

This is an old document but may give a few ideas for special meetings

Preparation for Special meetings

by
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Why My Church Should Invite An Evangelist To Come

By Ed Sealy

1. The evangelist is a man whom God has given to the church at large. (Eph.4:11-16) The ability to motivate people is also part of this calling. In addition to seeing people saved, a good evangelist will certainly **motivate the saints to be involved in reaching people for Christ themselves.** You may not see many decisions in your evangelistic meetings, but souls will be saved afterwards as a result of God's people being motivated. The evangelists seem to be disappearing from the landscape. Churches could encourage those going into this scriptural ministry by providing opportunities for this gift to be employed in the local church. Could our church provide an opportunity for a young man who feels the call to evangelism? Could our church pray regularly for an evangelist? Could we financially support an evangelist on a monthly basis?
2. The advertising and promotion during a series of meetings help to **heighten the awareness of a community to God.** Advertising in mail boxes advises the community that your church is still in business. Many times folks will call the church in a time of difficulty because of the awareness created by promotion for the special meetings
3. **It provides a focus for the saints.** Churches have become apathetic because of no focus. An evangelistic thrust will rekindle that fire. The sparks from a few rekindled saints will touch many other apathetic saints.
4. **It will increase the prayer involvement** of the local church. Saints can be challenged to gather in homes and church to seek God's face for lost friends and family. As people meet with God in prayer they are seldom the same.
5. **It will produce unity.** One of the reasons we have so much dissension in our churches is because we have lost our focus. The evangelistic thrust is a means of uniting the church behind a common cause. The result will be less strife.
6. **The various gifts in the body of Christ are used.** Creative people will be used in advertising, the administrators in planning etc.
7. **It provides greater involvement for the entire church.** People not previously involved can be trained to share their faith and while others are trained to counsel.

8. **Church attendance will increase** as you follow up those who visited the meetings
9. **Enthusiasm for the things of God** will be heightened.
10. **Souls are saved and backsliders are reclaimed.** Many times a crusade can be a time of planting seed that will come to fruition long after the meetings are over. The special meetings give the church a reason to invite family and friends out to hear the speaker.

What is my church doing in the area of evangelism? Please earnestly seek God's face in this matter. The souls in our community hang in the balances and we have the answers.

Preparation for Meetings

Since a lot of time and effort goes into the crusade, it is wise to prepare properly. Please remember that each area is different and the following suggestions may need to be improvised or adapted to meet the needs of a particular area. I have sought to address this matter not so much from a personal perspective but rather from the perspective of any outreach involving any speaker

It is wise to have the evangelist or one of his team come to your area a year in advance of the meetings. This will be a weekend rally and a time of pre crusade preparation. We are living in a skeptical world. The hearts of men are indifferent to the gospel message. Jeremiah advised us of the need to break up the fallow ground. (Jer.4:3) You cannot throw seed on the top of the ground and expect a great harvest. The ground needs to be broken up so the seed of the word can fall deep into the heart and bring forth fruit, some a hundred fold, some sixty fold, and some thirty fold. (Matt. 13) Proper preparation can prepare Hearts for the seed of the word of God. The Pre Crusade rally will help us begin to work on breaking up the fallow ground.

1. The Importance of prayer

- A. Prayer gives the church power (Luke 18:1; prayer in the book of Acts) The presence of a large number of prayed up individuals will give visitors a sense of God's presence and power. It provides a Holy touch which hovers over the meetings.
- B. Prayer has a way of softening the heart of people so the Word of God finds depth.
- C. Prayer helps open the ears to listen.

The pre crusade rally will call for a commitment to prayer

2. The Importance of planting (Psalm 126: 5,6)

One of the reasons we do not see a lot of decisions during our meetings is because there are few hearts prepared for the gospel. There was a time when God's people shared their faith throughout the year. When the special meetings came there were people who were being convicted and convinced of the Holy Spirit because the seed of the word of God had been planted in their heart by a friend or faithful witness.

The pre crusade rally will challenge people to make a public declaration of their intention to win one soul to Christ in the next year. The training during the pre Crusade rally will provide the knowledge of how to lead a soul to Christ and many creative ideas on how to share one's faith. This will be the beginning of a planting that should result in a harvest.

The pre crusade rally will call for a commitment to soul winning

3. The Importance of the Presence of God's people at the meetings (Heb. 10:26)

A crowd usually attracts a crowd. Did you ever see a crowd gathered beside the road and you just had to stop and see what it was that had caused so much interest? A large crowd attending a meeting will usually create a curiosity as to what is happening. The Queen of Sheba just had to come and see Solomon because she heard and sensed the excitement of all that was going on inside Solomon's kingdom. The pre crusade rally will also challenge God's people to be faithful to all the meetings. They will be challenged to set aside the crusade time on their calendars and to be faithful with their presence in these meetings.

The pre crusade rally will call for a commitment to be present at each meeting

4. The Importance of neutral ground as a Place to meet

I have observed that crowds are much larger at a venue outside the church. Many of our churches have been scarred by something that has happened in the past. As a result people will not attend. People of other faiths will not attend a church of a different faith even though they are curious to do so. Neutral ground is not offensive to anyone. Is it possible to have a hall, school, rink, a center etc. that is drawing card for the community?

5. The Importance of Music

There are two things to consider regarding the music: **The special music** and the **congregation singing**.

- A. **The special music** should come from singers who relate to the unsaved. This is not a compromising suggestion. However, the music and style should be relative to the area. The Maritime people for the most part listen to a folk, country style. Therefore, an opera singer will not relate to your congregation as well even though they are very gifted.
- B. A gifted song leader will involve **the congregation** in a few stirring hymns. When you involve the congregation, they feel more a part of what is happening. The hymns chosen should be triumphant and uplifting. The musicians should play triumphantly as well. In other words the music is not to be dragged out. After all we are seeking to bring people to new life in Christ. Words of the congregational numbers should be made available or placed on the overhead. A good choir is an asset.
Hymn books or overheads should be made available so that everyone can see the words.

2 Specials and 2 congregational numbers should be sufficient. The exception would be if your singer does a concert after which the evangelist speaks.

6. The Importance of Personal testimony

People may argue with your theology but they will never argue against a real live testimony. The testimony is personal and will be granted a listening ear. Find people who have an impressive testimony and some ability to share it. A good cross section of testimonies is the ideal. Eg. Businessman, teenager, mother, singer, athlete, community leader, etc.

The testimony should be short and powerful (7-10 minutes)

7. The Hype for your meetings

The following are put forth as suggestions only. You might be able to improvise on these ideas or implement new ideas

A. Special nights

Youth, business, professional, military night, athletes etc. A youth night could use free Pizza as the drawing card. **Celebrities like Paul Henderson** who scored the winning goal in the Canada Russia hockey series are available to speak. **Businessmen like John Lennihan Jr.** have been greatly used of the Lord. You could use them on a business night. You could have a **music night** and feature some individual or groups the Lord is using.

You could give away prizes for **the largest family present**, the most people in a car or van (watch regulations). **Old-fashioned night** where everyone will dress up old fashioned, the music will be old fashioned, an old-fashioned meal will be served and of course old fashioned preaching. Prizes can be given out for the best dressed folks.

B. Special Host and hostess plan.

- A. Appoint two or more couples in your church to be the host and hostess for the second night of your meetings.
- B. After the first service, it is their responsibility to sign up as many people as possible to be their guest the next night. They are also to invite as many other people as possible for the next night as well.
- C. The next night you count the number of people who came with each host and hostess. Prizes are given to the winners
- D. Appoint a new host and hostess for the next night.
- E. This plan helps you maintain your present crown each night as well as increasing the crowd as the host and hostess bring in new people.
- F. You may award fishing rods and fish chowder dinners to the winners.

C. Special messages

You may want to address Current events in the light of Bible Prophecy. Eg. Evangelist Jim Brown will be speaking "Current Events and God's calendar."

The Prophetic aspect of the middle east could be used if there is turmoil at the time of your meetings.

One could speak on "The Reasons for Columbine." (High School shootings)

8. The Promotion for your meetings

This is where we encounter the most difficulty. Most pastors have not had any business experience. It might be time to have a course on some basic ways to advertise. Advertising is always limited by my budget. What you will be able to accomplish depends on how much you have to spend.

A. Some ideas

- i) **Rent a flashing lighted sign** where you can arrange the letters and numbers to advertise your meetings.
- ii) **A banner** hung across a street in a strategic location.
- iii) **A billboard** along a highway with advertising.
- iv) **Radio and TV advertising.** If your budget is small, newspapers will sometimes do a free article if you bring them the press release and pictures concerning your evangelist and/or soloist. Newspapers also have a free public notice section. Local cable stations will display your ad on the local station for free. Radio stations sometimes have public advertising that is free. Take advantage of all these. The press may like to interview your speaker.
Newspaper ads should be designed to stand out from other ads. You might try to use an upside down ad. Most newspapers will not do this because it makes them look like they made a mistake. You could use a picture of a hand reaching out for a hammer with the slogan:

Trying to get a handle on life?

Why not attend the meetings at

First Baptist Church Puckerbrush, N.B.

v) **Hand bills**

This is the advertising for door to door visitation or mail outs. If possible have these professionally done. You may have someone in your church who is able to do a good job on a home computer. This will certainly reduce your cost. Please do not photocopy a picture of your evangelist and soloist unless you have a copier with the ability to copy photos. A scanner can be used to produce a quality job. Please remember the unsaved community expects high quality from those who name the name of Christ

9. The Church and the evangelist

A. What should the church expect of the evangelist?

1. The pastor should receive a confirmation of the meetings and promotional materials (pictures, press release etc.) two months in advance of the meetings.
2. The pastor should be informed as to how the evangelist will travel. There are times when a church will need to arrange flights for the evangelist.
3. The evangelist should provide any necessary help the church will need as they organize the meetings. Because he travels to many churches, the evangelist will have many ideas and suggestions that will be beneficial to the church.

4. The pastor should be informed of **special diets and accommodations**. I do not require a supper meal before the service. I find it causes me to feel filled up and because I enjoy the fellowship of God's people at the meal, I run to the church at the last minute and do not always have the heart preparation time that is required. I like a light meal in a home afterwards. I do not require a motel. Other evangelists make such requirements. However, the church needs to be sensitive to the fact the evangelist will need privacy and a place where he can study, pray and rest. Is there an **office space** in the church? Could he use a Sunday School room? Most churches have meals and fellowships after the meetings that run into the late hours of the night. At the end of the week of meetings the church folks are exhausted and need time to recoup. The evangelist must start another series of meetings within two days and would certainly kill himself at this pace.

5. The church should be advised if his wife plans to attend.

6. The evangelist should respect the pastor and his pulpit. He should build up the pastor and help the congregation know how to minister to their pastor.

The evangelist should be willing to help the pastor with any struggles and be prepared to make some visits if required.

7. The evangelist is there as a servant and must not be making demands of the church as if he were the lone instrument God is using today.

8. The evangelist must use discretion in dealing with ladies in the church. He must be gracious and kind with anyone with whom he makes contact.

9. The evangelist must be prompt for both meetings and meals. As he dines, he should avoid temptation. The soloist and I were scheduled to have a meal in a home with a lady whose husband was at work. The soloist did not show and I was left in a difficult situation. The church should make sure this sort of thing does not happen.

10. The evangelist should be open and willing to meet with the church folks. He should not counsel without advising the pastor. He should not be willing to entertain gossip against the pastor nor should he be involved in church politics.

11. The evangelist should not stipulate funds. If this meeting is God's will, the needs of the evangelist will be met.

12. The evangelist should be neat and clean when he is in a home. He should inquire what time the bathroom and laundry facilities are available so as not to inconvenience the household. The evangelist should be conscious of body orders and personal hygiene.

13. The evangelist should be sensitive to the time slot he is allotted in which to speak. There are churches where people resent the preacher who goes overtime.

14. The evangelist should be cautious of courting people who might be able to financially support his ministry. He should not place people on mailing lists without the permission of the pastor.

15. The evangelist should leave the church encouraged, revived and motivated. There should be people saved and contacts to follow up. Proper follow up should see people added to the church.

B. What should the evangelist expect of the church?

1. A commitment to the meetings. Please do not hold open dates with the evangelist for a long period of time. Some churches will keep two different weeks open until they can decide which dates will work. In the mean time the evangelist might lose an opportunity for work. Try to commit to your dates as soon as possible. A year in an advance is not too early to think about meetings. Most evangelists are booked at least one year in advance

2. A commitment from the church to participate one hundred percent to these meetings. (See previous points on pre crusade preparation)

3. An effort on behalf of the church to minister to the evangelist. Evangelists spend a lot of time on the road and sometimes needs the ministry of God's people. He understands he is there to minister. However, blessed is the church that takes the opportunity to minister to the evangelist. Some churches will be sensitive to vehicle repair, clothing, office needs. If there are people in your church that are so gifted to meet these needs, it is not soon forgotten by the evangelist. He many times will speak to others of the kindness that was bestowed upon him. There was a church which gave me a letter granting me the provision of a cottage whenever I was in need of rest. I have never used that kindness but I also have never forgotten this kind act. It is the little things done for a traveling speaker that cause a church to be in the speakers prayers.

4. Are there some local sights that might be of interest? A pastor provided my wife and myself with a tour of a famous museum. I do not need to be entertained but those acts of kindness are not soon forgotten.

5. The Church should provide a place to stay where there is some privacy. Try do avoid a home where the husband will be away and the evangelist is alone with the lady of the house. This would be uncomfortable for both sides.

6. The church should have a good PA System. **I take my own system with me.**

7. The church should **provide the evangelist** with a general **schedule** of events and the **times** of those events. If you have chosen **a theme** for the meetings, the evangelist should know several months in advance.

8. The church should have **counselors, ushers** and **nursery workers** in place for the meetings. Training should be provided in advance. (See notes on counseling)

9. The pastor should prepare the hearts of his people for these meetings. Revived hearts in advance of the meetings will create a great spirit in the meetings. Evangelism flows out of revived hearts. It would be good for God's people to **recommit, renew, repair, restore, return** well in advance of the meetings so the Spirit of God can flow through them.

10. The church should have the love gift or honorarium ready before the evangelist leaves. Many times a speaker has been told the money will be in the mail and it never arrives. Remember, the speaker's wife needs to buy groceries the next day. The Bible tells us not to be slothful in business. (Rom. 12:11) People in the church do not receive their pay in a haphazard way and should deal with God's servants in the same way.

11. The offering should be generous for several reasons:

I want to address this because this is a very misunderstood area of evangelistic work. Also, several pastors have asked me instruct them in this area. The fakes and phonies have plied their trade and made evangelism look like a money racket. I trust the following will be a common sense approach to the money issue.

A. The pastor must stress the truth that **"God gave some evangelists--"** (Eph. 4) This is a God given

calling that must be supported through prayer and financial support. How is the evangelist to travel the country without sufficient support? How will young men desire this calling if it is not encouraged by the local church?

- B. There are several weeks in a year when an evangelist does not work. Not every week is conducive to evangelistic meetings. 52 weeks a year is unheard of today. According to statistics most evangelists work about 32 meetings a year. I work much closer to the 52 weeks myself. Speaking 7-8 times a week is extremely exhausting. The evangelist will need a vacation and during this time there will be no income. There are cancellations from time to time as well. There are times when he must retreat from the road in order to study and prepare new messages. What may appear to be a large offering in a meeting is not so large when it is spread out over the year. At the moment I only have a few churches and individuals contributing to my monthly support. It is a faith ministry. That may change in the future as churches or individuals consider this ministry a worthy investment.
- C. A good evangelist will not restrict himself to large churches where the offerings are large. Many times he will be in small churches with very small offerings. A large offering in one church will be balanced by the small offering in a struggling church. Churches who are able, should give so that other smaller churches can be helped as well.
- D Those who travel on the road know the expense of gas, cars, repairs, insurance, meals, motels (Between meetings by times) Housing at home etc. I travel approximately 70,000 km per year by car and on several occasions use planes and trains.
The need for modest clothing and repairs to a PA system is an overlooked expense.
- E. The office expenses: the cost of postage alone is unbelievable. Each package of posters, pictures etc. that we send out for meeting preparation, cost approximately ten (10) dollars to send. The newsletter cost hundreds of dollars to produce and mail.

12. The people need to be prepared for the offering

- A. Announce that there will be a special offering. The Pastor should prepare the people well in advance
- B. This should be in addition to the budget

A church invited me to come a great distance and advised me they only had one hundred dollars for a budget. I agreed to come. As a result of the love offering, the total offering amounted to more than four hundred dollars. Both the church and evangelist were greatly encouraged
- C. When I was in the pastorate, our church scheduled evangelistic meetings one year in advance. I advised the people that we were going to buck Satan and give a buck (\$1) in our adult class toward our evangelistic outreach. We had a special bag made and passed around during our adult Sunday school class. Each one who was able, placed a buck in the bag. By the time our evangelist came to town we were able to give him \$1000.00 without touching the church budget.
- D. The pastor and the church should pride themselves on taking excellent care of the speaker. The pastor should not be envious if the offering is greater than his weekly salary, but rather rejoice in God's blessing on another. (Note above) Passages of scripture should be studied and memorized. (11 Corinth 8,9; Matt.6:33; Luke 6:38; Phil.4:19)
- E. Remember that when God gets a hold of people's hearts, he usually gets their money at the same time. People whose hearts have been deeply touched by the Spirit of God may want to give sacrificially. This should not be discouraged. (Gal. 6:6)

- F. The evangelist will speak well of the church and the pastor in his travels which is a benefit to the church. People who hear the evangelist will want to attend your church if they are transferred to your area. It also creates a high profile for the pastor as churches and organizations seek the evangelist for names of men who God is using in order to fill their present needs. **(Please remember that churches and pastors are not recommended just on the basis of their offerings)**
- G. An offering from a Spirit filled heart is of much more importance to God than a collection pried from the hands of an unwilling people.

These suggestions have been made at the request of pastors. They are only suggestions. They can be changed to meet the different circumstances across the land. Some may add suggestions to this list, while others may drop some suggestions. Our prayer is that God might use these feeble efforts to help you better organize special meetings so that precious souls can hear and heed the glorious gospel message.

Keeping on keeping on for Christ

Evangelist Ed Sealy