

## The Value of a Soul #19

### Do Not Be Discouraged

How easy it would be to become discouraged about the prospects for successful evangelism in today's cultural climate! Church growth has been slow or static for some time now. Our nation is well into a "post Christian" mentality.

At first sight, evangelism might seem futile. We might be inclined to throw up our hands, retreat into our church buildings, and proclaim "What's the use?" "Nobody is interested anymore!" "It's a waste of time." "It won't work!" Before we become too despondent, however, let me suggest three considerations which indicate that the situation may not be so bleak.

First, we should note that the more a society degenerates, the more it needs the gospel; and the greater becomes our responsibility to fulfill that need. The gospel is still the only antidote for the ills of the world. The gospel is still the power of God for salvation (Rom. 1:16). In a day like today the church should not back-off. Rather, in the face of an increased need, it should rise all the more to the evangelistic challenge.

Second, we should be encouraged in meeting that challenge by recognizing that decadent nations have been changed by the gospel before. It would be difficult to find a more reprobate society than the one described by Paul in Romans 1:21-32. All the hallmarks of corruption and immorality are there, and yet many of that wayward generation became Christians, and that society was vastly influenced for good by the gospel. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Paul said: "...do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."

Third, people today still have the same spiritual needs that are characteristic of all mankind through the ages. In fact, some of these needs have actually been exacerbated by the spiritual deprivation noted earlier. Many in our nation are suffering emotionally, spiritually, and psychologically. They have been scarred by the battering of a permissive culture. They are ensnared by the ravages of drug abuse, divorce, sexual promiscuity and perversion, and the perverted values depicted in the media.

There is a whole generation of lost souls out there wallowing in a profound spiritual vacuum. They need a relationship with God. They are looking for peace of mind, love, joy, hope, genuine values, a cause really worth giving their lives for, participation with a loving and accepting fellowship, moral and emotional support, stability in their lives, and an apprehension of the real truth.

This is the generation which we have been called to minister. These are the ones from whom growth will come—if we take the initiative.

Just as the market would be wide-open to a seller of food in a famine, so the opportunities for the church in a society such as this are literally without limit. If this is not an open door for the church, then I don't know what would be.

We have what these lost souls so desperately need. Let's go and minister to them.