

## Perspective

At the turn of the last century, two competing shoe companies were looking to expand their business. Both heard about a developing country in Africa which was opening its doors to foreign companies and investors.

Hoping to gain an advantage on their competition, both companies sent a sales representative to scout the possibilities of opening new markets. The first sales rep got off the boat and began walking around the small coastal community. After a couple of hours, he hurriedly made his way to the telegraph office.

“Halt production. Possibility of opening new market in Africa slim to nil. Nobody here wears shoes.”

The other sales rep soon disembarked from his ship and made his way through the same coastal village. After a short time, he too ran to the telegraph office.

“Build more factories. Send as many shoes as you can. Nobody here wears shoes!”

Many Christians right now in our country are disenchanted and disappointed by recent pushes by citizens and politicians to further legalise sin (aka. same sex marriage). But really, the values of our society have been deteriorating over the past decades, while the atheist movement in our country is growing stronger and louder. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, over the last decade, Christianity in Australia has declined from 68% to 61% today. We can probably expect further decline.

Such news should sadden us. God hates sin, and surely the sins of our society anger Him. Yet God also loves sinners and wants people to turn to Him in repentance and trust in Jesus as their Saviour. What is happening in our society should sadden and concern us.

But we don't need to wring our hands and throw up our arms in defeat. Jesus Himself said that many would turn away from the faith (Matthew 24:10). He said that the love of most would grow cold, (v. 12), but that doesn't change what we do as Christians. When we see large numbers of people who don't believe or who have turned away from what God says in His Word, we don't say, “Well, I guess we need to close the doors of our churches. There is nothing we can do. Nobody here wears shoes.”

No. We say, “Let's get to work. God is giving us new opportunities to share His message of sin and forgiveness – the message of Jesus and His love – because nobody here wears shoes.”

At one time when Jesus saw the crowds of lost and hurting souls before Him, He told His disciples, “*The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest,*

*therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field,”* (Luke 10:2). Then Jesus sent His disciples to get to work.

Then and now, many people who hear of Jesus’ kingdom end up rejecting it. Much as we hate to admit it, we, too, have responded indifferently and, at times, have rejected God’s will for our lives. Yet how heartening it is to know that Jesus continues to reach out with compassion through the Gospel ministry He has established.

We may be saddened by the state of our country and our world today, but we must also be excited by the challenge given to us to proclaim Christ. Surely, in our daily lives, we are presented with lots of opportunities to warn and to comfort.

So, seeing our society falling further away from God and His Word, don’t give up. Get to work. Opportunities abound. Nobody here wears shoes.