LABOR OF LOVE
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Printed In U.S.A.

Nazarene Publishing House
2923 Troost Avenue
Kansas City, Missouri

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Digital Edition 06/12/07
By Holiness Data Ministry

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DEDICATION

Affectionately and gratefully
dedicated to my parents
Samuel A. and Annie M. Williamson

FOREWORD

The Commission on Christian Service Training is happy to commend this volume to the attention of all who are interested in the task of Christian evangelism. The book is intended primarily as a textbook for the First Series course in "Evangelism in the Local Church," but deserves as well the attention of the average reader. The author is well qualified for his task. Before coming to the presidency of Eastern Nazarene College, he rendered distinguished service as a pastor in the Church of the Nazarene. He has served, moreover, and with outstanding success, in the work of evangelism. It is our prayer that the study of this volume will invest with a new sense of urgency that spirit of evangelism which has been the essence of our Christian faith from the beginning until now.

J. Glenn Gould, Chairman
Commission On Christian Service Training

PREFACE

Jesus assigned to His followers the task of evangelizing the world. The success of His kingdom on the earth depends upon the faithfulness and effectiveness of the church in carrying out His program. It is the purpose of this little volume to make clear that the supreme work of the church is to evangelize until all men have been converted or until Jesus comes again. All the activity of the church has some bearing upon the work of evangelism if we have Christ's view of the world and the need of men. Evangelism in the church has its effect upon the total life of the organization. There are different forms and methods of evangelistic endeavor, but if the church is alive and loyal to the truth as it is in Jesus, it has a single purpose. That purpose co-ordinates the whole program whether it be social, educational, devotional or promotional. To spread the gospel of Christ and persuade men to believe it is that purpose.
This offering is not exhaustive or profound in its treatment of the subject. It is designed to provoke thought and action on the part of the laymen of the church, upon whom so much depends for the success of the whole undertaking.

This opportunity should be taken to acknowledge the valuable help received from a number of my associates on the faculty of Eastern Nazarene College and from Dr. D. Shelby Corlett, Editor of the Herald of Holiness.

G. B. W.

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01 -- THE MOTIVE IN EVANGELISM

"Remembering without ceasing . . . your labour of love" (I Thessalonians 1:3).

I. Evangelism A Labor Of Love

Evangelism is defined as earnest effort to spread the gospel of Christ. That effort is inspired by the faith that the good news is for all men and is "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). The only sufficient motive in evangelism is the love of Christ. David Livingstone said, "The love of Christ compelled me." He borrowed those words from Saint Paul (II Corinthians 5:14). They both kindled their passion at the fire of Christ's undying love. His love for them won their love. They understood that as Christ loved them He loved all men. Love was Christ's motive.

Love is the motive in the whole program of redemption. It was love that inspired the thought. It was love that offered the sacrifice that God "might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:26). "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). It was love that brought Jesus to live among men. His was a life dominated by love. That quenchless fire in His soul moved Him to live a life of self-forgetfulness. He said, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20). His whole life's energies were absorbed with the work of saving men. He also said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Love for lost men thrust Him out into a life of hardship and self-denial. It enabled Him to turn a deaf ear to those who savored the things that were of men. It carried Him past the opposition of His foes. It sustained Him in the loneliness of Gethsemane, in the torture of the judgment hall, in the ignominy and pain of Calvary. Love made Him give with lavish carelessness all that other men cherish that He might save the lost of earth.

Christians Must Share Christ's Motive
It takes no unusual gift of spiritual understanding to see that all who share with Jesus in the work of human redemption must share also His self-forgetful love for those that are lost.

In I Thessalonians 1:3 Paul wrote, "Remembering without ceasing . . . your labour of love." Then he recorded with pleasure and pride that the recently established church at Thessalonica was permeated with the spirit of evangelism. He said, "Ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything" (I Thessalonians 1:7, 8). It is noteworthy that Paul wrote all this of a church that had but recently turned from idols (I Thessalonians 1:9) and that still had something lacking in their faith (I Thessalonians 3:10), and for whom he was still praying that they might be sanctified wholly (I Thessalonians 5:23). In other words, this church had not received its Pentecost. Pentecost is not prerequisite to evangelism. It is, however, necessary to the maintaining of the evangelistic fervor as an all-consuming passion.

Even as Paul characterized that early church by the phrase "your labour of love," so can every newborn soul be described. He has been saved from sin and is therefore full of zeal and passion for the salvation of other souls. This fact is recognized so universally that it is almost too trite to be mentioned here; yet it is a truth that has fundamental significance. In reality it means that for evangelism to remain a part of the church program we must see souls born again as the normal result of our efforts. We must conclude then that newborn souls are both a cause and an effect of evangelism. Without evangelism souls will not be saved. Without souls being saved we will not maintain a virile and vital evangelism. An effort that nets no returns will not be carried on indefinitely. The transformed life and the ringing testimony of a new convert keep the whole church fused with the spirit of evangelism. When Zion brings forth no children, zest and zeal languish, apathy and indifference creep over the church, and soon a condition of sterility prevails.

Love Essential To Evangelism

Evangelism is the labor of love. It is such a work as can be inspired only by that "love which is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost" (Romans 5:5). No other motive will be sufficient to drive the church to her great task of world evangelism. Furthermore, if the church does carry on the program in a merely formal fashion, it will be without effect. The unbelieving world can be persuaded only by those whose hearts are hot with holy passion and whose lives give evidence of having been empowered by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The great cause of the present plight of Christendom is that the love which inspires labor for the lost is lacking. The words of Christ to the church at Ephesus are applied as appropriately to many churches today. He said, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Revelation 2:4). He is speaking of a love that is first in quality rather than first in time. Nothing but that first, purest,
highest love can carry the burden for lost men and bring them through to a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Without it souls will not be born again. Spiritual children may come to the hour of deliverance only to find that the power to bring forth is wanting. The expression "soul travail" is a very striking figure of speech. It suggests that there are birth pains to be suffered if souls are to be born again. If we are without that soul travail we will witness barrenness at our altars. Only love, divine love, love such as Jesus had, will produce that labor. And only that labor will bring forth the newborn souls.

Let us not assume that this "first love" is possessed only by the new convert. True, it flares up in his soul and is the more noticeable because he has so recently found the Saviour himself. His enthusiasm may seem to be even more in evidence than that of the mature Christian. But that all-essential inward fire does not abate as one becomes more mature. Nay, rather does it burn more constantly and with brighter glow and greater heat. Let that young convert go on to Pentecost. Let him receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire. Let him follow his Master faithfully day by day in true obedience. If he does he will find that the fire of love grows more intense. His labors and prayers for men will be more ardent. It is doubtful if any Pentecostal Christian can be indifferent to the work of evangelism. The farther he goes and the more he grows, the more concerned he will be to give forth the gospel message to men both near and far.

Paul An Example

Probably there were some of the Corinthian Christians who saw how zealously affected for the salvation of men Paul was, and they said, "He is beside himself." Paul's reply is found in these words: "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us . . ." (II Corinthians 5:13, 14). There is a concern for the lost that approximates a mania. Without it we can have no great success in soul saving. Paul said, "The love of Christ constraineth us," which is to say the love of Christ shuts us up to a single purpose as within a narrow walled road. The Christian's life is thus directed. The farther he goes with Christ the more completely monopolized by Him does he become and the more valuable do the lives and souls of men appear to be. Worldly pursuits and interests are more subordinated, and the work of soul saving takes an ever-growing place in his thoughts and efforts.

Paul felt such a complete identity with the redemptive work of Christ that he said, "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and Fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake which is the church" (Colossians 1:24). His prayer was that he might know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings.

No Evangelism Without Love

That same passion in the soul is the secret of success in the work of evangelism. It should be experienced by evangelists, by pastors, by lay leaders,
and all true followers of Jesus. When it is the experience of Christians, souls will be saved and added to the church constantly. No other motive is sufficient to keep the church at its God-given task of evangelism, and no other motive can be the basis of fruitful effort. That love must he kept aglow or the candlestick will be removed, the light in our own souls will go out, and we shall he lost as well as those we might have won. Does that conclusion seem to be rugged? Would to God it could be stated in ten times stronger language.

II. Serving God With False Motives Unworthy Motives

The effect of being moved by wrong motives is devastating. It is first felt in the soul of the man himself. His springs of spiritual life will dry up at their source. His life will he like the fig tree withered by the curse of Christ. His love will cool. The nerve of his faith will be cut. His vision will be blurred. His once radiant face will become clouded, his message will lose the ring of sincerity, his whole effort will become perfunctory and professional. Before he is aware of it, he will he trifling with things as sacred as life and as solemn as death. Unless he is awakened in time he will jeopardize the integrity of his conscience and forfeit the salvation of his own soul. Well may we pray:

"Arm me with jealous care,
As in Thy sight to live;
And oh, Thy servant, Lord, prepare
A strict account to give."

It is possible for a man to go to hell from a church pew as well as from a gambling table; and alas, alas, a man can go to hell from the pulpit as well as from the pew. No man is more seriously tempted in the realm of his motives than the preacher. Nowhere is it more tragic to see men inspired by low motives than in the Church of Jesus Christ.

The Blight Of Insincerity

The effect of insincerity is not only ruinous to one's own soul, but it also blights the souls of others. The want of spiritual power results in futile, fruitless efforts. The routine of so-called Christian service is little more than beating the air. Words are vain. Deeds take on the air of acting. Nothing happens. This blight is contagious. If low motives dominate the lives of a few leaders, this condition will soon spread throughout the membership of a church until all but the strongest will be contaminated. Young converts will discover it and become disillusioned. All too frequently they turn away, to become cynical and sour. Unbelievers are more quick to detect insincerity than the saints, for they lack the charity which covers a multitude of sins. Often with disappointment and sometimes with contempt, they turn away from the church to be lost forever. Thus the whole program of the church becomes a dead formality, and at her doors sinning men lie dying without a light to lead them to the Saviour.
The time is come for each of us to examine our motives. Introspection may be overdone, but it is more frequently omitted. Before we engage in the work of saving others, let us make sure of our own salvation. Let us take off the mask of self-righteousness and view ourselves as we are while the unobstructed light of God searches our souls.

The Need For Vigilance

Constant vigil is needed to keep the heart free from secondary and ulterior motives. It is shocking, but none the less true, that men can be engaged in the most sacred duties and at the same time be governed by selfish motives. It is possible that one can be preaching an evangelistic message and be more concerned about his reputation than about the salvation of a lost soul. One can plead with men to seek the Lord, and do so with more anxiety about the report of the meeting than about the men who stand on the brink of perdition. One can pray for souls and think more about his own success than about their salvation. Laymen can work in the church with the view to gaining a place for themselves rather than to having pure love for the lost. They may pray that souls will be saved and join the church so that the new converts will lighten the load on themselves. Even so noble a purpose as getting people into the church can be inspired by secondary motives on the part of the ministers and laymen.

In the city square at Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, there stands a monument to the soldiers of the Civil War. At each of the four corners of its square base stands a sentinel in the garb of those who fought in that war. Each one holds his gun as if on guard against a foe who might be expected to strike any time, anywhere. Carved deep in the granite of that monument are the words of the familiar proverb: "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." No generation should be more conscious of the truth of those words than our own. The popular slogan of the current war is "Remember Pearl Harbor." Yes, we may well remember, for we are as much embarrassed by our own lack of vigilance as we are aroused by the treachery of the enemy. Even as the cherished rights of our Democracy are to be retained at the price of eternal vigilance, so will the liberty, purity, and love of our souls be kept at the same price and not a farthing less. Christian, set a guard at each of the four corners of your soul. Never be found without a watch. Never relax in carnal security. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). Only from a heart kept pure and full of love divine will issue that stream of holy influence and unselfish service that will result in the salvation of the lost.

III. Safeguarding Our Motives

Constant communion with Christ is the only sufficient safeguard to our motives. We must worship Him until we become like Him. We must live with Him till the warmth of His love melts away all the coldness of our hearts. We must walk with
Him till "our hearts burn within us" (Luke 24:32). We must abide in His presence until our selfishness gives place to love, until our bitterness grows into greatness of mind and soul. We must follow Him until we understand fully that if we are to save others we cannot save ourselves. Yes, the soul-winner must learn his technique very largely from Jesus; and, above all, he must be anointed with His Spirit for this greatest of all tasks. One might learn by rote all that has ever been written on the subject of evangelism and yet be utterly without success in soul-winning unless with it he possess the mind of the Master. We know how completely He forgot Himself. And He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). He taught us clearly that the condition of fruit-bearing is abiding in Him. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:4-6). Apart from that abiding life there can be no fruit unto eternal life. Therefore, let us lose ourselves in Him and live our lives a hundred-fold in the souls won for Christ.

Growing Love For Christ

Soul-winning is labor. It is labor that only love will inspire. Jesus knew that only supreme and absolute love would enable one to have the real concern for souls that all who engage successfully in the work of evangelism must possess. That is why He put Peter through such a searching examination that morning by the seaside. He said, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith unto him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord; thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17). All who would be evangelists, whether ordained by the church or not, must pass that test. Can it be said by you, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee?" Notice that the criterion by which the fitness of Peter was judged was his love for Jesus. He is jealous of our love. He claims the highest place in the shrine of our hearts' affections. Jesus said to Peter in substance: Prove your love to me by your service to those that are mine. If you love me, love them, save them, serve them. Jesus knew that only by love to men could love to God be demonstrated. Love is indivisible. To love God is to love all He loves. Certain it is that God loves all men; therefore, all who love Him love all the men of earth. The soul-winner's love must be all-inclusive. He cannot indulge in hatred and ill-feeling toward any man. He cannot be exclusive in his love. It must include the lovely and the unlovely, the charming friend and the ugly enemy. Lack of love for anyone is a defect in one's love for Christ.
Increasing Love For All Men

The Christian who becomes an evangel of the blessed Lord has a love for all men and a desire to see their salvation. But while that love is universal, it is also personal. We cannot love souls in the mass. We must love them as individuals. The love you show to those you know is a token of the love you have for all the people of the earth. You say, "I love everybody." You cannot unless you love somebody. Unless you love someone enough to yearn over him, to plead with him, to pray for him, to agonize for his salvation, to give your very life to see him saved, then you do not love anyone enough to accomplish his salvation. Love must be personal and individual. Without the element of personal interest evangelism is certain to break down. It will become professional in spite of every good intention. The evangelistic appeal from the pulpit must be supplemented by the faithful personal work of the pastor and laymen. Without personal contact and individual interest, the most moving public appeal will get small results.

IV. Men Are Saved By Love

God's Love Incarnate In Christians

If men are ever saved, they must be saved by love. God loves them, but sinners look for a demonstration of God's love in the lives of Christians. This world is dying and almost damned for the lack of love. And the tragic thing is that many Christians in name are living loveless lives. Some may say, "I want to love as Jesus loved, but how can I?" "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Romans 5:5). But love can be either smothered to death or fanned into a living flame within the soul. If you will have the love that Jesus had, then meditate upon the love of God. For "he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). Think of the fathomless love that bestowed on us the "unspeakable gift" (II Corinthians 9:15). "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Corinthians 8:9). When one thinks of the giving love of God and of Jesus our Saviour, certainly he craves to be filled with that same love.

Such Love Stimulates Concern For The Lost

Love prompts us to think of others. Jesus saved others. Paul said, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:4-8). "We have the mind of Christ" (I Corinthians 2:16). Therefore, we are absorbed with love for others. Every loving
impulse in our souls must find expression. Left without an opportunity to express itself, love will die. If you love a soul, be kind to him. Show yourself friendly to him. Do some deed of love. Say an encouraging word. Let no opportunity pass to befriend him. If at first your love is unrequited do not be discouraged. Keep on loving and you shall at last be rewarded. It is vain to profess to love souls without giving some evidence of it. To pray for them is good, but to give practical demonstration in words and deeds is also necessary. You can pray much more effectively if you put hands and feet to your prayers and do those things that will make it impossible for a sinner to gainsay your testimony of Christ's saving grace. To pray for a love for souls is vain unless you do for them all that love inspires. If you want love, then let God fill your heart with love by the gift of the Holy Ghost. Then, by meditation, by good works, and by prayer, let that love grow ever deeper, stronger, and more sincere. By doing what your hands find to do, you will be more loving every day. You will find your concern for souls will increase, your freedom in prayer and testimony will be greater, and your faith will grow stronger. God may fill your heart with love, but He does not sustain that love in your soul independent of your own effort. Do what you are prompted to do by the Spirit of love; then your own experience will be richer day by day, and you will see the desire of your heart in the salvation of souls.

Love Without Thought Of Reward

A labor of love is done without thought of reward. That must always be the attitude of the bearer of the evangel of Christ. His reward in this life is in the souls he is able to win; in the world to come, it is in the "well done" of Master.

If every Christian were filled with the supreme and absolute love of Christ, then every Christian would be an evangelist. In his inmost soul there would be a motive force that would drive him to spend himself lavishly in the labor of love. Evangelism is love's labor and love's labor is never lost. It bears its precious fruit both in our own and in the lives of others, both here and hereafter.

"Love of God, Eternal Love, pour Thyself through me; Nothing less than Calvary's love do I ask of Thee. Fill me, flood me, overflow me; Love of God, Eternal Love, pour Thyself through me."

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02 -- THE MESSAGE OF EVANGELISM

"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance" (I Thessalonians 1:5).

I. The Gospel, Evangelism's Only Message
The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is the message of evangelism. It is the good news that through God's mercy and free grace, guilty, rebellious sinners may be forgiven, and the defiled nature of man may be cleansed from all sin by the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son. Paul saw the power of the gospel demonstrated all the way from Damascus to Rome. In Jerusalem, "the word of God grew and multiplied" (Acts 12:24). In Ephesus, "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" (Acts 19:20). In Philippi, in Thessalonica, and in Corinth the seed of the word was sown. Some of it fell upon good ground and brought forth fruit. To the Romans Paul wrote, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

The Word of God has not lost any of its power and the gospel still has its blessed appeal. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

Healing For Man's Hurt

The gospel of Christ, the pure unmixed truth of God's Word, is the message for mankind. Nothing else will heal man's moral hurt. Nothing else will satisfy his soul's deep longing. Of those who turned from that message in the ancient day God said, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13). All substitutes have failed. All additions or subtractions or adulterations have damaged rather than improved it. Therefore, the message of the evangelist must be the simple truth that God will save all men who believe and obey the gospel.

A Message Always New

It is wonderful, and as true as wonderful, that this message never grows old. It is new every morning and fresh every evening. It slakes the thirst of the soul. It satisfies the inner longing. "Those who know it best seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest." Those who have partaken of it will be satisfied with nothing else. Those who turn from it will never find that for which their souls have craved. The message itself has such deep meaning that it is never exhausted, and such abundant variety that it never needs to be changed. It is adapted to the need of all people of all races, classes, and ages. It is like a diamond with many facets. When one has been blessed with the beauty and glory of one phase of the eternal truth, he has but to turn to another phase of the message to find it just as vital and gripping.

An Inexhaustible Message
The evangelist needs no new message. He needs only to dig deeper into the
treasure store of the Word of God. He needs only to comprehend more fully the
greatness of the divine revelation. No message has ever had such universal appeal.
None has ever held men so fast by its charm. It will draw more men to hear it and
hold them more certainly than any other appeal that has ever gone forth. It is true
that "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life" (II Corinthians 3:6). The Word must
be energized by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The secret of Paul's
success as an evangelist was revealed when he said, "Our gospel came not unto
you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost" (I Thessalonians 1:5).
God's Word vitalized by the Holy Ghost has power in it that convicts the sinner,
transforms the character, reforms the life of the individual, and if given the chance
will revolutionize society. The gospel of Christ when mixed with faith is the power
of God unto salvation. It will save one soul; it will save a nation. Yea, it will save the
world. Let us never lose faith in the Word of God. Let us believe it without
reservation and proclaim it without hesitation.

II. God's Standard Of Righteousness

The gospel proclaims God's standard of righteousness. That standard is
holiness or moral perfectibility. From the first chapter of Genesis to the last of
Revelation God calls upon men to be holy.

Revealed In Creation

The divine standard is clearly revealed in the creation. God said, "Let us
make man in our image, after our likeness .... So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God created he him" (Genesis 1:26, 27). Thus we understand that
man came from God's creative hand, bearing his own moral image and possessing
such a state of spiritual perfection that he could live in obedience and fellowship
with his Maker. When man's nature was defiled by his act of sin, his relation to God
was forfeited. "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to
till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed
at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned
every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Genesis 3:23, 24).

To be sure, this whole concept of the creation of man in the image of God
contradicts the theory of evolution, which supposes that man has come up to his
present level through all the forms of lower animal life. But that theory is
devastating to the faith of men in the power of God and the truth of His Word. It is
also degrading to man's whole conception of the dignity and nobility of human
personality. To follow evolution to its logical conclusion, one comes to the place
where he feels he may as well give full rein to his lusts and passions and live as an
animal with no standard of moral conduct supported by divine authority, and no
destiny beyond the grave. If our message is to challenge the attention and faith of
men until they are lifted by its power, we must affirm confidently that God made
man "a little lower than the angels," and "crowned him with glory and honour"
(Psalm 8:5). This view upholds the fact that God is holy and that it is His will that man shall be holy.

Declared In The Law

The divine standard is also declared by the law which God gave to Moses. Every demand of the decalogue is in harmony with the holiness of God himself. It is a transcript of His moral excellence. In the keeping of those Commandments man finds his highest good and his greatest happiness. Any departure from those standards imposes a forfeit upon the transgressor. It is not to establish an arbitrary standard that God has spoken to man at Sinai. No message that God has given to man is more beneficent. God knew that in the keeping of these precepts by man there was great reward. The law reveals God's mercy as well as His justice. He said, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments" (Exodus 20:5, 6). The essence of the law is written in the words, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16). The law and all the prophets proclaim the fact that God is holy and that He wills that men shall be holy. What God requires in the law He makes possible in the sacrifice of Calvary. The law condemned sin but it could not take it away. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:2, 3).

That Standard Still Obtains

Not one jot or tittle of the law has passed away. God forgives sin because men believe in Jesus Christ, but He never excuses sin. He loves the sinner but He hates his sin. Therefore, we must include in any adequate statement of God's standard for man that God's righteous wrath abides upon every impenitent sinner. "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14). On that great day God will say to the wicked, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). "These shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:46). The message of the evangelist cannot omit that note of judgment and eternal doom that awaits the transgressor of God's law who will not repent. God's whole system of moral government demands that there shall be a Final judgment and an eternal hell for the finally rebellious sinner. God is holy. He requires man to be holy.

III. The Moral Responsibility Of Man

Clearly Taught In Old Testament
The gospel of God makes clear the fact of man's moral responsibility. This position is maintained consistently in the Old Testament. In Eden God gave to man the power of free will. In the exercise of that freedom Adam fell. By the preaching of Noah God offered the people of the antediluvian world mercy and a way of escape from the visitation of His wrath. They proved themselves free men by their refusal to repent and accept the deliverance that was offered them. In Abraham God found a man with an obedient spirit and a faithful heart. In his seed God sought to raise up a people who would keep His commandments and walk in His ways but their obedience was to be voluntary. In return for their hearts' allegiance they were promised the glory of His favor and fellowship. The history of that people is a record of vacillation between rebellion and repentance. All their prophets from Moses to Malachi preached the goodness and mercy of God for all the obedient, and His judgment and wrath for the wicked. All of them placed the responsibility upon the individual man. Moses said, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19). Joshua said, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15). Samuel said, "Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, the Lord hath set a king over you. If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the Lord your God: but if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers" (I Samuel 12:13-15). On Mount Carmel Elijah said, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him" (I Kings 18:21). Isaiah said, "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 1:18-20).

Ezekiel was strong in his declaration concerning the moral responsibility of man. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live?" (Ezekiel 18:20-24).
Malachi joined with all the others in these words: "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 3:7).

Equally Clear In New Testament

In the New Testament there is no change of emphasis. The keynote of the preaching of John the Baptist was, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). Jesus was baptized of John and began His ministry with the same message, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). To repent is to change the mind by a deliberate choice. A changed mind results in a changed attitude, a changed attitude results in a changed course of action, in a changed character, and at last in a changed destiny. The whole doctrine of repentance is based upon the fact that men are creatures possessed of free will. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Romans 2:4). Because of God's grace the Holy Spirit seeks the sinner and convicts him of his sin. Nevertheless, repentance is a voluntary act on the part of man.

Paul was the apostle of faith. He proclaimed with no uncertain sound that faith is the condition of salvation. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:8-13). In this passage there are three essentials to salvation: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord"; "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness"; "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." But to call upon the name of the Lord, to believe with the heart, and to confess with the mouth, all involve the action of a free will. John said, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). Both of these great promises of salvation which include full pardon and complete cleansing are introduced by the word "if." This indicates clearly that confession and obedience to the light of God are acts of moral choice for which each individual man is responsible. Peter said, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (I Peter 4:17, 18). Peter declared that obedience to the gospel is the only escape from judgment.

Obedience Is An Act Of Will
James proclaimed, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded" (James 4:7, 8). Certainly it is clear that James here recognized that man is himself responsible for submission to God and for resistance of the devil. Yes, clean hands and pure hearts are gained only when the will of man co-operates with the will of God.

Man A Free Moral Agent

The New Testament offers salvation by grace through faith. But man must exercise the faith and he must voluntarily appropriate the grace that God provides.

That the Bible teaches the doctrine of election is obviously true. But it is the election of grace. The elect includes "whosoever will." Not one instance can be cited in the whole Bible where God coerced the will of man to save him. God loves, Christ seeks, the Holy Spirit woos and warns, but man is the captain of his soul and the master of his fate. God sets before man the way of life and the way of death. He is faithful to give knowledge of the rewards and punishments. Man makes his own decision, which is final. By choosing, man determines his vocation and his relation to God in this life. Likewise by choosing, he fixes his soul's eternal destiny.

Any teaching which deprives man of the exercise of his own will misrepresents God end degrades man. It matters little whether it is an exaggerated view of the sovereignty of God which reaches its conclusion in fatalism concerning man, or whether it is a materialistic philosophy which makes man only a highly developed animal without moral capacity and with no eternal destiny. The results of such teachings are devastating to the standards of righteousness. They tend to relieve the consciences of men, to make them careless of their conduct and indifferent to their obligation to God in this world and at His judgment bar.

Men Must Choose Christ

Any message of evangelism which is to bear the largest fruit and produce the most lasting effect must recognize the right and responsibility of each individual man to choose his standards of conduct, his associates, his object of supreme devotion, his purpose in life, and his destiny forever. Charles G. Finney was one of the greatest evangelists that America has ever had. His work was deep, far-reaching, and abiding. One secret of his success was that he so highly regarded the right of men to choose the Lord or reject Him. And he held men personally responsible before the bar of conscience here and the bar of God hereafter. With Finney sin was an act of the will; hence salvation required the voluntary act of forsaking sin and having faith in God. It seems almost a truism that the moral responsibility of man is an essential fact in the teaching of one who takes the role of an evangelist. If a man's destiny is predetermined, what can be done about it? Why appeal to him to accept Christ as his Saviour if it has already been decreed that he will be either saved or lost? To those who are chosen to be saved, the
The evangelist is unnecessary. To those who are doomed to be lost, his message is without avail. Therefore, let us declare clearly that man is free to choose. That fact makes him responsible for his own salvation and accountable to God, according to the full measure of the light he has received.

IV. The Meaning Of The Cross

The Centrality Of The Cross

The story of the cross with all of its blessed implications should have a large place in the message of the evangelist. The fullest and most eloquent proclamation of God's love and grace is brought to us in the cross of Calvary. By the sacrifice which was made on that despised instrument of death and symbol of shame, God's great redemptive purpose has been made known to mankind. In sending Christ into the world to live among men and die on the cross, God revealed to the sinful race His heart of seeking love and forgiving mercy. His revelation is so plain that none can ever doubt that God would "have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4). "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (II Corinthians 5:19). Some theologians have seen Calvary as an appeasement of God's wrath. It is rather an announcement of His love. An atonement was made and by its efficacy men are reconciled to God. God's attitude was not changed at Calvary. It was rather God's blessed appeal to man to change his attitude from rebellion to surrender, from unbelief to faith and trust. It is not necessary to discuss theories of atonement here. Such problems will be left to the theologians. Neither is it profitable for evangelists to engage in hair-splitting arguments about theories, but rather to proclaim the changeless fact.

A Call To Repentance

The message of the cross is an invitation to repentance and a promise of forgiveness. Many people know that they are wrong, but they are wanting in the power to change their manner of life. They are burdened with a sense of guilt. They are eager to hear a message which offers pardon and peace. Salvation by self-effort offers no hope for sin-burdened souls. They need a Saviour. They must have help from on high. John gives us the heart of the gospel in the familiar words, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). In the fact that God is faithful and just to forgive lies the hope of the world. This is the message that reaches the need of mankind. It is the message that all God's representatives are to proclaim.

A Promise Of Cleansing

The complete cleansing of the nature of man is included in the message of the cross. By the sacrifice made at Calvary God offers full redemption to sinful men. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Hebrews 13:12). "Wherefore he is able also to save them
to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25). Jesus provided a complete and uttermost salvation at the cross. Paul wrote, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6). He testified to the Galatians, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Anything less than a full and uttermost salvation is inadequate to meet the need of man. There must be a declaration of the glorious message of full redemption to awaken the interest and challenge the faith of sin-enslaved souls. The completeness of redemption is affirmed by John in this great text, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

V. The Power Of Pentecost

A Fearless Witness

Many people have thought of Christians as timid, fearful victims of worldly oppression. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Christians in some periods of the history of the church have been inclined to asceticism, but certainly not in the apostolic era. Then they were fearless, dynamic witnesses for Christ. They were threatened, beaten, imprisoned, and sometimes put to death. But it is recorded that "when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). The most powerful, most fruitful lives in all the Christian centuries were those of the first generation because the presence of Christ within them was made a reality by the power of Pentecost. In the upper room they received the promise of the Father. Jesus had said, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1:14). "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come..., they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:1, 4). It was the mighty baptism of the Spirit that made those men the marvel of their day and the inspiring example for Christians of every day.

The message of the Christian evangelist is not complete without the note of victory and power that is sounded so clearly in the pentecostal emphasis. The evangelist must experience the baptism with the Spirit and he must declare the availability of that experience to all Christians. Peter said, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). If the church is to impress the world it must be vitalized by this spiritual power. There must be something in our Christian faith to lift us above circumstances, oppression, persecution, worldliness, and sin. The power of Pentecost is sufficient to make men victorious. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).
Power To Resist Temptation

There is a threefold power that is discovered by the pentecostal Christian. He has power to resist temptation. He has been cleansed from inbred sin. He has been made pure by the fire of the Spirit, and he has been filled with God's holy presence until the power of temptation has been neutralized in his life, and he is able to rise above the evil that is in the world. Many people fear to start in the Christian life lest they fail. They need to know that there is a life in the Spirit which lifts them to the heights of spiritual victory day by day.

Power To Endure Trial

The Christian who has received his personal Pentecost also discovers that he has power to endure the trials and tribulations that may beset him. He is not defeated by the opposition of foes nor by the scorn of friends. He is not depressed by his burdens and cares. He can cast them upon Him who careth for him (I Peter 5:7). It is a wonderful encouragement to know that there are infinite resources of divine grace and power on which the Christian can draw. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life means that there is a ministry of supply always in operation.

Power To Serve Christ

Pentecost also provides the power for performance. Sometimes preachers and witnesses have left the impression that the chief benefit to be received in a Christian experience is to escape hell and reach heaven. That concept is a part of the truth but it is certainly not the whole truth. It offers some incentive to men to be Christians, but it is not the only one. The Spirit-filled Christian is endued with power for the service of Christ. No matter what his vocation may be, he can do his work better as a Christian than he can without Christ. Besides, while he is performing the duties of life he is radiating Christ to men. He is glorifying God and serving Him whether he be preacher or layman. The world wants to see a demonstration of the power of the Spirit in the lives of Christian people. For Christians to demonstrate that power in their daily performance they must hear the message of Pentecost from God's servants; and hearing, they must believe, and receive the Spirit in His fullness.

As those who proclaim the Christian gospel, let us send it forth in all its fullness. It is a message that is fresh with appeal and power. Christ came to save men from sin. The Holy Spirit is come to inspire their faith and empower them for performance as Christians in the world.

VI. The Kingdom Of God

In the message of evangelism there should be some clear teaching regarding the kingdom of God. In some instances we have had some serious muddling of this
great truth. It is not possible here to give a full and elaborate statement of the scriptural teaching regarding the kingdom. There are, however, three phases of this truth which can be stated briefly in this consideration.

The Kingdom Is Personal

First, the kingdom of God is personal. The unit in the kingdom of God is the soul of the individual. For one to be a part of the kingdom of God he must be born again. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). To be sure, all moral beings are subject to the sovereign will of God, but only those who are born again are citizens of God's kingdom. As sinners they were aliens. By repentance and faith in Christ they have been naturalized. God accepts only such transformed souls as subjects of His beneficent reign of grace and peace.

Another phase of the truth regarding the kingdom of God as it relates to individuals is that after one is in the kingdom, the kingdom must be set up within him. When one is born again he accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. But Jesus wills to be his Lord and King as well as his Saviour. Therefore, in a second crisis the will is yielded wholly to God's will; the affections are purified; and Christ becomes the unrivaled King whose will is supremely delightful. After the second crisis there is glad submission to all God's will, and perfect love to God fills the soul. Then one is in the kingdom and the kingdom is in him.

The Kingdom Is Social

Second, the kingdom of God is social. Some writers have gone to great length to distinguish between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven and the church. There is little or no distinction between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of God in the world is practically identical with the invisible spiritual Church. Of that Church and kingdom the various denominations are a part in so far as their individual members are spiritually qualified as God judges them.

Denominations are all accommodations to men and their limited understanding. They are also an expediency in the present order. Members of the various churches owe them their allegiance and support in so far as they are true to their God-given purpose and the teachings of God's Word. The kingdom of God claims a higher loyalty, an unquestioned devotion. Indeed, the interests of the kingdom have prior claims on the Christian's time and strength. To those who have found themselves happily adjusted in their denominations, loyalty to them is loyalty to the kingdom. In all cases Christians are obliged to consecrate all their means, all their time, and all their energies to the advancement of God's kingdom in the earth. They should seek to accomplish the personal salvation of every man. They should also seek to right every wrong in the community, in the state, and in the world. Christians have a duty to society. We cannot save all men nor reform all society,
but we can work to promote every good and to defeat every wrong. The principles of Christ's teaching are to be applied in every relationship which the Christian sustains to his fellow men. The most successful method of promoting reforms is by getting men personally converted to Christ. The lofty principles of our Christian teachings are far removed from the unconverted. Let us seek the salvation of each man and through him seek the betterment of the needy world. Let every Christian be as "a city that is set on a hill" (Matthew 5:14).

The Kingdom Destined To Be Universal

Third, the kingdom of God shall be universal. It is both present and future. In the final fulfillment of God's redemptive purpose there will be a kingdom in which Christ shall be "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:16). We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Peter 3:13). In that future kingdom all will be right. Not only within men's souls, but in all the earth there will be social equality and justice, universal peace and righteousness. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end" (Isaiah 9:7). "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11-9).

This view of the kingdom gives encouragement to evangelism. It is not fatalistic. It is not humanistic. It honors God and offers hope to man. It binds duties upon man and gives him faith to bear them.

VII. Eternal Life

The Universal Hunger For Life

The hope of life eternal has been nourished by all peoples of all ages. In many instances the conception of the hereafter has been very vague. In others it has been grotesque. But in the spiritual constitution of mankind the longing for eternal life has been universal and persistent. The inspired writers of the Old Testament gave expression to their hope. But in Jesus Christ that hope has become a faith fully assured. He said, "I am the resurrection, and the life" (John 11:25). Again He said, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). To confirm His promise and to give sure foundation to the faith, He died and rose again. "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, your faith, is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of
the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:12-22). In this remarkable argument Paul shows that the resurrection of Christ is the pledge of our resurrection. It is the proof that the grave does not end all, the assurance of life eternal. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:14, 15).

A Joyful Hope

The hope of eternal life is attractive. To live forever in the better world is a worthy desire. That prospect has drawn many to paths of righteousness in this life. But we should not leave the impression that the benefit of God's gift of eternal life is all to be derived in the future. Eternal life is begun within the soul when the new life of the Spirit is begotten. Jesus said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). The Christian enjoys the assurance and blessedness of life eternal here and now. He has heaven within his soul. Thus he lives with glorious prospects for the future and with a foretaste of glory to cheer him on his way in the present.

A Significant Hope

This message of eternal life begun now and never to end gives meaning to the gospel we preach. It should be proclaimed everywhere with great confidence in its power. If this message is given forth with no uncertain sound by men and women who are filled with God's Spirit, it will attract the attention of many. It will draw them to the Christian way. It will keep them encouraged in a sinful world. It will bring them at last to share the glory of God's eternal kingdom. This message must be preached and its power demonstrated. It will never lose its power.

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03 -- METHODS OF EVANGELISM

"From you sounded out the word of the Lord" (I Thessalonians 1:8).

To proclaim the message of evangelism with pure and unselfish motives is of fundamental importance. But it is not enough that we should give forth the whole gospel with sincere purpose. We must learn to perform this "labor of love" in the most effective ways. Therefore, in this chapter and in those to follow we will turn our attention to the more practical problems with which we are confronted as we seek to extend the influence of the gospel and build Christ's kingdom in the earth.

Evangelism is not a method but a spirit. Nevertheless, when one does effective work in any field of endeavor he finds that he develops a method. Evangelism should be as free from set and formal rules as possible. Mechanical or
professional approaches should be avoided. Freedom to follow the leadings of the Holy Spirit must be maintained. Sincerity cannot be sacrificed ever. But after we have discovered the most effective ways to extend the gospel and build the kingdom, these methods are probably most likely to produce results under normal circumstances.

To many people evangelism has been narrowed to include only that part of the church program in which the direct appeal for immediate decisions is presented in a public service. In truth, the term evangelism includes all the means by which God's Word is taught or preached, and all the effort which is designed to bring men to present and eternal salvation. Some have divorced completely the educational phases of the church program from the evangelistic. This separation is a serious mistake. The education of the mind and conscience is a necessary prerequisite to the effective appeal to become a Christian. It is equally true that after the surrender to Christ has been made, the careful instruction of the believer must follow immediately. Therefore, the work of evangelism is begun in the home and in the Sunday school, and is carried on in the regular worship and devotional services of the church. Every meeting, every function of the church, whether public or private, has some bearing upon the work of evangelism. Every Christian who follows earnestly his Lord and Master is seeking every reasonable opportunity to rescue others and in a very true sense is an evangelist. The revival meeting is a big factor in the work of evangelism, but it is only one factor.

In this chapter we will discuss some of those phases of the evangelistic program which support and supplement the work done in the revival services.

I. Evangelism In The Home

Christian Parents As Evangelists

The most effective evangelists in every age have been the parents. Christian parents have the first and best opportunity to evangelize their own children. If the home is truly Christian in its atmosphere, example, instruction, and discipline, its influence cannot be overestimated. If there is failure at home it is extremely hard to overcome that handicap in carrying on the work of evangelism. Satan will have hard work to defeat God's purpose in the lives of those for whom the foundation for Christian experience and character is laid wisely at home. There is no substitute for the early training by godly parents. In the long run their work, if well done, can hardly be nullified.

Parental Example

Parents may lead their children in the right way by their own example. Not all children follow the example set before them by their parents. But it is seldom true that they will be strong, consistent Christians in spite of the wickedness and the hypocrisy of their parents. However good the precept may be, it is more than offset
by practice that is contradictory. The memory of the lives of holy fathers and mothers is not easily erased. Such influence may be disregarded for a time, but it is never forgotten. There may be years of wandering and even degradation, but God's Spirit will faithfully call up the witnesses of the past. In many instances when by the kindness of Providence the circumstances have turned favorable, the transformation of prodigals has been accomplished. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

Home Atmosphere

Home atmosphere is also a great aid to the salvation of the children. The right kind of music on the piano or on the phonograph or radio, and the best of books adapted to the growing minds of children in their various stages of development, may be big factors in training the child in the right direction. The pictures on the wall, likewise, have their effect. There are many games for children to play which are not only harmless but which have a helpful influence upon the unfolding mind and character. To save their children's souls parents should plan to spend some time with them to play, to read, to pray, to sing, and to work together. No one can do for children what parents fail to do.

The Family Altar

Another important factor in the home life is the family altar. So important is it that the family be gathered for Bible reading and prayer at least once every day, that it could almost be ventured that a home is not a Christian home without a family altar. In our complex and hurried modern life it may be difficult, and in some few cases impossible, to gather the whole family at one time. In such instances there might be two regular times for the worship period. The most important work parents have to do is to train their children in the right way and lead them to Christ. To do that task well should be their chief concern. It cannot be accomplished to the highest degree of effectiveness without a family altar.

Discipline In The Home

The wise exercise of parental authority and discipline is also essential to the work of evangelism in the home. Harsh and brutal treatment of children is wicked and damning. But to give them free rein to do as they please is equally blameworthy. Proper restraints, backed up by unchallenged authority, are as necessary in the home as are laws in the state, and officers for their enforcement. To give a child freedom to follow the lead of his own unbridled passions and desires is to lay the foundation for a life lived in defiance of the law of the nation and of God Almighty. Most criminals start on the way of the transgressor at home. Parental discipline administered by love is one of God's ordained methods for saving men from sin and hell.
A testimony and a tribute here will not be out of place. This scribe was denied the privileges of a Sunday school and church through many of the Sabbaths of childhood and youth. But the example, atmosphere, worship, and discipline of the parental home were so effective that God’s good purpose was accomplished in his salvation many years ago. The most effective evangelists God ever sent to minister to his soul were his father and mother. They were faithful in all their house. Their wages have been received.

II. Evangelism In The Sunday School

The Sunday school has often been called the educational department of the church. That is true, but it is educational evangelism. All departments of the church carry forward their respective work, but all of it converges at the point of evangelism.

In The Adult School

An effective program of evangelism can be carried forward in the adult classes in the Sunday school. Leaders and members of such groups are able to invite people of all vocations and of every character. Thus they are brought under the influence of the church and the teaching and preaching of the Word of God. In the lives of many this contact will result in their salvation. Through the avenue of the Sunday school we have an approach to people of the world which is wide open. There are no barriers. The only limits are those fixed by our negligence and sloth. Wide awake Sunday-school teachers and workers can keep a church going and growing by bringing in needy people and keeping them interested. No doubt a large portion of a pastor’s list of prospective members for the church is made up of those who are enrolled in the Sunday school.

Some Groups Especially Susceptible

There are two groups that are especially susceptible to the appeal of the Christian life. Boys and girls of high school age compose one group, and young married couples make up the second. Of course there are others, but in those two categories we have almost unlimited opportunity.

In building our Sunday-school program we should see farther than building the enrollment or the attendance. The goal is to get these people into the church after they are saved and sanctified. Each class could carry on its own program of visitation evangelism. The technique for such work will be discussed in another chapter. Here we will devote our attention to the evangelistic work among children.

The Child In The Midst

The first thing to be done, to be sure, is to get the children into the Sunday school. It is not too soon to enroll them as infants. One with an evangelistic spirit
recognizes the possibility of ultimately winning a baby for Christ. He sees that life unfold in beautiful Christian character, rendering valuable service to God and man. Such a person will be friendly to the parents and keep in touch with them and the child until at last he sees the child and maybe the parents too in the kingdom. This work is more difficult and delicate in homes where the parents are not Christians, but it can be done, and often bears very satisfactory fruit. It is worth the effort. The cradle roll department is not to pad the enrollment. It is a great opportunity and a fertile field to cultivate. It affords a likely list of prospects for the church and the kingdom in years to come. The day a child is born is the day to begin his religious training, and the day to begin to bring influences to bear that will result in his salvation. The consecrated, praying Christian who sees the opportunity and begins his work will realize some satisfying results. His efforts will not be one hundred per cent effective, but the percentage may be as high as that realized in any other field of endeavor. His work is in the foundation and may never be recognized or acclaimed, but he will receive his reward. Every church could well have an evangelist to the infants. Making calls, sending pretty cards, watching, hoping, praying may seem to be work that is unimportant, but in the judgment it will have high commendation. The Lord of life was deeply moved at the sight of infants. He knew their possibilities. He bade them come and be blessed.

Every department in the Sunday school should have its workers organized to bring in new members. The teachers must take the lead but others can help. The boys and girls can bring in names of prospects. Some they meet in school, or at playgrounds, or on the street; some have recently moved into the vicinity; others have dropped out of other Sunday schools and are ready to make new contacts. The following of such leads will result in building class attendance and at last in the salvation of souls. Persistent interest, kindness, and love are needed to make the bond a strong one. No life is ever redeemed, no soul is ever saved without long, enduring, passionate love. In all its phases evangelism is a "labor of love."

Teaching Is Only A Means To An End

After boys and girls are won as permanent members of the Sunday school there must follow a period of patient and careful instruction. The foundation for Christian experience is laid in religious education. But religious education is not enough. It is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end. Satisfactory results in evangelistic efforts can be gained only when the instruction in Christian doctrine, experience, and ethics has been thorough. That period for instruction varies in length according to the home training received. Always the teaching must be adapted to the age of the child. When the child is able to see the point in nursery rhymes and stories with a moral in them, he is able to grasp the things that are spiritual when they are wisely presented. Teachers in the Beginner and Primary departments should prepare themselves to give the eternal truth to childish minds by object lessons, by stories, by demonstrations, and by example. If they can feel that they are evangelists as well as teachers they will have a more exalted
conception of the importance of their task. This work of preparatory instruction must be carried on in the Junior and sometimes in the Intermediate departments.

Watching For Souls

There comes a time when life's great choice should be made. None can tell at what age or on what occasion that time may come. The spiritually minded teacher should watch for the evidences of the Spirit's dealings and gently but faithfully guide the awakened boy or girl to a saving acceptance of Christ. The occasion may be in the class. It may even be in the midst of a quiet personal conversation. Often the private or informal situation affords the richest and most fruitful opportunity for evangelism. The intimacy of the experience as a child and a close adult Christian friend meet God face to face is in itself most precious. No doubt many boys and girls can be led to a definite surrender to Christ by the devoted Sunday-school teacher.

When such results are obtained they should be reported to the pastor of the church, who in turn should take a vital interest in the establishment and development of that boy or girl in the Christian way of life.

Evangelistic Services For Children

Occasionally, perhaps not oftener than once or twice a year, an evangelistic service may be held in the Sunday school. Preparation should be made for such a service. Teachers should be informed of it in advance. They should lead up to it by class instruction and by personal work for a few weeks prior to the date. If a church is equipped with enough rooms adequate in size for different groups, these services should not include too wide an age range. Primary, Junior, and Intermediate departments can be united for such a service; or in some instances the intermediate group should be included with the older boys and girls and even with the adults. Children of the beginners' department are too small. They hinder rather than help in an evangelistic service, and furthermore the presence of older ones often embarrasses the ones you want most to reach. The message may be brought by a visiting evangelist, provided he possesses an aptitude for work with children. But at least occasionally it is well for the pastor to bring it himself. The message should be scriptural. It should contain the eternal truth of God's Word. At the same time it should be simple. In the preaching of Jesus we have the ideal. By the simplest illustrations from life and by stories of universal meaning He proclaimed the eternal truth to people of all ages and classes. Look, for instance, at the story of the Prodigal Son. It is so simple, so true to life, so easy to understand, and yet it conveys the deepest truths the mind can grasp. That is the kind of preaching children should hear. They will understand it too. The message should not be long -- fifteen to twenty minutes. Very naturally, it should end with an appeal that will melt the heart and move the will to action. It should be the intention of the speaker to produce an atmosphere of deep feeling, but it should not be high pitched, excited tension. Quiet, strong appeals should be made. Tender, moving
invitation songs should be sung. Personal work by teachers is desirable. Undue pressure is not good. If this service does not bear fruit the next will. The individuality of each child should be respected. Choices made should be personal and voluntary. It is neither helpful nor necessary to do violence to any personality. When the call to the altar is ended, if there has been a response, there should be a prayer for all, in which all unite. Then each child should have some attention from a worker. Let none be coerced. If the light does not come to a soul he should not be urged to make a profession without experiencing a change of heart. Do not prolong the altar service unduly. When the effective work is complete let all stand and sing an appropriate song, such as, "Where He Leads Me I Will Follow."

Follow-Up Work

Now the work is not complete when the altar service ends. Careful, patient guidance should be given to those children. If they have Christian parents, they will be a big aid; but if not, then their sole dependence is on the church workers. Therefore the follow-up work is as important as the preparation and the decision. Indeed, the evangelistic service might prove to be even detrimental unless there is an adequate following through. It is little short of criminal to bring a boy or girl into spiritual life unless that life is to be sustained and nurtured until mature Christian character is developed. It is comparable to bringing a baby into this world to be left without care, without food, and without protection, to starve and die.

The Teacher's Responsibility

In all cases, and especially in homes that are not Christian, a large responsibility rests upon the Sunday-school teacher. That responsibility cannot be discharged in the thirty minutes occupied with teaching the lesson on Sunday. There must be some attention given to the need of each child. Time must be spent in prayer for him, calls must be made in his home. His parents should be awakened to their opportunity and their need. The child should feel that he has an example, a counselor, and a friend in his Sunday-school teacher.

The Pastor's Responsibility

The work of the teacher should be faithfully supplemented by the interest and help of the pastor. A personal knowledge of the child should be gained. Often words of encouragement should be spoken and calls should be made in the home of each child that has been converted.

Leading Children Into Church Membership

The progress of the young converts should be observed by the teacher and reported to the pastor. At a given season of the year the pastor should gather those who give evidence of having received a definite experience of conversion and who are mature enough to understand, into a class for instruction in preparation for
church membership. This class should meet once a week for several weeks, during which time the pastor should define the teachings of the church with regard to doctrine and practice. He should give the class clear instruction as to the meaning and responsibility of church membership. The climax of the class work should be to receive into church membership all who have responded satisfactorily.

Such work takes time and patience. Many pastors think they are too busy. They are only by-passing one of their great opportunities to build church membership and experience the untold joy of seeing the fruit of their labors. These boys and girls will be saved from wasted years. They will some day be the backbone of the church.

The ideal arrangement is to have the evangelistic service in the Sunday school during the fall revival, and to carry through the follow-up work until six or eight weeks before Easter. About that time organize the pastor's class for instruction for church membership, and receive those who qualify into the church on Palm Sunday or Easter. Local conditions may not justify such a program every year. But in the larger churches there should be no difficulty in gathering a class of varying size annually.

The Importance Of This Work

Some may doubt the desirability of such a program in a church devoted to aggressive evangelism. They may feel that the future of such youthful members is too uncertain. They may hesitate lest the church be filled with those who do not have a vital experience. These attitudes should make all of us careful, but they should not discourage us in making every effort to save our boys and girls to the church. A church with a vital spiritual program should give large place to the work with the youth of the church. In such a church they will either keep an experience and take their place in the active life of the church, or its spiritual emphasis will keep them under conviction until they will eliminate themselves. It is to be hoped that the eliminations will be few. The salvation of the church is not in excluding the youth but in keeping the whole organism alive and fervently spiritual. To be neglectful of our boys and girls is to lose them to the world and consent to their being lost forever. That there will be some percentage of loss at best one cannot deny. Nevertheless the percentage is not as high as among those who profess conversion after they have reached their majority. Furthermore, those who grow up around a spiritual church without accepting Christ often become hardened by the very means of salvation offered them, and they are lost as the result of sheer indifference. The gospel is a savor of death unto death or of life unto life (II Corinthians 2:16). To obey is to be saved. To reject is to be lost. Thus we should put forth a supreme effort to persuade them to accept the gospel overtures in childhood and live by its teachings throughout life. A very large majority of Christians were converted in youth. A still larger majority of church leaders found Christ in their early years. These facts indicate clearly that if our evangelism does not reach the
youth of the church, the church will ultimately fail in its mission; and those who should have been saved will be lost.

The church can find no way to carry on an aggressive program without taking some risk. The way is hazardous however we travel. We should anticipate the dangers and safeguard ourselves as much as possible. If we know the danger zones we can prepare for them. Certainly no way is more beset by peril than the way of extreme conservatism. Every sincere Christian should share the burden of responsibility for the youth of the church. By prayer, by faith, and by good works we should save a large per cent of our boys and girls for Christ and the church.

III. Pastoral Evangelism

The Pastor Must Be Evangelistic

In every phase of the church work the pastor is the example and leader. It cannot be hoped that a church will preserve its evangelistic fervor and activity unless the pastor is imbued with the spirit of evangelism. It is required of a pastor that he shall be an administrator of the business and the affairs of the church, that he shall be a leader in the cause of civic righteousness, that he shall be a thorough student and an acceptable public speaker. But he may possess all these qualifications and be "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." The first and last requirement for a successful pastor is that he shall have a high conception of his calling and a deep and passionate concern for the salvation of men. He must exemplify the spirit of evangelism always. The pastor is to be a "hound of heaven," always in hot pursuit of men who need the Saviour. Such a spirit, deep in his inmost being, will produce an effective overtone in his appeal whether it he in public or in private.

Fred Patzel was the world's champion hog caller in 1926. He said of the art he had mastered, "You've got to have appeal as well as power in your voice. You've got to convince the hogs you have something for them." It may seem farfetched to liken a hog caller to a preacher of the glorious gospel, but if a man discovered that appeal and persuasion must be in the voice of one calling hogs how obvious it must be that these qualities are important in the voice of a preacher. He may not be gifted with fine resonance and lovely cadence of voice, but if his soul is filled with loving concern it will somehow be heard in his voice, whereas a man with all the natural gifts that can be possessed may lack the ring of sincerity and loving appeal.

When a church is blessed with a leader whose soul is all aflame with desire to save the lost of earth, that church will catch his spirit and together they will sow the seed and reap the harvest with rejoicing.

Must Be A Man Of Prayer
If a pastor is to be an example of the evangelistic spirit he must be a man of prayer. Nothing else will save him from being professional in his appeal. His soul should often hold sweet communion with his Lord, so that God's Spirit may fill his life and divine love throb and pulsate through all his being. But the pastor's prayer should be of the nature of intercession very frequently. He should have the names of all his delinquent and spiritually deficient members written on his heart as well as on his personal record book. He should pray for the unsaved who attend his services and who are members of the church families. He should passionately plead for the people who live on his street and in the community around him.

The Pastor's Influence

A pastor who is engaged often in communion with Christ and in intercession for those he knows to be unsaved will wield a powerful influence among men. He will be a rebuke to sin. He will be a light in the darkness. He will have the esteem of his fellow men. He will be known as a friend to sinners as well as to the saints. Then he can engage in personal work as he meets men on the streets, in the meat market, in the grocery, in the corner drug store, in the barber shop. He can look into men's eyes and talk to them of their need and Christ's power to save them in the language they understand, and they will hear him gladly. No pastor can make public appeals effectively unless he has first made them personally. If a pastor makes soul-winning his first concern he can do every part of his work more successfully. He will have greater sympathy with the distressed and sorrowing. He will have more power with God when he prays with a dying man. He will have the heartstrings of men held kindly and firmly in his hands. Young people will want him to share their pleasures. He will be welcomed to their weddings. He will be asked to baptize their babies. He will be consulted about their problems. He will walk with them through the shadows. The older people will delight in his fellowship. They will receive comfort in their sorrows. The pastor who has persuaded people he loves them is never an intruder.

Pastoring And Preaching

All these contacts give background for the pastor's preaching. If he has built himself into the lives of people by prayer and personal work they will hear him preach with delight, and even if he is a man of only modest gifts as a preacher his congregation will become so attached to him personally that they will prefer his preaching to that of any other man whom he can secure to preach in his place. A man was heard to say some time ago, "When Pastor S____ was at our church we were always happy when the visiting preachers and evangelists had gone and we could hear our own pastor preach again." There was no intended discount on the visitors. The pastor had first place. That is as it should be. His appeal was not all due to the fact that he was a great preacher. He was a faithful pastor and carried the spiritual welfare of the church and the salvation of souls on his heart. He made them know he loved them. In return they loved him. Therefore his ministry was more meaningful to them than that of any other man, however great.
Evangelistic Preaching

The pastor should be an evangelistic preacher. Not that he should employ the arts and plans of a professional evangelist. But in all his preaching whether on Sunday morning or evening there should be that drive of the soul which brings the compelling conviction to all who listen that here is a man who shares the passion and purpose of the Lord who said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). It is impossible to understand how any man can be a Bible preacher without being evangelistic in his spirit and in his message. If he lives with the prophets and expounds their message he is truly evangelistic. If he sits at Jesus' feet and learns of Him he will be endued with evangelistic power. If he takes the apostles as his pattern he will be just as evangelistic as he is apostolic. This truth the whole church needs to understand. The Bible preacher is the one and the only one who is truly evangelistic.

His Sunday Ministry

The pastor's Sunday morning sermon should be in most instances directed to the church. It is usually doctrinal, devotional, or inspirational. As he feeds and builds the saints he is at the same time doing an effective work of evangelism, for he is creating a spiritual atmosphere in the church and kindling the holy flame within the hearts of the people of God.

The Sunday night service as a whole, and the sermon in particular, should be wisely planned so that the climax is reached in an invitation to the altar of prayer. The appeal may be directed to the unconverted, the backslidden, or the believer who should go on to holiness. It should not be unusual to see definite fruit in the Sunday evening service. Such a service will be more attractive than anything else the church can produce on Sunday evening. It is almost universally true that only churches which have an evangelistic appeal have a large and effective Sunday evening service.

Calling Men To Christ

It is possible to press the issue too urgently. At times it is well for the pastor not to hold on in a long altar call. He should be able to discern the leadings of the Holy Spirit so that he can thrust in his sickle and gather the ripened grain. But he ought to know when it is wise to sow the seed and abide the time for the harvest. He should not be in bondage to the idea that he must have seekers in every service. Neither should he consent to allow the weeks to pass with no results. A pastor is tempted to two extremes. One of them is to relax his own intensity and allow his altars to go barren indefinitely. The other is to be impatient when he ought to be trustful, believing that God's "word will not return unto him void." He ought never to doubt God nor the effectiveness of His Word.
It will be a great day for the church when it realizes fully the potentialities within it for the work of soul saving. The results that can be achieved are all but unlimited if we can have the ministry of the church backed by the faithful work of parents and supported by the whole Sunday-school force. May God speed the day when churches will approximate that ideal!

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04 -- VISITATION EVANGELISM

"In every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad" (I Thessalonians 1:8).

Evangelism has been an essential factor in the Christian movement from its beginning. The first method to be adopted by the disciples of Christ was that of visitation evangelism. Andrew, having heard John introduce Jesus, followed Him. At once the impulse was in his heart to tell the good news. He found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Christ." "And he brought him to Jesus" (John 1:42). From then until now whenever personal evangelism has been employed it has produced results. It should be an integral part of the program of every church.

Visitation evangelism is not here presented as a substitute for revival campaigns. It is rather offered as a preparation for and a supplement to them. It is a known and acknowledged fact that in many churches revival campaigns have been discarded entirely. It is a distinct loss to these churches and makes them far more impotent in their impact upon the world. Should revivals become ineffective in the holiness churches, they will be discarded by us. We should learn from the mistakes of others. We should examine the work of our evangelistic program at the present time to find wherein our weaknesses lie. After making such discoveries, it is our responsibility to correct them. It seems that in the past we have relied too much upon the results obtained from our evangelistic campaigns. We have depended upon the announcement that an evangelist and singer have been engaged for a certain period of time to attract the crowds and bring about the salvation of the needy people within our reach. By so doing, we are expecting results without sufficient causes.

To save our revival meeting from ineffectiveness, we must find some means of supplementing the work done in the actual revival period by careful preparation before it begins and watchful conservation of results after it has gone by. The psychology of the revival meeting is sound. Nevertheless, it cannot stand alone. The revival will, however, be a prominent factor in the program of the church as it continues to bear fruit sufficient to justify the investment made in it. A program of visitation evangelism carried on throughout the year will go a long way toward making the revival campaign all that it should be in the life of the church and community.
I. Organizing The Forces For Visitation Evangelism

Keeping Busy In Soul-Winning

There must be a prevailing and persistent evangelistic spirit in the church to lend inspiration to evangelistic activity. There must be a deep concern in the hearts of God's people for the salvation of others, or they can never become effective workers in a campaign to save lost men and women. While this evangelistic spirit is most necessary, it is not sufficient in itself. There must be an organization within the structure of the church through which the good intentions of the people can be directed, and their consecrated energies and talents be put to work. Many people lose the evangelistic spirit because they have had no opportunity to give expression to it. Other people waste their energies in efforts that are either fruitless or actually harmful because their work has lacked direction and co-ordination with the whole program of the church. If, by some means, we can perfect an organization in the church that will put a larger per cent of its people to work in the great task of winning others for Christ, the results will be far beyond our ability to predict. Those results will be observed, not only in the number of people saved and sanctified and added to the church, but also in the progress of the people who are already in the church.

Busy people are happy people. Those who are idle have time to criticize and find fault. To be sure, the results will not always be one hundredfold or even sixty or thirty-fold. Some seed will fall among thorns or on stony ground and even some by the wayside, but the continual sowing and cultivation will most certainly result in the harvest. The cumulative effect to be realized by a church that is not only filled with evangelistic spirit but directed in evangelistic activity will mean that the kingdom of God is advanced with a measure of success that we have not yet experienced. It is not maintained that the plan here offered is perfect, and neither is it intended to be inflexible. It can be adapted to the need and circumstances in each individual church. In its broad outlines, it is a plan that has worked in many instances.

The Evangelistic Committee

The work of visitation evangelism should be led by an evangelistic committee. This committee might be nominated by the pastor and elected by the church board. The duty of the committee would be to lead in the work of visitation evangelism.

The Committee Chairman

Perhaps the most important factor in the success of the committee would be the choice of its chairman. This man must have a number of qualifications. First of all, he must be deeply spiritual and entirely consecrated to God. He must
understand what it is to be definitely saved and sanctified wholly. It is important that he should know what the Church of Jesus Christ stands for. He should not only know the letter of the law written in its Manual, or Discipline, but he should have the spirit of the organization working mightily in his own life. It is important that he should be able to give a clear testimony. Another qualification for such a place of leadership is knowledge of the Bible. No man can hope to be skillful in leading others to Christ, to say nothing of inspiring his fellow Christians to engage in evangelistic work, unless he is a Bible Christian. Perhaps nothing will encourage a man to study his Bible with care more than knowledge of the fact that upon him rests the responsibilities for carrying on the work of evangelism in the church.

Again, the chairman of the committee should be a man of energy and enthusiasm -- one who has natural qualities of mind and spirit which enable him to lead and persuade people. Men who are negative and reactionary in their own attitudes of mind will never impress sinful and unbelieving people with the power and reality of their own Christian experience.

Anyone who accepts the responsibility for leading the evangelistic committee must be one who is unselfish. He must give freely of his time. He must consider the work of building the church and saving lost men more important than his own prosperity. To be sure, he will be forced to give attention to his own work and business, but he must be willing to seek "first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24).

Faithfulness to the whole program of the church is one of the important characteristics of a man who is to be the leader of the forces. He cannot be absent from the church service Sunday morning or evening, or uninterested in the Sunday school and the young people's work of the church, or careless about his attendance at the midweek prayer meeting. He cannot be a man critical of his pastor or of the church in general. In order to sell the church to other men, he must be sold on it himself.

Along with his other qualifications, the leader in evangelistic endeavor must be friendly. If he expects to win others to Christ, in the majority of instances he must win them to himself. He must somehow impress people with the fact that his heart is warm and that he would be a friend to them if they never were won to his way of thinking and to membership in his church. His sincere, straightforward manner must inspire the confidence of others with whom he labors. He must not be a man who becomes discouraged easily and gives up when his work is only begun. Like the men who were assigned to such tasks in the days of the apostles, he must be full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.

The Committee Personnel
After the chairman has been selected, it would be well to confer with him regarding the other members of the committee. The personnel of the committee should represent all groups in the church. The men's Bible class should be represented by one of its most aggressive and dependable leaders. Likewise, the women's class should be represented, for there are many homes represented in it that are not in the men's class. It is especially desirable for the young people's organization to have a representative on the committee. Through him the evangelism of the young people's society can be smoothly coordinated with the work of the evangelistic committee of the church. The younger departments of the Sunday school might also be represented, provided some supervisor or teacher can devote the time to the work of the committee. All of these persons should be capable, cooperative, spiritual members of the church, who know that they have been born again and baptized with the Holy Spirit. All the work cannot be done by this committee but they can enlist others, choosing agreeable associates for themselves as they continue in the work. It may be that some can give their time for only a month or for a few weeks, after which new team-mates can be found. Thus, the work becomes more widely distributed and the spirit of evangelism grows upon the whole church.

Planning The Work

After the workers have been chosen, it is desirable to call them together for some meetings in which instructions are given so that the work will not be scattered in its character but thorough and consistent. There are a number of principles that can be laid down as generally applicable. First of all, following the example of the apostles, we can say that it is wise for the workers to go out to visit in the homes two by two. There are a number of advantages in following this practice. First of all, it disarms those to whom they go of distrust and often relieves embarrassment. One of the two should be the leader. If both happen to be gifted in conversation and in the art of soul-winning, they may agree before going into a home who shall take the lead in that particular instance. Workers should be instructed to be tactful. The approach should not be abrupt. The way should be prepared for a straightforward conversation concerning spiritual matters and the welfare of the persons who are being interviewed. It is often desirable to gain some knowledge of the background of people -- what their business may be, what religious influences have been brought to bear upon their lives. By all means workers should be admonished to avoid arguments concerning controversial matters. Care should be taken that workers are not offensive in their attitude toward practices and attitudes that may be generally accepted among the unsaved. Many a soul has been driven from Christ instead of drawn to Him by a tactless approach that laid major emphasis upon negative denunciation of wrongdoing rather than an effort to display the winsomeness of the Saviour. It would be wise if workers understood that first calls may be only preliminary. In some instances, they will find people even hesitating to allow them to come into the home. Others will be a bit reluctant and self-conscious on the first visit. Under such circumstances the visit should be brief and the conversation should be directed into general channels. If
the people are busy, excuse yourself soon and offer to return at some more convenient time for further opportunity to become acquainted. An invitation to the church service can almost always be given without being offensive. Workers ought not to expect results to be gained immediately in every case. They should not attempt to be too fast. It takes patience to overcome the backwardness of people in discussing their spiritual problems and needs. Never be in a hurry. Watch for openings that would indicate readiness to receive a spiritual message and a word of encouragement. Prayer cannot always be offered. When there is sufficient freedom and cordiality to justify it, workers may suggest that the conversation conclude with a prayer, made either with bowed head or on bended knee, depending upon the attitude of the ones being visited. The work of saving men from false impressions concerning God and the church and from the power of sin and the world in their lives is extremely difficult. It takes time and thought and prayer. Above all, it takes perseverance. The work of winning a soul for Christ may not be accomplished for months and even years. But when success comes all the work, prayer, and patient waiting is forgotten. Indeed, the joy of accomplishment is the greater because it has been difficult. It may be necessary to build up a cordial friendship with the person who is slow in responding to the Christian message. But the worker for Christ who is interested in the salvation of a soul will not be quickly discouraged. Neither will he consider any price too great to pay to win that soul for Christ. In order to get him to go to church, it may be necessary for the worker to invite him to his home for a meal. He may offer to engage in some wholesome recreation so as to break down the barriers and get close to his heart. No doubt we fail to win people to Christ and the church because we are too easily discouraged. The prophet said concerning Christ, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged" (Isaiah 42:4). There is something persistent and indomitable in the will of the Christian man to win his brother man to Christ.

It will be well to instruct the group of workers so that they will be prepared to meet some of the common arguments that unsaved people offer when approached concerning their salvation. These arguments are numerous, but all of them have a reasonable and convincing answer.* [*For helpful suggestions in answering such arguments see Rev. Jarrette E. Aycock’s book, Win Them.]

Working In A Prayerful Spirit

After the instructions have been given and the time for the work to be undertaken is at hand, it is especially helpful to gather the whole group together for a season of intercessory prayer. The work of soul-saving can be done only by the aid of God's Spirit. Therefore, those who undertake it must be empowered with His presence in their lives. They will need the wisdom which He gives. They will need the radiance in their own testimony that only those who know the Spirit in His fullness can enjoy. The way before them must be prepared by the work of the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer. These special prayer meetings for the evangelistic committee and those working with them can be held with great profit once a week. While pastor of a church in a city in northern Ohio, the author had opportunity to
see this suggestion put into effect. A group of men met at six o’clock every Friday morning for an hour of prayer. That hour of prayer faithfully observed produced powerful results in the lives of those men themselves and made them radiant and effective witnesses for Christ among others. The retiring and refilling of the spiritual life of those who engage in the work of Christian evangelism is always of paramount importance.

Compiling A Prospect List

Before the work is begun, the pastor should gather a list of the prospects to be assigned among those who are to do the work of visitation. In making such assignments the pastor should consult the chairman of the committee. This list of prospects may be gathered in a variety of ways. Community surveys are often made either through the united efforts of all the Protestant churches of a community or by one church in a single-handed effort. Although such prospects are not as likely to yield immediate results and at least the percentage of success is expected to be less, yet to know there are people in the community who have inclinations toward the church and to whom a way of approach has already been made is of real value. Some of the prospects gained through such general surveys will be weeded out soon, and those that offer more encouragement will be retained on the permanent list.

Many good prospects can be gleaned from the Sunday-school enrollment. The adult classes of the Sunday school often have unconverted people in their membership. They are exceptionally desirable prospects since they already have a contact with the church and some of its activities. If they are interested enough to enroll in the Sunday school and attend even occasionally, it is probable that some personal interest and cultivation may result in their salvation. Often the parents of children in the younger departments of the Sunday school can be interested, but sometimes only after patient and persistent effort. However, if you know that parents are religious enough to send their children to Sunday school, you know that you have some hope of deepening that interest until they themselves are won for Christ and the church. You may find that there are reasons for their hesitation that can readily be overcome. This list of prospects made up from the Sunday-school enrollment should be exploited fully.

Visitors in the church services whose names and addresses have been secured can also be considered encouraging prospects, especially if their visits have been frequent or even occasional. If it is learned that they have other church connections and have paid a visit only because they enjoy the meetings, and if they seem to be settled in their own church relationship, then their friendship should be cultivated even though they never transfer their membership. Sometimes people like to visit a church and still want to be left alone. Such people should be made welcome and when their wishes are known, they should be respected.
People who have moved into the community should be located and called upon soon. Often these people are susceptible to an approach from a nearby church. Some of them may have moved into the city from a rural community, and although they are of another denomination, yet they find the church of their choice different in the city from what it was back home. They desire a service with more friendliness and warmth and informality. Many such people have found that for which they were seeking in the fellowship of a church devoted to the preaching of the message of full salvation. Regardless of who the newcomers to the community may be, it is well for the workers of a church to visit such homes very soon after the arrival. When a new family moves into a community, the milkmen vie with one another to get there first and secure their order for milk. In places where different companies are in competition, two or three may call within the first day. Would it not be well to have someone on the lookout on almost every street in the vicinity for people who have recently moved in? If your church is first to give an invitation, it has some advantage when the time comes for the family to make their decision as to which church they will attend and join. It is well, also, to encourage the entire membership of the church to report to the pastor or the chairman of the evangelistic committee the names and addresses of friends, relatives, or neighbors to whom an approach can be made without offense. If there is some personal contact, that is one cord already in use to draw people into a closer fellowship.

Last of all, the backslidden and the indifferent people within the membership of the church itself offer to the evangelistic committee an opportunity and a responsibility. Many people who become discouraged and begin to drift away from the church can be won back if someone that they know will take a personal interest in them. The church has lost many thousands of people because the pastor was busy and the people were thoughtless. There may be some battle going on that a word of encouragement would help to win. Perhaps a misunderstanding has arisen and just a little personal attention—a call, a prayer, a friendly interest—will heal the wound and re-establish the interest and fellowship that was imperiled.

II. Making The Appeal For Christ

Suiting The Worker To The Prospect

In assigning prospects to the various members of the evangelistic group, it is wise for the pastor and chairman of the committee to consider those who can make the most effective appeal to each individual person. Almost all sincere people can find something to do in the church, but their efforts need to be directed to those with whom they would have influence and to whom they could go with reasonable expectation of realizing satisfactory results. On the other hand, if an approach is made by one unfortunately ill-adapted by personality or circumstances, it may result in turning people away instead of winning them for the Lord. The work should not be done in any hit-or-miss fashion. It takes time and careful planning in order to do the work with a high degree of efficiency.
Appealing To Sound Judgment

There are a number of appeals which can be made to people in order to intensify their interest in their personal salvation and in the activities of the church. Unless people are known to be soundly converted and ready for church membership, the appeal to join the church immediately is not desirable. Of course there is always in the background the ultimate goal of church membership, but the issue should not be presented prematurely. If the prospect is known to be only passingly interested in religion, then one can appeal to him on the basis of the need and importance of giving attention to things that are spiritual. He can be shown that all life has a spiritual foundation, and that one who neglects to give attention to the things of the Spirit is robbing himself of the most satisfying relationship in life and of the most abiding joys that man can experience. An appeal can be made to man's sound judgment. God has a claim upon his life. He has been blessed with many expressions of the divine love and favor. His better judgment tells him that he ought to recognize the claim of God upon his life and allow his own personality to be a channel through which God can carry on His work in the world.

Appealing To Personal Influence

Another very strong appeal to most people is that their influence should count on the side of things that are highest and best. That influence is felt powerfully in the family. It reaches out into the community and finally it will have its effect upon the world. Almost everyone will admit that he desires an inward sense of satisfaction, security, and peace. That assurance can be known only when men have personal and saving faith in Christ. Many a man has a troubled heart; his life is not happy. He knows there is something missing. He needs someone who has made the great discovery to tell him that Christ alone can bring satisfaction and inward peace. It is almost universally true that people desire eternal life. Few people want to believe that men will lie down and die and be buried, and that will be the end. The hope of immortality springs eternal in the human breast. Often we can readily guide people to the conclusion that that hope has its anchor in Jesus Christ and the salvation that He offers. Of course, these appeals must be made at appropriate times and under circumstances that are favorable. But it is the duty of Christians to make them often and urgently wherever they can be heard by those who need the Saviour.

The Appeal Climaxed In Evangelistic Service

In many instances this personal work will need to be climaxed in the revival campaigns or at some evangelistic service in the church. Sometimes it takes an urgent, powerful appeal from the pulpit of the church to bring souls to the hour of decision and action. Therefore, the work of the personal evangelists in the church can be coordinated effectively with revival meetings, and it is observed to be true that those who have been prepared through personal appeals and persuasion will be more susceptible to the atmosphere and message that is delivered by God's
servant from the pulpit. Those with whom the personal work has been done will offer the best prospects when the time for the revival season arrives. In all personal work it should be impressed upon people that a public confession of Christ is necessary. Even if they have been converted in their own homes, those who have had the joy of leading them to Christ should lead them on to the place where they would be willing to go out to the church and make public announcement of the fact that they have accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Those who receive salvation without going to the altar still need the altar, and they should be given to understand that a public testimony is necessary for "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).

The Prospect's Conversion Only A Beginning

The interest in the convert should not end when he has yielded his life to Christ. Indeed, the attention given him should be increased. Good literature should be put into his hands. Frequent visits and warm handclasps should be offered to encourage him in making the adjustments necessary in the early days of his Christian life. The way of holiness should be explained. The advantages of being entirely sanctified and filled with God's Spirit should be clearly set forth. No time should be lost in leading a man from the experience of regeneration on to the fuller life of the Spirit which is realized by those who are sanctified wholly. This work should be continued also until the convert has united with the church and has become adjusted to its program and activity. Sometimes, after a person is won, he is lost for lack of friendly interest and guidance by the very people who have led him to the Lord. We ought to keep in mind the fact that there is no let-up in this kind of work. Everyone needs encouragement. Every time you win one soul to Christ you have probably opened up new possibilities in his circle of friends and acquaintances.

Visitation Evangelism A Growing Work

As evangelism is carried on in the church, the number who are interested in the work will increase. It will be a problem to keep them all busy in soul-winning work. New fields and new phases of the evangelistic program must be discovered. In most communities there are places where zealous Christians can do work that is highly appreciated. In cities there are missions, hospitals, public institutions where people with songs and testimonies are cordially welcomed and where their efforts will do great good. In more rural communities there are neglected fields. Meetings can be held in schoolhouses, abandoned churches, under tents, thus keeping the good work going on, and at the same time offering to people in the church something to do to keep the fire burning in their own souls. Sunday schools may be started in nearby communities to prepare the way for new churches so that the great work of home missions will have an ever-increasing number of open doors.

The Keeping Of Records
A final suggestion regarding the work done in visitation evangelism is that a record should be kept. It would be well for the pastor to make up a card on which are registered the name and address of the prospect. Spaces should be left for notations concerning calls, results obtained, and suggestions for the follow-up work. These cards should be kept on file as a permanent record. Occasionally they can be reviewed and the record brought up to date.

The suggestions offered in this chapter do not cover all the possibilities for the work of visitation evangelism. They are intended to be suggestive. It is to be hoped that the work of visitation evangelism will be greatly increased throughout the entire church in the days to come. The results will be far-reaching, not only in the salvation of souls but also in the spiritual life of the church itself.

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05 -- MASS EVANGELISM

"And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ" (Acts 17:2, 3).

I. The Revival Meeting

A Tried And True Method

A discussion of the subject of evangelism certainly would not be complete without some space and time given to the revival meeting itself. In the program of the truly spiritual church the revival meeting has had a large place. The progress of the Church would indicate that the method has divine approval. It has been justified by its fruits. The question arises, "Will the revival meeting remain a permanent factor in the progress of the denomination?" This is a question that cannot be answered with a dogmatic yes or no. The revival meeting will stay as long as it accomplishes the desired results. If it dies, it will die of its own impotence. If it lives, it must be by its own vitality, power and fruitfulness. As generations of leaders change, the methods of carrying on the work may change. We cannot expect the rising generations in the church to carry on the revival meeting simply because it is a traditional method. Men will not for long do the thing that does not net returns. They cannot be expected to beat the air or go through the motions without realizing worth-while goals.

Revivals Must Continue

There is no intention to sound here a pessimistic note. Revivals can continue. Indeed, they will continue! Nevertheless, there is a danger lest we consent to go through the routine of a revival meeting without the power and blessing and fruit
that is reasonably expected in such a season. Sometimes there have been evidences that our revivals need to be revived. In order to have far-reaching revivals, it is necessary for us to employ all the means by which we can hope to win souls to Jesus Christ. Revival meetings which are preceded and followed by the kind of work that has been outlined in the previous chapters will bear fruit. We have depended upon revival meetings to bring results without a sufficient investment of interest, passion, prayer, and personal work. Revivals cannot be had at bargain prices. They come only when a church is willing to pay the price for them. When any considerable number of people in a given church have dedicated themselves to the business of praying down and working for a revival, there will be definite results. Perhaps no revival has brought in all the returns that may have been hoped for. Someone for whom prayers were offered remained outside the fold. The number added to the church was not as large as had been desired. But wherever God's people have worked and prayed together in sincere and unselfish devotion, they have seen sufficient returns to encourage them to keep on with the work.

Carrying on a revival is hard work. It takes its toll of physical strength and nervous energy. Nothing saps one's vitality more rapidly than to carry the burden of a revival campaign and see it through to successful accomplishment. Herein lies the danger. Unless our hearts are deeply moved with desire for the salvation of souls and the upbuilding of God's kingdom, we will not put forth the necessary effort. We will not pay the high cost of a real revival.

Can A Church Have A Continuous Revival?

It has been heard occasionally that certain churches have enjoyed a continuous revival over a period of years. There is a paradox in that statement. It is contradictory. The word revival means recovery, restoration, renewal, reawakening. There is something of an intensity of concern and burden that must be borne during the revival season which cannot be borne all the time. To undertake to keep a church under the pressure of a real revival throughout an entire year or through a number of years would be to lessen the spiritual life and vital energies of the people. A church can and should have an evangelistic program going on throughout the whole year and throughout all the years. There is a distinction to be made between a consistent and constant program of evangelism and a revival season. Between the revival meetings there should be times for feeding and building the people of God. Time for study and time for meditation is essential to real progress in the building of Christian character. A church which has a spiritual leadership that encourages growth in grace and progress toward the highest ideals of Christian living in the times between revival meetings will do a more thorough and far-reaching work in the revival meetings. To attempt to keep a church at the high pitch of a revival tension all the time will mean that the members themselves are unable to meet the challenge that comes with the revival season.

A Normal Revival Program
A normal church program will include one or two revivals a year, with the intervening weeks devoted to nurturing the spiritual welfare of the whole church, and at the same time will keep the evangelistic work going on with a major emphasis upon the sowing of the seed in anticipation of the next harvest season. There is such a thing as having too many revival meetings. A church can be trained so to depend upon the momentum of a revival meeting that its members cannot be relied upon to do their part in caring for their own spiritual life and working for the salvation of others. When a church catches a stride which can be maintained under all normal circumstances, it will be discovered that the whole attitude of the church is more wholesome and the results of its efforts more gratifying.

II. Important Factors In Revival Meetings

When Should They Be Held?

There are a number of factors which contribute to the success of a revival meeting. No inflexible rule can be laid down as to when revival meetings shall be held. A time that is desirable in a city church might be undesirable in a rural community, and the converse is true. The time for the meeting should be chosen wisely and with due consideration to the convenience of the people who are members of the church. A revival can never be enjoyed in a church when its members are not in regular attendance and fail to bear their share of the responsibility. Of course there are circumstances over which devoted and loyal people have no control, but unless a major part of the church membership can be expected to attend the services regularly and enter into them with enthusiasm and zeal for their success, the revival meeting cannot accomplish the desired results. If there are hindrances in the way which cannot be adjusted or overcome, to be sure, the church should go on with its revival meetings, believing that the people who cannot attend can pay and pray that God will pour out His Spirit upon those who can come together, and that even those who are hindered from coming shall benefit indirectly from the services in which the presence of God has been manifested.

Ordinarily the time between October and May provides the best opportunity for revival services. Nevertheless in some places summer revivals are very fruitful. Many churches should sponsor tent meetings and home missionary campaigns during the summer months. Such efforts will also be reflected in the spiritual life of the church itself. No church should go on vacation during the summer time. There is work to be done every week in the year.

The Revival Atmosphere

Another contributing factor to the success of a revival meeting is the atmosphere which is created in the service. The word atmosphere is used here for want of a better one. By it is meant the general attitude and decorum of the people who compose the congregation as well as of the pastor, the evangelist, and the song leader. It should not be necessary to mention that the atmosphere of the
service should be religious -- not secular. There should be an approach to the 
meeting on the part of all with an attitude of reverence and seriousness. Those who 
engage in revival work are in the most serious business in the world. They are 
dealing with the immortal souls of men. The whole direction of many lives may be 
determined by the results of a single service. Their destinies may be sealed world 
without end. Anything that savors of trifling about such solemn matters is little 
short of wicked. The pastor and the workers should go to church from their closets 
of prayer. The days should not be spent in gadding about the city or country, and 
there should not be an extra amount of time spent in visiting for the sheer 
satisfaction derived from it. When the workers approach the platform, it should be 
with proper reserve and proper awareness of the fact that they are there on 
business for the King. An unnecessary amount of talking by the workers on the 
platform during the preliminary part of the service is hurtful. The people themselves 
ought to gather into the service thoughtfully and prayerfully. It would be a 
wonderful thing if all Christian people came into the service to bow their heads in 
prayer as soon as they take their seats. The spiritual atmosphere of a meeting can 
be seriously dissipated if people come together in a light and superficial frame of 
mind. If the people of God have a trifling attitude toward the service, how can the 
unbelievers be expected to think seriously concerning what is going on?

While there should be an atmosphere of reverence and seriousness, there 
should also be a spirit of freedom in a service. A revival meeting cannot be formal. 
The enthusiastic singing of the congregation is a big factor in producing the right 
kind of an atmosphere for the evangelistic message with the altar call which is to 
follow.

Spontaneous praise on the part of all God's devout people also contributes to 
a revival spirit. This is no plea for excessive demonstrations or for the prostitution 
of emotions in a religious service. But may the day never come when resounding 
amens, victorious hallelujahs, and other expressions of approval and praise are 
absent from a holiness revival! One of the factors that has made revival meetings 
attractive to the masses in all generations is that spirit of spontaneous praise to 
God which is the expression of a soul filled with the joy of the Lord.

The Singing

This factor leads to a third consideration which has always been important in 
the revival meeting, namely, the singing. A revival without singing is almost 
inconceivable. Nevertheless, there are occasions when it seems as if the singing is 
more of a liability than an asset. The song leader can do much to prepare the way 
for the evangelist's message. If, however, he feels that the first three-quarters of an 
hour is his part of the service for a demonstration of his own talent and takes the 
attitude that he is somewhat in competition with the preacher for time and attention, 
it might be better if there were no song leader. The attitude of the leader himself and 
the spirit which he carries with him is more important than the quality of his voice 
or his ability to "put it over." The singer ought to feel that whether leading the
congregation or singing a solo, he is doing his part of the work for the glory of God and the salvation of men. A performance in vocal gymnastics grieves the Spirit and often disgusts thoughtful people.

Another matter in regard to which our singers should take thought is the kind of songs that they sing. For revival work the great gospel songs that give expression to the experience that God has wrought in the hearts of His believing children are the most desirable. The ideal revival songs are found among those written by Fanny Crosby, Mrs. C. H. Morris, Haldor Lillenas, and the many others who have maintained their high standard. Gospel songs should not be set to ragtime music or perverted until they sound like modern jazz. They need only to be sung with the Spirit and with the understanding. When it comes to the special song, it should be chosen under the guidance of the Spirit with the view to helping move some needy heart to seek the Lord. It should be sung with no thought of self-glorification but rather to magnify the Lord. It can be sung in such a way that the Spirit of God can use it to melt a stony heart, to move an inactive will, and bring hope and peace to the troubled hearts of men. Generally speaking, a song that is sung to bless the saints will make the greatest appeal to the sinner.

It should be clear in the minds of all who have responsibility for leadership in a religious service that it is not an entertainment. Sometimes the fear that our revival program has been designed to catch the attention and entertain the people is well-founded. We are not entertainers; we are soul-winners. Anything that may result in the salvation of a soul is permissible, but if a crowd of people come together to be entertained for three-quarters of an hour and then sit indifferently through a sermon, and are glad when the time comes that they can leave, there is little hope that the service will accomplish much of lasting benefit. The worst feature of it is that when people are drawn to a meeting by the entertainment, there is a tendency on the part of the congregation to feel that the more important matters such as intercessory prayer and personal work are unnecessary, and they rely upon the fact that the crowd will be there anyway. There are no substitutes in evangelism for intercessory prayer. The revival does not come easy. Any consecrated means that can be used to attract the people to the way of salvation is desirable. But let us not offer easy substitutes for the requisites that have always been essential to real revivals of religion.

Revival Preaching

A fourth factor in the revival campaign is the preaching. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:21). This does not mean that preaching is foolish. It may seem to the ungodly that it is, but the preacher that proclaims God's message has the greatest task that has ever been assigned to man. It is important that the preaching should be done by the proper person. God has called some evangelists for the work of the ministry. There is a distinct office that God has chosen for carrying on the work of revivals. No one who reads his New Testament and understands it will doubt that God calls some
men to the field of evangelism exclusively. This does not mean that every revival
must have an evangelist called in to do the preaching. Many fruitful and far-
reaching revivals have come about under the preaching of the pastor. It would not
be advisable for a pastor to undertake to hold all of his revival meetings, or even
one a year, but once in each pastorate would be desirable; and if the pastorate
continues over a period of many years, he could repeat, as the Spirit might lead.
There is an advantage in the pastor doing the preaching in a revival meeting
occasionally. He has the appeal for some people that an outside man would not
have. He feels the weight and burden for the salvation of people within his parish.
He has called in their homes; he has been with them in their sorrows and their joys;
he knows their needs; he understands their backgrounds; he can make an
approach that will be successful whereas some other one might bungle. The effort
is good for the pastor himself. He enters into the ministry of intercession more
successfully. He feels the weight of lost souls pressing down upon his own heart
and he is able to preach and exhort with new power.

The Use Of Evangelists

The regular order, however, should be to choose commissioned evangelists
to hold the greater number of our revival meetings. These should be chosen with
some consideration of the local circumstances. There is a place for all God-called
men to labor, but some men are adapted to certain situations whereas others are
not. An evangelist is not necessarily a great preacher. He should certainly be the
very best preacher that his own gifts and opportunities will allow, but some men
who do not preach great sermons from the standpoint of their homiletical
arrangement or from the standpoint of pulpit oratory have been used of God to
bring about great revivals and lead many people into salvation and into
membership in the church.

It is advisable to arrange for an evangelist well in advance so that both the
evangelist and the church can make plans for his coming. There should be an
understanding regarding the financial remuneration that is as satisfactory to one of
the contracting parties as the other. In recent years churches have not dealt too
fairly and generously with evangelists. At the same time they have been quick to
criticize a man who showed any concern regarding his remuneration. If a church is
to err at all, it had better be on the side of generosity with an evangelist. Pastors
and church boards have sometimes driven an evangelist to desperation because
they have not given him a living compensation. If a figure is to be set by the church
board, the evangelist has a right to know what it is to be. If it is based on the pay of
the pastor of the church, then it should be remembered that the evangelist supports
his family at home, provides his own house, pays his own traveling expenses, and
has many other obligations that do not devolve upon a pastor. It is deplorable to
see an evangelist grasping for money; it is no less deplorable to see a church board
parsimonious and niggardly in their compensation of an evangelist.

Using Evangelists Of Differing Types
In choosing evangelists a church should not choose all of the same type. It is very wholesome for a church to have some revivals in which the evangelist is of the teaching type, one who unfolds the deep things of God and leads the people of the church into more glorious experiences of grace. At other times the church needs the man who is gifted in the denouncing of sin, in the calling of men to repentance by proclaiming the judgments of God, and in warning men of the rewards and punishments of eternity. By all means the evangelist should be a holy, sincere, Christlike man. He should feel very keenly his unworthiness and his own dependence upon the leadership and anointing of the Spirit of God upon his own soul while he brings the message that God has given him.

Importance Of Exhortation

If a man expects to see results at an altar of prayer, he must be gifted not only in preaching, but also in exhortation. He must know how to draw his net, to win decisions, to move men to action. Some preachers perform splendidly up to the moment of the altar call and then fall short. One who devotes himself to evangelism should not consent to failure at that point, and when a church looks for an evangelist, one of the main considerations might well be whether he is able to persuade men to come to an altar of prayer or not. He should not necessarily be gifted in stampeding a whole congregation, but he must be able sincerely and effectively to climax his message with an appeal that will produce results.

Revivals Depend Upon Prayer

Certainly a discussion of the revival meeting would be incomplete without some thought given to prayer. Anything that will produce a sense of responsibility in the minds and hearts of the people of the congregation is allowable. Chains of prayer, in which prayer is continuous throughout a whole day, have sometimes been effective. All nights of prayer have often produced far-reaching results. Group praying before and after the services and throughout the day usually makes a large contribution to the success of a revival. These meetings may be held in the church or in the homes of the people. There is one danger in all organized efforts to encourage the people to pray. That is that prayer shall become mechanical rather than spontaneous. To be really effective, prayer must come spontaneously from a burdened heart. It cannot be primed and pumped up, though without a doubt some leadership and some encouragement in persuading people to pray is almost universally necessary.

Praying for a revival should be importunate. We cannot expect large results with little prayer. Often it takes the cumulative effect of many prayers and many weeks, months, and even years of faithful praying to accomplish the desired results. Paul said, "Never give up praying" (I Thessalonians 5:17, Goodspeed). No one knows when or where or by whom the prayer that prevailed was offered, but it is the universal conviction of all who have had a part in promoting revivals that
prayer is one of the most important factors of all. To be sure, the pastor, the church leaders, as well as the called workers in the revival must lead in the practice of prayer.

As prayer grows in its persistency, it grows also in its passion. To have revivals, there must be those who "weep between the porch and the altar" (Joel 2:17), kneeling as it were between God and man, pleading with God to show mercy to the unconverted and pleading with man to give heed to the claims of God. Perhaps no illustration of intercession has been so often cited or offered so much inspiration to praying people as Moses praying for the children of Israel. He cried, "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin -- ; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Exodus 32:31, 32). That was a prayer boiling hot with holy passion. That prayer prevailed. If a church together with the leaders of a revival really feel the weight of their responsibility until prayer rises spontaneous, persistent, and impassioned in ever-increasing volume, a revival is assured.

Testimony Has Large Place

Still another factor which contributes to a revival meeting is testimony. The testimonies of God's people, whether as new converts or those who have been on the way for some time, have always been strong arguments that the unbelieving cannot answer. Certainly those who speak forth their testimonies in a public service should back them up by lives that are consistent with them. In many revival meetings some time can well be given to testimony. Testimony in a revival takes the same place that witnesses do in a court trial. Those testimonies should be brief, to the point, and ringing with certainty and victory. When the sinner hears such testimonies, they cannot be gainsaid. Dr. Daniel Steele said in his day, "The church needs witnesses more than it needs advocates." That principle is as true now as then. When the sinner listens to those who have found the Lord testify that "old things are passed away and all things are become new" and sees the effects demonstrated in the lives of those who make such declarations, he is obliged to accept that evidence.

Personal Work Indispensable

Personal work has always had a place in revival meetings. It is desirable, for the most part, that these interviews with people who have spiritual needs shall take place outside of the meeting. A large amount of that kind of work should be done by the pastor and by the members of the church before the revival begins and while it is in progress. If Christian people are faithful in doing personal work outside of the services, then personal work within the meeting itself will be far more successful. We cannot make up for our neglect of the spiritual welfare of people by showing temporary concern under the pressure of an urgent appeal. But when one has personal knowledge of a soul's need, very often he is used by the Spirit in inviting that individual to the altar of prayer. Some people do not want to be bothered in a
public service -- they are embarrassed if they are. It is necessary that those who engage in personal work in the public meetings shall be led of the Spirit. Promiscuous canvassing of a congregation is of doubtful value, but a word to a friend, courteously spoken, kindly insisted upon, will often help to win the decision on which so much depends. A church that is blessed with some people who are effective and faithful personal workers has an asset of untold value in carrying on the work of evangelism. Let it be remembered that prolonged pleading and tedious argument for the most part does more harm than good. If a soul is unduly urged to take a step which he is not ready to take, the effect may be disastrous. Even on the last night of a revival, those who hold out against God should be left in such a state of mind that they will be glad to come back to another revival meeting if their lives are spared. Seldom, if ever, is it wise to lead people to the conclusion that the door of mercy has been shut and locked in their faces. Rather leave them feeling that God still reaches out His pleading hand, inviting them to come and find pardon and peace.

The Altar Service

One last factor that should be discussed in this chapter is the altar service. The altar service begins when the invitation to the altar is open. In a majority of services the call should not be unduly long unless there is a definite moving of the Spirit. An altar call of ten to fifteen minutes in duration is long enough. If, however, there is a moving of the Spirit and hearts are wrought upon and time is needed in order to bring those who hesitate to action, the invitation may be prolonged. The Spirit may be so tender and so persuasive in a service that the invitation could be extended to the length of the sermon without hurt, but such times are rare. In all that is done in a public appeal to people to decide for Christ, there should be no professionalism and no performance of any kind for effect. The evangelist and all the workers should make sure that their efforts are born of sincere concern and love for the people that they seek to win. When an altar call is effective and people are kneeling at the place of prayer, the most important work of all is yet to be done. As a rule it is advisable for the leaders of the meeting to give some instructions to the seekers, admonishing them to prayer, to confession, and to exercise of faith. Then, it is always in order to have at least one public prayer led by someone who is gifted in praying around an altar, who should be joined by all who know how to pray for a needy soul. After an earnest season of prayer on behalf of those who are seeking, it is well for those who have the ability to do so to give them personal help. These workers at the altar should be trained workers. They should be people concerning whose character and religious experience there is no doubt. They should have some intelligent understanding of the way in which to guide a soul in his seeking after God. It is well for these workers to ascertain the purpose for which the seeker is kneeling at the altar. After having learned of his need, they can then pray more intelligently for that particular person and be a means of helping him through to a clear and definite experience. Altar work should be done thoroughly. Seekers should be encouraged to take the proper steps, but they cannot be taken in any mechanical fashion. Finding salvation is more than subscribing to a formula.
There is a real work of the Spirit within the soul. To regeneration and sanctification the Spirit himself bears unmistakable witness. It should be made clear to all seekers, however, that they exercise their faith before they have the assurance; that they do not believe because they are assured, but they are assured because they believe. Having people come to the altar without getting them through to definite experience in grace is of little value and may be detrimental. Therefore the altar work is delicate and important and should have the attention of the best workers of the church. It is discouraging to see church leaders in the back of the auditorium engaged in conversation about God knows what, while an altar service is in progress. The interest that people have in the work of the altar is a very good indication of their own spiritual condition.

Seldom should altar services be continued indefinitely. Seekers who are not ready to make their surrender, offer their prayer, and exercise their faith had better be encouraged to come again rather than urged through to a profession without the possession. There are times when the burden of prayer is great and when the struggle seems to be over an issue that is clearly drawn. Then the altar service may be prolonged. But the general practice should be to dismiss the meeting after opportunity for accomplishing thorough work has been given. All of these factors combined will produce some great revivals in any church in any age or generation.

III. Following Up The Revival

After the revival meeting is over, there is still much work to be done by the pastor and by the spiritual leaders of the congregation. Those who have sought the Lord are often beset by strong temptations and sometimes overtaken by unfavorable reactions. If ever men need the help and counsel of Christian friends and those who understand how to guide them through the days of adjustment, it is soon after they have been to an altar of prayer and made profession of salvation. After the revival is over is not the time for the pastor to be on a vacation or for the people to relax into indifference. Everyone should be on the alert to help another, to lead him on to the deeper things of God and into the church where he shall receive the benefits of worship and fellowship as he becomes established in Christian experience and grows in Christian character. We cannot afford to put forth the effort to have revivals and then let the fruits of them be lost because we do not carry on the work after revivals are closed. The psychology of revivals is sound. Revivals are an important factor in the program of evangelism, but by negligence and indifference the benefits may be lost. For that reason sometimes the erroneous and dangerous conclusion has been reached that revivals are unprofitable. God has honored and blessed revivals in all generations of religious history. They must be retained if the church is to enjoy the largest success.

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06 – THE FRUIT OF EVANGELISM
"And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost" (I Thessalonians 1:6).

I. Evangelism Bears A Rich Harvest

It is important to gain a knowledge of how to perform the work of evangelism. It is just as important that a church shall have the incentive to put into practice what has been learned about method and technique. The members of a church must be inspired to consecrate their time and talents to the doing of the work. They must be aroused to action. Nothing will accomplish these objectives so effectively as the knowledge of what the results of such work will be. Therefore it is appropriate that the last chapter of this brief study should be devoted to a discussion of the fruit of evangelism.

Its Results Incalculable

To estimate adequately the fruit of evangelism one would find it necessary to evaluate the total results of the entire Christian movement from Pentecost until now. That would be as impossible as to measure the effect of the sun shining upon the earth. Every soul saved, every good influence exerted, every institution founded for the improvement and relief of mankind in all Christendom is the fruit of evangelism. Try, if you will, to calculate how far-reaching was the effect of the preaching of the apostles on the day of Pentecost and in the days that immediately followed. Remember that many were converted the first day and in a few days that number was greatly increased. Consider the fact that from Jerusalem as a center the messengers and witnesses for Christ were scattered abroad in many lands. Try to imagine what the fruit of their lives would total in the first century. Then consider also what would be added if the results of the labors of those who went out from Antioch were included. Total the results of the labors of St. Paul in Asia Minor, in Macedonia and Greece and Rome. Then follow the history of the church and add up all that has been accomplished by its great leaders and by its obscure but faithful workers through the nineteen centuries that have passed. All this is the fruit of evangelism. No one would dare to estimate what it has all meant in the salvation of souls and in the extension of Christ's kingdom in the world.

The Genius Of Christianity

Evangelism is the genius of Christianity. Subtract evangelism from Christianity and there is little left but an empty shell. The normal expression of the new life that is begotten in the soul of a Christian convert is evangelistic endeavor. Without that expression the life will cease. Therefore, the first fruit of evangelism to be noted is in the life of the church itself. There is a spiritual vitality that is characteristic of an evangelistic church. This spiritual energy cannot be maintained except by sharing the spiritual blessings which have been received. Jesus said, "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). That one cannot give what he
does not have is an axiom. The converse is almost as obviously true: namely, that what one does have he is obliged to give. Peter said to the lame man at the temple gate, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6). Having no money, he could give none, but having fellowship with God and being in possession of the spiritual wealth that the pentecostal experience gave to him, he was obliged to say, "Such as I have give I thee." That should be the attitude of every Christian and of every church. It is necessary for self-preservation. If anyone becomes self-centered, demonstrating no concern for the salvation of others, he is certain to reach a state of spiritual stagnation. This truth holds as inevitably for a church as for an individual. If a church becomes self-centered, losing its vision of a world need, it is certain to come upon a day when the spiritual life will wane and its strength decay. Most churches begin their decline at the point of their evangelistic fervor. Doubtless such a failure was the fundamental deficiency in the life of the Laodicean church to whom the Lord sent the rugged message: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:15, 16).

II. Its Fruit In The Life Of The Church

Christian Experience Cannot Be Self-Contained

To keep the Christian experience fresh and up-to-date, it is necessary to be in constant touch with the source of divine supply, but it is equally important to keep the streams of spiritual life flowing out to refresh and to bless others. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)" (John 7:37-39). It may seem to some people that to give continually would be to impoverish, but such is not true. To give of the spiritual riches which one possesses is the greatest assurance that he shall continue to possess and that the richness and fullness of the spiritual life shall be ever-increasing. In spiritual mathematics to multiply it is necessary to divide, to add it is necessary to subtract, to have it is necessary to give. The more that is given the greater is the capacity to receive.

Evangelism Enriches The Church’s Own Soul

The church that gives out the evangelistic message and sends forth its preachers and missionaries to the ends of the earth is the church that is enriched continually. People have been heard to complain that when they brought young people of promise into the church, someone persuaded them to go away to college and the church lost what it had gained. But the church that keeps its young people going out to lives of useful service in building the kingdom of God will keep others coming in and the number will increase instead of diminish. Church people have
also complained that giving their money to causes outside their own local boundaries would result in their impoverishment. It never works that way. The church that withholds is the one that loses. The one that gives is the one that is blessed with more for itself and still more to give.

Protects The Church's Orthodoxy

The greatest protection to the orthodoxy of a church is in the fervency of the evangelistic spirit. No church that does not have the fire of evangelistic passion burning upon its altars will remain for long true to the fundamental teaching of the Christian faith. But suppose the church should retain its doctrinal accuracy and loyalty only to become fossilized and ineffective in its ministry to the world. Of what value would its orthodoxy be? The Pharisees of Jesus' day were fanatically orthodox, but He said of them, "Ye are like unto whited sepulchres .... full of dead men's bones" (Matthew 23:27). By keeping the spirit of evangelism alive in the church the vision of that church is enlarged. There is a vision of the white harvest fields that are near by. To those needy places the representatives of an evangelistic church are sure to go with their message of life and hope. That vision is enlarged until it includes the whole wide world in all of its vast and unmeasured need.

Broadens The Church's Vision

The true Christian church has never been local in its vision. At Pentecost Christianity broke its bands and leaped all the boundaries. Peter said, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those clays of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:16-18). John Wesley said, "The world is my parish." That is the assignment that God has given to every Spirit-filled Christian. It is in harmony with the great commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel unto every creature." With its variations, that commission is recorded five times in the New Testament. It included not only the apostles but all the Christian preachers and witnesses of the centuries. All of them lived with the urge of that mandate upon them.

Intensifies The Church's Passion

With the enlarged vision, there comes the intensified passion. Many people have no inspiration for sacrifice and service because they have no vision. "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). Not only those to whom they should go with the message of life perish, but also those who have not caught the vision. Where there is the knowledge of human need and the knowledge of God's grace, which is more than commensurate to that need, there can be no apathy or indifference on the part of Christian people. The deathless urge within the soul cannot be stifled. The infusion of the spirit of evangelism into a church results in
strengthened faith on the part of that church. Whenever the spirit of evangelism languishes, faith for the salvation of souls, for revivals of religion in a community, and faith for mankind in general will likewise languish; but where the Word of God is multiplying and prevailing, there is a growing faith in the effectiveness of the Word. The church that witnesses the results of preaching the evangelistic message will have the full confidence in God's promise, "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:10, 11).

Confers Blessing On Individual Christians

As the fruit of faith is seen in the salvation of others and in the accomplishment of God's purposes of grace, it will also be seen in the lives of Christians themselves. There will be a consistency in their conduct which is characteristic only of those who feel the evangelistic spirit in their souls. In an evangelistic church there will be a loyalty to the church, to its services, and to its program. There will be a spontaneity in prayer and testimony and in the performance of all Christian duties which is lacking where the inspiration of evangelism is absent. Likewise, there will be faithfulness in the paying of tithes and generosity in the making of offerings which can be inspired only by the knowledge that a contribution is being made to the cause of evangelizing a community and the world in harmony with the will and purpose of God. Indeed, the fruit of evangelism is seen in the accomplishment of objective goals, but it is also seen in the blessed benefits that are reflected in the spiritual life of the church.

III. Its Fruit In The Lives Of Others

Lives Transformed

Evangelism also produces the fruit of transformed lives. The purpose of evangelism is to bring men to Jesus Christ and to guide them in following His example. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). To see the lives of men completely transformed by the power of God is one of the great incentives in carrying on an evangelistic program. In a previous chapter the conversion of children has been discussed at some length. The importance of that work has not been overemphasized. If anything, it has been understated. Nevertheless, the program of evangelism in any church ought to be so designed as to make an urgent and frequent appeal to men who have strayed from the paths of righteousness and wandered far from God and the good way. Many prodigals ought to be brought back to Father's house. Many who have never known of the power of God to save men from sin should hear the glorious message of an uttermost salvation proclaimed with the urgency of a divine compassion. It is doubtful if any church that designs its
evangelistic effort to function within the structure of an educational program will keep the real evangelistic spirit alive for any considerable length of time. We want to save the youth before they have gone astray, but we must also seek those who are already lost and far from God. In every period of the history of the church when evangelism has been a dominant note, there have been lives transformed so completely that men have marveled as much as they did at the miracles that were wrought by Jesus and the apostles upon the bodies of men. Indeed, the greatest of all miracles is the moral recreation of a sinful man. In order to keep its faith strong and its vision clear, the church must have these monuments of God's saving grace ever in its midst. This fact does not imply that men must go astray to testify to the saving power of God. It only recognizes the truth that men are bound by sin and sinful practice and debauched in mind and morals, and that they need a Saviour. There has never been a time when the world was not filled with such needy souls. There never will be a time when there are no prodigals for the evangelist to spend his life in seeking to win for Jesus Christ. His evangelistic effort must somehow reach these needy people. If we fail they will be lost, and the church will suffer from the lack of their testimony to the fact that God's grace is sufficient to meet man's uttermost need. God still says to a whole needy world, "Come now, and let us reason together .... though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

Some people with limited understanding of spiritual matters have taken the attitude that to hear men testify to the fact that God has saved them from a life of sin is encouraging young people to go the way of sin because they know they can be forgiven if they do. Such reasoning is extremely weak. It is the universal testimony of those who have had opportunity to observe that the effect is the opposite. Listen to this testimony from David: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord" (Psalm 40:1-3). Has that testimony ever encouraged anyone to go into sin? Nay, rather it has been a warning to many to stay away from the miry clay and from the horrible pit. By inspiration David said, "Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord" (Psalm 40:3). Such testimonies inspire faith and evangelistic zeal in the church. They awaken spiritual hunger in the souls of the unconverted—both young and old. Nothing will do more to keep the whole church filled with the fervor of evangelistic passion than to see souls born again at its altars. Lives transformed by the power of God are one of the fruits of evangelism that must be always in evidence.

Lives Consecrated To God's Service

Another one of the results of evangelism is seen in the consecration of lives to the service of God. In many churches it is a serious problem to find people who are ready to devote their time and talents to the service of God. Laymen are reluctant to give their time for such tasks as can be done only by lay-people. This
situation has become so prevalent that churches can have choirs only if they are paid; musicians must be paid. Even Sunday school and young people's workers must be given a salary. All such are hirelings. They are working for the money they receive and not for the good they may accomplish. This is a sad commentary on the life of the church. There is no intention to imply that certain offices in large churches should not be filled by paid workers, but it is tragedy when lay-people are so reluctant in doing work for God in the church and for the salvation of souls that the only work that is done is by those who are paid to do it. Such a condition does not exist in a church that maintains a fervent spirit of evangelism. Quite the opposite is often true. It keeps someone busy finding tasks to assign to people who are eager to work because they are fired with a passion to do something that will result in the salvation of others and in the upbuilding of the kingdom of God.

Evangelism Recruits The Christian Ministry

Churches that have lost the evangelistic urge produce few men who desire to consecrate their lives to the Christian ministry. In many denominations of today there is a poverty of preachers. Many of those preaching have chosen the ministry as a vocation, rather than as an answer to the call of the divine imperative within their souls. This attitude is another indication of a spiritual decline within the Church of Jesus Christ. In a church that is evangelistic, young people are constantly offering themselves to the service of the church. The best of the young people want to be trained for the service of God. They feel the call -- a divine call to give themselves to the ministry, to the mission field, or to some other phase of Christian service. God forbid that the time should come in our holiness churches when the ranks of our ministers and missionaries must be filled by those who are attracted by the advantages of such a calling. May it ever be that our young people shall devote themselves to the service of God with the understanding that the demands of the service are great and that the sacrifices to be made are unknown and unlimited. If the time ever comes when the number who offer themselves for the high calling begin to decrease, then our spiritual fervor will have begun to decline. So long as the holy fire burns in the church, there will be a clear vision of a needy world, and the choice young men and young women will hear a voice saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" They will reply, "Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

IV. Its Fruit In The Larger Community

Enhances Church's Community Influence

The fruit of evangelism is also seen in the influence of a church in the community. The church whose program is designed only to encourage contemplation and worship does not make strong appeal in a community. A church whose ministry is enlightening and educational without being evangelistic may make contribution to the cultural life of a community, but it will not stand as a symbol of the gospel that makes rugged demands upon the consciences of men. It
will not lift up exalted standards of righteousness and morality in the most effective way. The message proclaimed by the evangelistic church makes an impact upon the total life of a city or town or countryside. A denunciation of sin in all its forms is an essential part of the message of an evangelistic preacher. The separation of the church from the world is demanded by the man who stands as a true prophet of God. The evangelistic church insists that religion is a practical thing, that those who adhere to its message must go out to put their religion into practice in every relationship of life. It must be lived at home; it must be demonstrated at work; it must be applied in business practice and in all social relationships. The evangelistic church takes its stand uncompromisingly on all issues that pertain to moral reforms. It recognizes that reforms can be permanent only if the lives of men are transformed. At the same time there is a demand for the recognition of the true standards of morality set forth in the Word of God. Those who manufacture and sell liquor have dreaded the presence of a church with a vital evangelistic message. Dance halls, night clubs, roadhouses all suffer when a rugged gospel message claims the attention of the people of a community. Following in the wake of revivals of religion, great reform movements have prospered and become permanent. Without an accompanying gospel ministry which proclaims complete transformation of the lives of men, all reform movements break down. The failure of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States can be attributed to the fact that in that period of experimentation Christianity as a whole was not virile and vigorous. We cannot maintain moral standards without vital religion, and vital religion is experienced only when the church is evangelistic. When men who have gone to church and been converted go out to live sober, honest lives and to take their stand for God and righteousness on every issue, the church which they represent will have the respect and confidence of an entire community. Not all men will come to see and understand the things of God as they are interpreted by that church, but they will be forced to admit that here is a church that wields an influence wholesome and uplifting in the community.

Will Increase Church’s World Influence

The evangelistic church also wields a powerful influence in the nation and in the world. To be sure, the size of the church in question has something to do with its total influence in the wider spheres. Nevertheless, the influence of a church is not by any means in direct proportion to its size. One local congregation may be responsible for the salvation of one soul whose influence may reach to the ends of the earth. Therefore, the influence of that church may be far greater than the influence of many others when all the results have been measured. The history of the church will prove that whenever there has been a powerful evangelistic movement, the whole nation has been affected by its influence. Look, for instance, at the effect of the spiritual awakening led by Martin Luther. It not only changed Germany, but it reached out to many other nations, and for centuries the history of Europe was changed by the power of that mighty spiritual movement. John Knox was the leader of the Reformation in Scotland. That movement spread throughout the nation. Centuries have come and gone but still today Scotland is different
because of the influence of that great awakening. John Wesley came upon the scene at a critical time in England's history. The spiritual life of the established church had ebbed seriously. Priests and people alike were carried away with worldly pursuits and gave little thought to God and His law. The nation was in danger, but John Wesley came and with him his colaborers, and as a result of their efforts thousands of lives were transformed and the nation was saved. The influence of that surging, sweeping evangelistic movement abides today not only in Britain but in America and throughout the world. A historian has declared that it was the revival under the Wesleys that saved Britain from a revolution comparable to that which drenched France in her own blood.

The history of our own country has been mightily affected by such revivals as the great awakening of the eighteenth century and those led by Finney and Moody.

It's Influence in Contemporary China

A classic example of the effect of evangelism upon the life of a nation and of the world is to be seen in a situation that now exists in China. Pearl Buck has said, "Three unknown women rule China today." Those three women are the Soong sisters -- Madame Kung, widow of the former Minister of Finance; Ching-Ling Soong, the widow of former President Sun Yat Sen; and Mayling Soong, wife of Chiang Kai-shek. These women are influencing China. At the same time, they are influencing the world of today and of tomorrow. It is a well-known fact that the father of these three women was converted to Christianity in a little church at Wilmington, North Carolina. The conversion of that man was accomplished by the evangelistic effort of a pastor and his congregation. That event has affected the destiny of the whole world.

Evangelism The Hope Of The World

The time is now ripe for a great evangelistic movement. God grant that it may come in all our churches and that it may sweep over the land, saving many thousands of souls and changing the course of events in this nation for centuries to come. The need is great. It is the only salvation of this nation and of the world. We can talk about a better world order, and such discussion is profitable occupation for our thoughts and efforts. We may make post-war plans, designed to bring about peace and good-will among men. We may plead for an application of righteous principles in industry and in politics. But really to solve the problem, we must face the fact that a great responsibility rests upon the Church of Jesus Christ. The Christian leaders must stand out with courage and faith to proclaim the gospel of Christ as the power of God unto salvation, not only in the individual life but also in the collective life of the nation and of the world. To make this message powerfully effective and permanently fruitful, it must be shot through with the spirit and fervor of evangelism. We cannot speak in pleasing platitudes. We cannot offer superficial cures. The lives of men must be changed. They can be changed only by God's
almighty grace. With the courage of the prophets and with the passion that is born in a heart deeply moved by a vision of Calvary, the preachers of righteousness must stand up to call men to repentance and to the ways of living that are in harmony with God's law and gospel. Whether or not all churches accept this challenge, the church that is devoted to the work of full salvation must accept it, and amid the very difficulties with which we are surrounded in this day, we must demonstrate the fact that the gospel of Christ is effective, that evangelism still bears its fruits, and that the evangelistic church still has its place in God's program of saving the world. Dr. J. B. Chapman has so frequently said, "We are come to the kingdom for such a time as this." With the whole world in a state of flux and change, with many foundations being destroyed, Christ must have a witness, the Holy Spirit must have a channel through which to work, the world must hear the message that has lived and borne its glorious fruitage throughout the centuries. Let our full salvation churches give out that message with unfaltering courage and with full faith that it will bear its fruits in our day as it has in days gone by.

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THE END