

The Key to a Missions-Minded Lifestyle

She's been hurting; teething times four; aching for more than some Anbesol; needing a healing touch from the One who watches over her; here in our foster home.

Her 1-and-a-half year-old self, shifts restless, angry, uncertain as to why pain resurrects in places she can't see.

And as a parent, we learn fast, don't we: No two children are the same.

So I pray, grab her tightly in my arms, and start rocking and singing, *"Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world..."*

One verse leads to another, until almost magically, her hard look softens, body starts calming, and the windows to her soul, watch curiously, my face as I sing.

In hopes of savoring this peace I am seeing, I keep singing, *"Jesus died for all the children..."* leading to, *"Jesus rose for all the children..."* and finally *"Jesus lives for all the children..."*

But then I realize, Jesus death and resurrection, the entire gospel message was hidden right there in a toddler song.

And wouldn't it have been funny if I would have given this newly walking child, the finer points of doctrine, theologically schooling her on Arminianism vs. Calvinism.

Sounds ludicrous, doesn't it?

The apostle Paul gave us a key to missional living, *"to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to men under the Law, [I became] as one under the law..."* And *"To those*

without (outside) law I became as one without law, not that I am without the law of God and lawless toward Him, but that I am [especially keeping] within and committed to the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law.” (1 Cor 9:19-21. Amp)

Paul goes on to say, “*to the weak, I become weak,*” and for the sake of the good news, “*I have become all things to all men*” (v. 22).

Like Paul, if we are going to reach diverse cultures, places, people, age groups for the sake of Jesus, we must take from the wisdom Paul gave, using His model for conversion, instead of trying to strain people through some “one-size-fits-all,” rules-based, Pharisaical legalistic system, demanding external laws, lives unflawed, and perfectionism void of any grace before others can find their place in the holy temple of God.

And just as Jesus’ death and resurrection tore open the veil and gave all of us the same access into the secret places of God; we can, no matter our history, past, or calling, like Paul, come freely and be one with a God who taught us that love weighs more than law.

A friend with a Master’s degree in theology sits in our home; another desperately seeking an Upper Room experience shares the same meal. Over our lifetime, we have spent hours enthusiastically discussing apologetics with a friend we have met with for years.

Paul’s model challenging us; will we die to our mold of evangelism, freely and willingly becoming what is needed to advance the gospel as a response to God’s call to a missional life?

If we are going to lead the multitudes to Christ, shouldn’t we first realize there is no *formula* to grow others in Christ? Might not the gospel come in the form of a song to an infant, a prayer with the prophetic, or a theological investigation

with the highly trained and educated?

What matters is not *how* we point to Jesus, but that we are prepared to give an answer to everyone for the hope that is in us (1 Pet. 3:15), meeting people where they are at, personalizing the gospel so others might receive it, trusting emphatically His Spirit to lead us as we bring others to The Resurrected One, behind the torn veil.

*Reprinted with permission from Missional Women. **Jen Avellaneda** has been “mom” to over 16 kids during the past 21 years. Some through birth and others through fostering. She is a writer, speaker and advocate for orphans.*