

The Link

"EVANGAPEW"

Can a person be an active member in a conservative church for many years and still miss Heaven?

For over six weeks I was a bachelor while Candy resided with our daughter Heather, who recently had a liver transplant. Candy was the appointed and hospital trained caregiver. My neighbor Freddie (names have been changed), who I have been sharing Christ with for several months, invited me to have dinner with he and his girl friend, his father Bobby and his neighbor Ernie. As we sat around an old wooden table to enjoy a hot meal and fellowship, Ernie shared a story about dying and being resuscitated. For a period of time, medical personnel performed CPR on him pounding and pushing on his chest to force his heart to pump life giving blood throughout his veins. In fact, his sternum and a number of ribs were broken in the process. It is an amazing story! I asked Ernie if he had an out-of-body experience. He said yes, & that he actually encountered Jesus. I then posed to him a probing question: If Jesus were to ask you, "Why should I let you enter into My Heaven," what would you have said? I repeated my question again to make sure he understood: "Why would Jesus allow anyone into Heaven?" There was a pause and a brief moment of introspection. Ernie's response was telling, "I do not know." Freddie's father, Bobby, chimed in and said, "He would let us come in because of His love and compassion." I gently countered saying that his statement is true, but rebutted with a question: "While on earth, how was Christ's love and compassion expressed?" Bobby, a professing Christian (Pentecostal), remained silent. Consequently, I then shared the plan of salvation.

Ernie, having been baptized years ago, attends the largest conservative church in the county. In fact, there are many "Ernies" sitting comfortably in churches. I often wonder how it is possible for an individual to sit under conservative preaching and not be able to understand and personalize the death, burial and resurrection of the God/Man Jesus Christ. In other words, should a professing Christian actively involved in the life of the church be able to understand and articulate redemption? Allow me to share another example.

Many church members attend weekly worship services, tithe and perform good deeds who are oblivious to why God entered history. They are religious but having no relationship with God. I vividly recall sitting in the office of an active church member who was a close relative to Jerry Falwell. This man was a trustee and respected member in the church where I pastored. After explaining in depth salvation, his response was shocking, "I have never heard this." He had listened to countless sermons by Jerry Falwell, and was active in the life of the church, but never comprehended and embraced redemption. That day he prayed to receive Christ. Was it genuine? I can only hope and pray it was an authentic conversion.

No doubt many have heard the salvific story many times, while at the same time the adversary is busy hindering redemptive words from penetrating one's heart. Being the theme of this article, I submit that evangelism begins first in the church. I call this **EvangaPew**. There are at least two things that must happen to win those in the pew:

- 1) **PRAY:** Paul requested for believes to pray that God would open a door for the Word (**Col. 4:3**).
- 2) **PREACH/TEACH THE "LIFE GIVING" WORD OF GOD:** The consistent teaching about redemption is paramount. The Apostle Paul pinned: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (**Romans 1:16**). According to the teachings of Jesus, the devil is present wherever the Word is

proclaimed or read so he can steal the seed (the Word) in order that it cannot be established in the heart/mind of the hearer/reader (**Matt. 13:1ff**—parable of the sower). The love of sin and the cares of the world are instruments that Satan uses to dilute or block the Word. Once the foundation of salvation ("the solid rock") is established in the heart of a person, construction begins. The unshakable foundation for our spiritual life is Christ as penned by Edward Mote in 1834—"My Hope is Built on Nothing Less."

My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand,
all other ground is sinking sand.

The Bible states, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (**Romans 10:14,17**). That is why preachers share the Word behind the pulpit, and missionaries are sent throughout the world to preach the scriptures. The Word is POWERFUL (**Hebrews 4:12**)! Gideon International has flooded hotels, university campuses and businesses with Bibles. The Spirit uses the POWER of the Word to open crusty hearts to understand God's gift: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that WHOSOEVER believes in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life."

Salvation is offered to everyone...yet not everyone will accept the FREE GIFT. Why? One major reason—"...men loved the darkness rather than the Light..." (**John 3:19**). For example, from time-to-time I share the gospel with another neighbor living on our street, but he continues to reject the offer of eternal life for a host of reasons. One day I cut through all his excuses by saying, "I know exactly why you refuse to accept Christ; you don't want to give up your sin." Amazingly, he said: "You are right!" The fact is, sin has so engulfed the world, that people cannot let go. Sin is like drugs to an addict...he knows he/she needs to quit, but the sinful giving endorphins numbs the soul concerning the Truth. In other words, the pride of life blinds people from exploring/comprehending redemption. This is a universal issue that is not only in America, but all of Africa and throughout the world. In addition to the above, besetting sins also shackles the believer from growing in spiritual depth according to **1 Corinthians 3:1ff**.

I understand that a lost person can give the right answers (mental assent) when sharing the gospel, but while at the same time their heart is far from God. Nevertheless, church members should be able to articulate their salvation experience. Unfortunately, members are rarely asked to verbalize their understanding of redemption. Billy Graham once estimated that seventy-five percent of church members are not truly born-again. They are religious but not truly redeemed. Therefore, the FIRST target of evangelization must be the church—**EvangaPew**—before God's Bride can effectively be mobilized to share the gospel. The Apostle Peter says it best: A believer must "...sanctify Christ as Lord in their hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" **1 Peter 3:15**."

Rick

Donations keep MLI supported in East Africa!

GENERAL FUND: Your gifts to the **general fund** has empowered MLI to help many Africans. The needs are great and your continued gifts are appreciated. **A short list of current needs is:** Salary support for several MLI teachers and staff still needed; widows general fund enables us to help with medical issues and to give something to those who do not currently have a donor; Please continue to support the medical fund. **On Going Projects:** Milling Project for Widows (see pic below); Deaf Ministry and construction of the Deaf School to be constructed on newly purchased land (see pic below); street kids fund; Thomas Kunya's house construction. Pr. Anthony & Pr. Euticauls of Kenya are grateful for your continued support. MLI's Instructors Pastor Paul & Teacher Julius Lusinda of Tanzania still need support.

More information is below regarding current/past projects. Please take time to pray over all of MLI challenges and projects. We know that God is able and will complete what He has begun.



Top Left to Right: MLI's Instructor **Julius Lusinda** of Tanzania was sent food for his family and others. The **Milling Building** (and bathrooms) for widows is ready for the trusses and roof. The deaf school if ready for the foundation. MLI will begin in September. We can use your assistance to make this happen. Far right is a sample of the food and soap that is distributed by Pastor Euticauls in the Korogocho Slum.

Middle Left to Right: The faithful **MLI Staff!** Far right is Flavia feeding an **albino** client. Additional feeding for albinos, widows, churches, bodas, street kids & staff scheduled the first of September.

Bottom Left to Right: **Pastor Timothy** of Basana is constructing a massive church facility. He has accomplished much for his people. **Pastor Anthony Ndambuki** is trying to feed church members and neighbors. MLI is assisting but more donors are need during this crisis. Pastor Anthony states that situation is critical. Thank you so so very much!

UGANDA NEWS

CDC recommends travelers avoid all nonessential international travel to Uganda. Uganda continues to be closed to international travelers unless an individual is willing to endure a mandatory quarantine period of 14 days costing \$100 per day.

CORONAVIRUS UPDATES

As of August 31, 2020

- **2928 confirmed cases**
- **30 DEATHS!**
- **Recovered—1288**

Churches remain closed, some transportation restrictions are still in place and business guidelines must be adhered to.

Thomas Kunya, MLI's bookkeeper, is now a signatory for our bank accounts in Uganda as of September 2nd (7 week process).

NOTICE: Again, September is a continuation of MLI's cell phone collection. Please ask your family, friends, Bible study group and church (Pastor) to donate their old cell phone to Mission Link. Also needed are laptops, tablets, electronic keyboard, and cameras.



Thirty dollars (\$30) a month brings great happiness & needed provision for our African Widows in Uganda!

Jane Nangobi: Jane was born in 1966 and has 5 children. Her husband died of blockages in 2015. She is so happy that God saved her, and she thanks God for her pastor who gave her a job to be a cook at the school. She is also grateful for the stove, medical clinics, soap and food that she always receives through Mission Link. Personal and medical needs are a challenge. Jane fellowships at Itukulu Baptist Church.



Candy (Sadler) was Heather's official hospital trained caregiver for the liver transplant procedure and post-surgery. After being a bachelor for over 6 weeks, I am happy to report that Candy has just arrived home. Heather is doing fantastic. She is in the top 1% for liver transplants having normal blood/enzymes levels in the first month! Thank you for your prayers!

Ronald Bagaga has been working in a hotel in Dubai for over two years. A donor afforded Ronald the opportunity to be trained in mechanics four years ago. Please pray for Ronald as his roommate has contracted C-19. Ronald is being tested, but is also not feeling well.

