

EVANGELISM IS THE ANSWER

By Dr. Hoyt W. Allen, Jr.

There is a great deal of work to be done in our world and I am not speaking about our nation's capitol. In the U.S.A. we have many deaths which take place. A recent Stat looks like this:

5.7 Every Minute
342 Every Hour
8,217 Every Day
2,999,064 Every Year

The church is in the people business, whether they are coming into the world or departing. It should be the church's primary task to see that people are taught about Jesus before they depart this life. All other aspects of the church are secondary. The church is to take the gospel of Christ to our neighborhoods, our cities, counties, state, nation and really to everyone on the entire globe. America has 3,000 to 4,000 churches closing their doors on a yearly basis.

The George Barna Research Group and The Fuller Institute Of Church Growth conduct extensive surveys and many of the Stats in this article are a result of their surveys. Attendance at religious activities is continuing to decline from 49% in '91 to 35% today.

The church is "cooling off" somewhat, as was made known in an area Men's Meeting ('96) when it was announced that their county had 17 congregations of the Restoration Movement. All 17 had a Sunday School, but they were all poorly attended. Only five of the 17 had an Evening Service, and only three of the 17 had a Mid-Week Service. If people would tith their time to the Lord - they would be in a Service or involved in some aspect of ministry for 16.8 hours per week. This means that one who attends all scheduled Services (Sunday School, morning & evening Worship, and Mid-Week Prayer and Bible Study) would still need to become involved in ten plus hours per week to reach the tith of time. Any way one looks at Hebrews 10:25 - it still reads to not miss scheduled Services. Many today do not seemingly understand that it is sin to purposely miss Services. This is definitely a sign that the church is "cooling off".

The Mormons have gone from 1.5 million to 9 million and are growing 200,000 per year. How are they doing it? The answer is evangelism! The two young men one sees walking the streets of America and carrying two black books are proving that evangelism and home teaching still works.

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When I graduated from Kentucky Christian College in '72 the Directory Of The Ministry, which I had on hand listed the following Stats in the U.S.A. as compared to the present Stats in '02 Directory:

| | 1971 | 2002 | GROWTH |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Church Members | 1,024,734 | 1,189,787 | 165,053 |
| Foreign Missionaries | 658 | 961 | 303 |
| Congregations & Agencies | 5,299 | 6,595 | 1,296 |
| Pulpit Ministers | 4,148 | 5,449 | 1,301 |
| Associate Ministers | 465 | 3,152 | 2,687 |

Our growth record for these 30 years per congregation is only .83 church members per year. This means that the average congregation in the U.S.A. does not have even one addition yearly.

Why has it been that our Christian Colleges which once were our source of training Pulpit Ministers, and now has better facilities, more money with which to work, and more teachers with doctorates on the campuses are producing many graduates - but seemingly we are not getting the job done that Jesus asked us to do. That, of course, was to evangelize the lost world. We have more Associate Ministers and yet fewer converts than when the one Pulpit Minister was his own Youth Minister, Secretary, and even did some of the custodial work at times.

Also in a recent report it was stated that the reason for the lack of growth within the church was: 1) 80% of ministers were discouraged 2) 84% of ministers' wives were depressed 3) 33% of ministers consider the ministry to have been an outright hazard to their families 4) 40% of ministers were suffering from burnout, frantic schedules and unrealistic expectations 5) 47% of ministers' wives- suffering from burnout, frantic schedules and unrealistic expectations.

Besides the above:

1) Financial burdens are very common 2) Most ministers are heavily in debt due to past college/seminary expenses 3) It is estimated that 1,500 ministers leave their pulpits each month, due to moral failure, spiritual burnout or contention within their local congregations.

Someone said, "The reason for church attendance declining and minister dropout rate increasing is 'A Lack Of Support From The Pew'". Could we as church members do the following to change the situation:

1) Pray daily for our stagnate situation 2) Strive to begin training to be a "soul-winner" 3) Fill our life with love so that it will draw people to Jesus just as flies are drawn to honey more than drawn to vinegar 4) Make the Church Service Schedule #1 on our priority list 5) Endeavor to be supportive of our minister(s) by: a) Praying for him daily b) Inviting him and his family to your family gatherings c) Recreating him (take him along) d) Being a personal friend to him e) Seeing to it that people do not gossip about him f) Making certain that he is compensated fairly for his labors

KQOWVA Evangelistic Association

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