

A strategy to witness for Christ

Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47.

It has been said that a Christian is either a missionary or a mission field. This may be an over-statement but there is still some truth in this statement. All believers and disciples of Jesus Christ we are commanded to go into the entire world and share the Gospel. Our town or village is part of the world. So we don't need to go very far to obey the command of Jesus Christ! As a missionary and pastor I have studied many plans and strategies of evangelism. But I always come back to the simple strategy Jesus used because it works!

1. Jesus was called a friend of sinners.

He associated with people, visited in their homes and attended their celebrations. He offered friendship to rich and poor, young and old, educated and uneducated. He even was a friend of those rejected and despised by society. For this he was criticized severely. If you and I have received Jesus Christ as personal Savior, Jesus now wants to work through us. So the first strategy is to be a friend of people. Many people are lonely and need a friend. Many people are disappointed in life, frustrated and have given up hope for a better life. Jesus wants to be their friend through you.

2. Jesus did not condemn or criticize people.

One time a lady caught in the act of adultery was brought to Jesus. Those who brought her to Jesus reminded Jesus that the Law of Moses states that she must be stoned to death. Jesus did not argue with the law but he told them that any one without sin let him throw the first stone at her. (John 8:7) They all left! Jesus was actually the only person qualified to throw the first stone. But he told the lady that He did not condemn her either and he challenged her to go and repent from her sin. This is grace. So in our witness for Christ we need to encourage people and not criticize their life-style, their habits or their religious beliefs. People need to come to Jesus and He alone can change people's heart and life-style.

3. We must only share the pure Gospel in our initial contacts. We are reminded In 1 Corinthians 15 what the pure Gospel is. The pure Gospel is not a set of rules and regulations as to what to do or not to do. Many people do not want to become a Christian because somehow they think that a Christian cannot have fun. I was once in Markapur, India having meetings in a small church. I went outside inviting people to come to church but they told me that church forbids about 20 habits that the people were enjoying, such as smoking, drinking, playing cards, cock fighting, gambling, going to the theater, watching movies, etc. All the rules and regulations were actually preventing people from hearing the Gospel! What is the pure Gospel we must share? Please note in 1 Corinthians 15: 1-4 that the Apostle Paul is reminding the church of the pure Gospel. By believing this Gospel people are saved. There are only 2 points to the pure Gospel:

- (1) Jesus died on the cross for our sins
- (2) Jesus rose from the dead and is alive today.

We can all share this simple Gospel and introduce people to the Lord Jesus Christ. When I became a Christian in Nederland, the counselor did attack me for smoking 80 cigarettes

per day. I would have been very defensive. He simply shared the pure Gospel that Jesus died for me and that He is alive and wants to save me and forgive all my sins and change my life. Wow! This was good news because I certainly needed to be changed.

I have lived and ministered extensively among Moslems and Hindus. But I have never attacked Islam or Hinduism. I would probably not be alive today to tell you this story. Some year s ago I was ministering in Kerala, South India in the Mar Thomas Church. We had meetings in the churchyard and thousands of people were there. The bishop told me repeatedly that I needed to be very careful in my preaching. He said that 30% of the people were Hindus, 30% Moslems and 30% communists. He said the people could become easily violent, if offended. So I was confused. What can I say so that no one is offended? I am prayed to the Lord, asking for wisdom and the right words to speak. You know what God said to me in my heart? "Open you eyes, what do you see?" Well, I saw a large symbol of the Indian Communist Party painted on the wall across the street. The Lord told me to preach about that! So I asked all the people to take a good look at the hammer and sickle painted on the wall. The Bishop almost had a heart attack, thinking I was going to speak against communism! "What am I reminded of when I see the hammer?" I asked the crowds. "I am reminded of a hammer in the hands of Roman soldiers who nailed Jesus Christ to the cross almost 2000 years ago". So I preached the simple Gospel of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. That Jesus died for all the Moslems, Christians, Communists and Hindus. That He is alive today. The sickle? A sickle reminds us of harvest time. Spiritual harvest, as men and women, boys and girls accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Many accepted Jesus that day and no one was offended. In fact the communist were happy that I drew attention to their symbol!

You can be friend to people, not critical of people but simply sharing the pure Gospel. May God use you for His glory, as you make yourself available to the Lord Jesus.