

### **Evangelism (Part 3)**

Hello to everyone, and Happy Sabbath. We are continuing this week with our examination of the Ellen White book, "Evangelism," and this week we will be starting with the third and last chapter of Section 1, entitled, "The Need of Evangelistic Workers."

The section begins with a quote that I find to be both encouraging and also designed to remind us of our responsibility in the plan of salvation. Normally, I skip the compiler-added headers, but this one is quite appropriate, reading, "The Harvest is Great."

[quote]

The solemn, sacred message of warning must be proclaimed in the most difficult fields and in the most sinful cities, in every place where the light of the great threefold gospel message has not yet dawned.

Everyone is to hear the last call to the marriage supper of the Lamb.... Countries hitherto closed to the gospel are opening their doors, and are pleading for the Word of God to be explained to them. Kings and princes are opening their long-closed gates, inviting the heralds of the cross to enter. The harvest truly is great. Eternity alone will reveal the results of well-directed efforts put forth now. [Gospel Workers, 27]

[endquote]

We are to do all we can, even with the limited resources available to us, to reach out to new areas that have not yet heard our message. We do not know how or where Yah will open doors of opportunity, and since each soul won brings new talents and opportunities into the flock, it is certainly the case that things can move suddenly, and quickly. We were talking about this last week, in fact. One of you asked me, "How do you know that the harvest is great?"

Well, we have here the word of inspiration to answer that :) But even beyond this, we know how the Spirit works. Even in our individual lives, we all lived many years in darkness, away from the light of the Gospel, and then one day the Spirit touched us, and we responded. It does not – as some who have been associated with us have unfortunately never learned – require years of study to "get" the message that we bear. The Gospel is simple. The acceptance of the Gospel is simple. There are challenges, and there are a few more complex things when we get into the details of the sanctified life, certainly... but to get on the path requires only a sincere decision, and a willingness to truly put the love of Yah before anything else in one's life. Yah's direct guidance takes care of the rest.

And so I firmly do believe that there is yet a great harvest to be won before the end, and it could be any little spark, any individual who shows an interest, to get a tremendous effect started. We pray to see these things, and yet we are also told that only in "Eternity" will we truly know how well our efforts have affected the course of spiritual history. And do not imagine that this is limited only to the "great" things we do. An act of kindness, a sanctifying word, an example set in some small area... these sometimes produce the most dramatic of results.

[quote]

Ministers of God, with hearts aglow with love for Christ and your fellow men, seek to arouse those who are dead in trespasses and sins. Let your earnest entreaties and warnings pierce their consciences. Let your

fervent prayers melt their hearts, and lead them in penitence to the Saviour. You are ambassadors for Christ, to proclaim His message of salvation. [Gospel Workers, 35]

Time is short. Workers for Christ are needed everywhere. There should be one hundred earnest, faithful laborers in home and foreign mission fields where now there is one. The highways and the byways are yet unworked. Urgent inducements should be held out to those who ought now to be engaged in missionary work for the Master. [Fundamentals of Christian Education, 488]

[endquote]

If this was true in Mrs. White's day, how much more should it not be true now? How many souls would not be laboring with us for others, had it not been for the hardness of men's hearts? Every day, new people encounter our message, all over the world. Frequently, I see an email, a facebook post, a forum post, of someone who has found our writings anew, and is reading with interest.

More often than not, these individuals turn out to be seed that has fallen on infertile soil, or the ravens or weeds take them away... but we have a responsibility here as well. When we hear of these things, when our brethren tell us of encounters they have had, or are about to have, we need to be earnest in prayer for the outcome of these meetings that Yah, by His special providence, arranges. I do not know if we, as a collective people, are offering enough fervent prayers for the individuals we hear encountering our writings... but let us Remember, conversion is not an intellectual exercise. It is a spiritual change, and must be facilitated by our prayers, as our Father has said.

Let us remind one another, and encourage one another, to pray always for the hearts of men to be saved, for in this way we may yet see a hundred workers where there are currently few. Do not grow weary in your expectations. Do not grow cynical, or discouraged, in seeking the harvest. We are to draw warmth from the coldness of others, not to let our excitement and our enthusiasm be diluted by it. There is work to be done, but it is a joyful, rewarding work laboring for the Master.

[quote]

For the accomplishment of all that God calls for in warning the cities, His servants must plan for a wise distribution of the working forces. Often the laborers who might be a power for good in public meetings, are engaged in other work that allows them no time for active ministry among the people. For the conduct of affairs at the various centers of our work, those in responsibility must endeavor, as far as possible, to find consecrated men who have been trained in business lines. There is constant necessity of guarding against the tendency to tie up at these centers of influence men who could do a larger and more important work on the public platform, in presenting before unbelievers the truths of God's Word. [The Review and Herald, April 7, 1910]

[endquote]

I am tempted, when I read statements like this, to feel great sorrow. It isn't that the message itself contained in this quote is intended for sadness. It is just that, when I hear of Yah's servants planning wisely, and of those who have training in various fields, like business, I get an idea of how much Yah's chosen people have squandered their talents since the time of the Third Angel's first goings-forth.

I think of all the intelligence and learning that goes into defending false doctrines, and practices that are hateful to heaven, and this by those who call themselves by the name “Seventh-day Adventist.”

I think of all the wise men that could do so much good for their lost and dying brethren, had they themselves not been deceived and misled by those who have been placed in responsible conditions. And those also who deceive themselves, because they do not believe in victory over the sins that keep them from the heart of Yah.

We know that Yah will wipe away every tear, and comfort every sorrow, when the Son of Man returns, but I wonder how much we will marvel, when we see just what has been lost by the apostasy that has taken place among Yah’s chosen. But we were called for a purpose... to succeed where others failed, and under harsher conditions, to show that the work is our Father’s, and not of men. We have a sacred work before us, for we are called to restore the pathways. We are called to restore the walls of Zion, and to turn the hearts of these wayward children back to the Father, if only they are willing to turn. Evangelism, evangelism, evangelism... this has to be our theme, as we watch for that harvest in the accomplishing of this work.

[quote]

There must be no belittling of the gospel ministry. No enterprise should be so conducted as to cause the ministry of the Word to be looked upon as an inferior matter. It is not so. Those who belittle the ministry are belittling Christ. The highest of all work is ministry in its various lines, and it should be kept before the youth that there is no work more blessed of God than that of the gospel minister. Let not our young men be deterred from entering the ministry. There is danger that through glowing representations some will be drawn away from the path where God bids them walk. Some have been encouraged to take a course of study in medical lines who ought to be preparing themselves to enter the ministry. [Testimonies For The Church 6:411]

[endquote]

It has not been the lot of the CSDA Church to “raise” young members. Most if not all of us have come to the faith as adults, and our education and “formal” training have been fairly settled by that point. We have been able to use our natural and cultivated talents to the glory of the work, and of course we pray that those young ones who are among us, such as Bro. Peter’s children, will become settled into the truth and take up the mantle of evangelist and minister.

Here is another statement that follows, regarding young workers:

[quote]

The standard-bearers are falling, and young men must be prepared to take the places left vacant, that the message may still be proclaimed. The aggressive warfare is to be extended. Those who have youth and strength are to go into the dark places of the earth, to call perishing souls to repentance. [Gospel Workers, 104]

[endquote]

It is not our faith that the redeemed of this generation will see death, but apart from this, I have to testify that we do not really have any “old” members. Those whom the world might be tempted to think of as old are carpenters, and missionaries... they travel the countries and the continents, being more active than those who are a quarter of their age, and their health is vital. We are truly blessed by Yah’s sustenance upon those who are bearers of wisdom and experience. The principle, of course, is well-taken. Those who are brought into the message must be taught that the work of bearing the Gospel is the highest activity in which they can be engaged, and to whatsoever extent they are able, let them share the responsibility of telling the good news of Yahshua to all who will hear.

[quote]

Our schools have been established by the Lord, and if they are conducted in harmony with His purpose, the youth sent to them will quickly be prepared to engage in various lines of missionary work. Some will be trained to enter the field as missionary nurses, some as canvassers, some as evangelists, some as teachers, and some as gospel ministers. [Letter 113, 1903]

[endquote]

At the moment, our schools are also being taught by Yah. We are learning by doing, and those who had never before thought of being evangelists are faced with the duty of serving in this way. And, naturally, our Father brings us into situations and circumstances designed to draw these talents out of us. Of course, we do not all abandon our employment to become wandering preachers... the Body at this time would not be able to provide resources for that kind of activity, and our evangelists need to support themselves through secular work, for the most part.

Furthermore, the quotes above mention that being in “the field” may entail many lines of service. These may range from medical, to educational, to being involved in the business world... but the work that we truly accomplish through the doing of these things is toward edifying and expanding the Kingdom.

[quote]

The Lord calls upon those connected with our sanitariums, publishing houses, and schools to teach the youth to do evangelistic work. Our time and energy must not be so largely employed in establishing sanitariums, food stores, and restaurants that other lines of work will be neglected. Young men and young women who should be engaged in the ministry, in Bible work, and in the canvassing work should not be bound down to mechanical employment. [The Review and Herald, May 16, 1912]

[endquote]

Here again we see the primary importance of evangelism in every activity the Church undertakes. With our current membership so spread out over the world, we have not had many opportunities for collaborative work like establishing hospitals or stores... but it is interesting to me to contemplate the culture of the early Adventist Church.

The work of spreading the Gospel was not an afterthought, as it is in so many so-called “Evangelical” churches, or the work of a few chosen individuals. Neither was it something that was “enforced” by Church policy, as it is with Jehovah’s Witnesses and Latter-day Saints. It was a balanced, but focused,

approach to the work of expanding the Kingdom, that encouraged all who were willing and able to place their time and efforts into this great calling.

In this generation, with the Latter Rain falling, all of us have received promptings from the Holy Spirit with regard to the ways in which we, individually and collectively, can serve the evangelistic efforts. If any of us have thought, “There is nothing I can do,” let us seek the voice of Yah in prayer, for there is truly more work than any age before, including the one in which Yahshua told His disciples, “Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.” (Matthew 10:23)

[quote]

Where are the men who will go forth to the work, fully trusting in God, ready to do and to dare? God calls, “Son, go work today in My vineyard.” God will make the young men of today heaven’s chosen repositories, to present before the people truth in contrast with error and superstition, if they will give themselves to Him. May God roll the burden on strong young men, who have His word abiding in them and who will give the truth to others. [Manuscript 134, 1898]

[endquote]

Here again we have a conditional prophecy, like so many in Biblical and recent history. I found the Adventist religion as a youth. So did several of my friends. There is a natural seeking-out of the truth that seems to be present in youths... but the cares of this world, and the manner of preaching in the worldly churches, works to stifle this quite effectively. And, where those who are best able to do the work do not do it, the work is taken up by those who are willing.

It should be our prayer today, as it was for Ellen White in 1898, that there will arise some who have both the strength of youth and the wisdom of Heaven, to accomplish the deeds of omnipotence in this age.

The final quote of this section is applicable to all of us, everyone who has come to Yahshua and seeks to work for His Kingdom:

[quote]

God calls for consecrated workers who will be true to Him—humble men who see the need of evangelistic work and do not draw back but do each day’s work faithfully, relying upon God for help and strength in every emergency. The message is to be taken up by those who love and fear God. Lay not your burden upon any conference. Go forth, and, as evangelists, in a humble way present a “Thus saith the Scriptures.” [Letter 43, 1905]

[endquote]

There is much here for Yah’s people to consider. Faithfulness and humility are necessary for any who will engage in the work of spreading the Good News. But do not let shyness or self-doubt be confused for humility. True humility does not falsely think badly of one’s self; instead, it relies upon Christ, and then speaks Christ’s words, and does Christ’s works. If we are going forward, relying on Yah for help and strength in every emergency, then no emergency can overcome us, and we will triumph over every challenge that Yah allows to exist in our path.

This statement is most interesting, “Lay not your burden upon any conference.” In hindsight, this statement is even more significant than the author likely intended... conferences can, and do, and have now, been subject to failure. In general, what this means is, if you have a burden to reach the lost and dying, do not rely upon “someone else” to do it. If you have a burden, it is because Yah has given it to you. Even if others are doing similar work, it does not lift the responsibility from those whom Yah has made sensitive to the need.

The Church sends forth workers and evangelists. Does this mean our collective duty is fulfilled? Hardly. Some are sent forth as active messengers, and... as encouragement to the rest of the Body to look for ways to contribute to the work of advancing the borders of the Kingdom. Just in last week’s study we saw a powerful quote, that where the workers of Yah are moving forward, we are actually “destroying” the kingdom of Satan, frustrating his plans, and undoing his effects upon the hearts of our sickly brethren.

This is a dramatic picture, but it is entirely accurate... and the Spirit of Yah is not limited by an apparent lack of any resource. The Holy Spirit is not limited by an apparent lack of workers. The workers are to labor faithfully, and expect to see a harvest for their efforts, either in this world or the next. And with every word they speak for the Kingdom, and with every soul that they introduce to the Good News, let the prayers of every saint ascend for the labors of each one. Let us be “as one” in the work of evangelism, for the everlasting good of those who will draw near and listen.

Are there any questions about tonight’s study?