

Effective Ministry in These Troubled Times

By Ben Burkhardt | Clear Call Ministries | Building God's Temple – Rain or Shine (Series)

Intro: We are living in difficult times of earth's history. Trouble is all over the world. From Bible prophecy, we know it will only continue to get worse (even if we see any kind of short reprieve). Yet, no matter the trouble in the world, we are called to work for God, to advance His Kingdom, and His everlasting gospel through Jesus Christ. In this lesson, we are going to look at three sections to give us helpful ideas on sharing truth in troubled times. First, we'll look at God's call to share truth in troubled times. Secondly, we'll explore the importance, usefulness, and effective ideas for literature ministry during troubled times. Finally, we'll explore team-ministry and well-trained Christian armies/platoons needed for being able to face any emergency. These can provide effective ministry in any kind of weather. Let's begin.

Sharing Truth in Troubled Times

- **The Call to Always Share**
 - **Eccl. 11:1-6** – Rain or Shine, clouds or not, we must work for Jesus (v.2,4). Keep sowing.
- **The Work Must Be Done in Easy Times and Hard Times**
 - (EGW) **"The work which the church has failed to do in a time of peace and prosperity, she will have to do in a terrible crisis, under most discouraging, forbidding circumstances."**—Testimonies For The Church 5:463 (1885).
 - "We are nearing the great and final conflict. Every advance move made now must be made with increasing effort; for Satan is working with all power to increase the difficulties in our way. He works with all deceivableness of unrighteousness to secure the souls of men. I am charged to say to ministers of the gospel and to our missionary physicians, Go forward. The work to be done calls for self-sacrifice at every step, but go forward."—Letter 38, 1908.
 - "We have no time to lose. The end is near. The passage from place to place to spread the truth will soon be hedged with dangers on the right hand and on the left. Everything will be placed to obstruct the way of the Lord's messengers, so that they will not be able to do that which it is possible for them to do now. We must look our work fairly in the face, and advance as fast as possible in aggressive warfare."
 - "From the light given me of God I know that the powers of darkness are working with intense energy from beneath, and with stealthy tread Satan is advancing to take those who are now asleep, as a wolf taking his prey. We have warnings now which we may give, a work now which we may do; but soon it will be more difficult than we can imagine. God help us to keep in the channel of light, to work with our eyes fastened on Jesus our Leader, and patiently, perseveringly press on to gain the victory.—Testimonies For The Church 6:22 (1900).
 - More EGW quotes on this here: <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/30.131>
 - **Building the Wall in Nehemiah's time** (as we've seen): **Neh. 4:6-10, 14, 16-20.** Prayer, praise, encouragement, working together. Dedicated to the work. (Override naysayers, by faith and talking faith).
 - **Daniel 9:25** "the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."

- **The Brave and Faithful will Share**
 - **Faint not for cold:** “The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing” (Proverbs 20:4). In hard times, you gear up and do it. You take up your cross and bear it along with Jesus.
 - **Be a Faithful Caleb:** Some people see giants, unsurpassable. Others see opportunities.
 - “Human agencies are to be employed in this work. Zeal and energy must be intensified; talents that are rusting from inaction must be pressed into service. The voice that would say, “Wait; do not allow yourself to have burdens imposed upon you,” is the voice of the cowardly spies. We want Calebs now who will press to the front—chieftains in Israel who with courageous words will make a strong report in favor of immediate action. When the selfish, ease-loving, panic-stricken people, fearing tall giants and inaccessible walls, clamor for retreat, let the voice of the Calebs be heard, even though the cowardly ones stand with stones in their hands, ready to beat them down for their faithful testimony.” {Our Father Cares, p.203.4}
- **Ideas for Advancement in Hard Times Like These**
 - Literature, Internet, Video Lessons, Small Groups, and Personal Ministry are very effective. Try a phone call ministry, too. Increase your prayer ministry efforts.
 - Health ministry is effective (guarded, remote). Reach out to people, as Jesus did, in their time of need. Depression Recovery/Optimum mental health (excellent offers). **Fairfield, WA example/idea** (Mailed healthy cookbooks. SDA Gift. Did online health/cooking)
 - **Sow seeds. Reap the harvest proportionally.** (When/if times open up for larger public meetings, then do them. Simply get ready for them now. Meanwhile, win souls how we can. With God, all things are possible. We can, should, and MUST win souls NOW).
 - **Keep Working for God. Sew Much!**
 - “In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.” (Prov. 14:23)
 - “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” (2 Cor. 9:6)
 - **Sow the gospel seed.** “The seed is the word” (Luke 8:11).
 - It needs to germinate in hearts to prepare them to make their decisions for eternity (Matt. 13:3, 18-23).
 - “5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. 6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him” (Psalm 126:5-6)

Let’s now take a look at literature ministry, in specific.

Literature Ministry and the 4th Angel

- **An Important Work:** Literature evangelism is a very important work that will carry on it’s importance to the very close of God’s work here upon the earth. Do you believe that?
- **My Testimony:**
 - **A Dear/Blessed Work:** Literature evangelism is a work that is very near and dear to my heart. Besides the preaching of the word in person, this is my next favorite gospel

outreach method. Actually, these must be combined – the work of teaching/preaching, and the work of sharing gospel-packed literature. In fact, the Bible from which we preach is God’s literature, preserving the truth throughout all ages. Placing literature in the homes is like placing gospel time-bombs or mines for the truth, just waiting to be discovered, read, and treasured by someone or multiple people.

- **My experience:** I first was introduced to literature evangelism in 2005. I joined a summer colporteur team in NCC, after their leader promoted the program at PUC. SOULS WEST Colporteurs (2 of them; John and Dawn) led the summer program under the leadership of Steve Nicola (NCC) and Larry Carter (Souls). I learned a ton that summer. That led me to do LE during my remaining college years, during the summer, and at times during the school year. Fall 2008 I did full-time LE work, to support my education and living.
- **My experience now:** I always carry literature in my car to share, and share it often. Like at the gas station with clerks or attendants, or some people I meet. In other transactions of business I also talk with people and share with them too. When I was in South Korea, we used literature in our classrooms and in a literature rack in the lobby. I would always encourage students to take some home and read it. I would even put it in their hands as a gift to every student. I believe it can be very effective at any age or time. We recently went door to door (during Covid 2020) and shared health and gospel literature to encourage people in OR. Folks who we saw seemed to appreciate it very much! Others found the surprise on their doorsteps later.
- **Pray and Work Wisely:** We should pray and share boldly, wisely, and intentionally the truth-filled literature that God has given us. Know what we are doing. Work according to knowledge. Let’s look at some truth-filled ideas on literature evangelism, its importance, and how we can get it out effectively, according to heavenly knowledge and counsel.
- **Let’s look over the special handout on the important work of literature evangelism** (see additional page/handout)

We’ll now focus on team ministry and being well-trained for God’s service.

Team Ministry and Well-trained Christian Armies/Platoons

Well-trained teams can accomplish many great things together. In fact, the greatest things that have ever affected this planet earth have been accomplished by excellent and well-trained teams. For example, the plan of salvation (The Godhead, the angels, God’s faithful – trained to work together). The greatest business enterprises, and best inventions, and military success stories have all been accomplished by well-trained teams.

These teams can provide effective gospel ministry in any kind of weather. They are trained and well-prepared for any emergency. In fact, they are always looking for better, more effective, and appropriate ways to do God’s work in any situation. Search the scriptures for answers. Search the Spirit of Prophecy for answers. Pray for the answers. Search out in the field among God’s workers for better ideas for success – yet always check and way these against the Bible and SOP for counsel. Then pray for God’s wisdom to employ all ideas correctly and to plan appropriately by God’s direction.

Now, the Bible itself instructs us that the best work will be accomplished by well-trained teams, and it shows the numerous examples as well. We need to pay attention to the instruction given us, to heed it, and to take action upon it. By God's grace, we need to become the most well-trained and effective missionary teams ever to grace the planet. God desires a well-trained, well-organized church – a Christian army with well-trained platoons working in perfect order and harmony for the glory of God. Is this what the Bible calls for? Yes, it is. Let's explore this more from biblical counsel.

- **God's counsel to organize**

- Ministry of Moses vs. Jethro's Advised Ministry for Moses (Exodus 18:17-23)
- "Why do not believers feel a deeper, more earnest concern for those who are out of Christ? **Why do not two or three meet together and plead with God** for the salvation of some special one, and then for still another? In our churches **let companies be formed for service**. Let different ones **unite in labor** as fishers of men. Let them seek to gather souls from the corruption of the world into the saving purity of Christ's love. {7T 21.3}
- **The Body of Christ** – "till we all come in the unity of the faith" (**Ephesians 4:13**).
- **NT ministry teams**. There are many to look at which could be studied. They all worked together in the cause of Christ. Example: Luke and Demas (**Col. 4:14**). Consider also Jesus and the 12, John the Baptist and his disciples, and the Apostles all working together.
- **Titus 1:5** – Organize the work. "Set things in order."

- **God's call for great serviceman**

- **Proverbs 14:28** – "In the multitude of people is the king's honour: but in the want of people is the destruction of the prince."
- Gideon. Judges 7:2-7 (esp. v.7). God chose the few who were brave, best qualified, and humble.
- The call of the disciples (prayerful. Luke 6:12-13)

- **God's call for effective training**

- **EGW on Well Trained Armies**.
 - "Just in front of our printing-office in Basel, Switzerland, is a large park of many acres, reserved by the government for military drill. Here, day after day, at certain seasons of the year, we see the soldiers training. They are drilled in all the duties of the army, so that in case of war they may be ready at the call of the government to engage in actual service." {GW 74.2}
 - Training on many items: Tent, Cannon, Ambulance, knapsacks.
 - "Thus the drill goes on, preparing men for any emergency. And should those who are fighting the battle for Prince Emmanuel be less earnest and painstaking in their preparation for the spiritual warfare? Those who engage in this great work must take part in the necessary drill. They must learn to obey before they are fitted to command." {GW 75.2}
- The training by Jesus of His disciples (**Luke 10:1-3,17** – the 12 and the 70, etc.)

- **God's call for unified minds, hearts, and purpose of action**

- Refresh by love and unity. Being "likeminded" like Timothy and Paul. **Phil. 2:2, 20**
- **The Importance of Togetherness – "Press Together" (EGW)**:
 - "Love of self, pride and self-sufficiency lie at the foundation of the greatest trials and discords that have ever existed in the religious world. Again and again the angel has said to me, "Press together, press together, be of one mind, of one judgment."

Christ is the Leader, and you are brethren; follow Him. Walk in the light as He is in the light. Those who walk in the footsteps of Christ shall not walk in darkness, but those who draw apart in unsanctified independence cannot have God's presence and blessing in the work" {ChL 11.4}

- Some cultures like in Asia know this far better than Individualistic America. The Bible promotes this very much too. In Evangelism and Church ministry, we need solid teamwork and team-players. We must be organized and trained for success, and we MUST SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER IN THE WORK OF MINISTRY.
- **God's call for an organized and effective missionary church, with mission teams**
 - My Experience with ESL Ministry and Center of Influence and Teams
 - An example of the need for this: Our "Open Table" Ministry and the gateway to other ministries (needed minglers).
 - At times it is child care, or effective greeters, or many other helps.
- **Practical Ideas for Success**
 - **Fill the various roles, working together, to create the most effective ministries possible.** In TF's "Soup and Salvation" we find this. In effective meetings, we find it, in other effective ministries, we find it.
 - **God blesses His organized, supportive teams of workers** in their ministry together. No one person needs all work or credit. All glory is due to God and His people working together. **Do not let Satan divide the flock or the team. A house "divided against itself" cannot stand (Mark 3:25).**

God's Appeal: Let's do this work for the Lord by prayerfully and faithfully serving Him, putting aside pride and selfishness, and working together with God as excellent teams and tools in His hands.