

SEVEN SIGNS OF JOHN:

A SIMPLE PROCESS FOR EVANGELISM AND STARTING CHURCHES

By Neil Cole

The Gospel of Jesus is the flame that burns at the grassroots of the apostolic movement. Having a means of igniting that flame in such a way that those who catch it can spread it on the same day is an extremely valuable catalyst. We felt we needed a means of unveiling the true Christ to a person open to it that was simple enough that everyone could do it in any culture, language or generation. That is a tall order to fill. We found our answer in the Bible, specifically the Gospel of John.

The 7 Signs of John is based on the words that the apostle John writes near the end of his gospel. He said, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:30-31)

Apparently, while John was with Jesus from the start and saw all the miracles performed, he selected these particular miracles and included them in this specific order¹ for a purpose—to open the eyes of the unbeliever to have faith in the real Christ and gain eternal life. This is not my opinion; this is what the Scriptures themselves say. Consider it this way: the Holy Spirit is telling you that the miracle stories in the gospel of John are the stories that are best to present the true Christ to an unbelieving heart. It is quite common for American Christian leaders to exaggerate the effectiveness of a method, but in this case it is the Holy Spirit making the claim, not me.

The Signs are as follows:

1. The turning of water into wine (John 2:1-12)
2. The healing of the royal official's son (John 4:46-54)
3. The healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-17)
4. The feeding of the five thousand (John 6:1-14)
5. The walking on water (John 6:15-25)
6. The healing of the man born blind (John 9:1-41)
7. The raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-46)

The way it works is that each week the person or persons you are sharing with is encouraged to read one of the stories once every day. So in the first week, they read the story of Jesus turning water into wine every day. At the end of the week when you get together and read the passage again together, you ask four simple questions and have a discussion about the passage. The questions are:

1. What does this story say to you about *people*?
2. What does this story say to you about *Jesus*?
3. What does this story have to say about *you*?
4. Who needs to hear this story?

This can easily be done meeting once a week over a cup of coffee with anyone who is a spiritual seeker. Every organic church I have ever started began going weekly



Church 3.0: Upgrades for the Future of the Church by Neil Cole © 2010 (p. 180-182)



through these stories and simply asking the questions. I have yet to do so and not have someone commit to follow Christ. I am not guaranteeing you the same results, but we can take the Holy Spirit's word for it that these stories will help people believe in Jesus.

This simple and profound ministry tool crosses all cultural barriers because it is simply the Bible speaking for itself (a significant principle!). It reproduces because anyone can ask a few easily remembered questions. This is not a model of church or a human curriculum. It is simply unleashing the power of God's word to do what it does in a life. The only way you could say that this doesn't work cross-culturally is to say that the Bible doesn't work cross-culturally. Even in an oral culture that is not literate this tool will still work because it is basic story telling.

¹ It is clear that while The Gospel of John follows Jesus' life it is not ordered in a strict chronological order. It is put together more topically than the synoptic gospels. The miracles that John writes about are placed in an intentional order. Therefore, following the order as John intended, while not absolutely necessary, has advantages.

