

Neil Cole's Story of Moths and Cockroaches

Earlier we talked about the problem of delegating disciple making to the institutional church and developing expensive and exhausting ministries that take place within the local church building in order to make disciples. There is nothing wrong with that - but the belief that ministry takes place primarily in the church building is a key identifier of an institutional church.

Neil Cole's people go - the Great Commission says "go" - and as a result find themselves in some pretty dark places. They have a few sayings about that to give themselves courage:

- *You belong to the King. The King lives in your heart. Wherever you go, the King goes.*

- *Wherever the King is, there is the Kingdom of God. Jesus is Lord over any place that you take him, because he goes with you (Matthew 28:20).*

- *Jesus is the light of the world. Wherever you go, you bring the light with you into the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome the light. The gates of hell cannot stand against the light.*

With these beliefs, Neil Cole's people went into a secular coffeehouse. They sat in the smoking section, reading their bibles, being friendly, playing board games and talking with anyone who wanted to talk to them. After several nights a week, week after week, the other people there began to accept them as a normal part of "their" place. Soon, the group got larger as people came to Christ; a few of these people started going to another coffeehouse, and a second group got started.

Neil Cole calls these churches; they are faith communities without the expense of buildings, staff, infrastructure, budgets or programs. There are no costs! Just people witnessing, learning, praying, worshiping and serving. That may not fit your definition of a church, but it works for him.

Here's a wonderful secret: when they bring the light of Jesus Christ with them into the world's darkness, they understand that the light coming into darkness reveals the nature of people. When you turn a light on in a dark room, what happens?

- *the cockroaches scurry for the darkness*

- *the moths come to the light*

Neil Cole's people are taught a simple reality: you can't convince the cockroaches to come to the light; they are afraid of the light. The more you try to get close to them, the more you frighten them. So don't worry about the people who avoid you when you bring the light into the darkness. Don't waste your time or theirs chasing them or trying to catch them. *(Let God change them because you can't!)*

Instead, just work with the moths that are drawn toward the light of Christ.

When you go walking in your neighborhood, or anywhere else, you are bringing the light of Jesus Christ into the dark places where hurting people need a savior and Lord. Don't worry about the cockroaches; know that the moths are ready to find faith as a disciple. So bring the light into the darkness and know that the people who come up to you are on their way to becoming disciples.

This is a good idea for those who are not sure who around them is ready for disciple making. The best answer is that, if you "go" to where they are, they will come up to you. So just go, and God will go with you!

(This reaction to the light is described in John 3:19-21: And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God.)