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Effective Evangelism

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Evangelism is a scriptural term.

Paul places "evangelist" third in the list of five ministerial functions Christ gave the Church.

Evangelism is not to be confused with salesmanship—it is salesmanship plus a sobbing heart. Radicals, sensationalists, and cranks mingle their voices with the true evangelist to confuse the issue of true evangelism. For this reason the unthinking may reject the ministry and work of the evangelists. But the work must go on. The Church cannot afford to do without the holy influence of the God-called evangelists.

Says James A. Stewart: "Satan is dishing out a pot-pourri evangelism." The dictionary suggests, among other definitions, that pot pourri means a mixed pot with a bad odor.

There is a popular evangelism that denies holiness, ignores the personal agency of the Holy Spirit, steers clear of divine manifestations, discounts personal testimony, is embarrassed by shouts of "Hallelujah," and declares that the sobs of penitents are certain signs of weakness.

In popular evangelism the evangelist struts and wisecracks, while the people giggle with "no fear of God before their minds." It works no miracles, calls forth no criticism from the worldling and is greatly concerned with numbers and finance.

From the pen of John Paul we have: "It has been remarked that a minister may stand up in a pastoral capacity and preach logically and eloquently on the harm of various sins . . . and people of all moral grades and all shades of belief may acclaim him as a great clergyman. But if he becomes direct and personal as if to say, I have shown this as a dark picture of your own life which I entreat you to forsake today . . . he is just a common preacher, whose unpopularity with people who are at ease in Zion makes it very convenient to spare him and all his clan."

Evangelism to be genuine must be Bible based, Christ centered and warm from a heart of compassion. Opinions, personal preferences, popular approval have no place in the program of genuine evangelism.

Effective evangelism does not apologize for carnality in its multiplied manifestations, but boldly exposes it as a race-wide malady which only the blood of Christ can clean.

"Effective evangelism," says Chester E. Tulga, "rich in the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, challenges the mind with its uncompromising truth, moves the heart with its rich spiritual experiences, and transforms the life by its penetration to the very depth of the human personality."

Effective evangelism is rich in emotions. From it flows "joy unspeakable and full of glory" and a "peace that passeth all understanding." The world does not understand, and the individual cannot explain the deep wells of holy contentment which bless his life.

It is the purpose of evangelism to make those evangelized into evangelizers. The hungry-hearted Samaritan woman "left her water pot" and hurried into the city to declare to others, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did." True evangelism implants in the heart a desire to make Christ known for what He is—the world's Redeemer.

Evangelism is the work of every born-again believer, but an evangelist is one upon whom rests the compulsion of God to forsake all other callings and give himself to the work of arousing the Church and awakening the sinner. "He gave some apostles; and some, prophets and some, evangelists . . . for the perfecting of the saints."

Men preach for a verdict, but what is the verdict? Listeners are called upon to cross the line, but what is the line? Evangelism, to be effective, must erase these question marks. The verdict is "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." The line to be crossed is the one separating the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of Christ; the line between the world and the Church. To be hazy on these points is to destroy the total evangelistic program of the Church.

Effective evangelism is the keen thrust of the Word to the hearts and consciences of men. It exposes sin in practice and in nature, and with the authority of a royal herald announces a full deliverance from sin's bondage. It recognizes no impossible situations and attempts great things for God.

Some targets for evangelism to aim at are—

* Every family praying together in a Bible-centered worship, systematic and frequent.

* Every member of every church witnessing to the unreached about them of the soul rest found alone in Christ. To sincerely believe that those about us are lost is to have a genuine concern for their salvation. In witnessing the heart must be kept warm with divine love.

* Every Sunday-school teacher adopting a seven-day week-by-week program of evangelism. Teen-agers, youth, adults must be won now, the time for harvest shortens daily.

* Every church promoting 1) an evangelistic campaign led by dedicated workers; 2) a program of two-by-two house-to-house visitation; 3) training classes in church membership and in soul winning.

* Every church to aim at world evangelism by 1) supporting Christian colleges, the denominational missionary projects; 2) by getting Christian literature into the hands of literate men everywhere.

* Every church aim at a ten per-cent gain in born again Spirit-filled members gathered from the ranks of those who are not now followers of Christ.

He was an avowed communist speaking before a group of college students. "We have," said he, "the one and only

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