

Evangelism of Love Knows No Substitute

I'm not an evangelist. I'm not a pastor. I'm not even a Bible teacher or a youth minister.

I'm a filmmaker, but I just so happen to be a filmmaker who attempts to do the near impossible for my films. I attempt to visibly film an invisible God.

Having traveled the world to make my first three feature films, *Finger of God*, *Furious Love* and *Father of Lights*, it is probably safe to say that the last six years have given me a new perspective and quite an education on what God is doing around the world, as well as what kind of evangelism is working and what kinds are seemingly slogging through quicksand.

The politically correct statement here would be to say that, as long as those trying to evangelize are preaching the basics of the gospel, then we should just be happy, no matter their methods. One of the criticisms sometimes leveled against my films is that they are in some way trying to state that one particular style of evangelism should be pursued above all others. While that was *never* my intention, I can't help but wonder if there is a form of evangelism that is most effective.

I suppose the question that must be answered first is what exactly are you hoping to accomplish in your **evangelism**? For most of my life the goal was always to lead someone to salvation—in essence, get them to sign on the dotted line. Your ability to either get a lot of people or a few would ultimately decide whether or not your outreach was truly “effective.”

But having been witness to some of the most incredible God-

moments ever caught on film for the past six years, I am beginning to rethink some of this. I wonder if maybe our job isn't to go out and create converts, but rather to be dispensers of love.

In Luke 8:5-8, Jesus tells the parable of the Sower, and the image He gives is of one randomly spreading seed everywhere. Jesus then explains the parable, telling us that the seed is the word of God. We, then, are the dispensers of that seed.

And herein lies the crux of it all: what is the best way to dispense of that seed? Do we stand on a street corner and do it? Do we simply do nice things for them, like building them houses? Do we try to talk people into accepting the seed intellectually? Do we prove God's existence and love through signs and wonders and miracles? Each denomination and church has chosen its own path in this question, but it is my contention that the path is not as important as the motive upon which we embark upon that path.

We are called to be sowers of the seed, not necessarily reapers. But it seems that the church as a whole is very preoccupied with reaping a harvest, especially a harvest they many times have no intention of planting, tilling, and fertilizing. We want the crop, but without the mess of farming. Too often, when our motivation is for results the evangelism becomes more for us than it does for the people we are going out to witness to.

When the motivation is love, pure and simple, with no motive at all behind it, the odds and results drastically change. If some of the seed is ready to be harvested, wonderful. If the seed is still blooming, that's great.

If we're simply planting on new soil, that's great. Our goal must never be to reap a harvest, but instead to plant the word of God, which is rooted in love. We are to be dispensers of love.

No one wants to be converted. No one wants to be someone's project or someone's goal. Everyone wants to be loved. And as God's agents here on earth, that is all that is asked of us. To love the one in front of us without an agenda. It is the greatest seed we will ever sow.

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