

Restoration



The João Pessoa team and the girls

Two weeks ago we held a retreat for them. Two nights were like our normal meetings but held in the house Ezekiel 47 uses for their meetings. Getting the girls out of their environment was great to help change the atmosphere and expectations.

Saturday was filled with music and various people sharing their own life stories, the hurts and pitfalls as well as the way they saw

God moving in their lives. Some of the girls opened up and told their own stories, which until this point we hadn't heard. There was not a dry eye in the room.

We also had time for games, eating and just hanging out. The retreat ended with the three men who are fathers standing in the place of the fathers who had abandoned, rejected, hurt and abused them, asking for their forgiveness. In addition, in an act of servant hood, the men washed each girl's feet. It was a very moving moment for everyone. The highlight was seeing one of the girls who has been the most closed-off melt into the embrace of one woman after another as tears fell down her face. God clearly moved in her life!

When Alpha is over we will continue to walk with these girls, along with the people in our church as well as Ezekiel 47. *The Snells*



Demonstrating the Father's love



XM Field Report

Planting Churches & Training Leaders

10 Barriers to Evangelism

“Why is it so uncommon for many of us to share our faith with our friends and family?” This was a question we posed at a recent Discovery Bible Study training conference. We all love Jesus. We all wish our friends and family could get to know Him as we do. What are the barriers to keep us from sharing more freely with unbelievers? We encouraged the conference participants to come up with reasons of why they did not talk to others about their faith.

Here is a list that the participant discovered together.

10 Barriers that keep Christians from sharing the Gospel

1. Fear
2. Feel untrained or unable
3. Insecurity
4. Fear of doing something wrong
5. Lack of interest
6. Laziness
7. Shame
8. Think it is unimportant
9. Fear that I will not know how to respond
10. Lack of time because of work and other good things



Discovery Bible Conference at the Monte Verde

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10 Barriers to Evangelism



Making a sign out of fingernail polish.

Once we had this list of barriers identified we divided the large group into ten smaller groups. We assigned each small group a certain barrier, and we gave them a related Bible text. Each small group did a Discovery Bible Study with that text, with the added challenge of identifying at least 5 biblical responses to their barrier. When the larger group gathered again, each small group shared their discovery with the larger group and facilitated a discussion with the larger group. The morning flew by as we all learned how biblical characters overcame these barriers to sharing their faith.

One truth from Luke 10:2-3 caught everyone's attention. "He [Jesus] told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves."

Jesus is sending us out like lambs. Wolves like lambs! They do not like shepherds. Shepherds have sticks, and sometimes hurt wolves. We do not need to have all the answers. With humility we invite others to learn how God wants to have a personal relationship with them. The Discovery Bible Study method is a method that some people find helpful because it puts the work of interpreting the Bible on the Holy Spirit and on those who are seeking to know God.

If we can lower these 10 Barriers to Evangelism so everyone feels qualified and equipped to share the gospel (1) it will be much easier for us to obey the Great Commission (2) more people will come to know Jesus as we do, and (3) more churches will get planted. When ordinary Christians learn to pass their faith to others in a way that these new believers can also pass on to their circle of friends, the Kingdom of God begins to spread spontaneously. "Spontaneous expansion begins with the



Evening worship at the conference

individual effort of the individual Christian to assist his fellow, when common experience, common difficulties, common toil have first brought the two together" (Allen, R., 1927. The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church). We dream of equipping ordinary people to look forward to going out to introduce their friends and family to Jesus. *Rick Bergen*



Studying the Discovery Bible Material



Restoration



Some of the girls from the foster home

A year ago we were introduced to a foster home for girls. The couple running the home expressed a need for people to invest in the lives of these girls spiritually.

The girls' lives are filled with stories that would break your heart, so much repeated abandonment, rejection and hurt in their short lives.

Before planting our church, we were without a church family and it seemed like more than we could take on. Ezekiel 47 is a small house church full of people who are very Kingdom-minded, that we have befriended. They were looking for an opportunity to serve, so we presented the idea of doing an Alpha with them at the foster home.

The girls immediately took to the Alpha videos, frequently asking, "it's already over?" at the end of the video.

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