

MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE?

Training Center Churches | Session 6
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THE EVANGELISM FUNNEL

In a previous session, we compared the evangelism process to the agricultural cycle. Winning souls to Christ is not a spasmodic easy work; on the contrary, each step in the process requires diligent, intelligent labor.

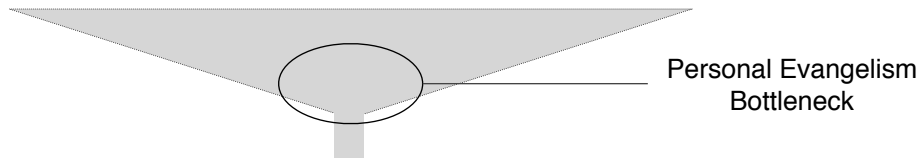
- ✓ **Soil preparation:** mingling with people and ministering to their needs
- ✓ **Seed sowing:** actively seeking to share Bible truth and ascertaining others' interest in spiritual things
- ✓ **Cultivation:** taking up the long but rewarding work of studying the Bible with people individually
- ✓ **Harvest:** calling for decisions from those with whom Christ and His truth have been shared
- ✓ **Preservation:** mentoring new members to be genuine disciples of Jesus who seek others for Him

People are always more inclined to have their temporal needs addressed than to have their spiritual needs addressed. Thus, you'll always have more interested in the opening steps of the cycle than the closing steps.

- **John 6:26, 27** Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."
- **John 6:66** From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

The evangelism cycle, then, can also be understood as a funnel.

- ✓ **Soil preparation:** least spiritually challenging | most community interest
- ✓ **Seed sowing:**
- ✓ **Cultivation:**
- ✓ **Harvest:**
- ✓ **Preservation:** most spiritually challenging | least community interest



- **Review and Herald, August 13, 1889** The Lord requires that far greater personal effort shall be put forth by the members of our churches. Souls have been neglected, towns and villages and cities have not heard the truth for this time, because wise missionary efforts have not been made... Our ordained ministers must do what they can, but it must not be expected that one man can do the work of all. The Master has appointed unto every man his work. There are visits to be made, there is praying to be done, there is sympathy to be imparted; and the piety--the heart and hand--of the whole church is to be employed, if the work is to be accomplished. You can sit down with your friends, and in a pleasant, social way, talk of the precious Bible faith.
- **Review and Herald, January 19, 1897** There are many who desire to see souls coming to a knowledge of the truth; but who among us are engaged in real, earnest work for the Lord? Who, with earnest, humble faith, are bringing souls to him by visiting, by conversing, and by explaining the Scriptures? The sacrifice that we ourselves are willing to make for the good of others is what will convince them of our sincerity.

When it comes to sowing the seed of Bible truth, it can be easy to fall into one of two bad traps: A) giving the message so abruptly that it seems alien and cult-like, or B) in an effort to avoid seeming crazy diluting the message such that it we never actually present it.

- **Luke 16:8** So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.
- **Matthew 10:16** “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.
 - **Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 3, p. 456** Satan understands the weakness of men. He has the knowledge which he has accumulated for ages and is an experienced hand at his work. His cunning and devices are well matured, and are too often successful because God's people are not as wise as serpents.
 - **Testimonies to Southern Africa, p.16** God would have you be as lambs among wolves, as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves... You should plan carefully what to say and what to leave unsaid. This is not practicing deception; it is working as Paul worked. He says, “Being crafty, I caught you with guile.” Your method of labour would not have that effect.
- **2 Corinthians 12:16**
 - ✓ NKJV “...being crafty, I caught you by cunning!”
 - ✓ KJV “...being crafty, I caught you with guile.”
 - ✓ NIV “...crafty fellow that I am, I caught you by trickery!
 - ✓ NASB “...crafty fellow that I am, I took you in by deceit.”
- **1 Corinthians 9:19-22** For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more... to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.
 - **Evangelism, p. 141** When [Paul] went to labor for the Jews, he did not first make prominent the birth, betrayal, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ, notwithstanding these were the special truths for that time. He first brought them down step by step over the promises that had been made of a Saviour, and over the prophecies that pointed Him out. After dwelling upon these until the specifications were distinct in the minds of all, and they knew that they were to have a Saviour, he then presented the fact that this Saviour had already come. Christ Jesus fulfilled every specification. This was the "guile" with which Paul caught souls. He presented the truth in such a manner that their former prejudice did not arise to blind their eyes and pervert their judgment. (see **Acts 16:1-5**)
 - **Testimonies to Southern Africa, p. 17** A great and solemn work is before us — to reach the people where they are. Do not feel it your bounden duty the first thing to tell the people, “We are Seventh-day Adventists; we believe the seventh day is the Sabbath; we believe in the non-immortality of the soul,” and thus erect most formidable barriers between you and those you wish to reach. But speak to them, as you may have opportunity, upon points of doctrine wherein you can agree, and dwell on practical godliness. Give them evidence that you are a Christian, desiring peace, and that you love their souls. Let them see that you are conscientious. Thus you will gain their confidence, and then there will be time enough for the doctrines. Let the hard iron heart be subdued, the soil prepared, and then lead them along cautiously, presenting in love the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.

“SO, UM... WOULD YOU EVER LIKE TO, I DON’T KNOW, STUDY THE BIBLE OR SOMETHING?”

One way to transition a conversation in a spiritual direction is to simply test the waters. Tactfully weave some spiritual element(s) into an otherwise normal conversation.

- “Praise the Lord!”
- “This morning as I was reading my Bible...”
- “I was listening to this powerful sermon...”
- “Last Sabbath at church...”
- “I recently read this incredible book...”
- “I have an assignment...”

A tried and true way of generating Bible study interests is doing community surveys. “Hi! My name is _____ and I’m with a group of Christians out trying to get to know their community a little better. Would you mind answering just a few quick questions?”

- Potential upcoming events survey
- World events and Bible prophecy questionnaire
- Five Questions
 1. Do you believe in God?
 2. Who do you believe Jesus was?
 3. Do you believe Jesus will come back to the earth again?
 4. Do you understand the Bible as well as you’d like to?
 5. Would you be interested in studying the Bible if you had the opportunity?

One of the most sure-fire ways of finding potential Bible study interests is to go through pre-made interest lists.

- Local church attendance records from previous events / campaigns
- Media ministries (*Amazing Facts*, *It Is Written*, *Voice of Prophecy*, etc.)
- Area Bible worker

There are other simple ways of generating Bible study interests

- Directly mail or personally deliver Bible study offer cards
- Ask for directions
- Wear an intriguing t-shirt
 - ✓ “I’ll give you \$5 if you let me study the Bible with you for 20 minutes.”
 - ✓ “I’ll give you \$5 if I don’t have a GLOW tract for you right now.”
 - ✓ “The Bible says you don’t have a soul. Ask to find out more.”
 - ✓ “The Bible says Sunday isn’t holy. Ask to find out more.”
 - ✓ “The book of Revelation isn’t sealed. Ask to find out more.”
 - ✓ “Jesus promised to come back... so what’s taking Him so long? Ask to find out more.”

BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES

There are plenty of SDA Bible study guides available today in print and DVD formats. Below are some of the most popular printed guides, from *Amazing Facts* and *It Is Written*. One or more of these should be available at your local church free of charge (hopefully from a clearly-marked, easily-accessible, and absolutely unavoidable resource desk) for all church members willing to give in-home or drop-off Bible studies.

- Discover Bible Guides
- New Beginnings
- Search for Certainty
- Unsealing Daniel’s Mysteries
- Unlocking Revelation
- Amazing Facts Bible Study Guides (online / printed)
- Storacle Lessons (online / printed)
- Landmarks of Prophecy

Signs of the Times, December 20, 1899 In every church we need Christlike workers, those who in life and character are growing in the divine likeness by working to call sinners to repentance. The spiritual life of the church can be kept alive only as the members make personal efforts to win souls to Christ. No amount of mental culture or theological training will do this work.

Gospel Workers, p. 200 The real character of the church is measured, not by the high profession she makes, not by the names enrolled on her books, but by what she is actually doing for the Master, by the number of her persevering, faithful workers. Personal, unselfish effort will accomplish more for the cause of Christ than can be wrought by sermons or creeds.

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 the 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.

Christian Service, p. 15 Let no church think it is too small to exert an influence and do service in the great work for this time. Go to work, brethren. It is not alone the large camp-meetings or conventions and councils that will have the especial favor of God; the humblest effort of unselfish love will be crowned with His blessings, and receive its great reward. Do what you can, and God will increase your ability.