

Calvin's Evangelism

based on *Living for God's Glory: an Introduction to Calvinism* by Joel Beeke (Reformation Trust, 2008)

It ought to be the great object of our daily wishes, that God would collect churches for Himself from all the countries of the earth, that He would enlarge their numbers, enrich them with gifts, and establish a legitimate order among them. (John Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.20.42)

REASONS why we must evangelize, as Calvin summarized them.

1. God commands us to
2. We want to glorify and please God
3. We have a duty to our fellow sinners. “Nothing could be more inconsistent concerning the nature of faith than the deadness which would lead a man to disregard his brethren, and to keep the light of knowledge . . . in his own breast.” (Commentary on Isaiah 2:3)
4. We are grateful to God.

Calvin's Example in Evangelism

1. In the congregation – How do we do evangelism in this way???
2. In his city (Geneva, Switzerland)
3. Throughout Europe
 - a. The historical dynamic of refugees fleeing to Geneva for safety
 - b. The Geneva Academy, a Seminary which sent men out to the world (In 1555 there were 5 Reformed churches in France. Seven years later, there were 2,000 churches)
4. To the ends of the earth—BRAZIL. The church in Geneva sent funds, ministers, and mature laymen. Some of these men were eventually strangled by the man who first begged Calvin to send them, while others fled or were killed by natives. No natives converted, according to our record. Yet today the conservative Reformed faith is growing fast in modern Brazil!

Restraints on Evangelism during the Reformation

1. Time constraints – can't plant a church if the home church is not well founded on truth
2. Work at home – home missions and foreign missions are BOTH important
3. Government restrictions – Hard to leave town with persecution by Roman Catholic kings, princes, or Muslim armies standing in your way. [Quote p.285]
4. Are there any obstacles to evangelism which we face today?
5. Does the doctrine of election and God's absolute sovereignty discourage evangelism?
(Acts 13:44-49)

DOING EVANGELISM GOD's WAY

1. Starts with PRAYER
2. To a SOVEREIGN GOD (Isaiah 55:11)
3. Using His Ordained MEANS –Word and Sacrament
4. Submitting to His Sovereign Plan: go where doors open, and don't bang our heads on the closed
5. Take the LONG VIEW–live in light of Eternity. God never says produce growth. Just work.
6. Seasons of Discouragement are often followed by seasons of revival. Remember Who is God
7. Ask your neighbor, “How do you pursue your spiritual convictions? How do you express your spirituality? What kinds of things truly make you happy and feel successful?” These will lead to a way to present the gospel truth of Christ, our only comfort.