



The Voice Of Truth

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The Church: All-Sufficient In Evangelism

By Cecil Willis

The importance of the mission of the church in evangelism is emphasized by a recognition of the following facts:

1. **Man is lost in sin** (Isa. 59:1, 2; Ezek. 18:20; Luke 19:10; Rom. 6:23; 2 Thess. 1:7, 8; Rom. 3:23). Every person that has reached the age of responsibility before God has transgressed the divine law. The moment a person commits his first sin, he then stands condemned. Men often attempt to exonerate some who live in certain distant countries of any guilt. But these, too, have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. These persons are not lost simply because they have not heard and obeyed the gospel; they are lost because they have sinned.

2. **The gospel is God's only power of salvation in this age.** (Rom. 1:16; Jas. 1:21; I Pet. 1:22, 23; 1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Tim. 2:4; Pet. 1:3, 4). This is a point which ought not need to be proved to a people who have had the Bible as long as have we. I suppose God could have chosen to save people in some other way had He so desired, but the fact is He chose to save men by the foolishness of preaching (I Cor. 1:21). God has no other power of salvation in this age. Realizing that men are lost in sin, and that the Gospel is God's only power unto salvation in this age, we therefore should be more zealous in our effort to prosecute this aspect of the mission of the church to evangelize the world.

3. **The church is God's missionary society** -- God's chosen means of getting the gospel to the lost. And just as the gospel is God's only power of salvation, the church is God's only organization to take the gospel to the lost. God has purpose for the church (Eph. 3:8-11). The purpose of God for His church is its mission. A part of that purpose is to "build up" the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11, 12). This involves the preaching of the word of the kingdom that others might be brought into it. I think I am safe in saying that in addition to the responsibility to worship; this preaching responsibility is the primary responsibility of the church. We learn from the Bible that the church is:

a. **God's sowing agency.** Jesus says "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field" (Matt. 13:24). The church is therefore God's sowing agency, and it is the only agency that He put here for that purpose. However, the church being a product of God, He need not put any other agency here with that purpose, for His products are perfect for the accomplishment of the

divine purpose assigned them.

b. **God's sending agency.** "For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that was a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard" (Matt. 20:1). These being hired, he "sent" them to their work. The church is likened unto this man who "sent" them to their work. In Acts 11:22 we see an example of this being done. "And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch." God's church is His only sending agency.

c. **God's supporting agency.** In I Tim. 3:14, 15 the church is said to be the pillar and support of the truth. The church is that which stands under the truth that, which upholds, supports the truth. I think this is to be significant of the statement in Rev. 1:20 that "the seven candlesticks are seven churches." A candlestick is that which holds forth the light. The churches are that which hold forth the glorious light of the gospel. Of course, when one stands under the truth, he supports it. When one supports the truth, this involves the support of those who proclaim the truth. So Paul says "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them that I might minister unto you" (2 Cor. 11:8). In Phil. 4, Paul declares that the Philippian church had fellowship with him in the beginning of the gospel. They sent once and again to support him. God put no other institution here whose business it is to support the gospel.

Having learned that God assigned to the church the work of sowing the seed of the kingdom, of sending forth and supporting gospel preachers, we inquire further to see if the church was sufficient to accomplish these assignments. We need also to observe that God made no provision for the church universal to function as a single unit. The only functioning organization about which one can read is a local church. The congregation is the organizational arrangement God provided to see that the gospel is preached. When we say the church is sufficient to preach the gospel, other than that work done by the individual Christian (and the individual is not an institution), we mean the congregation is sufficient to evangelize the world.

It requires but little investigation of the Bible to learn that the churches did accomplish what God meant for them to do. If so, these churches of necessity were sufficient for this task. I Thess. 1:3-8 relates how the church at



Why Don't People Understand the Bible?

(Negative Attitudes)

1. **Lack of study** 2 Tim. 2:15
2. **Cares of this world choke the word** Matt. 13:22
3. **No desire for knowledge** 2 Pet. 3:17-18
4. **Follow leaders without investigation** 2 Pet. 2:1-3; Rom. 16:17-18
5. **Closed minded** Matt. 13:15
6. **Twist and corrupt the word** 2 Pet. 3:16; 2 Cor. 2:17
7. **No love for truth** 2 Thess. 2:10-11
8. **Wilful ignorance** 2 Pet. 3:5

The Word Accomplishes

Faith - Rom. 10:17; John 20:30-31

Begets - James 1:18; 1 Pet. 2:23-25

Gives light, understanding - Psalm 119:130

Purifies the soul - 1 Pet. 1:22

Saves the soul - James 1:21

Converts, makes wise, rejoices, enlightens - Psalm 19:7-8

Cleanses - John 15:3

Sanctifies - John 17:17

Builds up, gives inheritance - Acts 20:32

Makes free - John 8:31-32

Makes wise to salvation - 2 Tim. 3:15

Comforts - Rom. 15:4

Causes growth - 1 Pet. 2:2

Protects against sin - 1 John 2:1

Gives life - Psalm 119:50; John 6:63; 20:31

Works in us - 1 Thess. 2:13

Assures of eternal life - 1 John 5:13