



Mark 3.31-35 – Joint Service with Bonanova RC Church
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, 24th January 2012

Two simple ideas and a challenge are suggested by tonight's gospel reading.

1. Theory of six degrees of separation (*Explain the theory of Hungarian writer Karinthy 1929*).
My recent example – Alex S, Aussie internet friend, intro to English children's book author Nick B via me and my old college Principal Mike B in only 3 steps. I guessed Nick and Mike might be related and they turned out to be brothers. Mike forwarded my email and Nick emailed Alex – QED!
2. Jesus Christ is alive and is the Saviour of the World. That's why we're here.

Put the two together and every person on the planet is 6 steps or less away from being introduced to Jesus Christ; the Saviour of the World. We are probably all agreed that it would be a very good idea for these introductions to be made without delay. God thinks it would be a very good idea too (*see for example 1 Timothy 2.3-6*), but how?

It is fairly unlikely that people will bump into Jesus themselves these days. But they are quite likely to meet one of his relatives:

"Who are my mother and my brothers?" Jesus asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." (Mark 3.33-35)

That means you and me and anybody else who is a doer of God's will. You may object that you are not skilled or called to be an evangelist, that you don't have the right gifts or personality for it. But perhaps as a brother or sister of Jesus your role will be as simple but vital as passing on a message – like my old College Principal Mike was prepared to do. He took a risk in introducing this stranger to his brother, and he did so because he trusted me and he knew that I trusted Alex.

We all need reminding regularly, that when we gather in the presence of our Lord Jesus to worship him that we do so for the benefit of all people, not just for ourselves. And the challenge tonight is that we should all be prepared to take the risk Mike took and introduce a stranger to our brother and our Lord. Because when a person who needs to meet Jesus meets you ... they are only one degree of separation, one step away from meeting him.