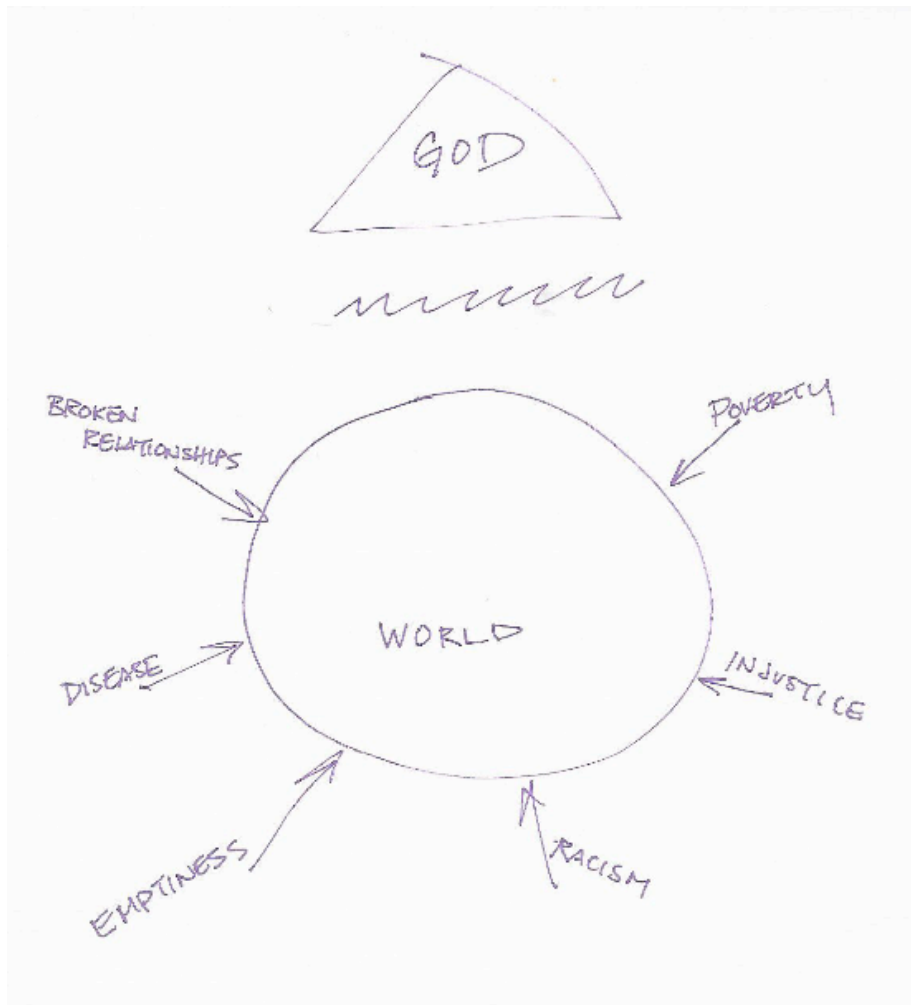
1. Something is wrong with our world

- a. Draw a circle and write "world" inside it.
- b. *"Something is wrong with our world and life on this planet."*
 - i. Begin listing all of the problems with our world and with life on the outside of the circle (poverty, injustice, broken relationships, emptiness, racism, catastrophes, etc.). Here, you can even cater it to the life experience of the listener including the problems that they experience.
- c. *"So what's wrong with the world?"*



2. Creation

- a. "God never wanted our world to be this way."
 - i. Write "God" above the World –
- b. "God's intention was that all of life would resonate with His love and peace. We would know God personally. We would have loving relationships with each other not marred by selfishness and pride. Even the whole created order of plants and animals would work in a God given harmony. No Katrina disasters, no tsunami devastations, etc."

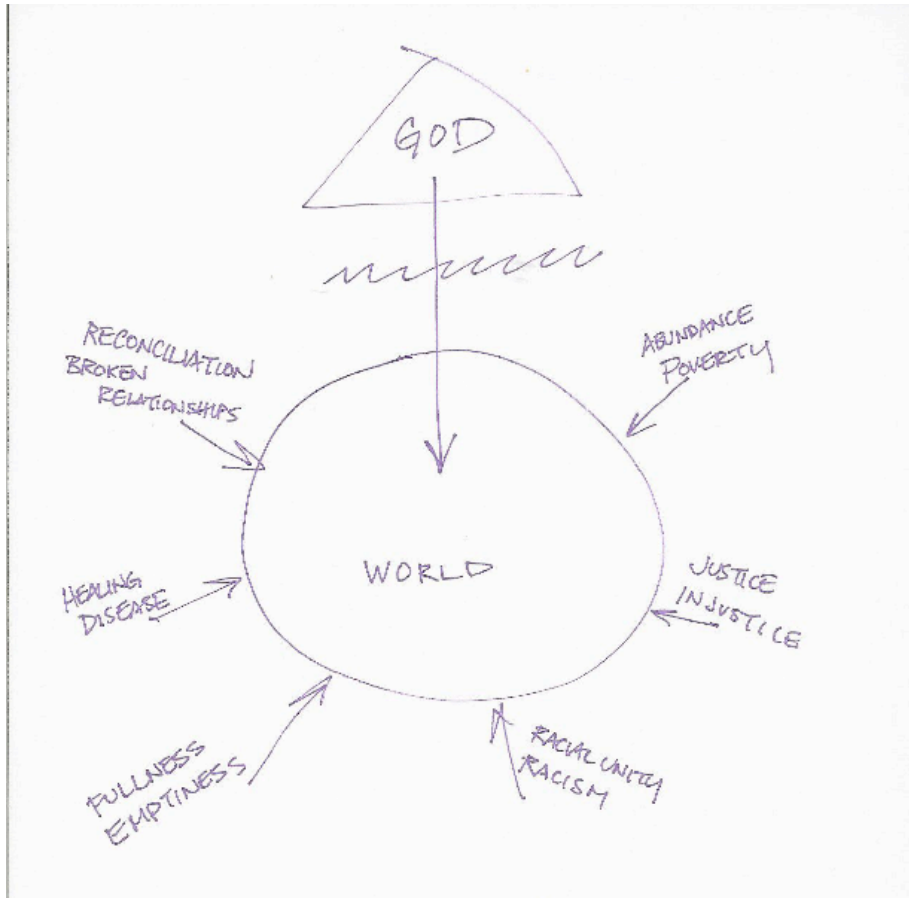


3. Fall

- a. (Human sin) *"But from the very beginning humanity chose and continues to choose to live apart from God. We want to live life our way, according to our own standards. And so we ignore or rebel against*

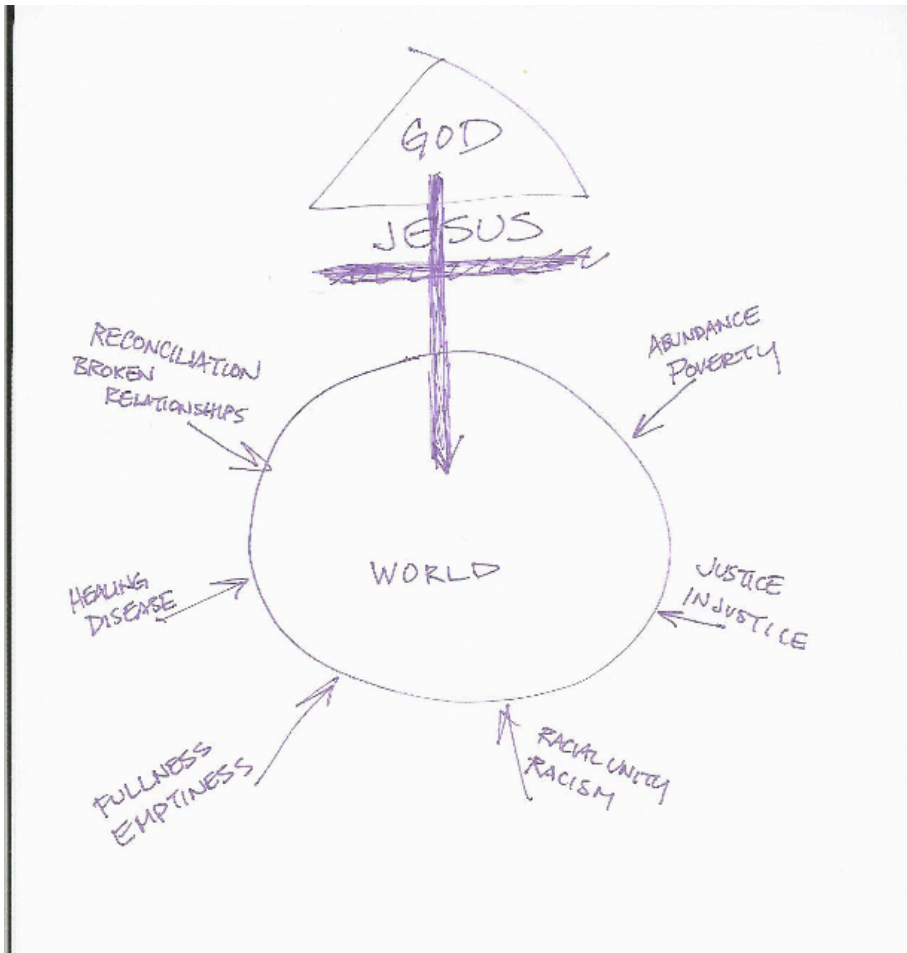
God and his ways. And so our relationship with God was broken"

- i. Draw a jagged horizontal line between God and the World signifying a broken relationship.
- b. (Global Consequences) *"The result of breaking our relationship with God was all of life went off careening off course. It's like a computer virus has infected the hard drive of life such that everything gets messed up. That is why things like injustice and poverty began to corrupt our world."*
 - i. "Draw arrows from all of the bad stuff to the world"
- c. (Personal Consequences) *"That's why in our own personal lives, things are not always right."*
 - i. *"Every relationship we ever get into is infected with some degree of selfishness and pride and people get hurt – sometimes in small ways, sometimes in huge ways."*
 - ii. *"And deep inside our souls, there is an emptiness that keeps rising up out of nowhere – something is missing."*
 - iii. *"And when it comes to being a good person, we can't seem to measure up to our own standards – we keep falling into selfishness that hurts others; we fall into indifference when it comes to the poverty and pain that plagues our world;"*
- d. (Bondage to Sin) *"And nothing we can do can fix things – no matter what we try, life on this planet continues to run off course. Our world has been infected by a virus and there doesn't seem to be a cure."*



4. Redemption

- a. "God could have just left us here – but out of love for us, He came down into our world to make things right."
 - i. Draw a vertical line down from God into the World and through the jagged line that separates the World from God (forming the beginnings of a cross).
- b. "Jesus was God coming to us to call us back to God."
 - i. (Jesus' Life) "He started a revolution to take back his lost world –
 1. "A revolution of calling people back to God, a revolution of fixing all of the brokenness that infects our world.
 2. "And not a revolution of military power but a revolution that is marked by the power of love and truth,
 3. "And not a revolution marked by dependence on human wisdom and power but a revolution marked by a dependence on God."
 - a. Over each aspect of sin in the world, begin writing what God wants in the face of all the bad stuff – "over poverty write abundance" "over emptiness write fullness" "over injustice - justice" "over racism – racial unity" etc. etc.

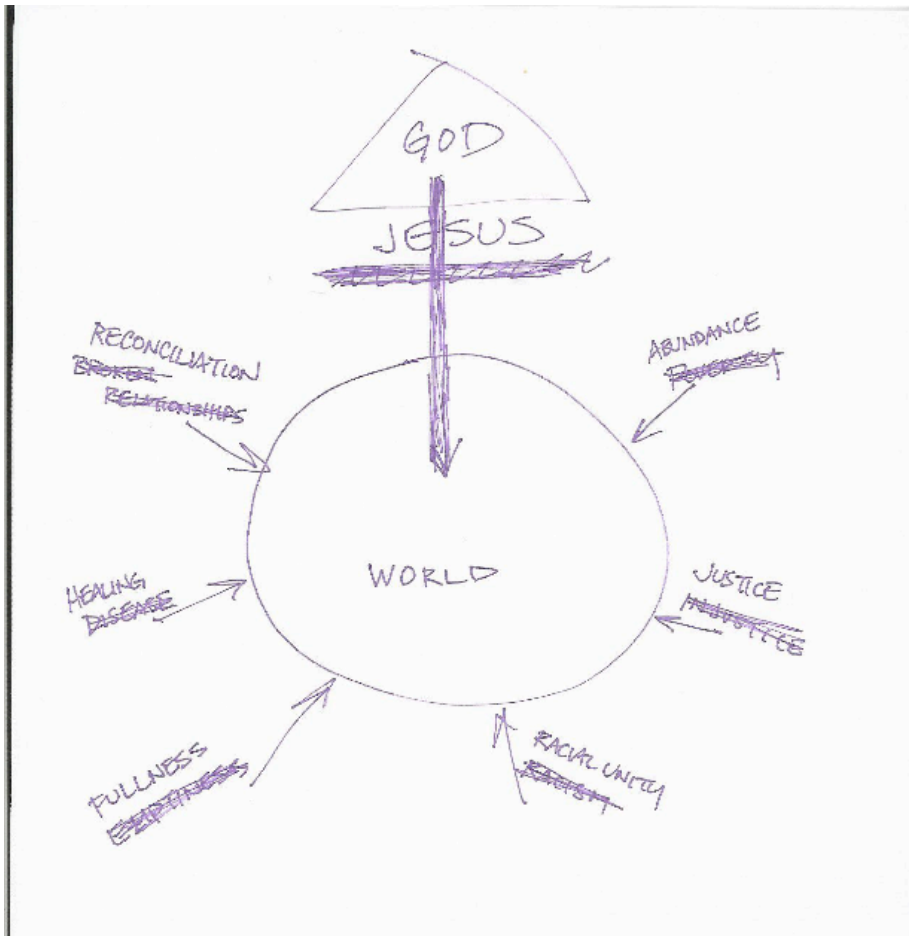


ii. (Jesus' Death) *"But in the process Jesus gets killed on a cross. It seemed like all the evil and brokenness of this world was too much and it overpowered Jesus."*

1. Begin thickening the lines to make a clear cross. Write Jesus over the cross bar.

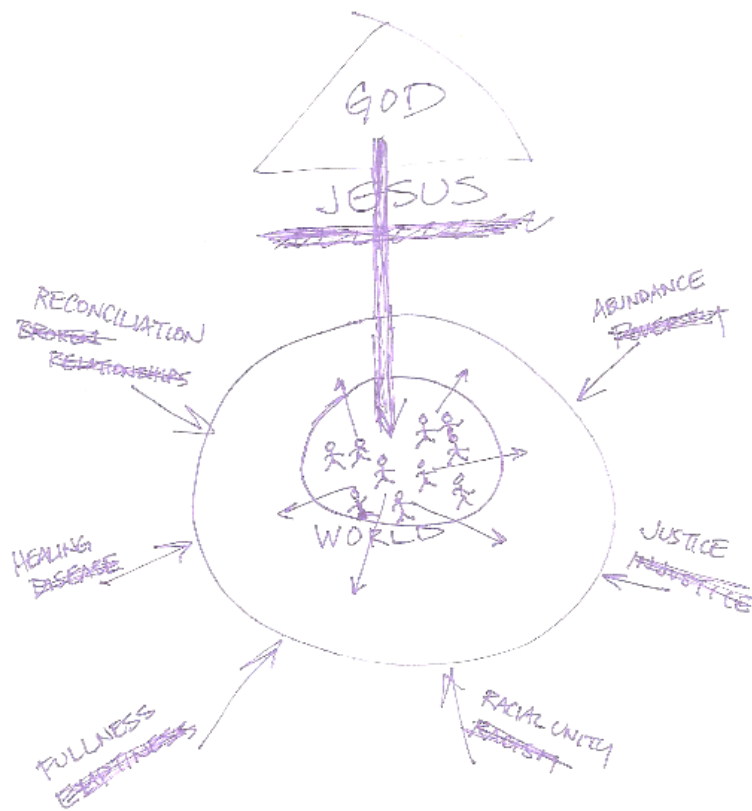
iii. (Jesus' Resurrection) *"But Jesus comes back to life!"*

1. *"The hope and truth of Easter is that all the evil and injustice in our world cannot defeat Jesus. Jesus is the only one who is able to overcome the selfishness and destruction that tears apart our world."*
2. *"It's like He came into our disease, gets infected by it and dies. But in coming back to life, it's like he's inoculated. And now He is offering that immunity to the rest of us. He is the cure to our virus. He is the one who can cure us from our selfishness and pride. He is the one that can push back the darkness of our world, the darkness of pain and injustice, the darkness of all that is not right with life in our world."*



5. Consummation

- a. "One day, Jesus is going to bring all things to completion and world will be the way God wants it to be..."
 - i. Cross off all of the bad stuff – "injustice" "poverty" etc.



6. Church

a. "But in the meantime, Jesus' revolution continues through His people.

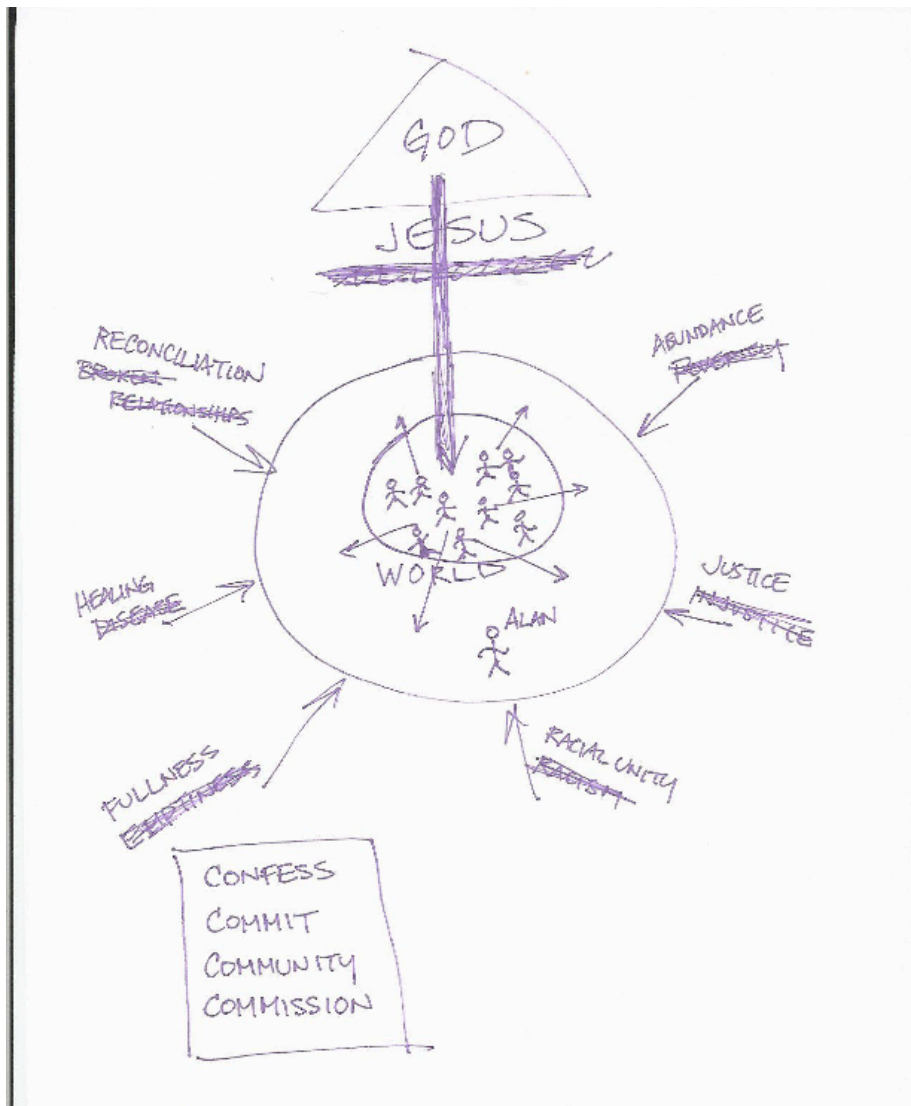
i. "The Spirit of Jesus is moving about in our world seeking to find those who believe in Him and want to enter into relationship with Him.

ii. "And He's gathering those people together in communities – communities like InterVarsity and _____ (name of local church).

1. Draw a circle at the foot of the cross...draw little stick figure people inside that circle.

iii. "And He's sending those communities out to be His hands and His feet to help spread the revolution – to bring peace where there is conflict, justice where there is injustice, healing where there is pain, etc. etc.

1. Draw arrows away from the circle out into the world to signify that God is calling to church to be agents of His Kingdom revolution in the world.



7. Invitation

- a. Here you are (draw a stick figure with the person's name on it outside the church but inside the world).
"What do you think? Do you want to join Jesus and His revolution?"
- b. (The 4 Cs of conversion – write out each "C" word below the gospel picture somewhere)
 - i. *Confess – confess that you've been living apart from God – that you've been living life on your own terms. Choose to turn away from that.*
 - ii. *Commit – commit to live life with and for Jesus. Commit to living life in relationship with Jesus and to live for His purposes in the world. Surrender your life to Jesus. Let him take the keys and sit in the driver's seat.*
 - iii. *Community – join the community of God's people that God is using to change the world.*
 - iv. *Commission – live out Jesus' commission to be an agent of His will in the world – helping others enter into relationship with Jesus, fighting against injustice and pain, being an agent of healing and justice wherever you are.*
- c. If you have the privilege of praying with someone to become a Christian, use the 4 C's as the framework for prayer. Invite the person to **confess** living life apart from God, **commit** to living life with and for Jesus, commit to live in **community** with other Christians, commit to living out Jesus' **commission** to be an agent of His world changing purposes.