

Witnessing and Evangelism

Evaluating Witnessing and Evangelism

Lesson #12 for June 23, 2012

Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 13:5,6; Hebrews 10:24,25; Deuteronomy 10:12,13; Matthew 23:15; Revelation 14:6,7.

1. Is there a role for evaluation in our evangelistic and witnessing efforts? If we try to be too detailed in our evaluation, are we attempting to apply business techniques to evangelism? Is there any way to evaluate the work of the Holy Spirit?
2. How about evaluating other church activities? How would you evaluate your church service? Your Sabbath school class?
3. There is one huge negative evaluation that we all should constantly keep in mind: The fact that we are not in the kingdom of heaven is proof that we have not finished the work!
4. What should be the goals of witnessing and evangelism? Is it our goal to win as many people as possible to the church and get them baptized so that a short time later they can leave again? Should we evaluate how effective someone's witnessing or evangelism is by seeing how many people are brought into the church by the people that person brought in? What is the most urgent work for the church to be addressing itself to at this point in history? Is it bringing more and more members into the church? That is certainly a laudable goal, but is it the most important one? Or, should the church's goal be to prepare a people who are so settled "into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved," (*MS* 173, 1902, p.6; *4BC* 1161.6; *FLB* 287.7; *LDE* 219.4; *Mar* 200.2; *OFC* 83.6; 328.2; *1MR* 249.2; *10MR* 252.1; compare *Ev* 694-697; contrast *LDE* 41:1) and thus, are prepared to stand among the 144,000? Is there any way we humans can evaluate this? Would it be correct to say that if we are worshiping the same God today that we worshiped a year ago, we are worshiping a graven image? Don't we believe in present truth? Isn't the most important truth of all the truth about God? This will prevent us from being deceived. What does it take to prepare someone to be a part of the 144,000? If you were the Devil, wouldn't you do everything possible to prevent them from forming? When they do form, the Devil is finished! How can we get ready? Will the 144,000 be closer to God than any others have ever been? Have others in the past been able to face the Devil as the 144,000 will?
5. Honestly, we constantly evaluate everything around us. We are evaluating the attire or clothing of those we see. We evaluate their health based on their weight and various kinds of habits such as smoking. And people are evaluating us constantly. Don't we evaluate the pastor and the sermon every Sabbath? Don't we evaluate our Sabbath school classes and teachers?
6. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13; 1 Corinthians 11:28; 2 Corinthians 13:5,6. What do these verses suggest to us about the basic utility of evaluation? We are encouraged to choose carefully especially those who will serve as pastors or deacons, but we are also strongly encouraged to evaluate ourselves and to test ourselves at all times and especially before communion service. Before choosing a new pastor, don't we want to know how fit s/he is for the position and especially how effective s/he is in her/his ministry? Isn't that evaluation?
7. Read Matthew 28:19,20. What are we admonished to do in those verses? Are we going everywhere spreading the gospel? Are we making disciples for Christ? Are we baptizing a lot of people? Are we teaching them to obey the commandments? Are we living according to

faith?

8. In every church there are those who are willing to help whenever they can. They end up being the faithful volunteers in almost every church program. In some cases they may not be supremely well-qualified to do what they are doing, but they are willing! When it comes time to evaluate how a certain program is doing, let us not fall into the trap of being critical of those who are willing to serve. This does not rule out constructive criticism. And it certainly does not rule out genuine affirmation. (See *DA* 825)
9. Read Acts 16:1,2; Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 11:2; and Philipians 4:14. Notice that Paul definitely affirmed church members, and he thanked churches that had done a good job. Timothy got a good report. So did Phoebe. The members of the Philippian church were acclaimed for their efforts in working with Paul.
10. When looking at any given program, we need to consider not only the outcomes which are perhaps most important but also the process. How do we evaluate the process?
11. In Hebrews 10:24,25, we are told to consider one another or even to think carefully about others when evaluating. It is quite amazing how encouraging a few simple words spoken in thanks to those who have done a good job promote the work.
12. Read the following passages: Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12,13; Matthew 22:37; 2 Corinthians 13:5,6; and Revelation 14:6,7. What do these verses suggest about what God is asking of us? Is God attempting to command us to love Him? Is it possible to command someone to love you?

The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and **love cannot be commanded**; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. (*DA* 22.1)

13. But, there are times when negative evaluations are appropriate. Read Matthew 23 and John 8. What do you suppose was the tone of Jesus' voice when He said, "You are the children of your father, the Devil"? (John 8:44, *GNB*)
14. So, what parameters should we use for evaluating witnessing or evangelistic programs? Is the number of baptisms the only thing that really counts?
15. Do any of our evangelistic programs work like the Pharisees' program did in Matthew 23:15? In what sense did they make their converts "twice as deserving of going to hell as you yourselves are"? (*GNB*) And how do we evaluate ourselves?
16. In the New Testament, we are admonished to watch and pray at all times. (Matthew 26:41; 1 Thessalonians 5:17) We are to be controlled by the Spirit (Romans 8:6) who gives us His fruit until we have matured to the point of being self-controlled. (Galatians 5:22,23) We must practice prayer and Bible study (Ephesians 6:17,18) and do our very best. (2 Timothy 2:15,16) So, why hasn't Jesus come back? Aren't we doing these things correctly?
17. How do we evaluate overall church growth in a single community, in a local conference, or even in the whole world? How will church growth be impacted by the shaking and the latter rain? In Revelation 14:6,7, we are invited to warn the world. Are we doing that? What will happen to the Seventh-day Adventist Church when Sundaykeeping is the law? How will we react when we see some of our fellow Adventists leaving and others coming in?
18. Are we seeking first the kingdom of God? (Matthew 6:33) Are we acting and working as if the

second coming is actually near? (Matthew 10:7; 24:14)

19. How could it be said that those who are not gathering with Jesus are scattering abroad? Are any of us scattering? (Matthew 12:30)
20. Consider the following rules or suggestions for evaluation as listed in our *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for Friday, June 22.
 1. Review what is involved in every aspect of the ministry you are undertaking and see how many people could take part.
 2. Decide on the areas where significant help is needed and look for key people to fill these major roles. Think about some team leaders.
 3. Prepare a fairly detailed written outline of all aspects of the ministry. This will be useful when talking to prospective team members. They will be able to understand exactly what is required of them.
 4. Report regularly to the whole church. This will let everyone see that your ministry is a part of the local church's overall witnessing and evangelism strategy, and they will be more likely to get involved.
 5. Have regular teams. Affirm team members and review progress. Ask the questions, "How have we done?" "How are we doing?" and, "Where do we go from here?"
21. Is it possible to cross the line from careful evaluation and judgment to being judgmental—being too critical? Do we ever produce "sons of hell" as the Pharisees did?
22. Read Proverbs 25:12. Are we willing to accept and implement careful evaluation? Should every evaluation include praise and encouragement for those who are doing a good job? Why do so many people dread any kind of evaluation or assessment?
23. We need to notice something interesting. In the Old Testament, only Levites—members from a specific tribe—were allowed to be the spiritual leaders of the children of Israel. But, in the New Testament, anyone who was faithful and honest and of good report could become a church leader. They were supposed to be of proven character and maturity and have sterling character. How do you think the church would do if the criteria for becoming a church leader were as demanding as are the criteria for becoming a top business executive?
24. It should be obvious that if we set our standards too high, no one would qualify to be a church leader. What kind of people did Jesus encourage to join His group? Read Luke 8:1-3; Acts 4:13.
25. Ephesians 1:15,16 suggests that Paul was always looking for good fruit among church members. And when he found it, he gave thanks to God.
26. Where do we look for good prospective church leaders, even church members? Look at Ellen White's comments about the woman taken in adultery. (John 8:1-11)

Jesus looked for a moment upon the scene,—the trembling victim in her shame, the hard-faced dignitaries, devoid of even human pity. His spirit of stainless purity shrank from the spectacle. Well He knew for what purpose this case had been brought to Him. **He read the heart, and knew the character and life history of everyone in His presence. These would-be guardians of justice had themselves led their victim into sin, that they might lay a snare for Jesus.** Giving no sign that He had heard their question, He stooped, and fixing His eyes upon the ground, began to write in the dust.—Ellen White, *The Desire*

of Ages, page 461.1

This was to her the beginning of a new life, a life of purity and peace, devoted to the service of God. In the uplifting of this fallen soul, Jesus performed a greater miracle than in healing the most grievous physical disease; He cured the spiritual malady which is unto death everlasting. **This penitent woman became one of His most steadfast followers.** With self-sacrificing love and devotion she repaid His forgiving mercy.—Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 462.2

27. The church would certainly not be looking for devoted and consecrated church leaders among prostitutes! But, should we? Did Jesus?
28. Read 1 Samuel 16:7 and Matthew 7:15-19. When Samuel saw David's older brothers, he was impressed. He was sure that one of those tall, handsome young men would be the next king of Israel, but he was wrong. He was only looking on the outward appearance. How often do we do that? Does the outward appearance include not only physical appearance but also personality, current social status, even the *curriculum vitae*?
29. How are we supposed to make correct judgments about those with whom we come in contact? Jesus was referring "particularly to judging another's motives, not to judging the right or wrong of his acts. God alone is competent to judge men's motives, because of the fact that He alone is able to read men's innermost thoughts."—5SDABC 354,355. In Matthew 7:16, *know* is referring to a kind of deep personal and complete knowledge of the person involved.
30. When is it appropriate to talk about the bad fruit or the bad characteristics of another person? What if you are a member of the nominating committee of your church? How thoroughly do we need to be in investigating rumors about other people before we report them? Do we need to follow Jesus' advice when dealing with possible bad reports? (Matthew 18:15-17)
31. Read Matthew 7:21-23. How does God evaluate each one of us? Could one of us be turned away at the gates of the New Jerusalem because God does not "know us"?
32. If you were put in charge of a revival and reformation program at your church, what would you do first? Where would you begin? When we carefully evaluate others, can we be sure that we are being guided by the Holy Spirit? And what if growth in your church seems to be stagnant? Are individual church members—including each one of us—in any way responsible for a stagnant growth—or lack of growth—in our church?
33. If you were responsible for setting evangelism and witnessing goals for your church, what goals would you set?
34. For those of us who believe in the larger-view, great-controversy, trust, healing, model of the plan of salvation, the really challenging question is: How do we prepare people to be a part of the 144,000. Our church has seen a delay of almost 170 years since the great disappointment. Don't you think it is about time we bring this delay to an end?

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