

HITTIN' THE STREETS – INVESTING WITH THE LORD

Yesterday was a day of street outreach ministry here in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. In the morning we went out with a team to one of the busiest intersections in the central part of the city, and spent time there handing out gospel tracts, witnessing to people who would stop and talk with us, preaching to the crowds that would gather, and leading people into a salvation relationship with Jesus. In the afternoon time we went into two different neighborhoods and walked from house to house witnessing to the people outside of their homes, and inviting them to drama outreaches we were conducting in parks near their homes. We were able to lead a number of people to faith in Jesus outside of their homes, and a number of others gave their lives to the Lord during the “invitation times” following the dramas in the parks. Overall, it was a very productive day in regards to evangelism. Also, in the afternoon we were able to connect the new converts to the pastor of a local church, so they can be assimilated into the church, and disciplined to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. We also turned over the names of people that were won to faith in Christ in the central city area to local pastors whose churches are not far from that area.

Sometimes people have asked me, “Why do you invest so much time, energy and finances in reaching the poorer people who live in the urban areas of your city or in other countries? They will never be able to travel to attend the worship services at one of your church campuses.” In responding to that question, I would say first of all that the Lord said that we are to be evangelizing people in every part of our world (Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15). Jesus said in Acts 1:8 that we are to be His witnesses in: 1) the Jerusalem area of our world (people who live around us or who are in relationship with us), 2) the Judean area of our world (people who live not far from us but we do not have relationship with them, like the people who live in the inner city), 3) the Samaritan region of our world (people who are unlike us or people who live some distance from us), and 4) the world at large. We should all know by now that obeying the Lord leads us to the best life, and when we obey the Lord’s commands to seek to witness to people in every part of our world, we will experience His greatest of blessings upon our lives and church.

Another reason we are to be witnesses for the Lord even to people who will never visit our church is because we need to develop the same kind of passion and compassion that Jesus had for people. It is obvious from reading the Scriptures that Jesus loves everybody. He loves little children (Matthew 19:12-15), big sinners (Luke 19:1-10), and even His greatest enemies (Matthew 5:43-48, Luke 23:34). If we are going to become like Jesus, which should be the goal of our lives (Ephesians 4:13), then we are going to have to love and minister to every type of person just like Jesus did when He lived on Planet Earth.

Another reason we focus so much on reaching the poor in our nation and in other nations, is because the Lord has said that when we take care of the poor, He will take care of us. Proverbs 19:17 reads, *“If you help the poor you are lending to the Lord – and He will repay you.”* Since God always pays His “debts” with much interest, sharing with others is more than charity - it is sound financial management.

There are lots of ways that people can get involved in “hitting the streets” and “investing with the Lord” in every city and community in our world. You may want to get involved in ministering to the homeless, working in the housing developments, visiting with people in prisons or in nursing homes, helping the elderly or any other number of ventures. Know this – when we are “hitting the streets” and ministering to the needy we are living out the passion and compassion of Jesus, and He will reward us greatly.

Dennis Watson

P.S. Today is our son Dennis' 27th birthday. Since Vicki and I are out of the country, if you know him and want to encourage him on his birthday you can send a birthday greeting to his email address, iluvjesus1982@yahoo.com.