

“Finally, a book that both demystifies the ministry of evangelism and practically applies the ministry to the life of a local church! *The Soul-Winning Church* can help your fellowship develop the postures and practices necessary for faithful sharing of the gospel outside the building.”

JARED C. WILSON, Pastor for Preaching, Liberty Baptist Church, Liberty, Kansas City, MO; Assistant Professor of Pastoral Ministry, Midwestern Seminary; Author, *Gospel-Driven Ministry*

“Church life is busy, and church leaders have seemingly infinite demands placed upon their finite time and energy. Being told you need to shoehorn in yet another programme or make space for yet another course can be deflating. In *The Soul-Winning Church*, authors J.A. Medders and Doug Logan don’t hit us with another thing to bolt onto church life. Rather, they outline a sensible, achievable, and attractive process by which to cultivate a genuine evangelistic *culture* in a church community. Reading and applying this book to a local congregation would do a power of good.”

RORY SHINER, Senior Pastor, Providence City Church, Perth, Australia; Chair, The Gospel Coalition Australia Council; Author, *The World Next Door*

“Medders and Logan help churches, pastors, and ministry leaders consider how to build not just platforms for evangelism but a culture of evangelism in every aspect of the church’s ministry. In a time when partisanship and politics fill our pulpits and pews, it is time for the church to be renewed in one of her primary callings—winning souls for the person of Christ. I believe the church is on the cusp of renewal and revival, but that begins with creating a culture of evangelism, and this book is a great place from which to start.”

J.T. ENGLISH, Lead Pastor, Storyline Church, Arvada, CO; Author, *You Are a Theologian*

“This book isn’t pushing a program or a method. Instead, it is clearly pointing to the local church as God’s method for reaching the lost. *The Soul-Winning Church* is a great book, and I have no doubt it will be a great resource to many. Buy it, and buy some for your church too.”

MEZ MCCONNELL, Senior Pastor, Niddrie Community Church, Edinburgh, Scotland; Founder, 20Schemes

“I think this will become the key book on mobilising the local church for evangelism in the English-speaking Western world over the next ten years. It’s short (I read it in one sitting). It’s crystal clear on the essential stepping stones we need in place for an evangelistic culture in the church. It’s realistic about the difficulties as we seek to mobilise the church and individuals. And it’s clear that Christ is the treasure we hold out. The authors have spent decades getting their theology and practice clear—we need to take advantage of their hard-won wisdom.”

RICO TICE, Founder, Christianity Explored Ministries;
Author, *Honest Evangelism*

“For as long as I have known Doug and Jeff, they have shown a passion for reaching the least and the lost in their own communities. As faithful Christians in healthy churches, we are to work together to reach the unreached. When we do that, our church will be, by the grace of God, a soul-winning church.”

MATTHEW SPANDLER-DAVISON,
Ministry Director, Practical Shepherding

“North America and Europe are the two continents in the world where Christianity is declining. We desperately need existing churches and new church plants to experience a renewed passion to engage cities with the gospel and reach the unreached, and so I am so thankful for this book, which takes a deep dive into the word and will inspire a new generation of churches to join in Christ’s mission of seeking and saving the lost. I highly recommend this resource to anyone wanting to join in God’s activity of expanding his kingdom locally and globally!”

VANCE PITMAN, President, Send Network;
Founding Pastor, Hope Church, Las Vegas

“This book is not merely a manual on evangelism; it is a heartfelt plea to embrace our role as ambassadors of grace and agents of transformation. Whether you are a seasoned pastor or ministry leader or someone seeking to step out in faith for the first time, this book will inspire and empower you to make an eternal difference in the lives of those around you.”

DWAYNE R. BOND, Lead Pastor, Wellspring Church, Charlotte, NC;
Director of Pastoral Care at Acts 29

“I love the tone of this book! It’s hopeful, inspiring, and so practical. Evangelism can cause fear in the heart of every Christian, but this book provides motivation and joy, not guilt or shame. The biblical wisdom and tangible application offered on these pages will—if you let them—change your approach to evangelism, the culture in your church, and maybe even your city, if the Lord allows. May God use this book, and may he use us!”

JEN OSHMAN, Director of Women’s Ministry, Redemption Parker, CO; Author, *Cultural Counterfeits* and *Welcome*

“Every godly pastor and planter wants their church to have a genuine gospel-sharing culture that sees souls regularly being won for Jesus. But for some leaders, it seems like a pipe dream, or it’s an area that just doesn’t seem to get any traction or something that seems to drop down the priority list. It’s because of this reality that I am so thankful that Jeff and Doug have written *The Soul-Winning Church*. It’s clear, gracious, and challenging, and I would encourage every church leader to read it, adopt its principles, and lead their church in the wonderful privilege and honour of sharing Christ with those who are desperate for him.”

STEVE ROBINSON, Senior Pastor, Cornerstone Church, Liverpool; Dean, Grimké Seminary Europe; Author, *Serve*

“My childhood pastor used to say, ‘The first thing to get cold in your body is usually your feet.’ J.A. Medders and Doug Logan remind us that the mission of God belongs to the whole church. The Great Commission is not a special calling for a few ‘special forces’ in the church; it’s something he intends for all of us. *The Soul-Winning Church* shows us how to be a church that lives out that calling.”

J.D. GREEAR, Pastor, The Summit Church, Raleigh-Durham, NC; Author, *Essential Christianity* and *Above All*



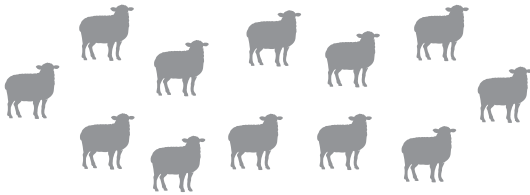
THE



SOUL-WINNING



CHURCH



J. A. Medders and Doug Logan, Jr.

the goodbook
COMPANY

The Soul-Winning Church:
Six Keys to Fostering a Genuine Evangelistic Culture
© 2024 J.A. Medders/Doug Logan, Jr.

Published by:
The Good Book Company



thegoodbook.com | thegoodbook.co.uk
thegoodbook.com.au | thegoodbook.co.nz | thegoodbook.co.in

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

All rights reserved. Except as may be permitted by the Copyright Act, no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission from the publisher.

J.A. Medders and Doug Logan, Jr. have asserted their right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 to be identified as authors of this work.

Cover design by FaceOut Studio | Art direction and design by André Parker

ISBN: 9781802541151 | JOB-007689 | Printed in India

“There is an evangelism that is genuine ... that means accepting Jesus Christ in reality and not in pretense—an evangelism that carries along with it a brotherhood, that so presents Jesus Christ that men see, and see plainly, what is involved in accepting him.”

Francis J. Grimké

This book is dedicated to:

Every church who wants to win souls for Christ.

Every pastor who wants see people born again.

Every Christian who wants to be a fisher of men.

CONTENTS

Foreword by Paul D. Tripp	11
Introduction	17
1 Where the Harvest Begins	
<i>Pray for Conversions</i>	25
2 Before You Say, “Go and Share Your Faith”	
<i>The Posture of an Evangelistic Church</i>	45
3 Salt and Light	
<i>Preparing for Conversions</i>	67
4 Telling People Jesus Is Awesome	
<i>Personal Evangelism</i>	83
5 Six Questions	
<i>Preaching and Teaching for Conversion</i>	101
6 The Beginning, Not the End	
<i>A Process for New Converts</i>	119
Conclusion	133
Putting the Principles into Practice: Some Case Studies	137
Appendices	165
Acknowledgments	171

FOREWORD

by Paul D. Tripp

I live in Center City, Philadelphia, between the Convention Center and the historical sites. Because of where we live, we encounter visitors every day who are trying to find their way around our great city. Even with their phones open to GPS, I often see people who, I can tell, are lost and confused. When I see such visitors, I approach them and ask, “Can I help you find something? I live near here and know the area well.” With a look of relief, these travelers most often say, “Oh, thank you! Could you direct us toward...?” I then provide them with a simple set of directions, and they go happily on their way.

If you encounter someone who is lost, you don’t look mockingly at them, walk away, or say judgmental things to (or about) them. If you know you can help but ignore them and walk the other way, something is wrong with you. If you’re too busy to offer them the help they need,

you're too busy. Lost people can't make themselves "un-lost." The very nature of being lost is that you're in a place where you need the intervention of someone who cares enough about your plight to help.

As I've walked the streets of my city, there is a passage that has come to mind again and again. These are the words of Jesus: "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). Jesus calls unbelieving, unregenerate people "lost." They don't know who they are, where they are, or where they are going. You and I encounter such people every single day of our lives. The people who stay geographically lost in Philadelphia will just have a bad day, but people who are spiritually lost, apart from the rescue of divine grace, will have an eternity in hell, forever separated from their Creator. How should you see and respond to the lost neighbors, servers, store clerks, bosses, fellow employees, and so on whom you are around daily? Consider Jesus. He wasn't passive, uncaring, or condemning. No, in the spirit of divine grace, he went looking for the lost.

How does God view the lost? I love how the biblical narrative clearly answers this question. Before the foundations of this world were set in place, God had a plan "to seek and to save the lost." Immediately after the sin of Adam and Eve, God announced his commitment to this "seek and save" plan. The bulk of what you read in your Bible is the story of how God harnessed the forces of nature, chose a people for his own, and

controlled the events of human history so that out of this chosen people a Messiah would come, and through his life, death, resurrection, and ascension, lost people would be found. But there is more. In the latter part of the biblical narrative, the people of God (that's you and me) are named as the Messiah's ambassadors (see 2 Corinthians 5:20). The only thing an ambassador ever does is faithfully represent the zeal and mission of the King who sent them. This means that God has strategically placed every Christian where they are, and every church where it is, to represent the Savior's message, methods, and character. So our lives don't actually belong to us to invest as we please. Because we are the children of God, we are ambassadors: that is, we have a higher calling than self-provision and personal happiness. Every one of us is called to be a caring, loving, active, gratitude-propelled lost-seeker. Every local church is called to build and sustain a culture of evangelism to the lost.

To be a seeker of the lost, we need to be prepared. What does that preparation look like? Preparation begins with the eyes of the heart. When you see your neighbors, fellow workers, relatives, and the people you walk by when you're out and about, what do you see? Yes, they are clerks, plumbers, Amazon delivery people, Starbucks baristas, aunts, uncles, and bosses, but they are so much more. Each person is a being made in the image of God and is either spiritually lost or has been found by grace. Wherever you are and whoever you're with, there is

a moral, spiritual drama being played out before you. Relating to the people around you is more than being polite, respectful, and nice. We are called to be seekers of the lost—that is, to constantly look for opportunities to share with people the dark story of sin and the glorious story of redeeming grace.

I must admit that what I have just described is not natural for me, as it may not be for many of us. I am a project-oriented person. I wake up every morning with an agenda and work hard and fast to accomplish what is in my plan. I tend to live head down, thinking, “I’ve got things to do,” blind to the people around me. So, if I am ever going to be a tool of redeeming grace in God’s hands, I need to go on being reminded of that grace. That grace is found in two of our Lord’s declarations: “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth” and “Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20). Your Lord rules every situation, location, and relationship where he calls you to be a seeker of the lost. Your Lord never sends you anywhere without going with you. He calls you, not because you have the wisdom, strength, and courage that you need but because he is present with you and offers you his inexhaustible grace, which is fully able to empower and transform you.

Do you live as an ambassador of redeeming grace, and is your church operating as an embassy of redeeming grace? If your answer is “No” or “Not consistently,” this book

is for you. If your answer is “Yes,” this book is still for you. Nothing I have read does a better job of describing what it means for a church to function (from preparation to discipleship) as an evangelistic, lost-people-loving, and lost-people-seeking community. As I read, I was convicted, encouraged, and motivated again and again, and I think you will be too.

Paul David Tripp
January 26, 2024

INTRODUCTION

Imagine a church where members are regularly praying for the conversion of their coworkers and friends.

Imagine a church's members sharing text messages with their small group about evangelistic conversations and asking for prayer.

Imagine a church's teenagers leading their friends to Christ.

Imagine a church having to change the regular order of the worship service because there are so many baptisms.

Imagine a church's membership class being filled with more new converts than new transfers.

Imagine that's your church.

We believe it could be.

That's why we wrote this book.

The Sheep Trade Market

During our years of being in the trenches with church planters and pastors—assessing, training, coaching, mentoring, and resourcing—we have noticed a hard-to-spot sign of unhealth in some churches. The reason it was hard to spot was that these were churches with growing numbers and great pictures on social media—churches that felt things were going well and that looked like they were doing well.

But when we got more detail on the growth, it became clear that most of the growth was transfer growth—Christians leaving one church to join another.

Now, of course there is nothing wrong with a church welcoming in Christians. Mature believers are a blessing to any church. But there is something wrong when a church is *mainly* growing through adding Christians from churches in the area. There is something wrong when a church is functionally content with transfer growth.

That's why we wrote this book. We want to refuse to be satisfied with the sheep trade market. Gaining members from a church down the street, swapping saints, and sharing the pie is not advancing the gospel. In Matthew 28, Jesus calls us to *make* disciples, not *move* them. We want to see a renewal of the missional drive and evangelistic culture in local churches, surrounded as we are by those who are lost without Christ.

We bet that, when you stop to think about it or when someone asks you about it, you want this too.

But we all know how an evangelistic emphasis so easily gets eclipsed in our lives and churches. A healthy local church is a hive of activity. There are a dozen things that need attention. Church leaders are inundated and preoccupied with good things like counseling, budgets, denominational required meetings, discipleship, staff management, and sermon preparation. We get it. We've been there. If church leaders aren't careful, good things—biblical things!—can slowly squeeze out the evangelistic nature of gospel ministry.

We wrote this book to encourage churches, young and old, to recover that evangelistic, soul-winning dimension of their ministry.

Soul-Winning › Evangeli-shame

Evangelism is one of those words that people—pastors, elders, church members—often find difficult to hear. We know we are called to do it, but we struggle to do it. Guilt, shame, and internal sighs of disappointment tend to well up when evangelism is brought up. So we want to introduce a phrase that communicates the same thing but in a refreshing way: *soul-winning*.

Soul-winning is an old word that sounds strange to our 21st-century ears. And it's this kind of strangeness that we need to rewire how we think of evangelism, of sharing and proclaiming the gospel. Evangelism, while a great word

that we will use regularly in this book, can come across as a duty, a have-to, a guilt-trip. The oddness of the term “soul-winning” makes us think about what we’re really talking about. We are not just reciting facts about an event that happened one weekend in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago so that we can check it off our mental to-do list and feel relieved that we got it done. *Soul-winning* reminds us of the spiritual, eternal, and supernatural elements at work in our evangelism. *Soul-winning* reminds of the ultimate longing of our evangelism—we want to see sinners won to Jesus. We want to see conversions.

Charles Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher of the 19th century, wrote a book called, *The Soul Winner: Or How to Lead Sinners to the Saviour*. He wrote this book to remind Christians—leaders and laypeople—of their calling to call sinners to look to Christ. “Soul-winning,” he wrote...

*is the chief business of the Christian minister; indeed, it should be the main pursuit of every true believer. We should each say with Simon Peter, “I go afishing,” and with Paul our aim should be, “That I might by all means save some.”*¹

Salvation of sinners is the essence of the work. Soul-winning, like fishing, is the kingdom work of casting the net of the gospel message, through a variety of

1 C.H. Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner: How to Lead Sinners to the Saviour* (Fleming H. Revell, 1895), p 9.

preparations and ways, and seeing who the Lord Jesus draws in.

A Church Culture All about Conversions to Christ

While Spurgeon wrote mainly about personal efforts in winning souls to Christ, we want to talk about *churches* that are committed to the cause and effects of sharing the gospel. *The Soul-Winning Church* is about seeing the whole church culture, not just a handful of leaders and members, committed to seeing people born again. We want to see churches become soul-winning churches.

Maybe your church has tried from time to time to have a fresh emphasis on evangelism. You've made it a common application in your sermons. You've run a Sunday school or midweek course on it. You've held some events for members to invite nonbelieving friends to hear the gospel. But evangelism still isn't getting the traction you had hoped. We'd encourage you to look broader in terms of all your church is, and deeper in your view of discipleship, and longer-term in what you're aiming for.

From our time around the world and around the block, we see six areas that are essential for being a soul-winning, evangelistic church. We believe God can use these keys to foster a culture of evangelism and conversion. A soul-winning church, under the power of God, will be operating in these six areas:



Each key isn't all that groundbreaking. And that's good news. But in our experience a church will tend to be mindful of one or two areas, but not all six. The churches that are paying attention to and active in all six tend to see a lot of fruit. Because these are the silver bullet? No. Because these are the supernatural operations God uses.

So we hope that in these chapters, you may find a new way to do an old thing. You might find that a simple encouragement or a case study from another church at the end of the book changes how your church spreads the

gospel. We hope that you will find new angles, thoughts, and practices for sharing the good news in your context. The principles of our book can be applied to any church—mega or small, new plant or historic. What we lay out in these pages can be applied to church in North America or New Delhi and can be used across the whole of a church—including various ministries in the church (kids, students, retired people, and so on).

For a culture like this to take root and spread, we recommend reading this book with a group. You can organize a reading and discussion time with the whole staff team or church leadership and maybe add a few committed church members. Reading together helps set a shared vision, prompt great discussion, and make sure that things actually happen. We've all read books on a certain aspect of church life or ministry which we underlined, and we enjoyed what we read but kept doing what we were already doing. Invite a number of people into learning, processing, and sharing the burden of the church becoming evangelistic.

Our Prayer for Your Church

Our prayer for this little book is that it would have a reviving, inspiring, renewing, and missional effect on our churches. We are praying for God to do a profound work in your church that will reach generations of families in your community. We are praying that this book will not serve as a rebuke or a reminder of past evangelism dereliction. No, we want it to be an invigorating guide

that helps foster a new culture in your entire church, so that evangelizing your community is central to your church's existence and every member's life, not merely an add-on or an option.

Imagine a church where the miracle of people coming to Christ is the norm, not the exception. Where space is at a premium and chairs are running short. Where gospel-sharing is a positive, joyful part of the culture—simply a part of what the church does, and loves doing.

It could be your church. It really could.

And it all begins with prayer to the God who saves.