

Why Someone Would Choose to Do Foreign Evangelism

Two ordinary folks

We were greeted at the door by a rather gray-haired man; as we walked into their living-room we were greeted by a woman of about the same age. Peter and I sat down and we had some good coffee. They even gave us some real good Dutch cookies. And they were good!!!! As the conversation started we learned that Wes had been a long-time sailor and we learned about Titia that she was born in Suriname. They were both in their mid-sixties. They had met in the Netherlands after Titia had lost her first husband and had moved to the Netherlands. Wes had never been married before and after they had met, this was about 20 years ago, they got married soon after.

and it was then that I saw it..... I saw it and it was beautiful!! What a joy for them who love Jesus. It was right there, I saw it, I can still recall the moment. It stood out clearly, it was written in large writing. Wow, what a joy that was to read!!!! Goose-bumps, that is what it gave me!!!

They shared their story with us that they had been a part of an evangelical group for about 20 years and they contacted us through the internet after having been severely disappointed with the teachings of this group. We talked about the women's role, the disrespect for the Scriptures in general, the abuse of "healing-services," and many other issues.

As our conversations continued, in another study, Wes opened up his Bible and laid it open on the table, it fell open on the first page and it was then that I saw it..... I saw it and it was beautiful!! What a joy for them who love Jesus. It was right there, I saw it, I can still recall the moment. It stood out clearly, it was written in large writing. Wow, what a joy that was to read!!!! Goose-bumps that is what it gave me!!!

On the inside cover it was written: "1 Cor. 4: 6" and "Rev. 22: 18, 19." I knew that I was in for a good time!!! If they had such a respect for the Scriptures we would certainly be able to work together.

In all our conversations they testified of their deep-seated faith in God, their willingness to do what is right. So that led me to ask them a question..... In the course of our conversations that followed the weeks after our first meeting together I asked: "Can I ask you a confrontational question"? And the answer was a full "yes." So I asked them: "Have you ever been baptized and why have you been baptized"? The reply was that they had been baptized and for reasons that they were Christians already and wanted to make a public statement.

I asked them if I could show them what I believed the Bible taught about baptism. And they were eager to know. Well at that moment I could not have imagined that it would only be about 5 days later that I got the call that they wanted to be baptized the Bible way. And so we did!!!! They got baptized that day for the remission of sin and added to the kingdom of God's dear Son. These things are the true thrill and joy of evangelism. That is what we are doing as God's workers.

A Monday night

It was on a Monday night that I walked into their living room. They had their Bibles ready and the smell of coffee came out of the kitchen. We sat down and we discussed what we would do. I shared with them that I wanted to read with them all the conversion stories in the book of

Acts and I wanted them to make a conclusion based on what they had read. And so we did.

I had met Gerard, Anja and John (step-father, mother and son) about four weeks before this Monday-night. I had called them after I read an ad in the local paper that they wanted to start a church in their own home, I called them and we had a number of talks and studies together. I got a call one night from one of our members and she shared with me that Anja and John were going to be baptized the next week. This baptism was going to be a denominational baptism. I said that I did not know, but that I would call them and talk about it. I called them and asked if I could come by and have a talk with them. I shared that I wanted to talk about their upcoming baptism. Our appointment was for Monday night and so we were gathered together at their home.

We started with reading Acts chapter 2, we moved on to Acts chapter 8 and then Acts chapter 10. We finished reading chapter 10 and John spoke up and said: "If this is the way it is, I want to be baptized tonight." We had some conversation about it and I suggested that we would read the other stories in the book of Acts. And so we did. With every passing story John would become more and more adamant to be baptized that night.

.....If this is the way it is, I want to be baptized tonight.....

I suggested that we would read Romans 6, Colossians 2, Titus 3, and some others. Well, the hours had passed slowly and it was about 11 at night and John was certain. He wanted to be baptized that night. Every time he would say the words: "if this is the way it is, I want to be baptized tonight." Anja was not 100% sure since she did not want to disappoint the other folks that were going to baptize her.

It was about midnight by this time and they knew of a body of water in their area, we stepped into the car and went. Anja had also become certain that she also wanted to be baptized that night, since she understood the importance of it. So Anja and John were baptized that night. I still remember that we stood there together in the dark of midnight, praying together for a life dedicated to the Master. It was precious, it was a touching moment. Tears of joy were shed.

These are just two stories that I can share with you; other stories could be shared similar to the two stories above. It truly is a joy to be able to share the gospel message around a kitchen table, to open up the word of God and read together with young and with old, with black and with white, with poor and with rich, and with the good and the bad. To the man with his multi-million-dollar business and with the woman who has had 7 different men in her life. To be able to help folks to understand what Jesus did for them so that they can have life and have it more abundantly is a true privilege.

It is all about Jesus

Jesus wrote in Matthew 9:36-38, "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, 'The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest'".

From the words of Jesus we notice an important matter; Jesus was moved with compassion!!! When Jesus walked the streets of the land of Israel He was moved with compassion when he saw all the people who were distressed and scattered. They were without a shepherd. They were without true guidance. They were lost like sheep that had no shepherd. And that is what Jesus saw!!!

When the shepherd is gone, the wild beasts come and they only want to destroy, so were the people in the days of Jesus and so are the people today. Lost, without true guidance.

And Jesus shed a tear when He saw this. What about us? Do we shed tears over them that are lost. We will never be successful if we do not see like Jesus. We need to see like He does!!! When we do, we will do all to help those people and we will do it in the same spirit as Jesus did it in His days. He was interested in serving others, not to serve self.

Jesus was moved with compassion when he said to the Jews that He had wanted to gather them as a hen gathers her chickens but they would not. There were tears in His heart. He wanted to bring them in, but they would not.

In the Old Testament we find Jeremiah who is known as the weeping prophet and it is written about him:

Lam. 2:11, Mine eyes do fail with tears, my heart is troubled; My liver is poured upon the earth, because of the destruction of the daughter of my people, Because the young children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city.

Jeremiah cried for the children of Israel, Jesus was compassionate about bringing people together and it was Paul's heart's desire that his countryman would be saved (Rom. 10:1- 3). What about us? Do we cry for our countryman, do we cry for those that are not yet saved? It should get us on the move. On the move for our Father who saved us and wants to save more.

How do we see?

What do we see when we look at people? What do we see? Do we see bad people who do not deserve God; do we see people who do not want to listen anyway? Do we see a man who is "so bad" that we judge he will never listen? Do we see a woman who has had "so many men" that she is not worthy?

I know what God sees; God sees people who are in need of a saviour. God, our beloved Father sees a soul that is made in His image, valuable beyond words and wants this soul to hear the gospel and be saved.

What did the Pharisees see? An evil and bad woman worthy to be stoned. What did Jesus see? A soul in need of grace.

So, what do we see? If we do not see everyone in need of grace when we meet our fellow-man we are surely in need of eye-salve!!! If we do not see like God our Father, we surely have a deep seated problem in our hearts. See, we are often good in giving all kinds of excuses.

In relation to the parable of the sower it is often said: "We do not need to be soil-inspectors but seed sowers." Are we too busy inspecting soil then sowing the seed?

John 8:2, And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

John 8:3, And the scribes and the Pharisees bring a woman taken in adultery; and having set her in the midst,

John 8:4, they say unto him, Teacher, this woman hath been taken in adultery, in the very act.

What did the Pharisees see? An evil and bad woman worthy to be stoned. What did Jesus see? A soul in need of grace.

What did Jona see? A whole nation worthy of death!!! What did God see? A nation in need of grace and He send His man Jonah. But he did not want to!!!

What about us? Are we willing to go to foreign countries and dedicate our lives? Some of us have been given the talents!!! Why do we not use them? Are we too comfortable in our own houses and chairs. Are we too comfortable in our own country?

What do we say? We cannot talk; well Moses tried that one and God gave him his brother. Others have tried other excuses, however when God is in our lives and hearts He can do the unthinkable.

They were moved and were on the move

When we look like Jesus we will be able to make sacrifices like the Apostles did. Why were they able to do as they did... they loved the people and knew that the soul of men has the greatest value above all. They were moved by the story of redemption and they were on the move. On the move to tell the story of Jesus. To touch the hearts of people by His love and His grace. And they did not consider borders. No economical borders, no age borders, no racial borders, and no country borders.

It is all about the old redemption story. The Apostles were together and so it is good for us. In all of the studies that I do I take someone with me. Often times Peter comes with me, other times others come with me. Preaching and teaching together has so many beautiful parts. As Jesus encountered a lot of folks that did not want to hear, so do we; as Jesus encountered a lot of folks who were discouraged Jesus needed a lifting hand and He went in prayer to the Father and so do we. We are also given one another and so it is good to work together.

As we travel and teach together, it is important to build one another up, in teaching together we have the joy of listening to the other teach and learning from the other. Teaching for a few hours is even very tiresome and you can help and complement one another that way.

In teaching you will find discouraging times and someone needs to be there to help you up when you are down. Teaching together helps to be on guard in situations that Satan wants to use to his glory. Teaching together gives opportunities to speak together as you travel together to far places. It gives times of singing in the car, having deep conversations, having laughs together and having tears together.

In teaching others there are many joys but also tears. Tears of sadness when you witness that people truly love the world more than the blessed Father, when they love false teaching more than the Lord of life, the Lord of hope, and the Lord of joy.

What about you? Do you just want to have all the comfort but not be a comforter?

It took them too many different places. It took them to other countries, they were led by the great I AM. They were not afraid to be moved and to be on the move.

What about you? Do you just want to have all the comfort but not be a comforter? Do you just want to sit at home and not in the home of a sheep that is lost. We are to get away from being comforted and also be a comforter.

It is all about the souls of people

Jesus taught with a lot of care. Jesus looked at the people and saw a man or a woman made in the image of Himself and did all to restore that; He was willing to take a step back and to serve others in their pain. Jesus came with hope and joy. Jesus was willing to make sacrifices, He was willing to associate with the poor, the public woman, the tax collector. Are we willing to do so. We need strong men and woman to do so.

**He was willing to take a step back and to serve others in their
pain**

He came with a message of repentance. He came with a message of restoration. But what a joy when sinners turn to Jesus. Even the angels in heaven rejoice when one sinner comes to repentance!!!! Would you take part in turning the hearts of people to their Maker.

In closing

Well, we started out with two stories, the first one turned out well, Wes and Titia remain faithful to this day. They have brought such joy to our hearts; they are special. We have cried together, we have laughed together, we have prayed together, and what a blessing that is. We have become special friends who can trust one another at all times. Committed to loving God and each other. What a true blessing this is.

Our second story turned out differently. After about one week I got a call from John in which he explained that he did not want to be a part of us anymore. He said that we had led him in the wrong direction. John had been back in touch with some of the folks of the denominational group that he was attending and they had convinced him that he had done something wrong. I asked him: "John, we simply read the Bible stories and you made the conclusion for yourself that you wanted to be baptized based on what you read". And he answered: "Yes, that is true, I cannot deny that."

Gert-Jan van Zanten
The Netherlands