

Evangelism and the Reformed Faith

by **Jefferson G. Duckett**

We will consider this subject under three general topics. First of all, some built-in hindrances in the contemporary Reformed Church. Secondly, the Arminian advantage (or the Arminian apparent advantage), over the Calvinist in evangelism, and thirdly, we will discuss two plans of evangelism that work.

Anti-Christian humanism trades in the souls of men. Wise and prudent servants of God are also to trade in the souls of men for entirely opposite reasons. Humanism seeks to save souls through social reform, while those who are servants of God seek to save souls for the glory of God. To this end we use all lawful means through expert teaching and prudence. The Bible is replete with the concept that soul-winning is a wise use of our resources as Christians. However, there are at least three built-in hindrances within the contemporary, organized, Reformed church.

Calvinism's Hindrances

One hindrance concerns pressures within the Christian community. As we in Reformed churches move toward a (hopefully) common goal, a goal that is often unpopular throughout the community, we realize that we are not held in high esteem by other Christians. Also, we uncover old truths within our ranks. As a result of this position in the community and in the church, we often get in a lockstep because we do not want to offend unnecessarily other Reformed Christians, and we do want to keep up doctrinally in our new-found faith.

As we advance in our ranks, we take side-glances to see if we are in step with those around us, if our swords are properly aligned, if there is a correct and proper interval between ranks, and if we are marching together, completely in step. Our objective narrows from a world-and-life application of the Christian faith, from extending God's Kingdom, and from an evangelistic emphasis that identified our early experience, to an immediate, but narrow, objective of pleasing peers and being doctrinally pure, or doctrinally clever. We want to be assured that we can stand inspection within our group and almost stand inspection by other Christians on the outside of our group.

The well-equipped French (poilu) soldier was considered the flower of soldiery while taking his position inside the Maginot Line. Inside those fortifications he had no one to measure himself by but his peers and his environment. This

hindrance is easily built into our ranks. We become so entrenched in our desire to defend the faith that we forget how battles are won. We fail to close with the enemy or even test his willingness to do combat. Although we need constantly to defend our faith and to improve our apologetic position, we need to realize that apologetics represents our defenses. We need to advance. We need to evangelize against the humanism of this day, or we will be overrun in our own defenses.

A second hindrance to evangelism follows in the wake of the first. We often feel that it is our required duty to address issues of such magnitude that our troops are never ready for the good fight of faith. Back in the fifties I had an interest in the American Council of Christian Churches. The old-timers were in complete charge, and were thorough in tracing the apostasy beyond Bishop Oxnham, down to the present, at times predicting a defeatist future. Speakers always were handy to fill in the details of the apostasy. Attending those meetings were hundreds of young people who were ready to do battle for our faith, for our cause. But instead of battle lines being drawn, the emphasis was always on educating us about the enemy. We needed to send out our troops to infiltrate his army and make the kind of progress that angels in heaven rejoice to see—the progress of turning men and women to righteousness, the righteousness that is in Christ Jesus. Instead, our ranks became thinner. The young people gave up and quit because they were either tired, bored, or ready to defect to the enemy. In other words, young people were not encouraged to advance our cause. Too much teaching had destroyed their readiness and willingness to do battle.

We need another dimension in our warfare besides apologetics and education. We need a heart and a desire to evangelize. Calvinism demands a balanced warfare. History teaches how Calvin's school, or academy, in Geneva raised up men of the Word, and these men were sent into many, many countries. I believe there were as many as nine hundred young men trained to evangelize. So eager were they to carry the Bible message to other countries that the King of France himself complained that too many were being sent into his country from the Geneva school.

A third hindrance follows in the wake of the two just cited. The first hindrance that I mentioned is our tendency to measure our success within our own ranks. The second one is to limit ourselves to an intellectual defense of the faith. Now, thirdly, it is easy for us to be taken up with the exotic, or some exotic, doctrine.

During the first five years of my ministry, I listened to every able preacher I could hear. It is embarrassing now to confess that I aped not a few of them. I always became obsessed with “new truth,” the “deeper life,” the pulpit mannerism, and a host of trivia that had not really contributed to the ministry of these fine examples. I did not give myself over to the strong and broad and able exposition of the Scriptures that characterized the men I sought to emulate, but rather, I adopted their accents, or their mannerisms, or their sympathies for some new scheme or some exotic missionary effort in faraway Timbuktu. Sad indeed is this tendency reflected today in the contemporary Reformed Church. One church makes a fetish out of certain apparel. Another emphasizes some minor doctrine, and even if that emphasis is not actively taught, the casual conversation concerning that doctrine dominates the atmosphere when several like-minded Calvinists get together. Leave it to us, if Knox, Calvin, Luther, Beza, and Farel had mentioned something exotic to emphasize or imply, we would find it out, and it would run its course through our ranks.

Please excuse this homely illustration, because it is only an illustration. Before I became well-known in a certain public school district, I was placed on a committee to recommend Social Studies texts for the coming year. Now if there is anything I dislike, it is Social Studies. I like Geography and History, but Social Studies implies management of people. After the presentation of one company, the argument went something like this. The blacks declared that the book under examination contained too much history and too little to favor them. The Mexican-Americans who were present wanted to remove certain portions because their culture was at stake and in jeopardy. There were some Japanese teachers present who objected because it did not give place to the concentration camps of World War II where Japanese were held during the war. And so it went. Every ethnic group had its say, and everyone “got in his shot.” Finally, I had to speak up, and this is what I said: “I object to the book because not enough credit is given to the religion of the Founding Fathers. And, I object because I am among the least of the minorities in America.” Well, everyone looked dumbfounded except a Chinese lady whom I’d known in several classes and who had a good sense of humor. She smiled in anticipation of what was to follow. I continued, “You see, my race is only one-sixth of the world’s peoples—the white race. There are more Islamics than Christians in the world, and I’m a Christian. But there are more Catholics than Protestants among the Christians, and I’m a Protestant. And there are more Protestants who have never read the Scriptures than those who read them regularly, and I read them regularly and believe them. Then, there are more Bible-believing Arminians within the ranks of Protestants than Calvinists, and I’m a Calvinist. As a matter of fact, only about one professing Bible-believing Christian out of

perhaps a thousand is truly Calvinistic in his interpretation of the Scriptures. The people who first settled in the thirteen colonies were Calvinists, and your book doesn't throw me and my ethnic group one bone on which to gnaw." Well, the result was that the entire group walked out of the room and left the book salesman and me all painted into a nice little corner. The Chinese lady on departing, turned to me, smiled, and said, "You know, I knew we had a whole lot in common." It is sad, but true, that we Calvinists are often found painting ourselves into a corner. What was done at the book fair should never be done as a missionary effort in a church.

The exotic. Instead of becoming missionary-minded, we are apt to place a great abyss between ourselves and those we seek to win to our cause. The story above that I cited is true; and it is given to illustrate the fact that there is enough challenge in one acronym, TULIP—T-U-L-I-P—to place us beyond most people whom we seek to win for Christ. Why dwell in issues until only a small group occupies our corner? It doesn't make sense. Place apologetics in its rightful place. Don't stagnate on endless teaching. Take action. Be a soul-winner. Don't let the exotic widen the gulf between you and broad Calvinistic goals. I am speaking here, not about church polity or public preaching, but about initial contacts with the unconverted.

Arminianism's Advantages

Now let us discuss evangelism and the apparent Arminian advantage. Space will not permit me to do any expositional work on various passages of Scripture, but Matthew 18:1–14 would contribute greatly to our message. The Arminian has an apparent advantage over the Calvinist for several reasons. He knows how to attract people to his proposition. The Bible teaches that a soul-winner is wise, and those who turn men to righteousness shall occupy a goodly place for ever and ever. As good soldiers of our Lord, we ought to recognize the several strong emplacements of the Arminian establishment, or Arminian Church. It is an oversimplification, but the following beliefs or practices characterize the Arminian Church.

First of all, the Arminian has a good, simplified knowledge of the Bible. We perhaps should say, the Arminians are strong in the Bible superficially. They are very weak in catechisms, history, and confessions of faith. The average member, however, can find a reference in the Scriptures as quickly as anyone. He has learned verses of Scripture, not passages or chapters, or context, but given a reference, he will find it readily.

Secondly, the Arminian has a simplified doctrinal position. He believes in eternal retribution. He believes that heaven is real. Many believe in the eternal security of the believer. He believes that to win souls for Christ is his job at whatever cost and by using whatever means may be available. He also believes that the second coming of Christ is imminent. Whether he believes that or not, he talks it—all the time.

Thirdly, he has confidence that he is able, and he does practice his doctrinal position with fervor. His zeal is to be admired.

These three points are characteristic of the Arminian belief. We should not for one instant suggest or imply that the typical pastor of an Arminian church does not teach other doctrines because there is an emphasis on the duty of the Christian, the Deity of Christ, the bodily resurrection, and almost all of the cardinal doctrines. However, the Arminian pastor weaves into almost every sermon a measure of soul-winning, an exhortation to win souls and second coming. Stated plainly, as a former pastor in a large Arminian denomination, I never thought of delivering a message that did not make it plain that I believed in the Blood Atonement, the Second Coming, and that souls were in danger of neglecting so great salvation.

What is wrong with such a message? Actually, what I was saying every time I preached was this: the starting point of Christianity, or the starting point of the Christian life, that is, salvation by grace through faith in Christ, is the chief end of Christianity. Secondly, the return of Christ is not only sure and certain, but imminent. Third, between these two mammoth doctrines, Christians were exhorted to provide a “fire escape” for loved ones and acquaintances by witnessing for Christ. All of these three points were humanistically oriented. God’s glory was incidental to the mind of the listener. In other words, he was concerned with the souls of others, but concerned for the glory of delivering them from hell. He was not concerned primarily for God’s glory. However, I hasten to repeat that this description is one-sided, and does not describe the godly pastor who seeks to encourage a more exhaustive approach to the ministry. I am describing what I taught, and what I know many Arminian pastors still teach.

Now, what does this mean? It means that the Calvinist, who has taken years to arrive at his fortifications, may find that his weaponry is at an apparent disadvantage, so far as the attack is concerned. Our weaponry is too cumbersome. It is too involved. It is too heavy. It is too complex to operate in taking ground. The Arminian brother is equipped with light and maneuverable weaponry. Although his weapons are not as awesome as the Calvinist’s, more

people see his formations, and more people experience his attack skills. More people join his army. If we refuse to recognize these things, we are never going to win many others. We are never going to evangelize successfully.

Furthermore, the new convert in many Arminian churches is initiated into a very simple program for advancing the Christian faith. This program consists chiefly of two parts: he is put to work in the church, and he is brought under the influence of those who have a desire to evangelize. He is given a job in the church, and he is told to go out and win people to Christ. It is that simple. This strategy, by the way, is also used by the Communists. So virtually every member as well as the new convert to the faith become soldiers who read their Bibles, have jobs, witness to the lost, talk about the “Rapture,” and deeply believe that they should love everybody (except Calvinists).

The Arminian has the apparent advantage over contemporary Reformed people when it comes to evangelism—when it comes to winning people to his cause. He is often indifferent to all but a handful of Bible teachings, but these he presents well because he believes that he understands them. Instead of recognizing that the Arminian often does more with his limitations than we do with our advantages, we too frequently attempt to sharpen our swords with passages misinterpreted by the Arminian. Almost every convert we have to Calvinism came out of an Arminian church, but he came out of that church after long years of weighing controversial Scriptures, or issues.

By the way, how long did it take you to find out these things? How long did it take me to find out these things? I was fifteen years preaching in an Arminian church before I became thoroughly Calvinistic. Actually, the best source for converts to Calvinism today is the Arminian church as described above, with its evangelistic emphasis. Now let us not fool ourselves. We do not proselytize the Arabs; we do not proselytize the Moslems; we do not proselytize anybody but people who have nominal Christian backgrounds. Therefore, if we fail to win souls in the United States—if we cannot evangelize successfully in the United States—we cannot expect to evangelize anywhere in this world.

A good source for converts is often the Pentecostal-type church. In one Baptist church, I baptized nineteen former Pentecostals in one evening, and I had two deacons who were angry because they said that I was bringing “garbage” into the church. Let me tell you something. They were not “garbage” to start with, and they were not Pentecostals when they were baptized! Neither were they thoroughgoing Calvinists. We need to understand that it takes years of study and teaching to change a person who is humanistically oriented into one who has a broad world-and-life view of Calvinism.

Remember this: the Arminian brother has not learned passages of Scripture, but he has memorized verses of Scripture. He can outdo the Navigators, and he will find the verse of Scripture in his Bible before the average minister will find it in his Bible. What the context and the pattern of the Scriptures teach is less important to him than what one verse or part of one verse means to him. One or two confrontations will not change his view. Let's look at First Timothy, chapter 2, verse 4: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." If you think that you are going to take that away from him in one or two sessions, you are mistaken. He has a verse, but no context. Let me illustrate, using 1 Tim. 2:4. The same word that is used for "men" here is the word that is used throughout the Scriptures for men. It is not an italicized word. It actually appears in that verse of Scripture. The Arminian is unable to see that his impression of this verse would make a better case for universal redemption, because universal redemption is no problem with him. He doesn't even know people who teach universal redemption. Back in the early 1900s, quite a few pulpits were given over to the heresy of universal redemption, but your Arminian brother has never been exposed to that sort of teaching. He has a verse, but no adequate theological context. As far as our strategy is concerned, it would be useless initially to attempt to argue away his understanding of the meaning of this verse by pointing to the error of universal redemption. He believes that this verse of Scripture teaches that God is doing His best to save every man without exception, and he believes that it is his job to get out there and win every man to his cause. So, if we are not wise, we will lose those we seek to win. Let us be assured that whatever we say to the contemporary Arminian, he has a verse of Scripture which he believes applies. The context means very little to him, and to teach him one verse exhaustively at one or two meetings is impossible, because you cannot hold his attention for that span of time.

A general may know volumes about deploying his army and destroying the enemy and yet be deficient in the handling of the weapons of the infantryman. If the handling of weapons by the general decided the outcome of the battle, the cause would never be advanced, and the tide of battle would never be turned. Likewise, it is true when we seek to win people to Christ: we do not need to go to them with an exhaustive teaching of the whole Word of God. We simply need to be obedient and go.

Let me qualify myself. Because the Arminian has an oversimplified knowledge of the Scriptures, because he believes and practices some truths and half-truths, because he is confident in his doctrinal position, and because, chiefly, he does seek to win people to Christ, he enjoys success in evangelism. Now it may be a facade, and it may all be outward, but it cannot be denied that he is

successful in attracting people. I make no comment as to the quality of his work, only the fact that most of the Bible-affirming churches in America today are Arminian-oriented churches, chiefly because people win people, by God's grace.

On the other hand, we often feel that we must either correct all of our own errors institutionally, or feed our own egos sufficiently, before we become successful in evangelism. That is not so. Amid all the strife that you can find in an Arminian church, the warp and woof of the membership, including the leaders and the minister of that church, believe that the church has at least one chief mission. That mission is to win people to Christ. They all agree on that. They may fight over other issues, but they all agree on the church's mission.

We may say then that the Arminian operates out of a more favorable climate for evangelism. He is constantly buying time to evangelize, and even though his church may be rent with strife, all the membership of the church agree that a live church is a church that does evangelize. If you do not believe me, you can attend some of these churches, and you will find out that winning people to Christ is an emphasis that we might well adopt.

Plans for Successful Evangelism

The third broad view that I want to present consists of two plans to evangelize. They work. It seems that sometimes when we advance in the Christian faith, especially in doctrinal precision, we forget some of the fundamentals and some of the necessary elements of the Christian faith. We forget that evangelism is very important, not only in the Christian faith, but it is important so far as any conviction is concerned. We must win others to our cause, or we dry up.

I am not going to take a text for this message, but I want to refer to the Book of Ephesians, and particularly two verses, 15 and 16 of chapter five. "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Every activity with which we concern ourselves, or every activity that concerns us, ought to be consistent with the Scriptures. The two verses that I lifted from Ephesians, chapter five, almost seem remote to evangelism when considered within the context. But a careful examination of this chapter shows that it treats the Christian's life and duties as a whole. The chapter includes exhortations to love, to be discreet, wise, and to use our time with wisdom and our talents in dependence upon the Holy Spirit. We are to lay aside folly and to pursue wisdom. All these concepts are found in

Ephesians 5:1–20. They argue against foolishness and place wisdom at the door.

In verses five through sixteen, we find that we ought to walk circumspectly, not as the world walks. We are to walk accurately, exactly in the right way, and to walk diligently. We must not be fools, seeking adventure, with no understanding of our duties or the worth of our souls. We must, of course, be taught of God, endowed with wisdom. When we walk in this manner, we are buying up opportunities to trade in the marketplace of this world. We improve our circumstances as wise in the marketplace. We make the best use of the seasons of grace, and we understand more accurately the will of God. We are to walk circumspectly in the world, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time. We should buy up opportunities because the days in which we live are evil.

This is all general and applicable to any Christian mission, and I do not strain the Scriptures to teach that it applies to evangelism as well. Evangelism is a mission of the Church. The pastor is charged to perform the work of an evangelist. The present condition of our many fundamental churches may be illustrated by a case that actually happened in my early ministry. I was struggling in a small mission. One Sunday morning, a family visited the mission service, and after the service, they indicated that they would like to join or be identified with our work. Their reason? “Our pastor is no longer concerned with soul winning.” I knew their pastor quite well. Later in the week I happened to meet him, and he asked if a certain family had been present in my service. On learning that they had, he said, “They like hell-fire and brimstone sermons, brother, because they figure they’re saved. Such sermons leave them asleep in Zion, and that’s wherethey want to rest.” This family abandoned the broad concepts of a world-and-life view of Christianity, and had narrowed Christianity down to the one mission, that of soul-winning, or soul-saving. That family decided that it was a waste of time to be instructed by expositional preaching. Nothing mattered but getting people in the aisle—plucking brands from the burning. That was their philosophy of Christianity. That used to be the philosophy of many of us, but sometimes I am afraid that we have been delivered, too much so, from this philosophy. Remember, we dare not surrender that which is good, just because others overuse it.

Face-to-face evangelism is a very effective form of evangelism. There are people who are won through the ministry of those who live quiet and godly lives, and who are not gifted in oral communication. There are those who are won to Christ by another person’s being used as instrument. Some young person may invite them to a Bible study, or even to church. There are others

who are won by those who are gifted and wise enough to listen over a span of time, before talking about the Bible. There are those who are gifted and patient enough to go out into the neighborhood and start a Bible study for nominal Christians and interested sinners, and stick to a simple expositional teaching that invites questions. Listeners may need simple instruction before they are ready for hell-fire sermons. It does no good to apply the whip to a starved team. The burden-carriers need food and water before the whip will move them. They need instruction. No soul elected of God in eternity will miss heaven. We want to be instruments of God fitted to look upon the fields ready for harvest, and missionaries who participate in that harvest.

I hasten to say that few have been less successful than I when my messages were chiefly slanted to “drawing in the net.” But years ago, God placed in my hands two simple and sane methods that have been most rewarding. Before I describe these two methods, I want to assure you that one method resulted through my observation, and one resulted from my desire to see the church evangelize, but without offending all the friends and all the relatives and all the loved ones of those who attended the church. I do not mean that there is no place for a prophet to speak. Certainly, men should be raised up who have the ear of the public and can sound forth an alarm from the steps of the Capitol in Washington, D. C. We should see men raised up who can warn America. But I am talking now about the local and indigenous church. I am talking about building up the local church. And, by the way, that is a ministry in which you are not too big to share. Are you greater than Farel? Are you greater than the Reformers? They all had a desire to evangelize and build the local church.

In 1951, I became a member of a church which was unique in my experience. You had to arrive fifteen to thirty minutes before the service if you wanted a seat with a view unobscured by columns and other obstructions. The minister was a rather average person in appearance; he did not have what the world would be pleased to define as “charisma.” His messages were easily understood. They were expositional and never sensational. Almost every month, twenty to thirty people were added to the church rolls through baptism or profession of faith. What was the program behind this remarkable ministry? This church, even at that time, was a very large church, and it had members conducting over seventy-five Bible classes each week throughout the community. These classes were sponsored by several families meeting in their homes. The families would go out into the neighborhood and invite nominal Christians, friends, acquaintances, and loved ones to their homes for Bible study. These studies were not sensational, just simple verse-by-verse studies led by an able teacher who was wise enough to avoid controversy. There was

no fan-fare and no name-dropping. Only a quiet and unpretentious confidence in the ministry of their church was manifest. When those who attended became more interested, they were invited by the sponsoring families to visit their church and hear their minister. All the time the Bible class was being taught, the sponsors referred to the minister as an able, wise, and understanding person.

I have seen this method work for me in a small church where the membership conducted fewer than five Bible studies each week. It works because family efforts to build up the church is a motivating program that overshadows egos, teaching techniques, training programs, and efforts to place people under some renowned evangelist. In one place, I refused to curtail my church activities, declining to become part of a city-wide evangelistic campaign. At the end of two weeks of campaigning, where a well-known evangelist was holding forth, our church had more new members than all the churches combined that had participated in the campaign. Our method proved to be the better way to reach people for Christ and teach them over a period of time. (The last report I had on the evangelist was that he was renting theaters for counseling sessions.)

The second method is more personal. Earlier I mentioned that the Arminian has an apparent advantage over the Calvinist, but now I want to qualify this advantage. He has an advantage over us only when we practice his techniques and are motivated by his philosophy. We have the advantage when we adopt several presuppositions. (1) We are probably only one instrument used of God to reach an individual. (2) God has used many other instruments to influence this individual in the past. Many people of God have probably dealt with the individual that you and I seek to win. Some have dealt with him directly; some have prayed for him, dealing with him indirectly. I have never seen a person converted to the Christian faith in any church who did not have someone or some relative praying for his conversion. So if we take the position that we're just instruments of God, and only one of many instruments, we are already cushioned against any apparent failure. (3) We are missionaries. We are not called of God to throw down a threatening proclamation in the pathway of those whom we seek to influence. We are out to win people to our position. That is what I mean by soul-winning. We are there to win the person. We are not there to turn him against ourselves, or turn him against his own friends. When we meet with no apparent success, we must remember that this person can either help us meet others or hinder us in our mission to evangelize.

There are other points, but any person who is interested will be able to fill in those to meet his own circumstances. Out in the world we meet people. We

influence friends on the job. We influence friends who make up car pools. We influence friends who are tradespeople. We influence many with whom we deal. Chances are that almost all of the people that we meet have some reason or reasons for not being interested in our God and His Son. When the conversation turns to religion, or when we can, without offense, turn the conversation to religion, we do just that. But we always avoid “in-depth” discussions. (“In-depth” is an overworked term borrowed from the teaching profession.).

Only a fool divulges his whole mind. (Pr. 12:23). The person you seek to influence does not need to know how you stand on everything. He does not need to know your philosophical orientation on everything. He does not need to find out that you are a walking encyclopedia of the Bible. Let the person express his religious feelings. There is no need to rebuke ignorance. There is often reason to rebuke those who are blasphemous, but the conversation usually is wide of blasphemy. I can only recall a couple of instances when dealing with people that I have had to caution them against blasphemy. Show a genuine interest in the person. You are not running up to some stranger on the street corner to deposit a tract in his hand, or pin a button on him, and then get lost in the crowd. This person you see frequently, weekly or daily. There are always those people with whom you come in contact who show but little interest. If there is but little interest, be satisfied to be one of God’s instruments, and let someone else be used of God. What is wrong with that? My father used to give out a little bit of bad advice that he never really expected me to heed. He would say, “Son, if you can’t fix it, be sure you fix it so the next guy can’t fix it.” We hardly need to carry that kind of philosophy into evangelism.

If things do work out over a period of time, wisely suggest that you would like to have your pastor, or somebody who is well known and more gifted, visit the person with whom you are dealing. Carefully avoid any pressure. Remember that your friend has met many pressure artists. If he has not met pressure in religion, he has met it out in the trade world. Tell him that some time when your pastor has the time, you’d like for him to call. If there is no interest, drop the subject until he brings it up. You will find that many think it is a pretty good idea, as long as the call will be made on him sometime in the future. Later, suggest that your pastor has two free evenings, and ask if either one of those evenings would be suitable. If he makes excuses, drop the matter. However, you will be surprised to learn that in a good percentage of cases, you will be successful in bringing the two together.

It is important that the pastor be wise, going no further than interest is manifested. He must always leave a friend behind for a follow-up by someone else, if not by himself. In other words, the pastor's first job in a case like this is to be friends with the individual, and to leave in such a way that the individual does not become hostile to the pastor or hostile to his friends, or to the cause. People want to talk to friends. People often will not talk to those who are walking books of theology, or who appear to be Bible experts. Now believe this! We know this to be true, and our object is to win this person to Jesus Christ, and to bring him into the Church where the Word of God can be ministered to him. Until he comes to a saving knowledge of Christ, it is useless for you to be an expert. He does not need an expert. He needs someone who has understanding, who has compassion, and who is a missionary and missionary-minded. Whether we evangelize through a Bible class, or whether we deal in a more personal manner, let our goal be that of a missionary, bringing someone into fellowship with our church. No one should believe his mission in life is more important as a Christian than that of building up the local church.

Although the church is but one manifestation of the Kingdom of God upon this earth, it is just that, and a most essential manifestation. It is part of God's Kingdom on this earth. It is the place where men and women and boys and girls are to worship and to be built up in the most holy faith. To undercut the local church because we fancy that we have a system which is superior to the local church, or because we feel that our system of values is greater than building up the local church, means that we ought to rethink our position drastically. Any man who undercuts the church or the church's place in God's Kingdom is a man who destroys himself and his family and never sets up anything for the next generation.

The Kingdom of God is much wider than the local church. I know that. I used to believe that a man had to be a preacher or a missionary to be doing anything for the Kingdom of God, but I was delivered from that intellectual bondage. I know that the local church is only one manifestation, but it is an essential meeting place. Even in the days of our Lord's first Advent on this earth, the meeting place was used to take the message of salvation to men and women, boys and girls. America can have no real restoration of Calvinism unless America has strong Bible-teaching churches that build up God-fearing families in the faith of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.