

Dave Gehrls – Personal Theology of Evangelism - Introduction

The core of my evangelistic theology is built around I Corinthians 2:1-5 and centers around these beliefs:

1. We have made “Evangelism” too programmed, and too complicated. We train everyone to be evangelists, but Eph. 4 says that “He gave some as evangelists, In Acts 1:8 Jesus says “you shall be my witnesses.” Not everyone is gifted to be an evangelist... But we are all equipped to be witnesses. Witnessing is not something you “do”... It is something you “be”. My desire is to make witnessing simple and natural again.
2. We really don’t trust and rely on the Holy Spirit as the primary agent in Salvation who brings a person to Conviction of sin, Repentance and Saving Faith. We train people to be “spiritual sales persons” not neighbors where the success depends on our technique and skills not learning to follow the Holy Spirit as He brings them to a life changing encounter with the resurrected Christ.
3. We don’t understand that Salvation is a process from Spiritual Conception to a full-term, healthy and natural spiritual birth. The goal is not that they immediately “Accept Jesus” but where is the Holy Spirit revealing new “Truth and Light” and their response (I John 1:7). If (or when) they walk in this new “Light” The Holy Spirit will give them the next step of “Truth and Light” to walk in and this process continues both before and after conversion as we mature in Christ. When we ignore this process we get “Spiritual Premies” with lots of complications.
4. We need to understand the “Ripe Fruit” Principle. When you work a garden, you don’t usually pick green tomatoes, you pick the red ones and tomorrow there will be some more ripe ones to pick. Like Cornelius, God has people ready, but like Peter the problem is getting us “Peters” out of our paradigms and church walls to go to Cornelius. We have found that through prayer and obedience God will connect us to the Cornelius’ all around us.
5. While many people say that the reason they don’t witness is that they don’t know what to say. Well, I have surveyed people in many churches and while most have had some form of evangelistic training, few have ever led someone to the Lord outside a church meeting or crusade. I think the deeper issue is the busyness of our lifestyle and that most of us really don’t want to be available and “inconvenienced” in our daily activities. My desire is to release people from all the evangelistic stereotypes and pressures to be free to be “friends and neighbors.”
6. While releasing believers to “be witnesses” I also want to identify those gifted to be evangelists and help train and resource them in more effective prayer and evangelism.

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