

# Whatever Became of Evangelism?

Now it came to pass that a group existed who called themselves fishermen. And lo, there were many fish in the waters all around. In fact the whole area was surrounded by streams and lakes filled with fish. And the fish were hungry.

Week after week, month after month, and year after year, those who called themselves fishermen met in meetings and talked about their call to fish, the abundance of fish, and how they might go about fishing. Year after year they carefully defined what fishing means, defended fishing as an occupation, and declared that fishing is always to be a primary task of fishermen.

These fishermen built large, beautiful buildings for local fishing headquarters. The plea was that everyone should be a fisherman and every fisherman should fish. One thing they didn't do, however; they didn't fish.

In addition to meeting regularly, they organized a board to send out fishermen to other places where there were many fish. The board was formed by those who had the great vision and courage to speak about fishing, to define fishing, to promote the idea of fishing in far-away streams and lakes where many other fish of different colors lived. Also the board hired staffs and appointed committees and held many meetings to define fishing, to defend fishing, to decide what new streams should be thought about. But the staff and committee members did not fish.

Large, elaborate, and expensive training centers were built whose original and primary purpose was to teach fishermen how to fish. Over the years courses were offered on the needs of the fish, the nature of fish, how to define fish, the psychological reactions of fish, and how to approach and feed fish. Those who taught had doctorates in "fishology." But the teachers did not fish. They only taught fishing.

Further, the fishermen built large printing houses to publish fishing guides. Presses were kept busy day and night to produce materials solely devoted to fishing methods, equipment, and programs, to arrange and encourage meetings, to talk about fishing. A speakers' bureau was also provided to schedule special speakers on the subject of fishing.

After one stirring meeting on "The Necessity of Fishing," one young fellow left the meeting and went fishing. The next day he reported that he had caught two outstanding fish. He was honored for his excellent catch and scheduled to visit all the big meetings possible to tell how he did it. So he quit his fishing in order to have time to tell about the experience to the other fishermen. He was also placed on the Fisherman's General Board as a person having considerable experience.

Now it's true that many of the fishermen sacrificed and put up with all kinds of difficulties. Some lived near the water and bore the smell of dead fish. They received the ridicule of some who made fun of their fishermen's clubs and the fact that they claimed to be fishermen yet never fished. They wondered about those who felt it was of little use to attend and talk about fishing. After all, were they not following the Master who said, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19).

Imagine how hurt some were when one day a person suggested that those who don't fish were not really fishermen, no matter how much they claimed to be. Yet it did sound correct. Is a person a fisherman if year after year he never catches a fish? Is one following if he isn't fishing?

