

VISITING PROGRAM TRAINING CLASS

Fourteenth Class

March 23, 1969

FORMAT:

1. Open with prayer.
2. World news discussion and drill (5-8 minutes).
3. Difficult scripture drill (30 minutes).
4. Sermonettes and evaluations (30 minutes).
5. Recess (10 minutes).
6. Lecture (one hour).
7. Assignments for next class.

DIFFICULT SCRIPTURES

1. Disprove: We should preach the Gospel from house to house (Acts 20:20).
 - A. This verse is not talking about preaching the Gospel to uninterested, unconverted people from house to house. Notice that Paul is talking to the elders of the Ephesus Church (Acts 20:17-18). Paul taught these men from house to house (Acts 20:20).
 - B. In Matthew 7:6 Christ gives the principle of "not casting your pearls before the swine." The precious truth of God is not to be carelessly given to the unconverted who will treat it with disrespect. If an individual's mind hasn't been opened by God, trying to cram the truth down his throat will only make him angry at you. For this reason we visit only those who specifically request a visit. Otherwise we let The WORLD TOMORROW and The PLAIN TRUTH witness to those who have no desire to be visited.
 - C. In Luke 10:7, Christ instructed his disciples, "go not from house to house."
 - D. Throughout the book of Acts we see that Paul's practice was to enter into the synagogue and preach publicly to the Jews assembled there (Acts 13:14; 14:1; 17:10). Nowhere does it mention that Paul preached the Gospel to the unconverted, from house to house!

Yet, in Acts 20:20 we see that Paul, when speaking privately to the elders of the Church, did teach them in their homes!

2. Disprove: Paul wanted to depart and be with Christ in heaven (Phil. 1:23, 24).
 - A. Paul did not expect to go to heaven and receive his reward immediately at death! Rather, in II Timothy 4:6-8, Paul explained that he would be with Christ at the day of Christ's appearing -- His second coming!
 - B. On the day Christ returns, the dead in Christ who have been sleeping in the dust of the earth (Dan. 12:2) will be resurrected to life (I Thess. 4:16-17). This event occurs at the sounding of the seventh TRUMP (I Cor. 15:52). This is the time Paul will receive his reward from Jesus Christ (Isa. 40:10). He did not expect to go to a "heavenly reward" immediately upon death!
 - C. Yet, Paul said he was "willing to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." Why? Paul's answer is found in II Corinthians 5:2 where he said that "we earnestly groan to be clothed upon with our house from heaven" - - the spiritual body he expected to receive at the resurrection. Paul yearned to be "delivered from this vile body of flesh," to end the difficulties and burdens of this life by death (Rom. 7:24; Phil. 1:24). "To die," he said, "is gain" because the next moment of his consciousness would be the resurrection!
 - D. Now Paul's statement in Philippians is clear. He was willing to remain alive for the sake of the Philippians who needed him as a teacher and apostle, even though he desired personally to be delivered by death from the troubles of this life. Paul, though dead and buried in the dust of the earth, would be AWAITING THE RESURRECTION and ultimately be with Christ at His second coming to this earth!
2. Disprove: Christians don't have to keep the law to be saved -- merely believe on Jesus Christ (Acts 16:30-31).
 - A. Paul did not say all a Christian need do to be saved is believe. He told the jailer to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." But there is more to it than that.
To all men Jesus says in Luke 6:46, "Why call me, 'Lord, Lord' and do not the things which I say?" In connection with Acts 16:30-31, we can see that Christ expects us to do the things that He says if we really believe that He is our Lord and Savior. One of the things Jesus said was, "If you will enter into life keep the commandments" (Matt. 19:17).
 - B. James magnifies this point by showing that faith and works go hand in hand -- works are the automatic result of faith. Faith without works is dead (Jas. 2:20, 26). We show our faith by our works (Jas. 2:18).

Again, the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 2:13, "For not the hearers of

the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."

No one is a Christian unless he has God's Spirit in him (Rom. 8:9), and God gives His Spirit only to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32).

C. The attitude of the jailer was not one of "all I have to do is believe." Rather, it was "what must I do to be saved?" Paul could see that he was willing to obey God -- willing to do whatever was required. Believing on Jesus Christ, on His message, His Word, His authority, was only one of the conditions to salvation. Paul didn't say that was all that was necessary. Verse 32 clearly shows Paul went on to teach him what real repentance was - - turning from sin - - obedience to God! And after that, he was baptized (Verse 33)!

Paul didn't teach faith without works. Rather he taught faith with works -- a belief that leads to positive actions.

HOW TO CONDUCT A VISIT - - PART II

* Begin with a short review of Part I -- main points.

I. NORMAL PROSPECTIVE VISITS

Most of you men in the Visiting Program Training Class will probably not be handling this type of visit. But it will be helpful for you to understand the basic approach to visiting new prospective members. These are visits to people who are not yet attending Church. Most of them have come in contact with God's Work through the broadcast and literature. Many have become interested through other members of the Church. Either way, these are people who have requested a visit and who have shown an interest in God's Church. We visit only those who approach us and ask for a visit. This way they are receptive and we are not forcing anything on them. Here is the general format and some specific points that should be remembered and used by those conducting prospective visits.

A. First Contact and Introduction

The first impression is important! It sticks with people. God's Church and Work will be judged by your conduct on this kind of a visit. Remember we are ambassadors for Christ and this is the first contact for many with a true Christian. How you look, what you say and what you do is very important on this first visit.

If the first appointment is made by a letter, it should be done well in advance of the visit. Type out the envelope and make sure everything is neat and in order. These new prospectives receive a definite im-

pression -- either good or bad -- depending upon this letter.

If your first contact is by phone, say something like this: "Hello. My name is (give your name). I am representing Mr. Armstrong and The WORLD TOMORROW broadcast. We received your request for a visit. We are in your area now and would like to stop by for a visit and try to help you." Something like this would be appropriate. The main thing is to be friendly and courteous. Have some personality in your voice. Be positive. Strive to give a right impression even on the telephone.

If you have notified them by letter and your first contact is at the door, then just introduce yourself in the manner given in the last paragraph - - "Hello. My name is" Then, in a friendly, positive manner, wait for them to invite you in. Give a firm handshake. Be warm and friendly. Remember your manners and wait until they ask you to be seated. You should be sharp and alert in every way on this first visit because it can "make" or "break" a new prospective.

Avoid a large Bible or carrying case. This gives a wrong impression. Use a small pocket Bible or else use their own Bible when explaining scripture.

B. Conducting the Visit

You should lead and guide the conversation but let him do most of the talking. Keep the conversation moving. Try to draw him out so you can find out about his background and ideas without seeming to be prying. If you let them talk, guiding the conversation, you can find out much information without asking direct questions. If they don't talk much, it is certainly all right to ask, "How long have you heard the broadcast? How long have you been reading The PLAIN TRUTH? Are you taking the Correspondence Course? Which lesson are you on?" Or, "What are some of the booklets you have received?" Or, "Do you have any questions?" Watch the reaction to these questions and note their knowledge.

Be observant and try to discern their real attitude. What is their attitude toward various booklets - - the Sabbath booklet or subject IF it comes up without "forcing" it too soon? During the conversation, be friendly and sociable -- make them feel at ease, but get to know them. If unconverted relatives are present, chat sociably with them about carnal things like hunting, fishing, etc. You can find out a lot by discussing their interests, hobbies, recreation, home and family, how they contacted us and things in their home. Their hobbies and interests can reveal many things about their character.

Be patient. Use this approach in visiting them -- "The servant of the

Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth . . . (II Tim. 2:24, 25). Don't preach at them or force ideas on them. Remember that only God can call and convert a person (Rom. 2:4).

Don't be CORRECTIVE on the first visit. Some of them may only be called to be Co-Workers. So be careful not to offend them and turn them sour or bitter against God's Work. Try to discern whether or not they are really being called of God. Look for a truly repentant attitude -- the attitude of yieldedness and obedience, one of submission to authority. In other words, be alert to their problems and attitudes.

I Corinthians 9:19-22 -- Try to develop a real personal rapport with them as Paul did -- sell yourself to them as a friend, one who is really interested in them. Sympathize with them and be understanding in their problems. Relate your own experiences, problems and trials to them and really try to serve and help them.

Let them talk a lot and you will get to know them. Be basic -- stick to key issues. Don't discuss too many subjects but be thorough on the ones that you do discuss. Don't let them ask a question and jump to another subject before you have thoroughly answered their questions on one subject. Don't try to solve all their problems at once. If they don't talk much, try to get them talking about the Work, the broadcast, Mr. Armstrong, or world news and prophecy. Let them know that this Work is different.

Make them realize we are not out after people's money and not trying to proselyte or "get people saved." Bring out that God is real, that prophecy is being fulfilled. Talk about world news and show them how it is related to prophecy.

It wouldn't be wrong to carry your Envoy along on a first visit and show them pictures of the Colleges. People are interested in pictures and this will also stimulate conversation and show them more about God's Work.

While you are getting to know them, be sure to notice and mentally note their main problems. Answer their questions and try to help them but be cautious about giving them too much spiritual meat on the first contact. Even the basic doctrines can be dangerous -- such as, divorce and remarriage. This can be a "bombshell" to them and you must be careful how you approach the subject. Save it till last and if they have this problem, you will need to give them more time to become deeply rooted and grounded in the basic things before you go deeply into their

marriage problem.

If there is no response on the first visit and they don't seem to be really interested, tell them that you are glad to have met them and that if they would like another visit, to let you know. And then leave on a friendly note. You may want to visit them again later if they do not contact you. A second visit may help you to determine whether or not there is any hope for them to come along.

The main thing then, on prospective visits, is to get to know them and their problems. Try to discern their true attitude. Are they being called? Are they just Co-Workers? Are they really "duds" or could you "bring them along?" to more truth and ultimate conversion by helpful follow-up visits and personal Bible studies? Regardless, sincerely do try to help them. Let them do most of the talking. Note the details of the visit in your mind. Fill out a visit report as soon as possible afterward.

C. Who and When to Invite

In a sentence, invite those who are being called by God and who are ready for baptism. God's Church is for God's people. It is the job of those visiting new prospectives to discern who is yielding to the calling of God and has a repentant attitude. This is an awesome responsibility. Without God's Spirit to give you discernment, you could be deceived and end up inviting carnal-minded, hostile, resentful, suspicious people into God's Church. Don't invite anyone to Church if you have any doubts about their conversion. Invite prospectives only if you feel they are virtually ready for baptism, or will be within just a few weeks. Don't invite anyone to Church to get them converted there. Church services are not evangelistic campaigns to convert people. They are commanded assemblies intended for the purpose of feeding those who are already converted. Let's really **STICK** to this principle in inviting people to Church!

Be very cautious about inviting prospectives who were strong Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses or Seventh-day Adventists. These kind very seldom really come out of their former religion. Be sure there is a complete change of attitude and make sure their problems have been mainly overcome before you invite them to Church. Be careful about those who were deeply involved in any of Satan's religions. Take several visits to make sure they have completely come out of it.

Don't invite a new prospective to Church on the first visit unless you are absolutely sure he is completely repentant and ready for baptism. Most prospectives are not ready on the first visit. Usually invite

them only after the second or third visit over a period of weeks of working with them. If they ask about a church on the first visit and they are not ready, tell them we don't have a church the way they think -- only private meetings for those who have their whole hearts in this Work, have proven it and have been converted and baptized. Exceptions would be friendly mates of Church members and young people of college age who have open minds and will probably come along in time.

So, be cautious and don't invite serious problems to God's Church. Make sure that God is calling them, that they are being converted and have overcome their main problems. When they are ready for baptism, then invite them to Church. Be sure to always clarify WHY you invited a prospective member to Church on the visit slip.

D. How to Close

In closing a prospective visit, one of the main points is to leave them wanting more -- waiting eagerly for the next visit. Don't try to solve all their problems on the first visit and wear out your welcome. When you see that the visit is beginning to drag a little, then begin bringing it to a close. Recommend certain booklets and articles that you feel they should be studying. Explain that you would be happy to come back and visit them again after they have proven a few more things to themselves. Let them know that you enjoyed visiting them and that you are looking forward to the next visit. Encourage them to pray and study more and to step out on faith and obey God. Really encourage and inspire them to take action on what they are learning. Use tact and wisdom, though, and don't push too hard. You can't convert them, so don't offend them. You may set up another appointment with them before leaving, or else ask them to call you when they want another visit.

II. PROBLEM VISITS

A. Members

Most serious member problems should be handled by the local minister in charge. You men, on the Visiting Program, should not be trying to solve some of the serious problems that members have. But you should be alert to certain problems so that when you encounter them, you can bring them to the attention of the minister. Watch for these problems:

Serious sex problems such as adultery, drinking too much and outright drunkenness, not saving second tithe and stealing from first tithe -- indicated by serious financial problems. Unusual marriage and child-rearing problems, serious attitude problems and demon problems. Be extra eyes and ears for your local minister. If you spot any serious

problem or potential problem, bring it immediately to his attention.

If any of you men in this Visiting Program Training Class have to handle a serious member problem, then here is the approach to use. Introduce the problem -- get right into it. On this type of visit the member usually knows your reason for being there. Explain that your visit is in love and that you want to help the member overcome his problem. If possible, get him to discuss the problem -- get all the facts. Show the individual his error and how it is hurting him and the Church of God. Try to make him see that his eternal life is at stake! Explain the scriptures that concern the problem -- show him what God says. Give the solution to the problem and serve the ultimatum. Be firm, serious and decisive.

The extent of the corrective action, if any, is up to him as indicated by his conduct and attitude. Punishment can vary all the way from a strong reprimand to a complete disfellowship. Suspending a member from all services and fellowship without formally disfellowshipping him is many times a good form of punishment. The time limit of a suspension would depend upon the person's attitude and progress in overcoming the problem. If a person is not seriously trying to overcome a major problem, he should be put out at the third admonishment (Tit. 3:10). All disfellowships should be handled by the minister in charge. Remember you are dealing with the individual's eternal life. Do your very best to save them! Try hard to get them to understand and see the seriousness of their problem. Pray fervently for them that they will see and change. Do your part to help save them from the lake of fire -- "And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire " (Jude 22, 23).

On the other hand, remember that you cannot live this person's life for him. You can only tell him what God says and leave the rest to him.

B. Prospectives

The most serious problem often encountered on new prospective visits is the divorce and remarriage situation. These problems should be handled only by the minister in charge who has been trained and instructed in handling these touchy situations. Much tact and wisdom and love and compassion must be used in handling these problems. All the facts should be gathered and much counsel should be sought. If there is any question at all as to whether or not a marriage is binding, these problems should be taken to the District Superintendent and then on to Headquarters if necessary.

Occasionally you will encounter suspicious or hostile prospective members.

Many times it is possible to soothe or eradicate this suspicion or hostility by your approach and answers. Explain the reason for your visit - - that we are not out to proselyte or "get" anything from them. Explain that our purpose is to serve and help in any way that we can. Show them how The WORLD TOMORROW is different. Some prospectives are suspicious or hostile because they have wrong concepts or ideas about God's Work.

Explain the truth to them in a tactful way. Show that what we teach is different and practical. Try every approach possible to get through to them. If there is still no response, don't waste any more time -- just leave. You should delete this type of person if you feel there is no hope for them now. If in doubt, wait awhile.

Watch out for demon problems! Again, these should be handled only by the minister in charge. Remember Acts 19:15 -- "And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" The demons do know God's ministers. And they fear the power and authority that Christ has given His ministers over them. It takes special training and discernment to recognize demon influence. If a new prospective is odd or unusual in any way, you should suspect demon influence. Never invite them to Church unless you are sure this is not the case. Part of our commission is to help these people if possible. But we must also use wisdom and extreme caution because some people are beyond our help.

You must realize that some prospective members are former drunkards, dope addicts, prostitutes, homosexuals, or lesbians and almost any other thing. This is the age we live in! And you must approach each new prospective visit realizing this could be one of those cases. Don't assume anything, especially in these visits. And don't invite any of them to Church until you are absolutely sure they have repented and overcome these problems. These visits, of course, should be handled by the local minister in charge.

III. FINAL IMPORTANT POINTS

A. Length of Visit

This should be determined by the type of visit and the need. But, as a general guide, one-half hour should be the minimum length of a visit and two hours the maximum length. To be most effective, the length of a normal visit should be somewhere between three-quarters and one-and one-half hours. Some unusual problem visits may require three to four hours. Even 15 to 20 minute "pop-in" visits on widows and other members can be encouraging and helpful. Whether or not a visit is really helpful and effective is the most important thing - not just how long it

is. So strive to make each visit worthwhile no matter how long it is. And, normally speaking, your last visit should end by 10:00 or 10:30 P.M. at the latest.

B. Refreshments

Use your own discernment about accepting refreshments. Remember that you might offend if you don't accept. If you don't accept, explain very tactfully why. Don't accept alcoholic drinks on a visit unless your responsibilities with Bible Studies, Spokesman Clubs or visiting and counseling are over for the evening. An exception would be a social dinner visit where a little wine or beer is served along with the meal. Wine and beer are to help you relax and be happy (Ps. 104:15) and should not be indulged in until the responsibilities of the day are over (Prov. 31:5 and Lev. 10:9-11). At all costs, avoid drinking too much even if you have to totally abstain! You must set a right example on this! So use wisdom and moderation in accepting refreshments.

C. College Applicants

These visits should be handled only by those of preaching elder rank or above. It takes an experienced, Ambassador College trained man to know the type of student that God wants at His College. The decisions made on these applications are vitally important. Adequate space and time should be taken to give a thorough evaluation. Years of time and thousands of dollars will be spent on each student accepted. Ambassador College is the "West Point" of God's Work. So only those applicants of highest caliber should be recommended for acceptance at Ambassador College.

D. Don't Visit Alone

You should not visit anyone alone unless it is an absolute emergency. Too many things can happen in this day and age. Always use your ministerial assistant or a leading man in the Church as a second man. Many times your wife may have to visit with you out of necessity.

Never visit women alone under any circumstances! Mr. Herbert Armstrong has made this absolute law! Even if you are above reproach, some women are not. Besides, God says give no appearance of evil (I Thess. 5:22). Men, don't take any chances on this! Some men on the Visiting Program in Gods Church did take chances. They are still suffering the consequences of that one mistake! AND they are no longer elders in the Church of God!

E. Apply This Lesson

One of the greatest needs in God's Work today is for converted and dedicated men to visit and help God's people! Will you men respond to the calling you are being given? Will you use the instruction you have been given in this lesson to more effectively serve God's people? If your answer is a determined "yes" then get to work in God's service as you never have before! The need is great!

Christ said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few . . ." (Matt. 9:37). Be one of those few laborers that Christ spoke of. God's people desperately need your help!

Work hard in this Class, apply yourself to learn what you are being given and to change your lives to conform to this knowledge. Then -- IF the natural talent, leadership and personality is there -- you can qualify to represent God as a servant in His Visiting Program!