

# Indio Informer

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## SUCCESSFUL SOUL WINNING IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY (#1).

By Brent Hunter

**Introduction:** Most of the precious souls who are interested enough in spiritual things to be reading this bulletin article do not need to be reminded that most congregations of the Lord's church (at least in the United States), are either plateaued or declining. Sadly, if the general trend of stagnation does not change, the trajectory looking forward is discouraging at best, and at worst, absolutely frightening!

We need to address not just what the problem is but deal with *scriptural positive solutions!*

A good place to start is to understand **what the barriers are** to church growth, and then learn **how to overcome them**, so we can be effective and successful in spreading the gospel in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We desperately need and want **practical solutions**.

In addition, we should be encouraged by the stirring examples of congregations that are bucking the trend, that have not given up, and like the church at Thessalonica, have successfully "*sounding out the word of the Lord everywhere*" (I Thessalonians 1:8), and whose "*work of faith and labor of love*" (I Thessalonians 1:3) are an inspiration. As a brotherhood, we need to be made more aware of the congregations around us that are consistently reaching many souls for Christ, so that we can both be encouraged, and learn the best way to approach evangelism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In this introductory article, I want to lay out a few key principles and set the stage for a problem/solution discussion which will deal with six main barriers that keep Christians from sharing their faith and how we can overcome those barriers in future installments.

Welcome, and Thank you, ...Brent Hunter  
Speaker for today and three evenings following.

**Gospel Meeting Begins!**  
Three evenings remaining...bring a friend!

**ATTENTION**  
**TIME CHANGE NEXT SUNDAY...TURN CLOCK**  
**BACK ONE HOUR!!**

### October Birthdays

8 Esmeralda McCollum 16 Elizabeth Carrillo  
28 Allan Brown

### November Birthdays

10 Daniel Brown

### November Anniversaries

2 Shannon & Susan Hudson

#### Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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## SO YOU WANT TO BE A SOUL WINNER?

By Brent Hunter

### Six Key Barriers Which Must be Overcome

**#1. Fear of Rejection. “I don’t feel comfortable.”** We are surrounded by a culture that is “politically correct” and people today are very easily offended. Unfortunately, many Christians have allowed the culture to change them, instead of the reverse. Indeed, this often-paralyzing fear of rejection, is the most commonly stated reason why Christians tell me they don’t talk to their friends and neighbors about the gospel. We need to be reminded that the opposite of fear is faith, and that “*without faith it is impossible to please Him*” (Hebrews 11:6). John admonishes us, “*Perfect love cast out fear!*” (I John 4:18)!

**#2. A lack of joy and assurance of one’s salvation.** If the truth were known, many Christians don’t possess assurance of their own salvation! John tells us, “*These things have I written to you, that you might know you have eternal life*” (I John 5:13). God’s intent was for His children to have peace and joy in their hearts. Why? Because we are to trust in Him and God’s grace as we “*walk in the light and He is in the light*” (I John 1:7). Sadly, if Christians don’t possess the assurance of their salvation, they can’t have joy in their hearts. Beloved, this joy and strength found in the Lord, should naturally flow out of us as we have conversations with others. Berating people for not doing “personal evangelism,” and trying to get them to be motivated primarily from guilt, is not a long-term solution to changing the culture in a congregation. We must be insightful enough to deal with the real underlying issues, and not just deal with symptoms. A better course is to encourage and strengthen personal commitment, and the Christian’s faith in the promises of God, and the “*joy of your salvation*” (Psalms 51: 12). It is noteworthy, that after Isaiah promises us that His word will not return void, He says, “*For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace*” (Isa 55:12). Make no mistake, the most effective soul winners are those that go out with joy in their hearts and share the gospel with passion and love in their hearts.

(To be continued next week)

I read recently, that when asked how often Christians had shared their faith in the past year, 95% of the respondents replied they had not shared their faith! Not even once. *Really?* Can that possibly be true? I have asked audiences around the country that same question, and received with few exceptions, the same approximate percentage. Sadly, it is not only true, but even more alarming, in some congregations, it has become the *acceptable norm*. Clearly, the culture of evangelistic fervor and zeal found in the book of Acts, has yet to be restored in too many congregations! So, on the face of it, this simple fact explains why most congregations are not growing. Haggai asked a very good question, “*Is the seed yet in the barn*” (Haggai 2:19)? In most cases today, the answer is “yes.” Obviously, we can’t sow the seed, if we keep it to ourselves! And if we sow sparingly, we cannot expect to have a bountiful harvest (2 Cor 9:6)!

Okay, the major problem is **the seed is not being sown regularly by most Christians.** However, **the real issue is why is this the case?** How can we successfully change the church *culture*, so that sharing one’s faith is an absolute top priority?

Before we get into the specific barriers, let me summarize the problem and solution with a broad brush first. This will give you sort of a thumbnail sketch; you can fill in the colors that are most meaningful to you. Why don’t most Christians share their faith? First of all, when my brethren sing “I want to be a soul-winner for Jesus”, I believe they mean it sincerely! I am convinced that the problem in most cases, is not ***motives***, but ***motivation***. The solution? *Local churches and evangelists need to provide appropriate examples and motivation on a regular basis.*

Secondly, it is **not a problem of want to but know how.** Christians need to be provided with evangelistic tools and shown how to use them! Once Christians are given a “track to run on” and begin to see conversions as a result, it is amazing how quickly a congregation can be turned around. It is not long until over time a culture of soul winning is developed that glorifies God and is edifying to all. **Success breeds success and enthusiasm.** I have seen it happen in a good number of congregations! If needed, you can be a part of sparking a revival in your local church as well. **We are saved to serve, won to win, taught to teach!!**