

LESSON TWO

SURVEYING THE FIELD

A. THE NEED TO SURVEY THE FIELD:

The whole world must be witnessed to. The gospel of the Kingdom must be preached to the entire world. Every town and city in the homeland and on the foreign fields must hear the gospel. In this respect we have hardly started in discharging our obligation to God, and our responsibility to our fellow man. Both at home and abroad there are thousands of towns and cities without the Apostolic message, which we must take to them.

When an evangelist or missionary receives a burden to take the gospel to a new city he should begin this work at once. It might be several months before he could move to the field. His actual arrival might be delayed even for a year or two. This should not discourage him in immediately beginning a very important phase of missionary work - that of surveying the field.

We may see the Biblical importance of this phase of the work if we think of Moses and Joshua. Moses sent out the twelve spies to view the land and Joshua sent out two spies for the same work. "...Go view the land, even Jericho" (Joshua 2:1).

A careful and prayerful survey of the field can lay a thorough groundwork for a successful campaign of evangelism. Careless work here may easily mean much waste of effort and needless delay. The home missionary simply cannot become too familiar with his prospective field of labor.

B. A FILE FOR ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

As the pioneer evangelist begins his survey, the first thing he should do is to start a file, and begin to compile all the information that he can receive concerning the place of his call.

To begin with, possibly four files will be sufficient and more may be added later. He may start with a file for each of the following: (1) Religion and established churches; (2) Real Estate, rentals, available halls to rent; (3) Personal contacts with individuals, names and addresses of prospects; and (4) General, for all other information.

By writing the Chamber of Commerce, tourist bureaus, and government agencies, he will receive within a few days a wealth of information that will help him become acquainted with this new field. Among the brochures and literature that he receives, he should make certain that he has received a street map, which he should study carefully until he is familiar with the entire city. This street map should not be placed in a file, but rather posted on the wall of his study where he can look at it daily, even during his periods of prayer.

C. ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

All information is important but there is some information that would be considered essential and should immediately go into the proper file. Here is a suggestive list of information to be filed:

1. Names and addresses of all people who have been contacted;

2. Churches and established religions;
3. Radio stations with rates;
4. Newspapers with subscription rates;
5. Cost of real estate and rentals;
6. Available halls that can be rented;
7. Schools;
8. Hospitals;
9. Nationality and customs of the people;
10. Industry;
11. Job opportunities and wage levels;
12. Cost of food and living.

D. WHERE THE INFORMATION MAY BE FOUND:

The home missionary may go to the library and find books describing the new field. In most libraries there will be books and literature available. These books and literature will give him a great deal of knowledge concerning the city or country, which he is planning to evangelize.

The writer went to the library in the fall of 1946 and read everything he could find regarding the island of Jamaica. When he arrived the island seemed already familiar. This was because of what he had read and studied. Anyone may do the same where he can become familiar with the field of labor before he ever arrives.

A good method to use at this stage is to subscribe to a daily newspaper. A long subscription is not necessary. Generally a thirty-day subscription is all that is required. By reading the local newspaper he can find much information that will be very important and essential to the success of the missionary endeavor.

E. A SCOUTING TRIP:

If the city is not too far away, and he can afford it, a scouting trip to the city can be a tremendous blessing. It would be wise to be accompanied by another worker but not to have a large party, for this is not a pleasure trip. He should not feel pressed for time but allow himself two or three days to travel throughout the city, carefully and prayerfully, meeting and talking with people, locating auditoriums and church buildings that would be available for rental or purchase.

He should earnestly seek God for guidance as to the section of the city where he should begin his work of evangelism. Even a few city blocks can make a difference between immediate success and apparent failure. Only God can help him in this regard.

F. THE VALUE OF MAKING A SURVEY:

By studying carefully the nationality of the people, the economical conditions and the religious backgrounds, he will know the problems that will be facing him. Thus, he can prayerfully prepare himself to have the right answers as he makes contacts and knocks on doors.

If the pioneer evangelist has followed through carefully in this work in surveying the field, he will find a tremendous burden for the place will grow, and he can become so familiar with the field that it will seem that he already had lived there for several months. This will confirm his call, and save him much lost time, expense, and heartache when he eventually arrives at his field of labor.

LESSON TWO

SELF HELP TEST

A. What do we mean by "surveying the field?"

B. List FIVE places from which information about a field may be received:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

C. List TEN different kinds of information which might be considered essential:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____