

Barriers to Reaching

"I simply argue that the cross be raised again at the center of the market place as well as on the steeple of the church. I am recovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles, but on a cross between two thieves; on the town garbage heap; at a cross road so cosmopolitan that they had to write His title in Hebrew and in Latin and in Greek ...at the kind of place where cynics talk smut, and thieves curse, and soldiers gamble. Because that is where He died and that is what he died about. And that is where churchmen ought to be, and what churchmen should be about."

- Ian Thomas

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 (NLT) When I first came to you, dear brothers and sisters, I didn't use lofty words and impressive wisdom to tell you God's secret plan. **2** For I decided that while I was with you I would forget everything except Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified. **3** I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling. **4** And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit. **5** I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God.

Paul didn't say this because He was ignorant but because He was spiritually sensitive. God used Paul with the philosophers in Athens in Acts 17 because He needed someone who could present an ingenious argument built on logic to philosophers who would not have related to Peters 'turn-or-burn' approach.

We cannot stop short

GOOTH was an incredible reach

Our summer reaches are absolutely necessary

They are great opportunities, and they can provide great environments for reaching

But we must let them allow us to stop short, if they do they can actually become a barrier.

It is important to be patient but watchful and deliberate

If we think it is someone else's responsibility it becomes a barrier

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV) But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

The Apostle Paul wrote these words in 1 Corinthians 9:16 (NKJV) "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, **woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!**"

I am under obligation to my Savior. My Redeemer's last command was for us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He did not use the last moments before His ascension to speak to the disciples about their own personal welfare. His parting message was not in regard to houses or health. Rather, it was about heaven or hell. His concern was for the lost.
– Stephen Hill

I am under obligation to my neighbor. Paul said, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Corinthians 5:11). Paul understood that this world is like a burning house. We, as Christians, have escaped the fire and can hear the agonizing screams of those still trapped in the inferno. What kind of man, upon seeing his neighbor's house ablaze and hearing the cries of the doomed children, would slouch back in his easy chair with no intention of helping.
– Stephen Hill

Matthew 28:17-20 (NKJV) "When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen."

A love for God and an openness to Him v 17 then He spoke to them.

- ⇒ **The command to reach is much more than making converts, it is making disciples.**
- ⇒ **Disciples are learners and disciplined followers of Jesus.**
- ⇒ **Disciple making requires relationship building**

A majority of unchurched Americans are turned off by the institutional church and don't have a biblical understanding about God and Jesus, yet they believe Jesus makes a positive difference in a person's life and would enjoy an honest discussion with a friend about spiritual matters.

It's interesting to me how Jesus looks at men. He does not only see what a man is; he also sees what a man can become. He sees not only the actualities in a man, he also sees the possibilities. Jesus looked at Peter and saw in him not only a Galilaeen fisherman but one who had it in him to become the rock on which his church would be built. Jesus sees us not only as we are, but as we can be; and he says: "Give your life to me, and I will make you what you have it in you to be." -- William Barclay's Commentary on the Gospel of John

90-95% of Christians in the church today will never lead someone to Christ

And yet

Despite their negative opinions about the institutional church, most unchurched people are open to discussing spiritual matters with a friend. The research showed that:

--78 percent of those surveyed said they would be willing to listen to someone who wanted to talk about their Christian beliefs. The number rose to 89 percent among adults 18-29 years of age.

--Only 28 percent of adults 30 years and older said they think Christians they know talk to them too much about their beliefs.

➤ **Why is that?**

First we must understand that the ministry of reaching requires supernatural service.

Luke 24:45-49 (NKJV) "And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 "And you are witnesses of these things. 49 "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Acts 1:8 (NKJV) "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."

Romans 1:16 (NKJV) "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."

We must become Missional and it is much easier to be a missions minded church than it is a missional minded church.

Communion