

Embracing the Vision of Camp Hill



The Three-year Old with a Vision

When my son Adam was only three years old he had already learned to ride his little bicycle without training wheels. It was not long before he was sneaking out of the house to hop on his chopper and go for a spin. Since not wanting him to ride into traffic and get hurt, I took some measures to keep him from having easy access to his bike. We had a tree with a branch lingering about 8 foot above the ground. On that limb I hung Adam's bike by the handle bars, many feet above his head. I was confident that he would be forced to make a request for riding privileges, resulting in safety. When Adam saw that bike up in the tree, he did not like it because it stood in the way of progress.

A few days later the three-year old have a vision. He was playing with blocks in the living room and I took a quick shower. When I came out he was not there. I opened up the back door only to discover that he had assembled everything in the yard into a homemade ladder. He had a goal to get the bike out of the tree and a plan to do that very thing. He had acted upon his vision. I thank God I stopped his vision before that five foot pile of homemade ladder fell on him.

Camp Hill Vision

We have the goal of a vision here at Camp Hill church of Christ. Our goal is to 1) Seek the Lost, 2) Equip the Saints and 3) Bringing all into the image of Christ. This is a scriptural goal consistent with the Great Commission given by our Lord in Matthew 28:19-20. Many congregations are missing this vital part of a vision and it hurts them greatly. This goal not only comes from God's word, but is also nestled in the hearts of our members. It has been well-demonstrated through your actions and love toward others.

How can we most effectively work toward this goal? How can we make sure there is a good balance of reaching out to the lost and reaching into the saved? How can we effectively combine the GOAL with a PLAN and ACTION to make it a true VISION? How can we take the bike out of the proverbial tree and use it in the way it was intended? As discussed there are three simple steps. 1) Training in Basics, 2) Planning Ministries and 3) Implementing the Plan. That is a ladder with a proven track record of stability.

Training in the Basics

In the last lesson, we began with a lesson about Gospel 101, the gospel basics. A gospel presentation is made up of five important principles, FORMATION, DEFORMATION INFORMATION, CONFORMATION and TRANSFORMATION. When deviating from these principles, we naturally tend to become ineffective in our efforts to reach out to the world with the message of hope. This is why one of the reasons that the church was very successful in their evangelistic effort in their vision with Christ.

Embracing the Vision of Camp Hill



The Gospel Presentation of Pentecost

They taught **FORMATION** on Pentecost:

- Acts 2:23 The message of Christ was a “predetermined plan” through the “foreknowledge of God”. The message was clear that this was all worked out before creation.
- This was the common ground for which all men could unite and begin their journey to the cross. Without commonality in Formation there could be no other steps to follow. Romans 1:20, *“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”*

They taught **DEFORMATION** on Pentecost:

- Acts 2:36, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”
- Acts 2:40, “Be saved from this perverse generation!”
- Peter made it clear to the audience that they were the reason Jesus died on the cross. They were dead in their sins

They taught specific **INFORMATION** on Pentecost:

- Acts 2:29, “Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.
- Acts 2:32, “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.”

They taught **CONFORMATION** on Pentecost.

- Acts 2:37-38, Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” ³⁸ Peter *said* to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Acts 2:41, So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

They taught **TRANSFORMATION** on Pentecost.

- Acts 2:42, They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
- Acts 2:45-46, “...they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. ⁴⁶ Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart...”

The Gospel Presentation at the Areopagus

Paul sought consensus on the **FORMATION** principle with the pagan Greeks.

- Acts 17:24-25, “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands, nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things.”

Embracing the Vision of Camp Hill



Paul did not hold back when it came to their DEFORMATION with sin against God.

- Acts 17:30-31 “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent...”

He shared the INFORMATION about Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection.

- Acts 17:18, “...he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.”
- Acts 17:32, “...they heard of the resurrection of the dead...”

He emphasized the need CONFORMATION to that same message.

- Acts 17:30, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

Paul observed a TRANSFORMATION by some of the listeners through dying to self and living to Christ.

- Acts 17:34, But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

The Gospel Presentation to the Sanhedrin

They communicated a FORMATION foundation.

- Acts 4:24, “O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM...”

They taught DEFORMATION in the hearts of their Sanhedrin listeners.

- Acts 4:12, “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”
- Acts 4:25, “...who by the Holy Spirit, *through* the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, ‘WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS?’”

They taught the INFORMATION of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

- Acts 4:2, “...they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.”
- Acts 4:10, “...let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead...”

They taught the need of CONFORMATION to the message, though the Sanhedrin outwardly rejected it.

- Acts 4:11, “He is the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, THE BUILDERS, *but* WHICH BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER *stone*.”
- Acts 4:18, And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

They taught the necessity of TRANSFORMATION for their lives.

Embracing the Vision of Camp Hill



- There was not a call for transformation in this passage because there was not acceptance of the gospel. Though the apostles attempted to share the complete message, the Sanhedrin would have nothing to do with.
- 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Throughout the New Testament you will find the emphasized on these five principles of the gospel message. They did not sugar-coat it (2 Timothy 4:3). They were not ashamed of the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16), but proudly wore it as a badge of honor (2 Timothy 1:8). By them observing and following this pattern, the first-century church was able to make simple adjustments to the method, but never the pattern of the message. Their consistency to the message gave them great success in sharing hope to a lost world. Yes, they were often rejected. Yes, some were even killed for sharing the gospel.

If we are ever going to have success in reaching our goal to reach out to the lost, then we must have training in reaching out to the lost. A physician without proper training will not lead you to the goal of good health. A mechanic not properly trained will leave you stranded short of your goal of a destination. A Christian not properly in the art of sharing the gospel with others will most certainly fall short of their goal to lead others to Christ. In the next lesson we will cover some of the many examples of various methods which were carried out in the New Testament.