

“Selling the Church to Her Area!”

Acts 2:1-12; 37-41

Intro. – What I’m about to relay to you is not made up; the facts are true. These facts center around four local churches – two of them are urban and two of them are rural. Listen carefully as this will illustrate the real purpose behind this message.

First, let us consider the two urban churches. Both of them are situated in a fast-growing, much in demand suburban area. The potential for growth is absolutely unlimited. New houses are going up all the time, in spite of the current economic situation. Family after family is moving into these two neighborhoods. The fields are ready unto harvest. Under such circumstances, we would expect both churches to be booming; however, this is hardly the case. One of these urban churches is experiencing great growth. It is alive, vibrant, and growing. The other church is struggling – struggling to even keep its head above waters. Here then is the 60 million dollar question: why such a drastic difference between two churches with identical potential filled fields?

Let us now consider the two rural churches. Neither on these churches have their buildings located on a main route. As a matter of fact, to get to one of their buildings you have to cross a small creek-bed. No houses or farms are within eyesight of either building. In short, both of these churches are situated far out in the country; thus, potential for growth is limited at best. Now, under these circumstances we would expect both churches to be struggling to even hold their own; however, this is hardly the case. O, one of these rural churches is floundering – showing little if any life, but, the other rural church, the one with the creek-bed to cross, is more than alive. It is showing growth in all areas!

So there you have it. Four “real life” churches illustrating the difference between churches who sell themselves to their area and churches who choose not to do so. Upon closer examination, the urban and rural churches that are experiencing growth, are two purpose filled congregations. They know why they are there and for what purpose they served – to *make disciples!* Because of this, they were selling the Lord’s Church in their area or to their communities.

Purpose: to examine the Biblical basis for selling this church to this area

I ATTENTION Must be Attracted

- other institutions do this – e.g. manufacturers, stores, colleges... use the radio, TV, displays, fliers, etc. all in an effort to raise attention.
- v 6 clearly shows the people had their attention *attracted*
- we must attract our area’s attention with our razor clear purposefulness = involves following:
 - A. By a Cordial Welcome
 - 1. No one is attracted to a place, a thing, or a person if there is a hint they are not welcomed!
 - 2. We ought to go out of our way to let guests and one another know we are delighted to see them.
 - note: guests will observe how they are received... AND how we receive each other...!
 - 3. Put aside shyness (thoughtlessness), take the step and introduce yourself... make people know they are welcomed to assemble in worship with us here!
 - B. By a Well Kept Building
 - 1. Church buildings reflect the attitude of the congregation (can show you prime examples of what I’m saying right around here)...
 - 2. An unkempt, disrepair building the community to one conclusion – we think the church really isn’t all that important of a matter in the community.
 - 3. Proper upkeep of a building shouts the following messages:
 - a. it shows our placement of importance behind our very existence as a local church...
 - b. it shows our concern to offer the best we are able to offer...
 - c. it gives the proper of example of our being trustworthy stewards of what God has blessed...
 - C. By Sound Preaching/Teaching
 - 1. People are naturally attracted to honesty, genuineness, and candor

2. Preaching/Teaching of God's Word done in such manner will draw the right kind attention!
3. Entertainment and ear-tickling preaching/teaching has no place in church wanting to sell herself to the community and area in which they are serving.

D. By Spirited Worship/Singing

1. Singing is a tremendous way we ALL can and should participate in worship together to God!
2. Songs (hymns, choruses etc.) that express our faith and commitment ought to ring forth from our lips with great zeal, heart and enthusiasm...
3. When this is done, guests who assemble... bros/sisters can't help but be encouraged...
4. O, how we need to lift our voices... instruments... in songs of praise and victory letting this area know of our faith, hope and commitment. Amen? Amen!!!

We could go on listing ways the early church attracted attention, but, be assured if we're going to sell the Church of Christ in Eaton, OH we're going to have to attract attention!

E. By Biblical Literacy

1. Knowing the Word of God is imperative, crucial, vital, essential, necessary, fundamental, indispensable, compulsory, needed, central, required, urgent, pressing, critical, significant, important, key, paramount, intrinsic, innate, inescapable, chief, preeminent, utmost, absolute, supreme, highest, obvious, evident, apparent, utmost in every person's need YET:
 - it is the most neglected priority in just about every local church.
2. Let me illustrate what I mean:
 - several years ago, Mary and I returned to Central Christian College of the Bible in Moberly, to take Adam to school. While there I visited with bro. Gareth Reese. Amongst the many classes I had under him, the book of Acts sticks out in my mind. I know the book of Acts today as well as I do because of Gareth Reese. In my visit with him – "...Students today aren't like when you came to school. Churches are simply not preparing students; so, as a result we have to back up and establish fundamentals..."
3. 2 Peter 3:3-7 (v 5) "*For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water...*"
 - KJV says "...willing ignorant
4. Romans 1:13; 1 Corinthians 10:1; 12:1; 2 Corinthians 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:13 – "*Now I would not have you unaware (ignorant) brethren...*" Brethren, I can't say it strongly enough, we must attract attention because we know and do the Word of God!

II INTEREST Must be Created

- "Spilled paint attracts attention but it doesn't create interest."
- such words as *amazed*, *confounded* and *marveled* are words used to describe the interest stirred by the first century church.
- proper interest such as this must be created by a faithful membership doing the following:

A. By Building One Another

1. Through faithful attendance:
 - we need to see one another at worship, study, service, fellowship etc... We need to do this to encourage one another in the Lord!
2. By faithful application of the Word of God the results are more than predictable:
 - a. gossip, quarrels and family feuds will be far less frequent...
 - b. we are to stir one another unto *love and good works* (Hebrews 10:24)... Nothing more fulfilling and encouraging than to see one another on fire for the Lord!

B. By Seeking the Lost

1. This is not the preacher's or the elders' job alone... all servants of the Most High God are called upon to go fishing, to go a far seeking the lost...

- Donald McGavaran “Our Lord went to the cross for the lost. Those who won’t go across the street for the lost can scarcely call themselves His disciples.”

2. Preachers and perhaps elders/shepherds/pastors are expected by the community to approach them... but, when more of the church’s people go seeking the lost, interest will be created!

Faithful and purposeful members create the needed interest in order to sell the church to her community!

C. By Preparing Future Leaders

1. The church family, visitors and the surrounding area ought to be attracted to this local church because of the EFFORT and EMPHASIS being put on future leaders.
2. Remember what was said to a young man who recently became a Christian? “Start NOW preparing to be a leader for the Lord in the future...”
3. Intentional and necessary steps must be taken NOW to create interest amongst our younger men present and those who will be present in the future... Ladies, younger and older must recognize the key role the Lord has given for you in this very matter...

III CONFIDENCE Must be Instilled

- notice the confidence of the early church... growth etc....
- leadership was a key then and is a key today.
- the community must be convinced *we mean business* – business in fulfilling our divine purpose!
- Such confidence must be instilled in the following ways:

A. By Committed People

1. This community/area must see that we are committed... not to OUR selves/church etc. ... but committed to nothing less than Christ and His Word (another reason why bring your Bibles)...
2. Already have mentioned this must begin with leaders – men who know purpose and leading to it!
3. This in no way excludes all matters, but this community must see NOTHING, absolutely nothing is more important to us than Biblical worship and service to Christ the King!

B. By Holy People

1. Our commitment must be backed up with Godly, righteous behavior or this community will not and cannot give their confidence; instead, the Lord and His Church will be yet another joke...
2. Talk is cheap... Our Lord makes this clear in Luke 6:46-49 “...many will say, Lord, Lord and do not what the Lord says...”
3. Again, your preacher and leaders must be *examples* – instilling/leading more to be more holy...
4. This naturally will result in confidence from the community/area in which we worship/serve...

We must have this confidence if we are going to sell the church to this community!,,,

C. By Biblical Leadership

1. Men who are intent/desirous of being *examples* rather than enthralled with the worldly concept of leadership being all wrapped up in what? -- *power*.
 - a. being a man of God, a Biblical leader is all about responsibility and NOT about power.
 - b. this is where the confidence is instilled -- Godly, compassionate servants and not worldly iron fisted tyrants.
2. God’s people are sickened and disappointed with worldly men trying to foist themselves off as leaders when all they do is emulate the world’s idea of leadership and continuously miss the mark in being Biblical Leaders. Show me true Biblical leaders and I’ll show you people who will follow out of sheer confidence!

IV NEEDS Must be Met

- Apostles on the day of Pentecost showed the people their great need AND the solution to that need
- this is a basic principle in sales – show the need... show the solution... sell the solution...
- our task as a local church is to show the following needs and how they can best be met:

- A. By the Church being Divine
 - 1. Community/area needs to be shown the church here is not a club, social gathering for goody-two-shoes, or an “ease your conscience for the week” society.
 - 2. Divine in purpose and pattern... -- the church is unlike any other institution on the face of earth!
- B. By the Church Supplying Man’s Greatest Need
 - 1. Physical needs were provided by the early church... we too have supplied physical needs here...
 - 2. Man’s greatest needs, however, are spiritual...
 - 3. The Church of our Lord ALONE can supply these needs!
- C. By the Church Giving the Best Opportunities
 - 1. No other organization does a greater work than the church...!
 - 2. I’m for walk-a-thones, heart association, MS society etc. all of which are good things, but, NONE of these come close to doing a greater work than the Lord’s Church!... deals with eternity!
 - 3. How we need to show this community/area we give the greatest opportunity to be involved with the greatest work ever!...

Conclusion: A survey was taken of salesmen and revealed the following: 48% of salesmen made 1 call and quit; 23% of salesmen made 2 calls and quit; 15% made 3 calls and quit; and 12% made calls and continued making calls until they were convinced the person would never buy their product. This 12% who kept calling did 80% of the business!

Do I have to make the application? The same holds true for the church here selling herself to the area and the community here!

Conclude with this riddle: How can you eat an egg without cracking the shell? The answer is: Have someone else crack it for you. Such illustrates the idea that many church people are great about wanting the benefits the Lord’s Church has to offer without sharing in the responsibilities and work. A lot of church people have a lot of great ideas as to what can be done but want others to incorporate those great ideas. The bottom line is this: If you are going to eat eggs you’re going to have to break some shells – i.e. you’re going to have to help your brothers and sisters in the Lord to sell the Church to her area!