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# Words of Truth

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## Are We Recruiters Or Are We Teachers?

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The Psalmist said: *"Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee"* (Psalms 51:13). What the Psalmist said about teaching and converting the lost to the Lord is echoed throughout the New Testament (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:47, Acts 5:42, Acts 8:4, Acts 10:42, Acts 15:35, Romans 10:14-17, Ephesians 3:8, Colossians 1:23, II Timothy 4:2, etc.). Clearly, God wants His people to share the truth with those who are lost. God wants us to help people to be saved by teaching them the Gospel (Romans 1:16).

With the Scriptures being so clear in showing that Christians are to teach people, why have many fallen prey to the recruit people to Jesus mindset? Now, before we move forward, let me explain what I mean by saying the, "recruit people to Jesus mindset". Many so-called "churches of Christ" have gotten into what seems like an advertising campaign to get people into their buildings. These folks have special things for "visitors". The West Irwin church of Christ in Tyler, TX actually has a staffed "visitor center" (<http://www.westerwin.com/#/visitors/visitor-info>). The Lancaster church of Christ says this: *"Visitors are our honored guests. We want to make sure that they feel at home and are not left confused on where to go or what class to attend. In order to make sure we do not miss our visitors, greeters are assigned at each service. Their job is to keep an eye out for visitors and make an extra effort to make them feel comfortable"* (<http://www.lancasterchurchofchrist.com/svworship.htm>).

I could list many other things that people are doing wherein evangelism has been forsaken and recruiting has become the norm. In fact, Scott Parker recently told me of a congregation that had a special parking spot reserved just for "visitors". Brethren, such gimmickry is not the work of our Lord. Such tactics are based in worldly wisdom. Why do these ignorant folks use worldly wisdom? The answer is simple; they believe the Gospel is the foolish approach. Notice this: *"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe"* (I Corinthians 1:18-21). Brethren, we're not out to get "visitors", we need to be working on saving souls!

### Evangelism Is Not "Visitor" Centered

Let me begin this section of our study with the fact that the Lord approves of unbelievers being present in our worship assemblies (I Corinthians 14:15-16; 23). That being said, what Scriptures can you find where the Lord tells us to go out into the world and "invite people to services"? Where in the Scriptures are we instructed to invite sinners to be comfortable while worshipping God in vain?

Remember, when someone is in sin his or her worship is so vain that God does not want them to worship Him until they change (II Chronicles 7:14, Proverbs 15:8, Proverbs 15:29, Proverbs 21:27, Proverbs 28:9, Isaiah 1:11-16, Isaiah 59:1-3, Jeremiah 6:19-20, Jeremiah 14:10-12, Matthew 23:14, John 9:31, I Timothy 2:8, and I Peter 3:12). Thus, they are not HIS honored guests. How do you comfort someone in a worship service when God hates what he or she is doing there (Amos 5:21-24)?

Christians are supposed to be the people who worship God (Philippians 3:3). Thus, when did our gathering together to worship God become about visitors rather than about God (John 4:23-24)? Don't think this mindset only exists in "liberal" churches. Even here, we have loosely announced to those visiting that they are "our honored guest". Where is our authority to say that? I have IGNORANTLY (cf. Acts 17:30) made that statement in the past and will not do so in the future. Do we assemble together to have "honored guests" whose worship is unacceptable to God? Remember, our first day of the week assembly is for the disciples to come together for the purpose of worship (Acts 20:7). Our assemblies to worship God must not be centered on evangelism.

### **We Have To Go Out And Teach Not Bring Them To Us To Teach**

Again, as we've proven, there is certainly authority to have an alien sinner in the assembly. However, such a situation is not the work of evangelism. Notice: *"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth"* (Colossians 1:5-6). Even with the twelve disciples, Jesus sent them to teach rather than having them wait for people to show up (Matthew 10:16, John 17:18, and John 20:21). Now, what are we to do when we go into the world to teach?

### **It Is Go And Teach, Not Go And Recruit**

It is not our task to enlist people into the Lord's body. It is our task to present the Gospel and let people choose to obey (Romans 6:17) or disobey it (II Thessalonians 1:7-9; 2:10). We cannot become public relations specialists who try to sell salvation. Our task is to be lights in this world (Matthew 5:14-16 and Philippians 2:14-16). When we can teach others, we are to plainly teach them the truth (I Corinthians 2:1-5 and II Corinthians 3:12). We cannot allow ourselves to fall into the mindset wherein we think we need to make our Lord more attractive to sinners. Additionally, we cannot allow ourselves to try and make this congregation more "welcoming" to sinners (Psalms 1:1-2, Psalms 119:104, Romans 12:9, I Corinthians 10:21, II Corinthians 6:14-18, and II John 9-11). That is not to say that we become rude and unkind (Colossians 3:12), but at the same time we have to remember who the enemies of the Lord are (Matthew 12:30; cf. Philippians 3:18-19).

### **Conclusion**

Freedom from sin comes through the truth (John 8:31-32), not sales pitches designed to get more people into a building. We want to see people be born into the kingdom. That can only occur by teaching people the truth (Acts 2:36-47, James 1:18, and I Peter 1:23-25). We must remember that we are teachers of God's will. We are not to get that confused with the tactics employed by false teachers wherein people become merchandise rather than lost souls (cf. II Peter 2:1-3).