



Humanity is all around

by Melissa Felkins

I don't believe there could be a better place in the States to have a conference like this—the Aggressive Christianity Conference.

General Gowans' (Ret.) theme Friday night was obedience. He talked about how it was better than sacrifice and even better than worship. He spoke about how we could do all the things for the Lord that we wanted, but if we weren't doing what he was asking us to do, even the smallest thing, then we weren't being obedient to his will. For me, this was the most powerful part of the weekend and the perfect way to start.

Cory Harrison led a workshop called "The De-Evolution of The Salvation Army." Cory is the guy who gave us the modernized version of Catherine Booth's Aggressive Christianity. Cory is also a guy who turned down a job of being a divisional youth secretary in London, and moved his family into a homeless shelter in Chattanooga, Tenn. If that isn't extreme and aggressive, I don't know what is. He shared with us how he brings into his home—the apartment above the shelter—homeless people from the street, and recently clean drug addicts, and lets them live with him and his family.

God really took some time to humble me and convict me during the weekend as well. He forced me to open my eyes to the world around me. That conviction hit me hard on Sunday morning. After a Spirit-filled weekend I still chose to look away. Before the workshop Sunday morning I went to Starbucks to get a latte. On my way in the door a homeless man asked me for spare change. I shook my head like I didn't have any and turned away. Here I was, Bible in hand, proudly wearing my new Salvation Army shirt that says "Saved to Serve," walking into Starbucks to spend \$3 on a single drink, and I ignored one of God's children. One of my own brothers. God stood in my path and I denied him and ignored him.

One of the questions posed during the Action Summit was "what do we do with what we've learned here?" A fire sparked in us that we knew a difference could be made. We made connections with each other. We got to know each other—other people that can remind us and encourage us in our mission to be more aggressive Christians.

A great passage to serve as a reminder of our call as Christians is Matthew 10:5-16:

Jesus sent his twelve harvest hands out with this charge: "Don't begin by traveling to some far-off place to convert unbelievers. And don't try to be dramatic by tackling some public enemy. Go to the lost, confused people right here in the neighborhood. Tell them that the kingdom is here. Bring health to the sick. Raise the dead. Touch the untouchables. Kick out the demons. You have been treated generously, so live generously.

"Don't think you have to put on a fund-raising campaign before you start. You don't need a lot of equipment. You are the equipment, and all you need to keep that going is three meals a day. Travel light.

"When you enter a town or village, don't insist on staying in a luxury inn. Get a modest place with some modest people, and be content there until you leave.

"When you knock on a door, be courteous in your greeting. If they welcome you, be gentle in your conversation. If they don't welcome you, quietly withdraw. Don't make a scene. Shrug your shoulders and be on your way. You can be sure that on Judgment Day they'll be mighty sorry—but it's no concern of yours now.

"Stay alert. This is hazardous work I'm assigning you. You're going to be like sheep running through a wolf pack, so don't call attention to yourselves. Be as cunning as a snake, inoffensive as a dove."

(The Message)

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