

Andrews University

## Digital Commons @ Andrews University

---

Lake Union Herald

Lake Union Herald

---

3-2024

### Evangelism is not Optional

Claval Hunter

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/luh-pubs>

---

# Evangelism is not Optional

AFTER BEING IN MINISTRY FOR 23 YEARS AND WORKING WITH SO MANY CONGREGATIONS THROUGHOUT NORTH AMERICA AND ABROAD, I HAVE DISCOVERED THAT MISSION-DRIVEN CHURCHES ARE ALWAYS CONCERNED WITH THE NEEDS OF OTHERS IN THEIR COMMUNITY. AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF MATTHEW 9:35-38 WILL REVEAL THE FIVE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES THAT WILL HELP KEEP CHURCHES ALIVE AND MISSION-DRIVEN.



▲ CLAVAL HUNTER

## **Genuine Care for the Community**

In Matthew 9:35, 36, notice that the compassion of Christ moves Him to action. Jesus was constantly moving from one community to another that was helpless, weary, and plagued with injustices. Like Christ, the church must care not only about a person's spiritual well-being but also for one's physical, emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Communities are more likely to respond favorably and trust a church that builds authentic relationships and shows a desire to comprehend their particular identities and needs. Building these relationships enables the church to integrate meaningfully into the fabric of the neighborhood, encouraging respect and trust between neighbors.

## **Prayer and Dependence on God**

To avoid utter failure, the church should never undertake any missional assignment without praying and trusting God's divine power. According to Matthew 9:38, God is seeking spiritual individuals who will stand in the gap for others, fight for their

rights, provide a protective hedge around the helpless and defenseless, work to destroy the strongholds of the devil, and release people from issues that are enslaving and have them gripped with fear. By praying and participating in God's mission, we will discover that it is invigorating and life-changing.

## **Proclamation of the Gospel**

Every church member must consider innovative ways to share the good news of Christ to draw individuals into the family of God. I have realized in my years of ministry that if a church is going to communicate the gospel message effectively, it must take the time to study the cultural, social, and linguistic context of the community. The gospel message should be clear, relatable, and relevant. Furthermore, developing relationships based on trust and empathy is essential for the effective proclamation of the Gospel. When people witness the gospel practiced in the lives of Christians, they are more open to it.

## Demonstrating God's Love Through Action

Seeing how God has demonstrated His love for humanity (see John 3:16 and Romans 5:8), Christians are to be some of the most generous people on planet Earth. For the past three years, my church, the Berean Transformation Center (BTC), has been actively involved in transforming lives in South Bend, Indiana. Through fasting and prayer, especially in 2023, we sought the miraculous, and miracles unfolded before us. As we mingled with our neighbors, nurturing loving relationships and addressing their needs, we were humbled to witness 40 new individuals baptized into the family of God. Demonstrating God's love for a broken world will always make a difference.

## Training and Equipping Lay Members for Mission in Their Ministry Context

Lastly, with so many people suffering from life's punishing blows and trying hard to cope with dashed dreams and disappointments, Matthew 9:38 reveals that God is looking for workers who have a zeal and self-denying love for souls as He does. Pastors and church leaders must understand that people will not be reached for Christ by great sermons. The best place to reach people is not in a church building. It's beyond the walls, in the communities where they are. Lay members should be rightly trained to actively participate in the community and serve as Christ's hands and feet (see Matthew 5:13-16). To ensure that lay members succeed in this mission, I suggest churches continue to offer support, mentoring, and accountability. For support, churches can contact Andrews University Center for Community Change ([www.communitychange.world](http://www.communitychange.world)). ■

---

**Claval Hunter** is associate director of the Center for Community Change at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary on the campus of Andrews University.

► Berean Transformation Center members have been actively involved in transforming lives in South Bend, Indiana. Through fasting and prayer and mingling with their neighbors, 40 new individuals were baptized into the family of God in 2023.

