

# Commission Report 2018

Wednesday August 22, 2018 8:42 AM

Northern Virginia Commission on Evangelism

Many individuals viewing this forecast today have been part of either the baby boomer, or baby buster generation. This probably means that you remember church experiences in which we frequently entered into God's gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise. It was a joy not merely on Sunday morning, but several days during the week. Surely you remember the days of simplicity, days in which our community stood in greater unity than today. Those were the days in which we cherished our time in the house of God, and with other congregations in our various communities. Those were the days in which our churches were the centerpieces of the African-American community. We thank God that over 50 years ago such centrality of God's house was able to rally a group of Christians congregations in a racial weary community in Montgomery Alabama in 1955 to eventually organize the Montgomery Improvement Association, and place a deep indelible dent into armor of Jim Crow, segregation, and discrimination.

Those were indeed powerful days. Those days are recorded in our minds and hearts even to this day. A strong church centrality is reflective today in the cinema with new cinematic classics like Boycott, Selma, and Hidden Figures. The familiarity of those powerful Christian experiences are also found in the following song by the Winans...

*I remember when life was so simple*

*You did or you didn't*

*You would or you wouldn't*

*But it ain't like that anymore*

*I remember when life was so easy*

*People said what they meant*

*They were either for it or against*

*But it ain't like that anymore*

*Somewhere, we lost the score*

*Bring back the days of yea and nay*

*When we could plainly see the way*

*Then it was up to us to choose*

*Whether to win or to lose...*

That notwithstanding, my forecast predicts that without the evangelistic efforts of our cultural, and historical past, which is found in such prominent pioneers as, George Lisle, and Lott Carey, we will lose the progressive stability which has blessed us to be where we are less than 200 years after emancipation. In my international travels I have experienced a tremendous, and anxious thirst for our testimony. Herein, and again without this Biblical mandate as prescribed in scripture we will become an ineffective fixture in the various pertinent issues of life here in the 21st-century. We are now amid the cultural oddities of a new generation that has an incredible zeal toward God, but not according to knowledge. For so many there is more concern with political correctness than with Biblical application. We now deal with parishioners that comes to church to justify their behaviors, rather than learn what said behavior should be. For some of our children, and grandchildren evangelism is viewed as an unnecessary task which intrudes upon the preferences of others, but It has been stated that the church will either evangelize or fossilize. This my friends is the purpose of this forecast. To sound a clarion call to action that will reinforce our most cherished procession. The fossilization of our churches will have a devastating effect on our American culture and the African American community. Already other communities of faith have endorsed, and elected a chief executive who speaks the truth as a foreign language, with no fluency of honest dialect.

Our ancestors lived, hoped, and thrived progressively through a strong Christian tradition from the faith lyrics of songs like, "...Up above my head I hear music in the air, there must be a God somewhere..." to today's, "...Praise is what I do...", Nonetheless, a declining application of evangelistic mandates is now presently eroding the fabric and foundation of the tapestry of African-American culture, and churches. This should concern the Northern Virginia Baptist Association because a decline in new Christian in our churches will eventually, but surely effect the registrations of our beloved gatherings. Dr. King use to say, "...We are all bound in one network of neutrality, tied in a single garment of destiny. What effects one of us directly effects all of us indirectly..." Indeed we now deal with a pharaoh who doesn't even know our name, and with the various cultural shifts we have experienced within the past 30 years we are compelled to make bricks without straw. Even in this bleak atmosphere we must regain the elements of evangelism to refocus, reflect, and regroup.

Some of you remember the revivals of 20 and 30 years ago. Especially the those grand citywide revival's which celebrated, and enjoyed an exciting cooperation throughout the church community. I recall the ushers bringing more chairs to the pulpit to accommodate all of the distinguished guest Pastors. I recall someone else's choir proudly singing in the choir box, and someone else's pianist at our piano. I recall Deacon's from every church in the city, not only Baptist Ch but Methodist, and sometimes even our friends in the Catholic faith gathering within His Gates of Thanksgiving. Deaconess, and Missionaries from neighboring churches came together like a noble, and majestic sorority of sisters. Deacons marched in these evangelistic services as devoted proponents of fellowship, and worship. The transmitter of power flowed from heart to heart, and breast to breast. At each service "...Heaven came down our Souls to greet, and Glory crowned the Mercy Seat..."

My forecast today is filled with these memories because there is still hope, but there are also potential clouds of grave ramifications. Some churches have already experienced A Spiritual Diabetic Disorder. Spiritual Diabetes has at least four elements.

- The Lethargic Element
- The Confusion Element
- The Hydration Element
- The Nutritional Element

### **The Lethargic Element**

One of the greatest oddities of this generation is that with faster cars, more effective communication systems, with social media, and technologies such as texting, websites, Xerox machine, blogs, newsletters and Twitting... we appear to always be tried, a day late and a dollar short. Like the church of Ephesus in the book Revelation we have left our first love, and the abandonment of our first Love has separated us from our primary mandate, eclipsed us our original priorities, and this has left us too weary to be effective here in the 21st Century. it may be necessary for us to add a prescription of Geritol with the elements of our monthly communion; for not only are we too exhausted to approach Global missions today... many of our churches no longer have the strength to attend an afternoon worship service.

This why God told Amos to tell Israel **“...I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream...”** I believe that a return to evangelistic efforts will revitalize our churches, and give us new found strength for our precious journey.

### **The Confusion Element**

The second element of a Spiritual Diabetic Disorder is the element of confusion. The standard of morality has been a challenge for our Nation far before the grandeur of 1776. Such changes continue today as we encounter ways that... **“...seem right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death...”** In embracing evangelism we will be better equipped to eradicate this element because... **“...the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord...”**, and **“...God is not the author of confusion...”** The great Apostle Peter tells us in **II Peter 1:9** **“...but he that lacks these things is blind and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins...”** There is clearly no need to be confused while processing the wise counsel of God's Word at hand with clear instructs of His Word, His Will, and His Way.

### **The Hydration Element**

The hydration factor reveals increased thirst. This thirst is seen within ritualistic obsessions that provide no meaningful satisfaction. Congregations without a strong evangelistic ministry finds themselves plagued with a constant element of thirst. This prognosis is easily found in the line item notations while auditing our annual church budgets. Most churches have large figures of outcome prioritizing what we want to accomplish as religious organizations, but very little, or no resources to address the mandates of God. This thirst is manifested with voids, and constant wants. The vital, loving sibling of evangelism is the essential ministry of discipling. It is obvious that by not bringing in New candidates for baptism,

and new brothers and sisters in the body of Christ we will find ourselves Religiously eroded, and spiritually impotent. The human body as well as the Body of Christ suffer when there is a lack of water. This lack causes dehydration. Dehydration is reflective not only in thirst, but in awkward symptoms of dizziness, headaches, and a lack of focus. This element explains the Predilection of irrelevancies in many congregations. **Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keeps the law, (Word) happy is he.**

### **The Nutritional Element**

I have learned in my life journey that food alone does not energize this fragile frame. One of the most irritating elements of diabetes is an ineffective diet. Today our radio, and television broadcast have become sources of Religious Fast Food. They provide an unhealthy, high sugary content which actually promotes... "...the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life..." A physical diabetic can consume multiple meals on a daily basis, and still remain hungry, lethargic, and void of the necessary vitality of a balanced diet. The Spiritually Diabetic Congregation that ingest non- substantive sermons bearing high sugar content de-energizes a people into the status mentioned above... "**...having a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge...**" It is a known fact that a church with any Christian education ministry is not as effective without evangelism. Evangelism provides freshman Christians who willingly enroll into our churches required instruction, training and education. However, without new Christians through the elements of evangelism the teachers find themselves teaching a declining enrollment. As well those whom we do teach find themselves trapped in a repetitive matriculation of a stagnate student body being taught the same lessons by the same teachers continuously within nonproductive semesters.

In closing, with these considerations and other elements which are not included in this report, the Commission on Evangelism makes the following recommendations:

We recommend that every congregation within the Northern Virginia Association form an Evangelistic Ministry. We also recommend that churches with effective Evangelistic Ministries would assist other churches in their region to reach their communities, after said churches have successfully established a qualified New Members Orientation, and classes that will help to promote Biblical Knowledge, and Spiritual Maturity. Some suggested classes for advanced programs would include lessons in...

1. What we believe as Christians
2. The Reliability of Scripture
3. Defending our Faith (Apologetics)
4. Sharing our Faith (Evangelism)

The Commission on Evangelism has a proud legacy of providing a full curriculum of Evangelistic courses established by our previous Director... Dr. Alfred Jones of the Zion Baptist Church, in Triangle, Virginia. We stand ready to assist any church, with the permission of their Pastor. The success of our smallest church is as important as our largest congregation. The regular practice of evangelism will please our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, bring others to Christ, grow our local congregations, and expand the Gospel throughout the world.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Jeffery Johnson, Sr.

Director Commission on Evangelism

**II Timothy 2:2 And the things you have heard me say  
in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable  
people who will also be qualified to teach others.**