The making of an evangelist

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THE PRACTICE OF EVANGELISM

THE PROCLAIMING AND THE POWER (Evangelical Preaching)

This chapter aims to cover such topics as 'the art of evangelism'; the evangelist; his call; personal and study life and ministry; the evangelical message; his appeal and methods generally. This subject may suggest that this study is for the full-time or 'professional' (terrible word) evangelist. So I would begin by defining the word evangelist.

The Evangelist falls into three categories in the Bible.

(a) The full-time evangelist (Ephesians 4:11-12; Acts 21:8).
(b) The Pastor who does the work of an evangelist (2 Timothy 4:5).
(c) The lay person who does the work of an evangelist (Acts 6:5-10; Acts 8:1-4).

In 2 Timothy 4:5 it suggests that doing the work of an evangelist makes full proof of the ministry. It is wise (Proverbs 11:30; Psalm 126:5-6; Daniel 12:3).

At this juncture because of so many evangelists, giving a wrong impression of what evangelism is all about, I want to interpose a few thoughts on the marks of a true evangelist.

Negatively - what he is (or should he be)

* A professional (professional, yes! But not 'professional').
* Hypocritical *(cf. NZTV prog. re 'Boy Preacher', etc.)
* A lover of money.
* An uncouth person.
* A charlatan (using 'quack' medicines).
* A high pressure emotionalist.
* A proud person
* A jealous person (especially of other evangelists [Note: We are all co-workers with God to work out his plans through preaching]).
* A lime-light seeker.
* A hireling.
* A manipulator of people.
* An uncaring person.
* A prayerless warrior.
* An autocrat (or a prima donna)
* A kingdom builder (is for himself).

Positively - what he is (or should be)

* He is called by God (Ephesians 4:11-12).
* He is gifted by God (Ephesians 4:11-12).
* He does not choose himself - he is God's man.
"Born from Above" (John 3:6-8)  
"A new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)  
"Put on the new man" (Colossians 3:9-10)  
"The temple of God" (1 Corinthians 6:15-20)  
"His heart is a sanctuary for God".

* Is equipped by God (Christ will make us fishers of men).  
* Knows message — not words but power (1 Corinthians 4:20).  
* Diligent — approved unto God (2 Timothy 2:15).  
* Granted liberty by God (2 Corinthians 3:7).  
* Equipped with God’s power (2 Corinthians 3:5,6).  
* Expects God to do the outstanding (Ephesians 3:20-21).  
* Daily warms his heart at God’s fire.  
* Cares for people.  
* Bears cross daily (Romans 12:1).  
* Practices self-discipline.  
* Preaches the Word (2 Timothy 43:2).  
* Keeps filling with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:14).  
* Speaks the truth in love.  

The evangelist will be equipped by God to do efficient service for God, to enable him to exalt the Lord so that men and women will love God. He is a voice for God — a vessel to be used. His is a promoter of God’s kingdom and never his own. He allows the Spirit of God to work through his (or her) natural personality, indeed he (or she) expects the Spirit to work through them provided the life channels are clean.

He operates with the Holy Spirit. He yields (Galatians 2:20). As he uses the Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12) the Holy Spirit convicts (Acts 7:24) of sin (John 16:9), convices of righteousness (John 16:10), convicts of judgment (John 16:11; 1 John 5:19 (RSV); John 17:16) and so He saves (Acts 2:37-41).

No true evangelist will lack humility. One has said 'Seven words about Jesus for every one about yourself'. Another, 'no one can magnify Christ and himself at the same time'. 'His aim is the evangelising, establishing and equipping people to become resourceful Christians'. His burden should be like Jesus 'weeping over Jerusalem' or Paul, 'who could wish himself accursed for the brethren's sake'.

"When I am dying how glad I shall be  
That the lamp of my life has been blazed out for Thee  
I shall be glad in whatever I gave,  
Life, or money, one sinner to save:  
I shall not mind that the path has been rough,  
That Thy dear feet led the way is enough,  
When I am dying, how glad I shall be  
That the lamp of my life has been blazed out for Thee.'  
Author unknown.

• The Call to Evangelism

There are a number of ways this can come.
(a) The Word of God (Matthew 23:18-20 - making disciples; Acts 1:8; Romans 12:4-8; Matthew 9:36-38; John 4:35).

(b) The needs of the people (1 John 5:12; Revelation 6:12-17; Revelation 20:11-15).

(c) The longing to share (cf. lepers at Samaria - 2 Kings 7:1-20 [especially verse 9]).

(d) The deep inner conviction (the Spirit's imperative).

Note: Take into consideration your physical, mental, emotional and especially spiritual abilities. Do you have the qualifications to serve in the way you feel led - or do you have the potential? Do others recognise your gift of evangelism if you feel called to full-time work in this field.

In Jeremiah 1:5-8 God said to Jeremiah, 'I formed thee, I knew thee, I sanctified thee ... I commanded thee ... I shall be with thee'. God says this to preachers too.

Dr Campbell Morgan, a famous Bible teacher and preacher had to make up his mind whether to be a preacher or a messenger - God made him both. One can be both, but if a choice has to be made, He must first be a messenger, with an authentic word from God each time he preaches.

The personal and study life

The personal life should always be based on a seeking after holiness of life. We must never call others to do what we have not done ourselves (or are willing to do).

Paul to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24) - 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it'. (Verse 26: The holy kiss is for the brethren not the sister's).

Paul to Timothy (1 Timothy 4:12) - 'Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.' 'Study to show thyself approved unto God (1 Timothy 2:15).

Dr Stephen Olford said, 'If you are not growing in the Word, you will not be fresh and will be a failure'. The evangelist's study life needs discipline:

* Disciplined endurance like a soldier;
* Disciplined exercise like an athlete;
* Disciplined persistence like a farmer.

Every time you speak you should be approved of Heaven; have an authentic Word of God; have a God magnifying and Christ exalting ministry.

The man must be prepared by God if he is to be effective for God. He should pray along these lines:
’Lord Jesus be continually everything to me, my life, my victory, my wisdom, my joy, my strength, my everything. Help me to be dependent on thee, walking in thy ways and in thy strength. Make me willing to follow Thee and be 'bent' and 'broken', and trust in the redeeming blood for complete victory’. (Brokenness means a willingness to humble ourselves and repent immediately - he must increase and I must decrease.)

A similar statement by Robert Murray McCheyne, the famous young Scottish preacher, gives an insight into the secret of His power. He said, 'Study universal holiness of life. Your whole usefulness depends on this ... give yourselves to prayer, and get your texts, your thoughts, your words from God, for no one day say - "thus saith the Lord" if the Lord does not give it to him to say'.

That tremendously effective evangelist Billy Sunday showed his heart for God in a very short but thought-provoking statement. He said, 'I owe God everything; I owe the devil nothing except the best fight I can put up'.

He put up such a good fight that houses of ill-fame closed down; hotels went broke, and the brewers were so concerned about Billy Sunday's impact on things, that they banded together to fight back in no uncertain way. If my memory serves me correctly, they were unsuccessful. Another thing Bill Sunday said, which should help those doing evangelistic work was, 'One spark of fire can do more to prove the power of gun powder than a whole library written on the subject'.

Of course, what Billy Sunday meant the co-evangelists to note was that the powerful spark of the Holy Spirit in the life, can set off the gunpowder of heaven in the community with earth-shaking power.

Develop a time discipline (Ephesians 5:15-16) - 'redeem the time'. There should be, in our daily planning study times; prayer times; family times; recreation times and ministering times.

Ú Ë“Note:• It is not better to Ú Ë“burn out• than Ú Ë“rust out•. It is better to Ú Ë“last out•. 'It spoils the bow to always have it bent'.

A medical doctor, Dr Wilson, says:

'1 hour of abandoned preaching = 8 hours of executive desk work; = 12 hours of manual work.'

So be careful how you plan - you may have to rest before you preach.

So in your day take time for God for restoring the soul; relaxing the tension; recreation of spirit, soul and body. Seek the 'unction' from on high. Remember, Ú Ë“burn outs• do not rightly handle time. Seek God’s Ú Ë“fresh-dew• upon you - His fresh anointing. Take time to pray when you feel like it and when you don't. Pray till you do feel like it.

•Learn to relax.œ Remember, recreation should be 're-creation'. Listen to music, read something light, go fishing, do painting, do walking
every day or some other exercise. Seek to be as fit as a soldier; in top form as an athlete; as hardy as a farmer.

Don't be wasteful of time. Be organised. Be disciplined. Maximise your travel and waiting times by reading or listening to tapes. Avoid being a 'workaholic', but also avoid being a disorganised or lazy person.

Dr Paul Meier, a psychiatrist and Christian, who was a 'workaholic', and accepted everything in sight as a speaker and work, finally decided to change his priorities to:

1. Know God personally.

2. Provide for my own mental health needs. (Recreation, fun, fellowship with friends, etc.) How can I serve God if my own mental health isn't what it ought to be.

3. Meet my wife's emotional and spiritual needs (you may have to transpose here).

4. Minister to seminary students and the local church.

5. Carry on part-time psychiatric practice.

6. Write books in spare time.

You may have to adjust this to suit yourself - particularly in numbers 4 and 5, but there is a good principle here.

The ministry

Remember: That God must be the real preacher and that we should permit Him to use us (Colossians 1:29; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Galatians 2:20; John 15:4-5). When preparing a message, keep in mind the following points.

(a) Is the audience of one age group or mixed?

(b) What are the problems and hurts of these people? Find the hurt and heal it.

(c) Materials for study. A good Bible (wide margin, interleaved), a concordance, Hally's Pocket Bible Handbook, a compact biblical dictionary, Ryrie Study Bible, some books or Bible on soul-winning Scripture; some indexing system.

(d) Texts and passages. Ask God to guide you by His Word. When the Scripture speaks, God speaks. Read in context - get background. Think and pray about the passages. Let it form whilst walking or travelling.

Dr Campbell Morgan would read a passage through 50 times. Dr Meyer said, 'The secret of communication is not saying seven things but one thing seven times'. Dr Jowett said, 'He can give in one sentence what he was going to say'.
The principles of preparation. Have a theme. Like a polished shaft, look to the Holy Spirit for the points and illustrations to drive it home.

In preparing the evangelistic methods of preaching, we need to note there is a difference in some measure from normal preaching, and at the same time there are similarities. In normal pastoral-type preaching, it is a truth that the message should consist of unity, order and progress. So should evangelistic preaching, but this type of message is usually designed to reach a different kind of person, and often deals with people with little or no biblical background. Also, evangelistic preaching tends to be more direct, and there is an element of appeal for decision all the way through. Another thing which should be noted, is that we should never isolate our audience. It is essential to make the whole group of people feel that this message is a God-sent message to them Û®ú‘all•.

In the delivery of the sermon there are some simple hints which will help in the proclamation of the Word.

To overcome any sense of nervousness, never focus your attention on who is in the audience. God has given you a message and He knew who was going to be in the audience before you did.

There is an old church in Scotland, where, as the preacher stands up to preach, he is very conscious of a carved statue of the recording angel standing alongside him, with a pad and pencil in his hands, ready to record, as it were, the words given in God’s name to the congregation seated there before the preacher.

It is good to know when we stand up to preach that a record is kept of what we say, and our aim should be to please God, irrespective of who is in the congregation. In one church, where I was a pastor, as I stood up to preach my eyes were directed to a sign written at eye level saying, 'Sir, we would see Jesus'.

Another thing which helps our delivery is to take two or three quiet, but deep breaths as we are walking to the pulpit, and to remember that as the Lord said in the Old Testament days to a saint of that time, 'Certainly, I will be with thee', which means really: 'There is no doubt at all that I will be with thee', so the Lord says that to His servants today.

Dr Billy Graham never preaches to an audience of doctors, lawyers, business tycoons as such, but he remembers all are sinners, needing a Saviour, and some of these people may not have received Him yet.

Regarding the structure of the sermon, a statement made somewhere by Dr Stephen Olford is worth careful consideration. He said, 'The sermon is like a body ...

Head - Subject
Neck - Introduction
Arms - Points
Fingers - Sub-headings
Feet - Conclusion'.

I would add that 'the theme' is the trunk joining all the above.
Be clear on what you want to say and where you want you and your hearers to go, and they will go with you. Let Scripture bring out the structure (for example, Psalm 23).

(e) Illuminate, organise and finalise. A sermon is like a building with the solid walls of scriptural truth and the windows of illustration. Spurgeon said, 'Don't build a Crystal Cathedral out of windows', and I feel you don't need to build a solid dungeon with little or no windows.

Aim for the conclusion. Make the appeal all the way through your sermon. Aim for the target. Scatter buckshot as you go, but become a sniper at the end.

To finalise your message, write it out fully (you may need to use it again). Pray it over. Let it soak into your mind. Try preaching it to yourself. Get a clear grasp of the major points.

Preach it without notes or from a skeleton outline. Mark where you preached it. Get the Lord's OK and then preach it.

(f) Deliver a message from God in the fullness of the Spirit and with 'unction' upon it. It will be preachable.

(g) Draw the Net. William James said, 'Impression without expression leads to depression'. A fisherman does not put his net in just to wet it, or to leave any interested fish swim around in it. He draws the net, or if line fishing, he seeks to hook the fish.

There are various ways:

1. Come forward.
2. Pray prayer and raise hand.
3. Stand up.
4. Hands up (prayer); come forward.
5. Card in the seat (fill in).
6. Go to a counselling room or vestry.
7. After meeting.
8. Somebody out at front, a counsellor or fine Christian to stand alongside.
9. Cross imaginary or draw line.
10. Other ways can be gathered from your reading of other books.

Note: Some of these ways need to be handled very carefully and honestly. For example, number 4 - There must be no 'trickery' in the way this is done. As the appeal is also the work of the Holy Spirit, we need to remember that He only deals with matters in a "holy" way.

On giving an invitation, the use of emotion is legitimate during the whole sermon but emotionalism is an entirely different matter. One cannot have a love for the lost without emotion being seen, but to try to sway people by emotionalism is wrong. Emotion is fire but emotionalism is bush-fire. That is, emotion out of control, and fire can be a servant but bush-fire is dangerous and uncontrolled.

Giving an invitation
1. Be specific - plain and clear.
2. Be honest.
3. Relate the invitation to the message.
4. Whole service should point to the invitation.
5. Invite them to do what God wants them to do.
6. Give it confidently.
7. Give it earnestly.
8. Give it courteously.
9. Give it naturally (don't try to be someone else.)
10. Give it prayerfully.
11. Give it scripturally.
12. Give it compassionately.
14. Give different types of invitations.

Another problem in proclaiming the message

Some preachers actually preach essays not sermons. My little diagram below will show the difference.

Ú Ù”Ú Definitions•œ

* An essay is structured, presents facts, but does not necessarily ask the reader to do anything about them.
* A sermon is structured, present facts, but should ask - 'What does the hearer intend to do about it?'

For example, a message on 'God loves everybody - especially you'. I decide to have a theme, an introduction, three points, and a conclusion.

Ú Ù”Ú The theme•œ - God loves everybody - especially you.

Ú Ù”Ú Introduction•œ - The Bible tells us that God loves everybody and He loves you.

Ú Ù”Ú Conclusion•œ - He loves you. Do you believe that? But Ú Ù”Ú do you love Him too?•

Ú Ù”Ú Please note•œ these important items regarding the outline above. There is a great danger here of preaching the sermon in such a way.

(a) That you isolate your congregation.
(b) That you leave yourself nothing to appeal in.

Let me illustrate further. In point 1, the statement 'God loves everybody', does say 'God loves you' - but only in a fairly general and impersonal sort of way. It needs to be emphasised that God loves you. Not your neighbours, friend, rich or poor (this leaves out middle income earners) - but you. My wife Alice was led to Christ by a well-known Australian evangelist (Rev. John Ridley) on this very point. She was a girl from a non-Christian home, who had been invited to the meeting by a Christian workmate. She was interested in what was being said but it was not touching her deeply. Then the evangelist said (pointing his finger at the crowd and she thought he was pointing at her) 'It is not your neighbour, nor your friend, nor the person across the aisle from you - but you I mean'. Then the young girl who is now my wife thought...
'Oh, it's me he means', and she took a very deep personal interest in the message, and that night she was born again.

'You, you, you, I mean', has a large part in evangelistic preaching.

I have noticed that Dr Billy Graham and other world famous evangelists communicate the message in a similar way. Dr Graham brings in the crowd so that they feel that God has come to speak to them through the evangelist.

A vast number of people setting out in the stands can be completely isolated from the message if it were not for three things at least that take place.

1. You are not here by accident. God meant you to be here tonight.

2. I want you in the choir, the ushers, and others in the audience he pinpoints until they all feel that they are part of the meeting and it is almost a one-to-one communication.

3. The message is general in its communication but in particular in its application. If our message is directed wholly to a small section of the crowd we will get what we 'fish' for. The theme loneliness, for example, can be preached on the wide basis of loneliness can be a general thing for all ages of human beings, or it can be a specific type of loneliness of a few people. If a wife is neglected by her husband and she is lonely, and our message is aimed at that point, then single girls, men, women who are not neglected, widows, etc. are completely isolated by the narrowness of that message. The result would be very little for we are only communicating to the few and not to the many.

How important it is not to isolate the congregation. The point is: 'God loves the world'.

Africans
Asians
Jews
Gentiles

All of these could be very informative to the congregation and yet make the message so impersonal that it does not touch them.

Even if you brought in Australians, and even Queenslanders to a Queensland audience, it could still be impersonal, because people tend to think that sermons are made for someone else. But if you start to say this applies to you as an Australian, Queenslander or whatever, the oldest of you, youngest, the middle-aged, the men, the women, youth, etc., then you are bringing the message home to them.

Some years ago when I did Christian programs on radio, I saw this same principle in action. The program was reaching about 80,000 listeners and many of the speakers were speaking to that size audience. I had some sessions with the manager of a radio station on the best way to communicate and he pointed out to me that although 80,000 listeners were listening, you really only speak on a one-to-one basis as though you only had one listener. I had taken this advice and for some weeks used the one-to-one method.
One day in the city where I was broadcasting, an elderly lady stopped me in the street but I did not know her. Then she said, 'You are Rev. Jarrott, aren't you?'. I said 'Yes'. Then she said, 'You know me, I listen to your session'. I told my radio manager friend about that and he said, 'That's what I have been trying to tell you. It becomes so personal that they not only take notice of what you say, but they actually think of you as a visitor to their home, and that you know them'.

In point 3 above - God loves you. Remembering that this message has been especially for the person we have called 'you', and that you can appeal to that person to give their life to Christ because you have not only been speaking about others, but to them personally, and that God's Holy Spirit has been communicating the message especially to them.

I once heard a well-known and effective American evangelist say that when we preach we should 'Sprinkle the audience liberally with buckshot. Doing this means that something of the message should apply to everybody. My personal feeling is that having done that when concluding, we should use not only the shotgun method, but also the snipers method directed fire to arrive at the personal response to the message.

In closing, here are some Basic rules for preaching and public speaking:

1. Present the message:
   * with directness
   * with authority and power
   * with fervour

2. Have a basic aim:
   * What do I want to do?
   * Whom do I want to reach?
   * Why do I want to reach them?
   * Which way shall I go about it?
   * What steps should I take to reach my goal?

3. Note:

'Communicate' comes from Latin word meaning 'to share' and A simple outline is the easiest way to do it.

* Purpose (to speak to Christians or non-Christians and what do I want them to do?)
* Information to include.
* Facts to back what I say.
* Action the audience should take as a result.
* Strong ending.

* Next step - write down major points to be covered (not in order, but every thought that comes to you).

* Then:
* Collect them
* Evaluate them
* Eliminate them
* Re-arrange until you have the exact picture you want.

Here is a work-sheet you may care to go through. It should underline some of the things taught in this chapter.

Ú Ü”•Ü”The Evangelistic Ministry • Ü”(Worksheet)•

1. •Steps for preparation and giving of an evangelistic message

   (a) Ú Ü”Prayer for 1-2 hours. What about?
       Self.
       Texts or passage of Scripture.
       Glorifying God - praise, Bible, hymn book, etc.
       Get a 'happy heart'.
       What else?

   (b) Prepare.

       Who will I be speaking to?
       What kind of message?
       Name some kinds you think suitable.

   (c) Present it.

       With directness.
       With fervour.
       With what else?

       How will you manage this type of presentation?

   (d) Persuade people.

       How?

   (e) Present the Appeal.

       Which way do you like?

2. •Steps in building up to a special meeting or crusade.

   Ü”Prayer.
   Survey the area to be reached.
   Find the hurts.
   Plan the program.
   Personnel required - speakers, workers, singing, etc.
   Plot out the 'count-down'.
   Painstakingly check up on every area.
   Prepare the venue.
   Provide evangelistic materials/follow-up etc.
   Prepare for a harvest.
   Purposefully 'follow-up'.
Work at it like a good, conscientious workman of the Saviour.