1993

The making of an evangelist

Jarrott, Reginald Edward

Point Halloran, Qld. : T.M. Pryce-Davies, 1993.
https://myrrh.library.moore.edu.au:443/handle/10248/6173
Downloaded from Myrrh, the Moore College Institutional Repository
This chapter is a natural follow on to the previous one on post-natal care. It could be thought of as post-natal care in special areas of life.

In the counselling tents or rooms of major crusades there are people standing around the walls, labelled 'advisors' and who not only check on the counselling already given, but also there are some there with expertise to deal with very difficult cases.

Although all inquirers benefit from some follow-up, there are some who need mature Christians to stand by them to help them through the very rough patches of the road back to health and/or spiritual happiness. To neglect to stand by them is to invite failure in their effort to gain a spiritual victory.

Here are some areas which desperately need the 'stand by me' approach. They are:

• The alcoholic

Some years ago, in a suburban church in Brisbane, Australia, an alcoholic responded to the call to accept Christ as Saviour and Lord. Like many alcoholics, he was 'a loner'. He found it hard to fit into the local church sitting, because he was too shy and ashamed of what he had been. Sometimes church folk do not understand how difficult it is for lost people who are inquirers to come into the circle of those who know the Lord. I heard of a case, some years ago of a person who was seeking the Saviour. She had been advised to go to church. The person who invited her to go saw her about two weeks after the invitation, and asked if she went. She said she did but she had to have two stiff brandies before-hand so she could pluck up enough courage to go.

Another woman who was seeking Christ, went to church. Her life had been anything but good. She was uncomfortable as she looked at the women in the church. She thought, 'I wonder what they would think of me if they knew the life I have lived'.

To get back to the alcoholic who came to the suburban church I attended. As an evangelist, I sensed his need, so made a habit of looking out for him each Sunday, and we went in to the church together. I saw he got a hymn book. We sat together. I tried to explain to him what was going on, and why we did certain things. This was all right when I was able to attend the local church, and he was coming on real well. I saw that he got invitations to various functions which could help him, and introduced him to people in order to gradually make him part of our group.

My work as an evangelist took me away again, after having tried to stand by him for about five or six weeks. I was to be away for a fairly long spell. I tried to do what I could to help him attend, but sadly for some reason or other, he dropped out of things.
These alcoholics need people to stand by as support people for many hours of the day at times. Some alcoholic movements sit up for the rehabilitation of these people, are on call any hour of the day or night. We have a group of people, who are not easily won into the Kingdom of our Lord. The heart cry of the alcoholic is 'Brother or Sister, please stand by me'.

My second story regarding the saving of the alcoholics is an overseas one. It happened in a suburban church in St Louis in the State of Missouri, USA.

The church had a regular Sunday afternoon service in which saved alcoholics and unsaved alcoholics met in a kind of church 'Alcoholics Anonymous' meeting. One of the leaders was an alcoholic who had been converted to Christ. To protect his identity I will call him 'D'. He had been having a terrible battle with the demon of drink for many years. Now he and his wife have a radiance that only Christ can give. In desperation, one day, he contacted the pastor of the Church, who led him to Christ. He came to a place of victory, after years of every type of treatment known by the medical profession had failed. 'D' became a leader in the reclamation of alcoholics. He used to invite me to go out with him, after a long day of crusade work, into the streets of St Louis looking for alcoholics.

This happened night after night until the early hours of the morning. He was on fire for the Lord, and a most caring soul for brothers and sisters struggling with the demon drink. When you see the ravages of alcohol in the lives of people like 'D', let me say most emphatically, there is too much glamour surrounding the beautifully labelled 'booze'.

Every Sunday there was 50 upwards attending the Sunday afternoon service for alcoholics.

We need to understand the dreadful traumas that alcoholics go through, to really do anything to help them. One man I tried to help, but I think I got there too late, finally committed suicide because despite pointers which seemed to show the opposite, he could not bear to see the wife and family he really loved, suffer any more at his hands. Try as he would he could not bear the dreadful hold of the demon called 'booze'.

• The compulsive gambler

Some people believe that it is almost harder to help the compulsive gambler, than even the alcoholic.

In Australia, there are people who will bet on any sort of 'race' - flies crawling up the wall; a cockroach race; a cane toad race; or horses and dogs. You name it - they have to bet on it. Then there are art unions, raffles, poker machines, betting on football matches. Australia has its very own brand of gambling called tow-up. I'd better explain it to non-Australian readers. They take two coins with a side called 'heads' and a side called 'tails', and toss them up on a flat stick and people put their money in the ring, and call 'heads' or 'tails' and the winner is the one who called rightly when they see which way the coins fell. This game was illegal for a long time, but is now made legal by incorporating in some Casino operations.
Radio and TV plus the newspapers make enticing offers as to the get rich schemes - some offering millions of dollars for a win. For Christians gambling, as one Christian writer calls it, 'The sport without a smile', cuts right across the principle of Christian love. The sins of covetousness; the get rich quick schemes at the expense of others - many households suffer that others might become rich.

The dreadful story of fathers who gamble their wages away leaving their wife and children without food, and sometimes decent and warm clothing. On top of that, bills are not met and the home is in turmoil because someone else got rich on the funds that the house in turmoil desperately needed.

Two men I met in my travels as a preacher told me about the fact, that even though they had become dedicated Christians, and were helped by the power of God, still had a great difficulty in breaking away completely from the 'get rich quick ideas of gambling.'

Like the need to stand by the alcoholics, there is a similar need to help the compulsive gambler to keep away from the great temptation of having another flutter. It may require the one who 'stands by' taking him to places personally, where he knows the temptations will disappear. It will be costly to the brother or sister in Christ and may take a long time to gain complete victory in Christ.

It may best be performed if the one who stands by is a victorious ex-compulsive gambler. For those who do this task in the Saviour's name, will have grateful families, who have suffered much, rise-up and call you 'blessed'.

Remember, compulsive gamblers can be either male or female and bring about the same damaging results.

• The 'saved' drug addictœ

Drugs and alcoholic problems can be very similar as far as those concerned Christians who 'stand by' them. Alcohol is a drug as well as some of the other drugs used, and both drug addicts and alcoholics need great 'after-care' when a decision is made for Christ.

One church I cam across and was able to help a bit both in preaching and counselling did a marvellous thing.

The young pastor and his wife opened their home to drug addicts. The pastor and his members would go into the city and find drug addicts. They would get them to the church for a special service, and give them something to eat. If they were homeless, he and his wife took them in. I understand that a lot of the financial burden was carried by the giving of their own savings to the needy. The whole effort was surrounded by prayerful, loving and understanding groups of helpers. There needed to be those who were willing to sacrifice time and sleep as some counselling sessions would go on to the early hours of the morning.

• Miscellaneous needsœ
There is not only a need for people to sacrifice time, money, comfort, and to have a life committed to the snatch from Satan's grasp ruined lives as set out above, but there are other people with great needs. They have gone deeply into sin, and have lived deep in Satan's territory and he is not willing to let them go too easily.

In these cases, we need to assess how great is the follow-up needs of such people who decide for the Saviour. For example, Satan worshippers, those trapped by Eastern cults and religions, those who have lived very immoral lives. These may have miscellaneous needs but they may need a Christian brother and/or sister to stand by in order to see them through.

Remember, Jesus had men to be with Him so that he was always there on 'stand-by' whenever the way got too rough.

Paul stood by young Timothy to help him as a young pastor to get his life as a pastor under control, and to learn how to be an example to the flock of God under his care. In his case, he had not been deep into Satan's territory before he became a Christian, but needed to go deep into Christ's territory to be a more effective Christian leader.

God still needs 'Stand by Me Squads' today because some people find it very hard to burn their bridges behind them after they had made a decision for Christ.

Don't forget we need the wisdom of God in it all. We are often on a collision course with Satan, and will need all the help and strength and wisdom available to us.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 16:9, 'For a great door and effectual [literally efficient] is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries [literally opposers]', and translated 'For a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries [or opposers] (see New American Standard Version).

God can give a wide-open door for effective service in these areas, and there will be those who oppose our efforts, and seek to make us discouraged. But Romans 8:31 is a good tonic for us: 'What shall we say of these things? If God be for us, who can be against us'. This is a very good question isn't it?