

# EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

“...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE...” ~ EPHESIANS 4:12

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## THIS WORLD ISN'T ANYONE'S HOME!

By Andrew Dow

In order to encourage the Christians in Philippi, Paul reminded them, **“our citizenship is in heaven”** (Phil. 3:20). We must constantly remind ourselves of this truth. God has always expected His people to **“come out from their midst”** (2 Cor. 6:17) and **“Be holy”** (1 Pet. 1:15-16). As Christians, we need to recognize that this world is not our home. It would serve us well, however, to realize that this world isn't *anyone's* home!

After God created man and woman, He placed them in the garden of Eden, but Solomon describes that He **“set eternity”** within the hearts of mankind (Eccl. 3:11). It is apparent that something beyond this temporary existence has been instilled within each and every one of us. After all, men and women are not merely physical beings, but we have been created in God's image and according to His likeness (Gen. 1:26-27). Part of what it means to be made in the image of God is that we are spiritual beings (cf. 1 Thess. 5:23) as God is a spiritual being (cf. John 4:24). Furthermore, this world was never meant to be an eternal abode: **“the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which... the earth and its works will be burned up”** (2 Pet. 3:10).

God made us all for an eternal existence with Him and He desires salvation for everyone (2 Pet. 3:9). This is good news! This is what we need to help a hopeless world see!

## WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR TEACHING THE LOST?

By Andrew Dow

What is numerical church growth supposed to look like? Acts tells us about a time when **“three thousand souls”** were saved (Acts 2:41, NASB). We find later that **“the Lord was adding to their number daily”** (Acts 2:47). Eventually **“the number of men came to be about five thousand”** (Acts 4:4). Is this what we should expect today?

It may be unrealistic to expect to baptize three thousand souls every Sunday (This was not the norm even for the Apostles). Still, the New Testament church was constantly growing! Why aren't we growing like they were?

I am persuaded that one reason a local church may not be growing is due to a misunderstanding of our roles in the church. Many Christians have convinced themselves that evangelism is not their job. After all, don't we pay an evangelist to evangelize? So, who's job is it to evangelize?

### Teaching the Lost is the Work of the Church

We should begin by pointing out that evangelism is the work of the church! This is clearly seen in Paul's description of the church to Timothy—**“the pillar and support of the truth”** (1 Tim. 3:15). The local church is that which upholds and promotes the truth. It is the pedestal from which all men can see the truth. Therefore, it is no surprise that local churches play a major role in spreading this truth.

Scripture reveals a number of ways that local churches accomplished this work. Paul explained to the Corinthians how churches in Macedonia offered him financial support so that he could work elsewhere (2 Cor. 11:7-11). However, teaching the lost vicariously through paid evangelists is not the only way first century churches evangelized. Paul

commended the Thessalonians because **“the word of the Lord has sounded forth from”** them (1 Thess. 1:7-8). The entire church was involved in sounding forth God’s word.

### **All Christians are Expected to Teach the Lost**

Narrowing our scope further, Scripture teaches that it is the responsibility of individual Christians to teach the lost. First, some of Jesus’ final words were, **“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...”** (Matt. 28:19-20). The point is this: wherever you find yourself, make disciples. This is a pattern Christ expects all His disciples to follow!

Furthermore, Peter wrote, **“You are... A PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you”** (1 Pet. 2:9). Could our purpose in Christ be expressed any clearer? We are saved so that we will **“proclaim His excellencies.”**

The Bible teaches that God’s people must be lights to the world (Matt. 5:14f) and teachers of the Word (Heb. 5:12). Who is responsible for teaching lost souls? Each and every Christian has this responsibility. It can’t be delegated or passed off. We must work diligently to become people who are interested in saving souls. If we can accomplish that, we will become more like Jesus (Luke 19:10).

### **So... Why Do We Pay an Evangelist?**

Having established that we should all be engulfed in evangelism, a natural question comes to mind: what’s the work of an evangelist? We don’t have the space to offer a full answer here, but the work of an evangelist can be boiled down to two primary duties:

*First, and most obviously, the evangelist must evangelize!* Paul charged Timothy to **“preach the word... do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry”** (2

Tim. 4:1-5). Evangelists ARE payed to teach the gospel!

*Second, the evangelist must equip the saints.* God gave the church **“evangelists... for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ”** (Eph. 4:11-12). Paul told Timothy to put this into action when he wrote, **“The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also”** (2 Tim. 2:2). One of the evangelist’s most important duties is to prepare others to evangelize.

If God’s plan is executed properly—i.e., if evangelists equip saints to teach the lost, and if saints take their responsibility to teach the lost seriously—there is no reason we shouldn’t see growth like the church in the first century experienced. So, let’s work together. Let’s encourage one another to teach lost souls the gospel of Jesus Christ. Teaching the lost is your responsibility, and it’s my responsibility because we are disciples of Christ!

**NOTES:**

<b>SHARING GOD’S ROAD TO RIGHTEOUSNESS</b> <b>(LESSONS BY KRIS EMERSON)</b>	
Sun. 9:30am	Jesus’ Death: By the Numbers
Sun. 10:30am	The Grace of God
Sun. 6:00pm	Personal Evangelism
Mon. 7:00pm	The Roman Road to Righteousness
Tue. 7:00pm	Going Back to Jerusalem
Wed. 7:00pm	The Third Question

**“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES...”**  
**(MATTHEW 28:19-20)**