

“WITNESSES”

Acts 1:8

Growing trend in our Fellowship: Elaborate programs as the main outreach method. Social media as vehicle for evangelism. May have some validity – but it can be counter-productive to evangelism & discipleship.

I. THE PURPOSE OF JESUS

A. The move towards social media

1. Illustration: Jesus would have FB page, Twitter account, his picture on Instagram

a. The old methods are OK – but we need to be up with the times

B. Jesus' purpose can be seen simply in this text

1. Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

a. Jesus' purpose was to train/anoint and send those who would witness to him

2. There needs to be a personal element involved in this

a. Ark of covenant had rings/poles: Testimony of God is meant to be carried by men

3. This is what God uses more than anything else to save people

a. We know from the Bible/experience that most people respond to personal impact/witness

II. THE PROGRAM MENTALITY

A. We are very “program oriented”

1. We look for methods to reach people – instead of Jesus' primary method

a. Fantastic programs, “professionally” done: We can get wonderful responses from audience

B. But there are dangers in relying on our professional programs – of any variety

1. Our programs can consume time, vision, motivation that takes too much away from Jesus' purpose

a. Personal contact with sinners becomes lost or minimal:

1. Hours spent on creating/executing elaborate programs – without evangelism

2. Social media dangers: personal contact with sinners lost completely because of social media distance

a. Just send out a tweet – and revival will happen! b. Old days: Religious using TV/Satellites to reach the world

3. We can produce Christian program participants but not witnesses for Jesus

a. Practiced 97 hours for band/drama/play...when was the last outreach you went on/impact team?

4. Our faith can shift from God to programs to accomplish

a. Lose sense of personal responsibility to be filled with HG and touch sinners

b. Fail to develop the ability to engage sinners for the gospel on personal level

1. Acts 8:4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

5. Can be detrimental to the development of disciples

a. If we send out men who only know how to do programs –they'll be lost trying to get the first converts

6. Can be detrimental to pioneers: Put all their faith in a program 3 months away...what if it snows/rains?

a. They lose any chance at impact – for another 2 or 3 months!

III. FINDING THE BALANCE

A. The point is not: “Throw away all programs and just let people witness”

1. There are regular programs that serve Jesus' purpose

a. Concert scene powerful b. Plays/outreaches can be very effective

2. Any program becomes unhealthy if it takes away from personal witnessing & evangelism

B. The power of God is directly connected to witnessing/preaching to sinners

1. Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

a. God empowers witnessing – declaring the Gospel

1. Pioneering: there 18 months. Not until 2 weeks before we left did we get someone who came that had no personal contact/get saved/lock in. But we continually grew b/c of personal evangelism & outreach.