



SOULWINNING 201 SESSION 1

WHEN EVANGELISM DOESN'T WORK

1. INTRO

A. About me

- i. Raised in church but left
- ii. Baptized at 27 (nearly 24 years ago)
- iii. In pastoral ministry and evangelism for 16 years

B. About Emmanuel Institute

- i. Started in 2009
- ii. MI Conference lay training school
- iii. Current, experienced pastors
- iv. Training Center Churches

C. Seminar "Soulwinning 201: The Next Level"

- i. When Evangelism Doesn't Work
- ii. How to Get a Bible Study
- iii. Which Lesson Should I Use?
- iv. How to Give a *Really Good* Bible Study
- v. How to Lead People to Decisions
- vi. Keys to Success

2. GONE THE WAY OF THE DODO?

A. I remember when one of my church members asked me, "Pastor, hasn't evangelism gone the way of the dodo?" In other words – isn't it outdated and irrelevant in our secular society?

B. Over the years I've heard the expression "Evangelism just doesn't work anymore" more times than I can count. What people are usually referring to is methodology. "Traditional" evangelism – prophecy seminars especially – don't appeal to postmodern thinking or secular culture, etc.

- i. Evangelist Mark Finley once said "I'll keep winning souls and the church growth experts can keep writing books how it doesn't work."

C. We are going to explore 4 reasons "evangelism" may appear to be ineffective.

3. WHEN EVANGELISM “DOESN’T WORK”

A. When there is a general misunderstanding of what evangelism is

- i. The word “gospel” (from the Greek word euaggelion) means “good news”. The word “evangelism” comes from the Greek word euaggelistes (pronounced “you-angle-ees-tase”) which literally means a messenger of good news, or the gospel. This means that evangelism, in its most literal sense, is sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- ii. Evangelism is a cycle, not an event
 1. *Preparing*
 2. *Planting*
 3. *Cultivating*
 4. *Harvesting*
 5. *Preserving*

B. When people have unrealistic expectations

- i. It’s called “*laboring for souls*” for a reason (Gal. 6:9)
 1. *Don’t get weary (because it’s a common tendency)*
 2. *We shall reap (not might reap)*
 3. *In due season (sometime other than now)*
 4. *If we don’t lose heart (the only way to fail)*

When we give ourselves wholly to God and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success of our honest endeavors. Not once should we even think of failure. We are to cooperate with One who knows no failure. COL 363.1

- ii. We don’t know what will prosper (Eccl. 11:4-6)
- iii. The game is won on singles, not home runs

C. When there is no personal labor for souls

- i. Inspiration is clear that personal work must come first

Your work may accomplish more real good than the more extensive meetings, if they lack in personal effort. When both are combined, with the blessing of God, a more perfect and thorough work may be wrought; but if we can have but one part done, let it be the individual labor of opening the Scriptures in households, making personal appeals, and talking familiarly with the members of the family, not about things of little importance, but of the great themes of redemption. ChS 121.2

Ministers may preach pleasing and forcible discourses, and much labor may be put forth to build up and make the church prosperous; but unless its individual members shall act their part as servants of Jesus Christ, the church will ever be in darkness and without strength. ChS 68.4

Let ministers teach church members that in order to grow in spirituality, they must carry the burden that the Lord has laid upon them,—the burden of leading souls into the truth. Those who are not fulfilling their responsibility should be visited, prayed with, labored for. Do not lead people to depend upon you as ministers; teach them rather that they are to use their talents in giving the truth to those around them. In thus working they will have the co-operation of heavenly angels, and will obtain an experience that will increase their faith, and give them a strong hold on God. ChS 69.6

D. When the members of the church have no spiritual interest

The preached Word will be powerless for the conviction and conversion of souls, while a sleepy, lazy, and backslidden church are all that are left to sustain the efforts of the laborers. The efforts of Christ's ambassadors will be successful only when sustained by an earnest, praying, working people. Prayer-meetings are neglected, while concerts, singing schools, and various entertainments are faithfully patronized. "It's only a prayer-meeting," is often repeated by church-members; I can not call them Christians. Exciting popular lectures will interest the church-members and call them out, when the prayer-meeting has no attraction for them. This reveals the true spiritual condition of the church. God is not pleased with this state of things. Spiritual and eternal things are not appreciated, while temporal matters are exalted above things of eternal interest. PH152 6.2

A prayer-meeting will always tell the true interest of the church-members in spiritual and eternal things. The prayer-meeting is as the pulse to the body; it denotes the true spiritual condition of the church. A lifeless, backslidden church has no relish for the prayer-meetings. Young men and women of no depth of religious experience; who are vain and proud and frivolous, can feel no satisfaction in engaging in religious exercises. They prefer to pass the time in flirtations or reading novels, or in other ways of pleasing and gratifying the feelings of the natural heart. PH152 7.1

E. When the message is overshadowed by the method

- i. This gospel – the 3 angels' messages (compare Mt. 24:14 w/ Rev. 14:6-12)
 1. *When we give up the message, we've aborted the mission*

The light that Christ revealed to His servant the prophet is for us. In His revelation are given the three angels' messages, and a description of the angel that was to come down from heaven with great power, lightening the earth with his glory. In it are warnings against the wickedness that would exist in the last days, and against the mark of the beast. We are not only to read and understand this message, but to proclaim it with no uncertain sound to the world. By presenting these things revealed to John, we shall be able to stir the people. The usual subjects on which the ministers of nearly all other denominations dwell will not move them. We must proclaim our God-given message to them. The world is to be warned by the proclamation of this message. If we blanket it, if we hide our light under a bushel, if we so circumscribe ourselves that we cannot reach the people, we are answerable to God for our failure to warn the world. 19MR 41

In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light-bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world.... They have been given a work of the most solemn import,—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention. 9T 19