

Full-Circle Evangelism

✖ There's nothing more exciting than leading someone to Christ through a "power encounter" hosted by the Holy Spirit. I've seen a waitress come to Christ because a group of us out for lunch simply showed Christ's love and talked to her and gave her words of knowledge-even one about her cat! I've also experienced times in which the Spirit of God is so tangible during ministry or a personal interaction that people have asked me, "What is this, and how do I come to know this Jesus you are talking about?"

When Jesus spoke brief words of knowledge to the woman in Samaria, she told the entire village about the Lord. I believe these types of power encounters have been God's preference for evangelism all along. Other methods have some impact, but nothing gets your attention like finding out that God "has your number."

Yet the salvation experience isn't the end of the journey. As leaders, we know the number of times someone has had an encounter and then seemingly dropped off the planet.

The answer to this dilemma is the local church. If a person is plugged in, he will discover the truth of God's ways, be trained in the Holy Spirit, hear the gospel message, develop personal relationships that lead to growth, and hopefully

become part of
a small group where discipleship and ongoing development
occur.

I'm so convinced of the benefit of
belonging to a church that I would rather see members of my
congregation
get people to a Bible-believing, Spirit-filled church than
merely get
them saved. Believers with little or no ongoing training are
quickly led
astray.

C. Peter Wagner says, "The single most
effective evangelistic methodology is planting churches."
Consider why:

When a team sets out to plant, all are actively engaged in the
process.

They take ownership of it and are eager to see the plant
succeed, so

evangelism and telling others about the new church is a
natural

byproduct. To fulfill the Great Commission, we and our
ministry teams

must be actively and aggressively involved in church planting.

I am not minimizing the importance of
existing churches. I am merely describing how greater
productivity can
occur in evangelism.

Thus, as we teach our members how to
wisely win souls, we must also convey to them the importance
of seeing

new believers grounded in the right local church. This doesn't
always

mean encouraging the convert to attend *our* church. Certainly,
that is a great option-the person who shared salvation can

then share relationship.

Yet it is important to also have information available about good churches to recommend in different areas of town or even in other states. It's helpful to have information about churches where the particular emphasis might better interest the new believer.

Because it is God who is at work building His church, setting the members as He pleases, I never worry about "giving away" new people. They are His anyway; it's all the same kingdom.

As we engage in the awesome privilege of winning the lost through power encounters, let's remember the ultimate purpose: to make disciples. This is not done in one encounter, no matter how dramatic. Lives are built carefully, one day at a time. I believe healthy, growing, relational churches full of the Spirit and the Word provide that environment.

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