

The Primary Business of the Church is Spiritual

By Bob Young

Business consultants often ask companies, "What business are you in?" The church is not a business but the question is helpful. "What are we about?" Mottos and mission statements try to answer the question. What is our dream for this church in the next 10 years, 25 years? What do we hope this church can become? Where are we trying to go? What are our goals and values? How will we know when we get where we are going?

One challenge churches face is that not every member gives the same answer. One says, "We are in the people business." Another says our business is evangelism. Another focuses on mission work. Others claim that a primary task is benevolence. Someone notes that we are in the educational business—teaching the Bible and sharing the gospel. Today one hears responses that focus in areas we seldom thought about 40 years ago. We are a worshipping community, we are a nurturing community, we are a serving community.

What does the Bible say? We are in only one business—the salvation business. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Our task, given by our Lord, is to follow his example. The name, Jesus, signifies Savior. The church is the congregation of the saved. The church is God's plan for fulfilling his eternal saving purpose. Our task is to extend the kingdom, helping people find salvation in Jesus Christ and live out the reality of that salvation. Our task is to save people and keep them saved. But... we are tempted to adopt other priorities because we know of churches that have attracted people with such programs.

Note the order. The gospel leads people to do good works. Doing good works does not necessarily lead people to the gospel. It is true that not every church does evangelism the same way. Some awaken interest with teaching, others through relationships, others with compassion. Some choose evangelism fields close to home, others focus on mission work across the seas. Some find multiplied ways to serve, others catch attention by modeling kingdom living. Some build bridges for the gospel by establishing relationships with unbelievers; others build bridges by integrating spiritual needs and felt needs. The saving gospel spreads and is supported by how we worship, how we live, how we love, how we serve, how we care, how we talk, how we teach and preach, and by countless other aspects of our life.

So, whatever we do, may we never forget—our priority is the same as that for which God sent his Son, that all may have eternal life. We are in the business of helping people find salvation in Jesus Christ. If we fail in that task, we have failed!