

Effective Outreach

What are the most effective ways for All Saints Campus Ministry to share the Gospel with college students? Rev. Klemet I. Preus has written a book called What They Need to Hear: Sharing Christ With Family and Friends (CPH, 2013). This book is filled with effective ideas for campus ministry. These practical ideas work well with the student meals and social events that campus ministry holds for students.

Rev. Preus wrote this book to help his father-in-law regain his faith. The book is a series of letters to his father-in-law, who appeared to be close to death, and who felt he had lost his faith because he no longer believed in miracles. Rev. Preus loved his father-in-law and was honored to have the opportunity to help him with his spiritual problem. To do this he wrote ninety letters to his father-in-law, letters which are helpful for campus ministry. Free student meals and events like hiking are great, but the ideas Rev. Preus presents in his book makes sharing the Gospel much more effective.

For one thing, Rev. Preus suggests that we slow down and concentrate on sharing with one person, and not be in a rush to reach out to several students at the same time: "It's better to speak to one person ten times than ten people one time." That's just what he did. He wrote many, many letters to just one person, his beloved father-in-law, who had agreed to read the letters. This is good advice for campus ministry, too. We are more effective when we treasure even one student who comes in to talk.

Another principle that Rev. Preus encourages is really listening. He listened to what was bothering his father-in-law so much that it cost him his faith. Rev. Preus suggests that it is not effective to ignore what really bothers people with a faith problem. The pastor realized he had to confront the issue of miracles, and therefore wrote several letters explaining the Christian view concerning miracles. Only when he was sure that his father-in-law understood miracles did Rev. Preus move on to other faith issues. So, when a student has struggles with baptism, the Lord's Supper, or argues that "God is not fair", we should not ignore his/her questions, or slide by them. Rev. Preus suggests that it is much more effective to deal directly with the issues causing the student's struggle for faith.

Another of Rev. Preus's teaching is that trust is crucial in order to effectively share the Gospel. Even our own children need to trust in and be able to listen to our answers to their doubts. Rev. Preus' father-in-law trusted him enough to read the letters and to come back to faith through them. Students who come to All Saints for the meals, worship, Bible studies, will grow in trust. The members of All Saints show by their actions that they can be trusted with sharing the Gospel.

Many members from the past practiced the principles presented in What They Need to Hear: Sharing Christ With Family and Friends. Andy Heasley was one of them. He and his wife interacted very easily with college students. It didn't matter that the couple were in their eighties. It mattered that they made a point of knowing their students. They opened their

senior apartment to invite them to come in for quiet study time. They invited the students to come in for the special desserts they made, desserts like extra special puddings. Even after Lou's unexpected death, Andy included the students in his life. One student felt he had become a father to her.

Another older member from the past was Fern Fitzpatrick, who was known for driving students to Grove City for pizza at her expense. She too, invited the students to her apartment in the senior citizen's complex in town. She loved to listen to her "kids" and to tell them about her boys, all of whom were pastors, and her daughter. In fact, one son, Rev. Bob Fitzpatrick, was the Mission Executive who brought Fern to All Saints. She listened with compassion to her students, who had their struggles with college life. Today All Saints members and campus ministry look forward to sharing lives with students using Rev. Preus' ideas for effective Gospel outreach.

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