

Date written: March 9, 1946

Scripture: Mark 1:16-18

Text: Mark 1:17

Theme: Individual Christians as evangelists.

Proposition: Individual Christians must be and can be evangelists for their faith.

Sources:

"Tidings," Vol. 8, No. 5, Feb. 1945, p. 5

A Complete Index to the Thought and Teachings of Jesus Christ,
W.S. Harris, Nashville, Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1939, p. 51

Places preached:

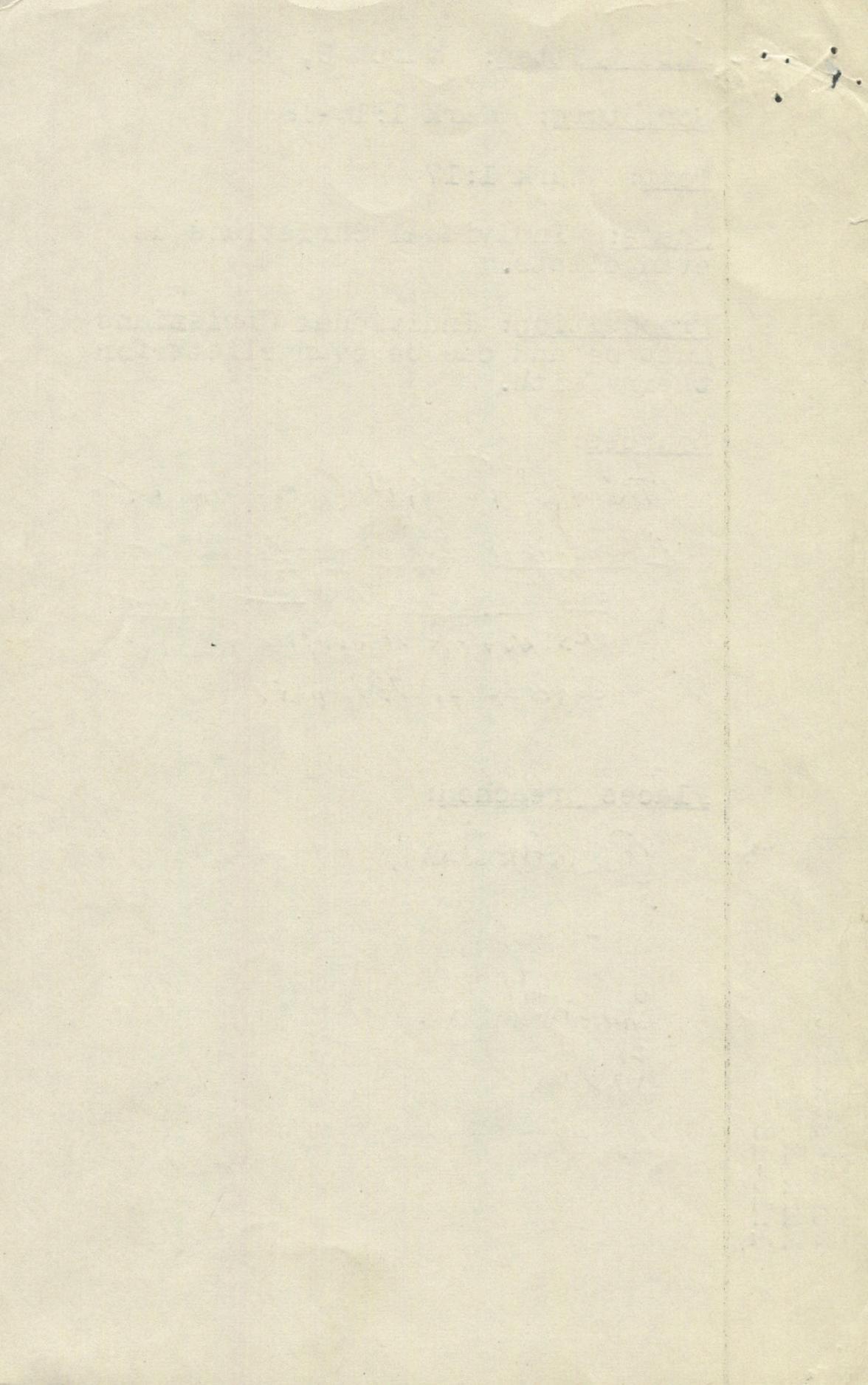
Pentecost } 3-10-46
Reedy Hall }

Epworth } 3-17-46
Salon }

Huntington } 4-11-46

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Sermons
New Testament
Mark 1
1:16-18



Scripture: Mark 1:16-18

Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

And straightway, they forsook their nets, and followed him.

Text: Mark 1:17

And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

Introduction:

1. Webster's Collegiate dictionary defines evangelism as "preaching or promulgation of the gospel."

2. Evangel, the word from which evangelism takes its name, is defined as "the message or news of man's redemption through Christ; good news or tidings."

3. In everyday parlance, it is true to these definitions to say that evangelism is the carrying of the good news of Christ's offer of redemption to those who know it not, and the persuasion of the unredeemed to accept the redemption of Christ.

4. An evangelist is one who evangelizes, or converts others to Christianity.

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I. Christ outlined what should be the vision and action of the evangelist.

outline
from
Harris,
p. 51

1. He should behold the fields white for harvest.

John 4:31-38:

In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?

Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Say not ye, There are yet four months and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

The fact that any of us are aware of the gift of salvation is because someone recognized that we were as the fields waiting to be harvested.

2. The evangelist should realize the abundance of the harvest.

Matthew 9:35:

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synago-

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gues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers unto his harvest.

Reliable statistics show that over 50% of the American population lay no claim to being religious at all, Christian or otherwise. Truly, the harvest is white for those entrusted with the gospel.

3. The Christian should realize the necessity of helping to harvest because laborers are few.

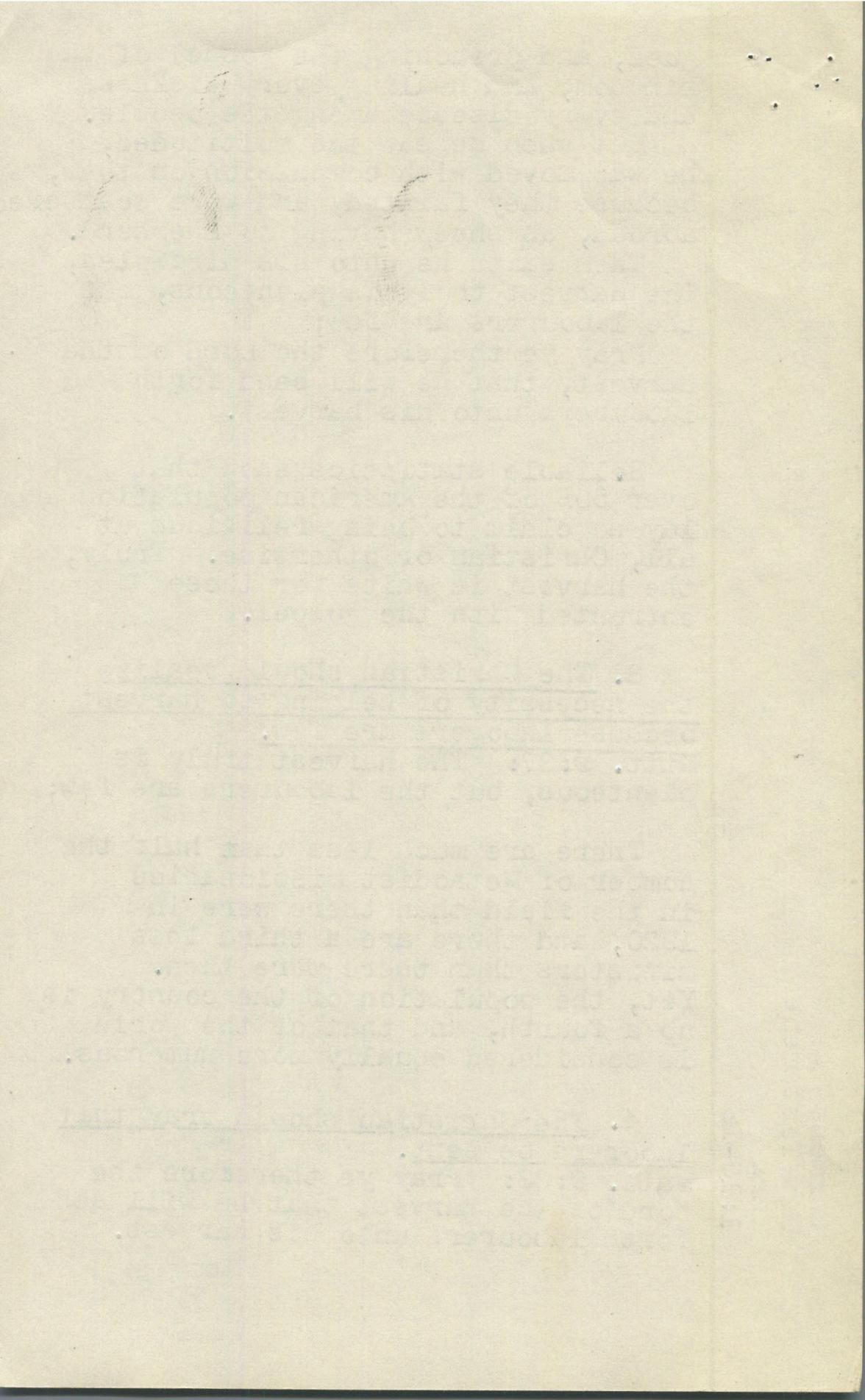
Matt. 9:37: The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

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There are much less than half the number of Methodist missionaries in the field than there were in 1920, and there are a third less ministers than there were then. Yet, the population of the country is up a fourth, and that of the world is considered equally more numerous.

4. The Christian should pray that laborers be sent.

Matt. 9:38: Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers unto his harvest.



q5. The Christian should go personally and immediately put in the sickle.

Mark 4:26-29:

So is the kingdom of heaven, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

The church stands for certain principles, and for a definite message. Many around us know and have considered those principles and that message. Yet we have often hesitated to "put in the sickle." We should "immediately put in the sickle," and bring these people to a recognition of their place in the Kingdom of Heaven if they will but put away their sins and profess Christ.

II. Individual Christians today must carry the message, the evangel to those who know it not. A newspaper headline that attracts attention is said to arouse certain questions in the reader's mind, so that the reporter is supposed to answer certain questions in the first paragraph of the article. Those questions are followed by a sixth in the remainder of the article. The questions are "Who?", "What?," "Why?," "When?," and "Where?," and the sixth question is "How?"

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6. These questions applied to present-day Christians are answered thus by the Methodist Church, in its evangelism by laymen effort in the Crusade for Christ.

From ↓
"Findings"
Feb. 1946
p. 5

1. Who? Someone describes sympathy as "two hearts tugging at the same load." Evangelism at its best is that kind of sympathy. For whom is the gospel intended? At the outset of his ministry Jesus named the persons who would find him tugging at their loads. (Luke 4:18.) Before declaring the message, let us prayerfully designate the persons around us for whom spiritual redemption is intended. We share Christian discoveries with persons we know, persons whom we do not hold in contempt. Who is the message to reach? That depends on how big our love is.

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2. What? Ours is a consequential message. We have what man and society need. Our generation hears God's voice because we speak his word in the language of our day. Our contemporaries know Jesus intimately as the one who can life them up because we exalt him. What is the message we have? What is the message given to the Church as its sacred trust? Is it a myth, a dream, a will-o-the-wisp, an opiate? Oh, no! It is reality, fact, truth, life. Our message is Jesus Christ -- son of God, redeemer of man!

3. Why? When tornado, fire, earthquake, or other catastrophe strikes, suddenly draggin hundreds and perhaps thousands to physical destruction, we become horror-stricken. We put a high

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These questions are listed on page
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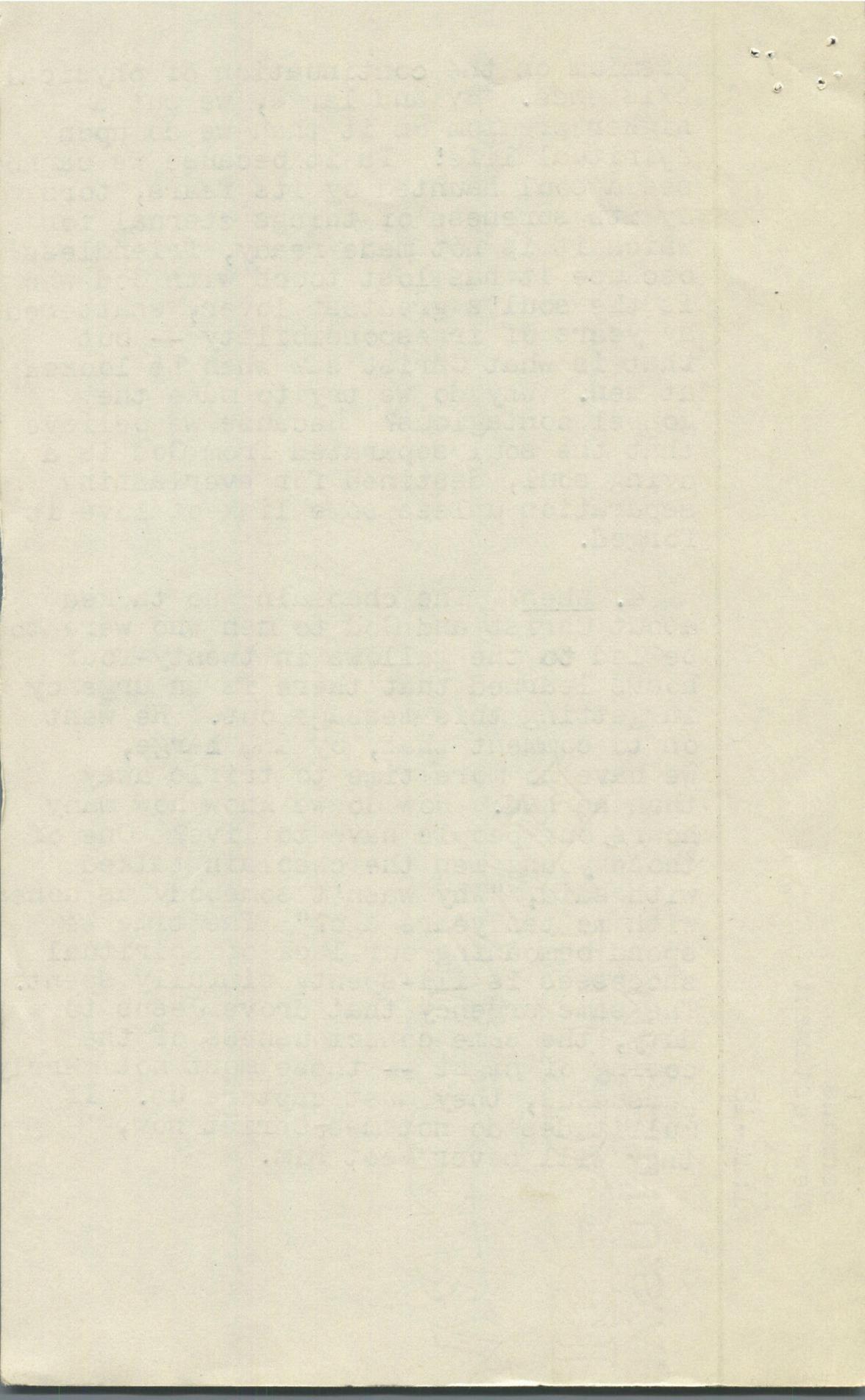
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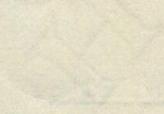
premium on the continuation of physical existence. By and large, we put a higher premium on it than we do upon spiritual life! Is it because we cannot see a soul haunted by its fears, torn by its sureness of things eternal for which it is not made ready, friendless because it has lost touch with God who is the soul's greatest lover, shattered by years of irresponsibility -- but that is what Christ saw when he looked at men. Why do we try to make the gospel contagious? Because we believe that the soul separated from God is a dying soul, destined for everlasting separation unless some link of love is forged.

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 4. When? The chaplain who talked about Christ and God to men who were to be led to the gallows in twenty-four hours learned that there is an urgency in getting this message out. He went on to comment that, by and large, we have no more time to trifle away than he had. How do we know how many hours our people have to live? One of those young men the chaplain talked with said, "Why wasn't somebody as honest with me ten years ago?" The time we spend bemoaning our lack of spiritual successes is ill-spent, sinfully spent. The same urgency that drove Jesus to duty, the same consciousness of the coming of night -- these must not merely pursue us, they must capture us. If multitudes do not meet Christ now, they will never meet him.



5. Where? Saints hold no monopoly on any community. In proportion, there are as many sinners among the up-and-outs as among the down-and-outs. Whoever has the gospel in his heart need not travel around the world to find a good place to start sharing that gospel. He can start usually in his own house, in his own circle of acquaintances, and -- if he gets ambitious enough, in the whole community and on out into the world. Sin is subtle. It takes on new guises. We talk little to our friends about the subject because we don't want to offend them. Then our silence is a sin. Evangelism begins wherever there is one heart tugging all alone at a load of sin! You'll find a host of folks like that -- right in your community!

6. How? We search the New Testament in vain to find a detailed procedure on getting results from the message. Jesus was careful at this point. He wanted a spirit-kingdom. His temples were not of brick and stone, but of human personality clothed in the righteousness of God. How does this happen? Jesus said he could give living water to whoever asked him for it! What we need is living water to quench the soul's thirst. How do we quench our physical thirst? By catching from the spring a cupful of refreshing water -- not merely to admire it, but to drink it! We have the water of life. We are thirsty. We need not stand admiring it. We need to lift it to our lips and let it bring refreshment to our



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9.
parched souls! When we have taken of that flowing stream, we know what it can do and we will want others to know, too. We can help them by showing them the spring, but each will have to drink for himself!¹/₂

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III. Each individual Christian can carry the evangel to others.

1. In our text Jesus personally, individually, called Simon and Andrew, saying "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." We know that these two men, and others whom he called in similar manner, were the first Christians and the earliest church; that from them and through them Christianity spread to all the world. Yet they were simple men.

2. Jesus sent the disciples and the seventy, and "sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come." These seventy were simple, ordinary people who had heard Jesus, and hearing believed in him.

3. Even likewise, today Jesus uses ordinary simple men to carry him and his message, as he said to the seventy: "as lambs among wolves."

a. The success of the great dist evangelical churches in the early days of this country illustrates this. Most of the preachers, who were responsible for the great growth of these churches, were simple, ordinary men with a deep faith.



THE HISTORY OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE UNITED STATES

1. The first part of the history of the United States is the period from the discovery of the continent by Christopher Columbus in 1492 to the establishment of the first permanent English colony in Virginia in 1607. This period is characterized by the gradual expansion of European settlement and the development of a distinct American identity.

2. The second part of the history is the period from the American Revolution in 1776 to the Civil War in 1865. This period is marked by the struggle for independence, the formation of a federal government, and the expansion of territory and population.

3. The third part of the history is the period from the Civil War to the present. This period is characterized by the Reconstruction era, the Gilded Age, the Progressive Era, and the modern era. It is a period of rapid change and growth, marked by the rise of industrialization and the emergence of a global superpower.

b. The success of recent laymen-visitation evangelistic efforts in the Methodist church in certain areas indicates that the ordinary, average church member can so exercise his faith that he can truly be an evangelist for that faith.

Conclusion:

Individual Christians must be and can be evangelists for their faith.

1. Christ's outline of the vision and the action of the evangelists indicates that he considered ordinary folk evangelists.

2. Human knowledge and experience of the Christian faith shows that a real burning of Christian faith within a person makes it imperative that he carry the evangel to all who need the gospel and will listen to his experience of it.

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3. Christ himself used ordinary men and women to spread his gospel to others.

4. Christ assures us that if we follow him, he will make us "fishers of men."

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