

"How many people have you brought to Christ?"

By [John Nash](#)

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At a recent clergy gathering, one of the other preachers said that the problem with the church is that we aren't asking the right questions. He said that the only question we should ask is how many people we have brought to Christ this year. When he said that, everyone sort of turned their heads and looked at him sort of funny, not sure what he was actually saying. Someone asked him to repeat himself, and so he said his question again.

At this second response, I said, "Are you asking how many adult professions of faith we've had?" And he said yes. To which I told him, "Well, I've had five adult professions of faith, but I am not responsible for any of them, and so I guess I would say I haven't brought anyone to Christ." I then followed up by saying "there were hundreds or maybe thousands of people before me who did all the work, and then there was the conviction brought by the Holy Spirit. None of this was my doing, I just happened to be the one who was there when they decided to make their commitment to God. And so if you ask how many people I brought to Christ, the answer is none, because the hard work was done before me, but if you ask how many people I've had make a profession of faith this year, it's five. But those are two very different questions."

I don't think he was really happy with my answer, but something I find among my more conservative or evangelical colleagues is a blindness not only to the work of others, but more importantly to the work of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it even seems that they doubt the work of the Holy Spirit altogether with their emphasis on all the work they must do, and have done, to get someone to "come to Christ." As a result they take all the credit for something I don't think they can or should take credit for.

This is best illustrated by someone I know who is routinely going around to different areas of the country preaching "revivals" and putting more notches in his belt, which he is certain to tell you all about. The problem is he has so many notches that his

belt is bound to fall apart anytime, and then I wonder what he is going to do.

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