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INVITE THEM
By Jarrette Aycock

Personal Work During
the
Invitation

Beacon Hill Press
Kansas City, Mo.
First Printing, 1956

Also by Jarrette Aycock
Drawing the Net
Win Them
Save Some
If Christ Had Not Come
The Grand Old Book
The Story of Two Prodigals
The Prince of This World
The Crimson Stream
Mother
The Nightingale of the Psalms

Printed in U.S.A.
This is a
Companion Book to
WIN THEM
SAVE SOME
and
DRAWING THE NET

Printed Book No Copyright

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FOREWORD

My books on soul winning, *Win Them, Save Some, and Drawing the Net*, have been so well received that I make bold to launch a companion book, *INVITE THEM*, on the sea of soul winning.

Jesus said, "Go out and INVITE them to come."

Nowhere does the soul winner, unless it is while dealing with seekers as they kneel in prayer, need more tact, more courtesy, more common sense, and more grace than when doing personal work during an invitation.

In my early evangelistic ministry I saw this need and often gathered chosen workers together and gave this message. Now, with a prayer that it may help others, I present these suggestions by means of the printed page.

Jarrette Aycock

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1 A GREAT ASSET

One of the greatest assets in any revival or other evangelistic service is sane, spiritual personal work during the invitation.

In the twenty-seven years of my own evangelistic work my best meetings have been in places where there were a few good Christian people who went out into the audience and invited men to come and definitely seek the Lord.

The objection is often raised that doing personal work during a revival will drive people away. That is true, if it is improperly done, but the right kind will not drive anyone away but will have a tendency to hold people and eventually bring them to Christ.

Knowing the value of the right kind and the danger of the improper kind of personal work during the invitation, I offer the following suggestion:

Let the pastor, or the evangelist and pastor, choose spiritual people in whom folks have confidence. Call them together to instruct them in the best methods of approaching people about their souls.

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2

QUALIFICATIONS

There are certain definite qualifications necessary in order to be an efficient personal worker and soul winner.

You should have a sincere passion for souls. This comes, and will increase, through prayer and practice.

If you would gain a burden for souls, begin to pray for souls and work to bring them to Christ and the passion or burden will come automatically.

You should be tactful, gentle, sincere, and courteous. These graces are always in order.

You should have a personal and scriptural knowledge of salvation. The man who goes forth to deal with others must know that he himself is right with God.

You may have all these qualifications and yet be "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal," if God be not with you in the work.

Keep in mind it is "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

Illustration

Dr. Biederwolf once asked a prominent churchman, who stood at the front seat during the invitation, to go into the audience and do personal work. The man responded, but when he spoke to an individual, one standing near heard this reply:

"Who are you to come back and talk to me? What is it that I do that you do not do? I swear and you swear. I drink and so do you, for we have drunk together. I play poker and so do you, for I have played with you. Who are you to ask me to get saved? You had better get saved yourself."

The churchman turned and walked back to the front. When Dr. Biederwolf looked questioningly at him he said, "Doctor, I guess I am not adapted to this kind of work."

Neither is anyone else unless he personally knows Christ.

Pleasant Breath

There is yet another qualification which many may lack, yet which all may do something about. That is, one should have a pleasant breath. Bad breath has repulsed many an individual and has been so offensive he could not listen to the worker's appeal.

A pastor friend told me that he spoke to a businessman about going forward for prayer. The preacher said: "I looked upon him as my friend, but he seemed cold and retiring and I could not understand it.

"I met him the next day and, calling me by name, he said, 'John, if you ever speak to anyone else about becoming a Christian, before doing so, take something for your breath to keep it from being so offensive. Then when you draw near him he can listen to what you have to say.'"

The words which the man used were cruel and cutting. Nevertheless, the advice was good. "Watch your breath."

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3 THE RAISED HAND

It is always best to sit toward the rear in a revival service where, without being conspicuous, you can have a good view of the audience and see who raise their hands.

The raised hand is a step toward God and an indication of interest in prayer. It gives the worker who sees it an advantage. He can make his approach with much more confidence, knowing that the person is interested.

When you speak to the individual, do not mention the raised hand. If he does not yield in that service, he will be slow to lift his hand again lest he attract someone to him.

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4 CO-OPERATION

Always co-operate, no matter who is in charge of the service. Work when and as the leader suggests.

You may not always agree with the method, but unless there is a principle involved, co-operate in the plan proposed or being used. After all, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isa. 55:8). Even when Jesus was on earth, there were some whose methods did not suit the disciples, yet their work bore fruit and the Master said, "Forbid them not."

If the leader says, "Everyone bow your head," co-operate. You can do that and still watch for the raised hand. If he asks everyone to cease talking for a moment, stop immediately, so the one with whom you are dealing can hear the speaker. The appeal he is making may be the very thing that will cause your prospect to yield and go forward.

* * * * *

5 WHEN SHALL WE GO?

The best time to do personal work, unless the leader has instructed otherwise, is to start immediately. Start as soon as the Invitation is given.

At the close of a searching evangelistic message that has gripped the hearts of the people and when the spirit of conviction is on them, the tension is very great.

It is difficult, at such a time, for a sinner to step out alone and go forward for prayer. When workers are moving around, it helps to break that tension and makes it easier for the unsaved to move out.

As a rule there is more conviction immediately after the message than there is later on. Therefore, immediate action is more likely to pay off.

Don't Wait

Never wait to start your personal work until the leader has said, "We will sing just one more stanza and close the invitation."

If you start then, the stanza may be over before you reach the individual whom you wish to win.

The preacher must keep faith with his audience, and if he promises to close after one stanza is finished he should do it. Yet the work that you might have accomplished if you had started sooner may be lost. Don't wait.

Lose Yourself

If you are near the front of the church and you wish to speak to some individual, it is always best to lose yourself in the crowd before you approach him.

People are prone to watch a worker to see to whom he is going. Sometimes this attracts attention and proves embarrassing.

It is better to move down some other aisle and inconspicuously approach the one to whom you wish to speak.

* * * * *

6 PRAY FOR GUIDANCE

As you go into an audience to speak to the unsaved, it should always be with a spirit of prayer. Ask God to guide you to the right person and help you to speak the right words.

Never wait until you feel definitely led before you go. The devil will hinder you at this point. He will try to keep you from feeling led and some soul may be lost.

Jesus said, "When ... the Spirit ... is come, he will guide you ..." (John 16:13).

It is my opinion that we should go forth in the strength of the Lord, praying for Him to guide us to the person with whom He would have us deal.

Illustration

I remember one night in a great camp meeting when my colaborer, who was preaching, reached the invitation and there seemed to be considerable lethargy on the part of the Christians. I know it was on me.

I did not feel led to do anything. However, duty and a knowledge of the fact that there were souls there who were lost caused me to leave the platform and make my way around the tabernacle. As I walked, I prayed for God to guide me to someone.

I felt no leading whatever and started walking down the center aisle back to the platform. As I passed a young woman it seemed to me that something suggested, "Speak to her." I did. She went forward and was converted and in a few weeks she died and went to heaven.

Suppose I had waited until I felt led; she might never have been saved. Go! Go at once! Trust God and pray for guidance.

* * * * *

7 HAVE AN ANSWER

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Pet. 3:15).

When you speak to an individual, pray while you wait for his reply. Always have a scripture ready for the excuse the unsaved may make.

In my little book Win Them, I give twenty-five different excuses commonly made by the unsaved and under each from six to nine verses of scripture answering the excuse.

Every worker should know these scriptures and be ready to give a Bible answer to those who endeavor to give a reason for not seeking God.

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8 TESTIMONY

An effective weapon, when you are dealing with souls about seeking the Lord, is your personal testimony. This is why it is so necessary for a soul winner to know God.

When the unsaved meet you with such excuses as, "I am too great a sinner," "I have gone too far," or, "God does not love me," you can give a direct answer by quoting Isa. 1:18 and John 3:16, and then you have your personal testimony.

Tell them what Jesus did for you.

Tell them how you thought there was no use, that you could never be saved.

Tell them how you felt, if you were once saved, that you could never live the Christian life.

Tell them how you were finally persuaded to seek God and how He wonderfully saved you.

Tell them how, by His grace, for all these months or years He has graciously kept you.

Tell them, if you were bound by some habit, how God delivered you.

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9 DEALING WITH STRANGERS

Do not be too urgent with strangers who may be in the audience for the first time.

It is all right to approach them and courteously inquire if they are saved or if they would like to go forward for prayer.

However, if they decline, tell them you are glad to have them in the service. Urge them to return and courteously promise to pray for them.

This will usually help and it will not offend.

On the other hand, to put pressure on them in the first service may drive them away.

I know there are exceptions, but in most instances you will find that caution at this point is worth while.

Are You Saved?

It is seldom wise for a worker to ask, "Are you a Christian?" There are several denominations that have the word "Christian" attached to their names, and to people who are not used to revivals it is often confusing.

Illustration

I once asked a young man in Dallas, "Is your mother a Christian?"

He answered, "No. She is a Methodist." I said, "Wouldn't she be glad for you to be a Christian?"

He replied, "No. But she would like for me to be a Methodist."

The young man was confused and thinking only of the Christian church.

A better way of putting it would be, "Are you saved?" or, "Have you been born again?"

Accept Testimony

If you ask a person, "Are you saved?" and he answers in the affirmative, always accept his testimony.

Even if you feel sure he has not been converted, it is not best to act as if you doubt him or question his statement.

I have often said, "I am glad that you are saved and I wonder if you have a deeper need and would like to go forward and let us talk and pray with you."

Oftentimes, after such an approach people have stepped out and definitely settled things with God.

A Church Member

You will find many people who will answer your question, "Are you saved?" with the reply, "I am a church member." Often they will mention the name of their church.

Never cast reflections on any denomination whether you think the doctrine is straight or not. We never know what strong ties of friends or loved ones may center in a denomination. To criticize that church may do serious damage.

A better way would be to say, "We are not asking you to join our church, but wouldn't you like to let us pray with you that you might find a closer walk with God?"

This is an age-old method, but it has its appeal and thousands of members of formal churches have been swept into the Kingdom by it.

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10

DON'T ARGUE

The wise worker will never argue with the one to whom he is speaking. There are three good reasons for this.

The invitation is no time or place for an argument.

Argument will attract the attention of those around you and will detract from the work of the evangelist or pastor.

An argumentative person is seldom under conviction and contending with him will not likely help him.

When you find someone so inclined, it is best to pass on quickly to someone else.

I have known people who delighted in attending a revival and arguing with every worker who came to them. In almost every instance it greatly hinders the invitation.

Do Not Offend

Be careful never to bore or embarrass the person with whom you are dealing. If you find you have offended him, be quick to apologize.

In such instances I have said: "I am very sorry if I have offended you. I was only interested in your soul. Please forgive me. I will not bother you again but I will pray for you."

Such a spirit of humility and courtesy will help you and it will help the one offended. He will leave with less resentment but with a feeling of shame that he has taken a wrong attitude.

More than once I have had such individuals return and get saved, and later testify that they left the service feeling mean and miserable because they had taken that attitude toward a worker who was interested in their souls.

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11

DEALING WITH COUPLES

In dealing with a couple, if one goes forward, I have often been able to get the other to go by saying: "Why don't you go and kneel with him? You may not be interested but it will help him and will not hurt you. Don't you believe if it was the other way around he would come and kneel by you?"

I can recall many instances, after such an appeal, the individual has responded and both received definite help from God.

When the one not responding to the invitation claims to be a Christian, appeal to him to go and pray for his companion or friend. I have known this appeal to be the beginning of a closer walk with God for those to whom it was made.

A Married Couple

If you are dealing with a married couple with children, appeal to them on behalf of their little ones. Impress upon them how every child needs a Christian home, a Christian father and mother, and it is not only their privilege but their duty to give such a home to their children.

Out of Place

"Wisecracks," silly or humorous remarks are always out of place when dealing with a soul. Never make cutting or harsh statements. Crude, cutting, and unkind words have no place in the vocabulary of one when he is inviting a man or woman to the altar of prayer.

Resentment

If you find resentment in the persons whom you approach, leave them immediately. There may be various reasons for their attitude.

It may be that they do not like your looks. Personalities of some people clash on sight.

Perhaps they just do not wish to be bothered. They may have heard something about you which makes them doubt you.

Unwholesome rumors may have come to them which they believe.

If they resent you, they have a reason or think they have.

Their resentment, however, is no excuse for you to give them up. If you cannot reach them personally, you may be able to find someone else who can deal with them and win them to Christ.

Illustration

I remember the night I was converted. I very much resented the man who came and spoke to me. I did not know the man. It was just a personality clash. I did not like his looks and he sensed it and quickly left.

This worker was not only as "harmless as a dove" but "wise as a serpent." Unknown to me he went around to another individual and, pointing me out, said, "I want you to go and invite that young man to come to the altar and I will stay here and pray for you."

The worker he solicited to help him came and spoke words that caused me to yield and go forward and give my heart to God.

If one resents you, do not give him up but try to reach him in another way.

* * * * *

12

ONE AT A TIME

Unless you are the evangelist, avoid approaching a person with whom someone else is dealing. If you feel you must speak to him, it is best to stand waiting for a moment, and most workers not making headway themselves will give you an opportunity.

However, if you are the one who brought the message, a few words from you may be just the thing to bring about a decision to seek God.

Your Enemy

Never try to work with a person with whom you have had difficulty or a misunderstanding. You may be innocent but he does not think so. If you are especially interested in his salvation, pray for him. Send others to him but stay away from him yourself until he has settled the question with God.

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13

DON'T BLOCK TRAFFIC

Avoid standing in the way, physically, of the person whom you are trying to win.

I have seen a worker stand between the seats, and the person with whom he was dealing would have difficulty getting past him into the aisle.

Always stand to one side. Make it easy for him to move. Say to him, "If you will come, I am sure these folks will be glad to let you pass."

Sometimes it is well to say to the person between him and the aisle, "Would you please step aside and permit him to pass?"

Use the same type of courtesy you would with a guest in your home. Scores of times when I have seen a worker "blocking" the way, I have walked back and said, "I am sure this friend wants to come; please let him pass," and immediately he has stepped out.

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14

A TIME TO STOP

It is not often wise to continue dealing with a person after the invitation is finished.

As a rule most of the Christians go forward to work with those who are seeking the Lord. Those who do not, usually take their seats.

This makes the person to whom you are speaking more conspicuous than when many were standing around you. As a result, he is often embarrassed and sometimes very resentful.

Sometimes, as a last resort, as the invitation closes it is possible to get him to kneel at his seat. It is worth trying, but I have known few who received definite help.

If he does not quickly respond to your appeal to kneel where he is, immediately leave him and go work with those who have manifested enough interest to go forward.

Illustration

A businessman attended a revival service I was holding in Montana. He was known to the pastor and some of the people but had never been in the church before.

When the invitation started, an overzealous lady began talking to him and continued talking after the invitation closed. He courteously kept standing. They were the only two people in the church on their feet. When she finally left him, without even being seated he picked up his hat, walked out, and never returned.

I have always felt that he might have come back if she had been more tactful, for he seemed very interested during the earlier part of the service.

The Handshake

If you are dealing with one of your own sex, it is usually best when you approach him to shake hands and endeavor to hold his hand while you talk with him. Sometimes a gentle pressure forward is just what is needed to get him to go.

However, never try to pull or force people to the altar or inquiry room. I have seen this a few times, but it seldom works and often drives folks away.

If you are dealing with the opposite sex, always be careful. People are watching. Over-familiarity brings criticism. The meeting, souls, and you yourself may be harmed.

Solomon said, "He that winneth souls is wise." This wisdom will manifest itself in many ways and one sign of wisdom is carefulness in dealing with the opposite sex. This is one way and place that the soul winner should always be wise.

* * * * *

15 TRUST GOD

Do not be discouraged because the person to whom you speak does not respond. Remember the battle is God's. We are "workers together with him" (II Cor. 6:1), and the fact that you do not see immediate results is no sign that God was not with you and blessing in all you did.

It sometimes takes many days and weeks and even many people, many months, and many years to bring a soul to Christ.

Looking back across the years leading up to my conversion, I can now see where there were eight different people, some far removed and unknown to others, who had a definite part in bringing me to Christ. Some passed on to heaven without ever knowing that the godless boy for whom they prayed was finally saved.

Listen

If the evangelist makes a proposition while you are speaking to an individual, always cease talking immediately and give him a chance to hear what the preacher has to say.

What he is proposing may have more influence upon your prospect than what you are saying. As soon as the leader has finished, urge an acceptance of the appeal and try to get him to go forward at once.

* * * * *

16 SECURE A COMMITMENT

If you cannot get the one to whom you are talking to go forward, always endeavor to get him to make a commitment before he leaves. Get him to promise to read some scripture, that you may designate, and to pray for his own soul.

Assure him that God will meet him anywhere, that He will save him on his way home or by his bedside or anywhere else when the conditions are met.

Sometimes you can get him to promise to return and settle it at the next service. Urge him to come back, and assure him you will be there to help him and pray for him.

Make It Short

It is usually not best to deal with an individual too long. If you don't seem to be making progress, leave him and perhaps someone else can be more successful.

I know there have often been times in my own experience that I made no progress whatever the first time, but I have gone away and later in the same service returned and spoken again and the one spoken to yielded.

I have had good results by going to an unsaved person who was regularly attending services and saying, not merely for effect, but because it was true, "God has placed you on my heart and I am praying definitely for you."

I have spoken to such in a similar way several times before actually trying to get them to go forward. The results have been very gratifying.

Church Membership

In many church meetings today, to respond to the invitation means to join that particular church. Therefore, we should always make it plain that responding to the call to go forward for prayer does not obligate anyone, in any way, to join the church.

Tell folks that every Christian should have a church home and they may be satisfied with the church where they now attend.

Say to them: "We are not trying to get you to join the church. We want to help you to a closer walk with God; church membership is a matter for you to settle personally after this is done."

I have dealt with scores who, after being assured we were not trying to line them up with the church, stepped out for Christ and let Him have His way in their hearts.

* * * * *

In dealing with an individual, remember there is a soul in your hands. Remove every barrier possible to help him to go forward for prayer.

We should also recognize that not all problems are likely to be settled during the invitation, but can best be settled while the seeker kneels and talks with God.

Then there are some things that will be settled only after the soul is saved and as he walks in the light.

All methods are useless and all words are in vain unless anointed by the Spirit of God.

As we work to win men to Christ, let us continually be conscious of the fact that it is "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

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18

B'S FOR PERSONAL WORKERS

Be "wise as serpents."

Be "harmless as doves."

Be prayerful.

Be patient.

Be positive.

Be sincere.

Be scriptural.

Be faithful.

Be friendly.

Be humble.

Be kind.

Be definite.

Be brief.

Be courteous.

Be constructive.

Be co-operative with the leader.

* * * * *

19

SOME THINGS TO AVOID

Avoid arguments.

Avoid reflecting on other churches.

Avoid lightness.

Avoid loud speaking.

Avoid gestures, talking with hands.

Avoid being conspicuous.

Avoid offense.

Avoid lingering too long.

Avoid compromise.

Avoid embarrassing those with whom you deal.

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THE END