

# CRUSADE VISITATION

Because in connection with evangelistic crusades the laymen who have been working in this soulwinning program will associate with the team in the crusade visitation, it seems well to include in this manual a chapter on the methods that must be used for visitation in connection with an actual evangelistic campaign. Hence the following brief introduction to what we will call **Crusade Visitation**.

Perhaps more efficiency is lost in a crusade through and because of faulty visitation technique and know-how than by any other phase of the program. It is common for workers to spend the greater portion of their time laboring for and with souls who are the poorest of prospects, believing that they are good interests, while neglecting the very best prospects available to them. (The most typical generalization is he who is studying with ten elderly ladies and neglecting busy young couples.) We don't have time to spend with all who will receive us, so we must wisely choose the group for our present labors which will produce the largest return at the moment. Some who do not now classify as good prospects will be ripened at the time of the next series. (We do not suggest poorer prospects be discarded or neglected because they are not good interest now, but labored for while we are not in a crusade, hoping to nurture poor prospects into good ones.) We must concentrate our efforts where there is a harvest to be reaped now.

Initial visitation has two objectives:

1. Get as many started in attendance at the crusade as possible. There truth is learned and conviction created. Spiritual momentum is built up.
2. Evaluate the prospects so as to be able to spend our precious time with those who have real possibilities of coming through during the present campaign.

**Discovering the ATTITUDE of the prospect is the key** to valid assessment of interest. It is not what they "know" or what they "believe", or how many lessons or Bible courses they have completed.

The **attitude to Christ, His claims and His truth** are what we must learn to discern. When we achieve the ability to do this, we will labor for the best prospects and our effectiveness will increase rapidly. A car salesman for instance, does not waste time with window-shoppers. With the use of a few well chosen questions he knows who needs a car, or is actually intending to buy one and he spends his time with those people. The beginner, on the

other hand, will often spend the day demonstrating cars to those whom he might have known were only passing the time of day!

We need to **develop the ability to ask the 'un-loaded' question** in order to discover the actual attitude of the prospect. If we ask the question in a way which **implies the answer we feel** is right or favorable, we will not be able to get an accurate diagnosis. Also, we put the prospect on the defensive and he retreats or resists us because he feels we are trying to "corner" him. You don't create a receptive psychological relationship by "loaded" or "leading" questions.

Learn to let the prospect freely express his doubts, fears and inclinations. Only thus can we find the real needs and meet them with love and spiritual help. Can you imagine a doctor suggesting symptoms to his patient by the questions he asks?

Truth does not need to press its advantages or "hem-in" its inquirers. It can work in an open atmosphere. This kind of relationship also is less stressful for you. (Read the Reader's Digest article, "The Delicate Art of Asking Questions." This is in the June, 1965 issue.)

#### **Sample Pattern of typical questions for the interest or backslider:**

(When mastered, these questions will enable you to have this vital discernment. A relaxed, almost nonchalant attitude on your part in asking these questions is essential.)

"Did you receive our invitation to the meetings?" (Let the prospect talk,—you listen. No quiz or third degree atmosphere.)

"Have you had a chance to get out yet?" (These questions usually reveal his attitude to the crusade.)

"Is this the first time you have attended meetings like this?" (Answer reveals possible Seventh-day Adventist background of prospect.)

"Is this the first time you have heard or studied about the Sabbath?" (Note how adding the word—"truth," loads the question. Don't say, "Sabbath truth".)

"Have you ever thought of keeping the Sabbath?" (Key word is **thought**. Do not say **should** or **will you**.)

"Have you ever thought of joining the Adventist church?" (Again, **thought of joining**. Never say, "Don't you think you should.")

Naturally, the questions should be **pursued only as far as the answers indicate** that they are appropriate. But go through all of them the very first visit if

the background indicates it, and if the attitude to each question is on the positive side.

Notice the questions are "unloaded" in that the person is left free to express his own feelings and thoughts without your having implied the kind of answer you expect. When we indicate what we think their answer should be, we "load" the question and the individual either conforms so as to please us, or evades their true attitude for fear we will pressure them, and it is then impossible to get an objective evaluation.

(Now later on, we must ask the loaded question and try to bring them to decision. That is another part of our work. But in the initial stage, it is very vital to get a true evaluation of the prospect's own feelings and this can only be done by developing the above technique.)

### **Variations for the backslider:**

"Have you heard about the meetings? . . . Have you had a chance to get out?" (Then after a few minutes of get-acquainted talk: "You used to attend with us, didn't you?")

"When did you join the church? . . . Who baptized you?" (This recalls the happy memories. Never ask when they were disfellowshipped!! That will come anyway, soon enough, with all of it's wounds.)

Then talk of the message, "Once you've known it, it always stays in the heart", etc. and talk of fulfilling prophecies. "Surely Jesus is coming soon". "Have you ever thought of coming back to the church?"

The above kind of visitation allows the interested one to tell us just how he feels about the Lord and about the church. What we need to understand is that it is an individual's **attitude** toward these things that indicates whether he will make a positive decision in his present spiritual condition, or whether he will not. So many make the mistake of thinking that if an individual knows the doctrines of the church and our distinctive truths, that therefore he is about to make a decision or that he is a good prospect for decision. There are multiplied thousands who **know the truth**, but have decided against it and are the poorest prospects in the world.

It is even more frequently assumed that a person is a prime interest if they say they **believe these truths**. But remember what the scripture says, "The devils **believe** and tremble." What we need to discover is whether the prospect has a **willing heart toward God**. An individual with very little knowledge or background, who has a willing spirit can be taught the truth in a very short while and brought into the church. So really the amount of understanding, or the number of Bible courses finished, or even what a person believes can have very little bearing on how good an interest he is.

We always recognize that a person's condition and attitude can change, especially if he is attending the meetings and exposing himself to God's love

and His word. So we never make final judgments. But at least we have a valid position from which to work intelligently.

Especially in crusade visitation we try to avoid getting into discussions of doctrinal matters in the home as long as the meetings have not yet taken up those subjects. It is very important for the individual to get out to the meetings, and their questions about our teachings can be used as a motivation to increase their attendance. On the other hand, taking the time in the home to answer their questions, effectively de-motivates them so that they feel no need of coming to the meeting at all. This defeats the very purpose of our visit.

After the subjects have been covered in the meetings, then sincere questions that need to be cleared up can be dealt with in a tactful and kind way in the home.

### **The Four Essential Steps in Securing Decisions:**

1) After an individual has concluded a series of meetings or a series of Bible studies, we need to **review with him all the points of faith and the teachings of the church in a brief period of time** with the help of some official list of our teachings, such as a baptismal book, or perhaps a baptismal manual. This should be done in one sitting, if possible,—certainly in not more than a few days time. This will help the individual to be confident that he understands the teachings of the church and that there is no conflict in his own mind with what the church stands for. An individual can never make a decision in an atmosphere of uncertainty, or while he feels that there are teachings that he does not yet know about, or understand, or agree with. Just a brief review clears up these matters and prepares the way for decision.

2) Then the prospect should be **identified with the church**. We can say something like: "You know, you have come to believe just as we do. Actually you are one with us in your heart. And really an individual can be satisfied and happy only in the fellowship of those with whom he has a unity of faith. We have come to love you and to enjoy our fellowship with you and it is the hope of our hearts that you have come to the place where you want to be united with us in the church that keeps the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." Words such as these reach the heart with love, and reach the reason with recognition that an individual could scarcely be satisfied with anything less than all the truth which he now has come to believe.

3) A simple, straight-forward **invitation to join** the church and/or be baptized. "We hope that you have decided to be baptized and join our fellowship."

4) Never ask a prospect to make a decision for church membership without having **a definite time** to propose. If we say, "I hope some day soon you will decide to be baptized and join our church." The prospect will probably answer, "Well, someday maybe I will." Rather an invitation for decision

should always be accompanied with a definite day. "We are planning a baptism next Sabbath (or a week from Sabbath) and we want you to be in that baptism. We have been praying that you would decide to take your step of church membership at that time."

As simple as the foregoing may seem, it is very effective because it includes the essential steps, and the winning ingredients of decision-making.

The most common difficulty that is faced at this time is the intrusion of fringe matters that the "flesh" doesn't want to surrender; such as jewelry, or tobacco, or social-drinking, or entertainment, etc. The individual may often say, "I am not sure that I am ready to give up these things." Rather than making a big issue out of these objections, you must put them in their perspective in the light of eternity. They are indeed, small things and they will look even smaller in the judgment day. Help them to see that it is a small price to pay for the blessed fellowship of God's remnant church, for the confidence that we are obeying God's will, and for the opportunity to help finish His work and prepare for the second coming of Christ. Appeals based upon these principals are a thousand-fold more effective than debating the rightness or wrongness of these matters. Only rarely will we accomplish any good by trying to prove that such things are a sin. Instead we should use the appeal of Jesus, "He that is not willing to forsake houses and lands, father and mother, brother and sister, husband or wife or all that he hath is not worthy of men, and cannot be my disciple."