



SESSION 14 CHAPTER 10

THE WAYS OF THE ALONGSIDER

Pray

Does anyone have a special Quiet Time revelation they would like to share?

The Way of Mission

This week author Bill Mowry moved from the second focus of being a disciple back to the first - being an evangelist. Why do I use that order? First, let's go back to John 17 where Jesus is praying to His Father. At verse 20 we read where He says, "I do not ask on behalf of those alone (meaning His small group of Disciples), but for those also who believe in Me through their word."

Who are these people? WAIT (These people will be the downstream believers.) Yes, He is singling out the people who believe in Him, His name, and His word. Jesus lifts up those who will follow Him, then and now SO THAT His work will continue into the future.

Can you expect a non-believer to effectively and truthfully share the gospel with someone else? But, using a Texan phrase, Jesus is betting the ranch that His disciples can do it. Not one thing, but two things. So, what are the two different responsibilities being described. The answer is found at Matthew 28: 19 and 20.

Let's read them together once again. What are the key action words in verse 19? What are the key ones in verse 20? (Evangelism vs Disciple making) So 19 refers to a disciple's responsibility to take the gospel out to the unbelievers, while 20 refers to a disciple's responsibility to train up those believers so that they too will become equipped to make disciples, who will then make disciples.

I raise this point because we already agreed that if you are a true follower of the teachings of Jesus, you are a disciple. But our motive for doing so, and maintaining an obedience to follow His teachings, takes us back to John 14: 21.

Will someone read that verse, John 14:21? He loves you; you show your love for Him by obeying His teachings. Those teachings are at Matthew 28: 19 and 20.

Bill likes to hang new pictures in our minds. This week he identifies a companion description of an alongsider as that of an 'insider'. Insofar as how insiders are the ones who can best reach people with whom to share the gospel, Bill calls them 'God's agents for church growth.' Do you think he is talking about increasing the number of members of churches? WAIT From your reading of this entire chapter, what is your understanding of the concept and benefit of your being an 'insider'?

However, at the top of page 106 we read how the Apostle Paul was an 'outsider' who used 'insiders' to facilitate his ministry. Who will read the two paragraphs at the top of 106?

What we're seeing is how the early church expanded and grew. How does this differ from many of the churches in America today? In poker terms there is a lot of 'shuffling the deck' going on where people leave one church to go to another. This certainly wasn't the case in the early churches.

Why do you think so much of modern church growth comes from transfers?

Who do you believe is stimulating that kind of growth?

So how do insiders, that is to say, today's believers in the name of Jesus and who follow His teachings impact church growth? I suspect within the various spheres of influence that we all collectively share that we could raise up quite a few new people to this very church. But is numeric church growth the goal? If not, what is that goal? (The personal, life-changing relationship of Jesus of the insider/believer is both known and shared through one's individual testimony.) It attracts others.

Let's look at the reference at question 8 to Acts 2: 42 - 47. Someone read it. One of my bibles says these six verses are the most important in all the book of Acts. What kind of church are we reading about here? How does this compare to the modern day church? What about here at Heritage?

FOR THE STAFF ONLY:

How would you describe the growth at Heritage today (transfer or conversion)?

What would you like to happen in the future?

What do you believe needs to be done in order to reach your desired future?

FOR THE LAY LEADERS ONLY:

What did you discover about Jesus' example of an insider ministry?

Describe some of the ways you are already an insider.

What are some benefits you enjoy by being an insider?

Name some groups where you could have an insider ministry.

What are some steps we can take as insiders to reach those people who do not yet have a personal salvation relationship with Jesus Christ?

In obedience to Matthew 28: 19, what is the believer's personal responsibility?

At the top of page 109 our workbook describes the evangelism process as a series of connected events:

- Building a relationship

- Creating interest
- Leading to insight
- Encouraging conviction

What steps you could take to help someone in each of the categories above?

On pages 111 and 112 Bill Mowry relates how insiders can easily share their personal stories using three simple steps to identify what his/her life was like before encountering Jesus, the free will decision to move towards Him, and what that life has been like since making that decision.

The sweetest thing is that your story is yours. No one can dispute it. It is your truth, so regardless of whatever theology the listener may have, he cannot argue the fact that your story is true. And he or she just may want to know more about this very same difference maker, this Jesus.

Discuss how ready you believe you are to take those actions. Record them on 119.

Is there anyone here who has not shared his/her story? If so, today is your day.

Close in Prayer