

# POLL THE AUDIENCE

**Gary McDade**

A popular television series is making the title a familiar household phrase. The “market-driven” approach of “doing church” from such best sellers as Rick Warren’s *Purpose Driven Church* has reshaped the thinking of many within the church today. The Memphis Urban Ministry<sup>1</sup> continues to ask the community what they want in a church.<sup>2</sup> An example of their willingness to give the community whatever they want is pictured in a recent book produced by MUM where a newly planted congregation is gathered under a twenty-five foot mural of a multicolored crucifix of Jesus which serves as a focal point of their worship.<sup>3</sup> The clamor for change is growing ever louder.

The need does not exist to modify the gospel to make it more acceptable to modern man. What is needed is to take the never changing gospel to a lost and dying world. Perhaps a reminder of the nature of the gospel would be helpful. In the Book of Hebrews the writer said, “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant . . .” (Heb. 13:20). In the final book of the Bible which has as its theme the ultimate victory of the kingdom of Christ over the world (Rev. 11:15), the apostle John wrote, “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Rev. 14:6). The warning of Paul to the Galatians is still as valid today as when it was penned two thousand years ago, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6-9).

Most have not heard the gospel. Therefore, attempts to modify it only heightens the expression of rebellion against God. A report some years ago in *The Spiritual Sword* revealed that in the United States eighty million people are not affiliated with any religious group, and of the people who are, ninety million are inactive. And, out of 242 countries in the world the church of Christ has made no effort at all in 109 of them. The church of Christ has a presence in about 133 countries, but

the number of members is very small. Much work is needed.<sup>4</sup> The gospel does not need to be changed; it needs to be believed more and with greater conviction of its saving power be carried to the lost.

The late Jule Miller, developer of the well known five lesson filmstrip series called *Visualized Bible Study Series*, once gave some simple suggestions on how to be an effective soul winner. First, make a list of all those with whom you would like to have a Bible study. Second, pray every day for each person on the list. Third, underline the best prospect. Fourth, approach that person to set up a Bible study. Fifth, continue to add to the list. Sixth, set aside one night per week for soul winning, and on that night either set up a Bible study or be studying with someone. (Remember: Bible study, not socializing, gossiping, or killing time.)<sup>5</sup>

The word of God is the “final answer” to mankind’s problem with sin. It will be the basis upon which the eternal destiny of man will rest (John 12:48). It must be fully and faithfully proclaimed (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 20:26; II Tim. 4:2).

### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup>Locally a ministry of the Highland Street Church of Christ.

<sup>2</sup>Jim Harbin, Minister of the Raleigh Community Church in "Vision for the City," a publication of MUM, Sept. 2000, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Shank, Harold; Wood, Anthony; and Bergeron, Ron; *Embracing the Poor* (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 2000), p. 76.

<sup>4</sup>Earl Edwards, *The Spiritual Sword*, 27:1, p. 9. Earl Edwards occupies the chair of graduate Bible professor at FHU and is a former missionary to Italy.

<sup>5</sup>Jule Miller, *The Spiritual Sword*, 27:1, p. 30.