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The making of an evangelist

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Years ago, tent meetings were a wonderful source of evangelistic outreach on neutral ground in Australia, and are used to some extent today.

Later on, they were used less because the tents because too expensive and often needed a fair amount of up-keep. Even to hire them became too expensive. Today, however, the material from which the tents are made is fairly durable, and there is some resurgence of interest in them.

In the times when they were too expensive, we decided to have an experiment of having a tent-type meeting without a tent. It was a most successful venture, drawing quite large crowds at a time when television was fairly new, and we had the largest number of viewers in the State of Queensland, in that city where the meetings were held.

I am setting out in some detail how we went about organising these things. No doubt, the reader can adjust some of these ideas to suit local circumstances. Before starting on such a project, there are some necessary questions to ask yourself.

What is your aim? Why do it? There are at least five possible answers:

1. To advertise the local church.
2. To preach the Gospel to the unsaved and unchurched.
3. To use the popularity of a former pastor to attract crowds.
4. To help shut-ins and disabled people to have a night out with a meal of spiritual food.
5. To seek to reclaim backsliders for Christ.

Of course, behind all these above, and other aims, the whole of the outreach needs to be bathed in prayer, and to seek the face of God for direction and help. Always remember, we should make sure that our plans are actually God's plans.

We choose around the month of May in Queensland because it is not too cold and usually fine weather. Other areas may find this different. Once, when living in New Zealand temporarily, I organised a picnic in June (winter) thinking that winter in my home state of Queensland was a glorious time of sunshine and fine weather.

No-one had advised me that in Auckland, New Zealand, it is somewhat different in winter time. The church people to whom I was ministering looked at me in a strange way, with little enthusiasm it seemed, for the project. The day came, and it was a perfect day at the field in the property where our picnic was planned, and we had a wonderful time. Later I was dubbed, affectionately as 'The Mad Queenslander'.

The moral of this story is to be careful. Check the weather possibilities and maybe arrange for an alternative venue - just in case. For three years running, we had our 'tent mission without a tent' in lovely and most suitable weather, with no disruption at all.
Under number three above, there is need to give some explanation. This project was run from our local church, and as pastor at the time, when visiting I heard many people telling what wonderful times they had with two of their former pastors. One of these was a very good singer as well as a preacher, and there was one Gospel song which he sang with great effect, and it lived long in the memory of his people.

I decided to suggest to the church that these meetings should run for three nights with the first two nights featuring each of these two popular pastors as the guest speakers. One would preach each night, with an invitation to the singer/speaker to give the solo so greatly loved by church folk and others.

This strategy, built on the popularity of these two preachers, and people came to the meetings in good numbers to hear them.

The third night, I was the speaker as the local pastor, and I brought the church to the people in such a way they actually experienced what we were all about. Instead of our usual 300 plus people attending, our numbers grew from about 800-1,200 with many non church-going people and unsaved folk attending - some of whom caused amazement to our people, when they saw who was attending.

Seek out a suitable venue

Check the entrances to make sure they are suitable and, above all, make sure the venue is in a suitable position. You will probably have to obtain permission from a local authority to use the grounds. Make sure the grounds are well drained, preferably with a slight slope away from the seating and car parking area.

Electricity will be needed. Try to get a place with an electric light pole, and see the electric authority about fitting a temporary box with a number of outlet points for lighting, organs, etc. Don't try doing this yourself as it will be dangerous and almost certainly illegal.

An alternative way of doing things is to see the authority about running a temporary meter box and equipment for a neighbouring house and paying the cost of electricity on the temporary meter. This is a bit messy, and would need to be checked with the electric authority to see if it is legal.

Sometimes a kind neighbour may allow you to run off their power, and you could pay the excess amount on their usual bill for the period.

You will probably need lighting for:

(a) The platform.
(b) Counselling tent(s) and prayer tent(s).
(c) Amongst the congregation for singing unless an overhead projector is used. Don't forget your screen and transparencies, and watch copyright so as not to transgress here.
(d) The plugs for organ, overhead projector, amplification needs at the pulpit, soloists(s), song leader, choir, piano, etc.

I conferred with a colleague of mine who has had a great deal of experience in getting electricity to a given site for an evangelistic
outreach. He has worked mainly with tent-meetings, but the same procedures apply to 'tent meetings without a tent'.

He suggested that the following steps could be taken.

(a) See if there is an electric light pole on the grounds or nearby in the street outside.

(b) See the electricity authority about getting a property pole for your use.

(c) Estimate how much power you will need, and get about 10 amps more than you need.

(d) If using a tent, see the authority and find out what is permitted, and the possible necessity of using emergency lighting.

(I am grateful to my colleague for permission to use this information set out above.)

The pattern of organisation

It is essential that the meetings be prayed over and also well organised. The following sections should help the readers to see some of the things which are necessary in organising.

• Steps in organisation

1. Appoint a Crusade Director to work with the pastor and to relieve the pastor of administrative burdens. He should be a man of proved ability and spiritual strength.

2. The Crusade Executive lays down basic policies for the crusade and includes the pastor and director plus six to nine church leaders.

3. The Convener of Committee could be some of the executive or other people. He/she should have gifts of leadership and consistent spiritual life. Great care should be exercised in choice.

The committees should be:

(a) Prayer.

(b) Promotion and publicity.

(c) Visitation.

(d) Counselling and follow-up.

(e) Finance.

(f) Music.

(g) Arrangements.

(h) Transport.

(i) Young people and students.

(j) Nursery and baby sitting.

(k) Ushers and reservations.

(l) Welcoming committee.

The nominations should be presented to the church by the Director. The church of course, may accept, reject, or alter nominations.

• Smaller crusades
Adapt to suit needs. Either the number of committees or one member committee so as to involve as many as possible.

This section above is a guide to building bigger committees in order to organise massive crusades, or smaller evangelistic outreach projects can be adapted. In very large crusades, a committee could have 10 or more members, whereas, in a smaller effort, one or two people would suffice. The committees (a) to (l) should cover all needs, but of course in a small church, lacking personnel (k) and (l) could be combined.

Two skeleton outlines of the sort of meetings which could be held and the time factors involved are included for your help, consideration and alteration if and where necessary.

Skeleton outline of mission meetings

Type of services used in crusades - based on starting times at 7.30 pm.

• If no film is used

7.15 pm Slides before service to interest people.
7.30 pm Praise service.
7.45 pm Choir or item.
Prayer.
Hymn.
Announcements and offering.
Item or testimony of five minutes or 500 words.
Prayer time.
Bible reading.
Hymn.
Item.
Message (sometimes and appeal - solo).
Benediction.
Theme chorus.

9.00 pm Meeting is finished no later than this time.

• If a film is used

7.25 pm Start praise.
7.32 pm Film - 30 minutes unless exceptional. No more than 40 minutes.
Praise (stand for hymn).
Prayer.
Announcements and offering.
Item.
Hymn (one or two verses only).
Message.
Appeal (including hymn).
Theme chorus.

9.00 pm Meeting should finish no later than this time if film is 30 minutes in duration.

• Notes

1. Any film used over 40 minutes would need a film service design with only a few words to follow-up. This should be used rarely.
2. Leadership of meeting is usually shared.

Should you not be able to get some former pastors who are likely to help draw former church attenders back to these meetings, there are a number of alternate types of meetings you may hold, and then finish with the local pastor as suggested.

(a) People's night and instrumental. Use people of the church.
(b) Education night. Use students (or others who have graduated).
(c) Story of Christ in music. Palm Sunday and Easter music or in other ways.
(d) International night. Use migrants; hymns by overseas composers. 'Migrants sermon'.
(e) Prophecy and second event night. Fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecy.
(f) Variety and harmony night. Recitations; choral vocal; instrumental; sermon - story of a great hymn.
(g) Harvest. Thanksgiving night.
(h) Instrumental night. Songs of Fanny Crosby by an orchestra/choir.
(i) Songs of great revivals and evangelistic crusades. Testimony of someone converted in a crusade.
(j) Testimony night. 'Why I am a dedicated Christian'.
(k) Christmas in music night.

• Other ideas to discuss together

Musical evenings featuring music, vocal and instrumental; family evening - special children's film; teenage rally - orchestra - film for teenagers; neighbours, friends and relatives night; students night - testimonies by students; medical night - doctors, nurses, etc. - trade union night.

• Some things needed for setting up the meeting

A suitable semi-trailer big enough to take at least these areas of need.

(a) Electronic organ.
(b) Piano.
(c) Choir of about 40-50 people.
(d) Some chairs for leader, guests, speaker for the evening, choir, conductor and song leader. You will need a music stand for the choir conductor and pulpit or speaker stand for the speaker.
(e) You will need coverings for the instruments in case of rain.

Please note! It is usually best to take away the instruments after each meeting and bring them the next night. Alternatively, some men could sleep in the counselling tent or on the semi-trailer and guard the instruments. Remember however, depending what nights you hold the meetings, the person who owns the semi-trailer may need to use it each day for his work.

• Seating accommodation

(a) Usually have a roped-off section for seating. Invite people to bring blankets, folding chairs, cushions, etc.
(b) You will need to bring some chairs for the platform identities, the musicians and choir.
(c) There will also need to be a 'drive-in' section for cars for those who prefer to sit in them because of ill-health, injury and the like.
(d) Possibly a special roped-off section for wheelchair audience.

• Arrangements committee

This important committee is responsible for the detailed arrangements of the crusade meeting place each night. After appointing a committee:

(a) Check lists at the back of this book set out in order - a section which is the responsibility of this committee. Please read the relevant sections carefully.
(b) This committee is responsible for the smooth running of the meeting by seeing that not only the building has been prepared in every way, but also for the ushering and floral arrangements.
(c) The ushers should see that they are there in good time and that there are adequate supplies of hymn books or give-out material if used.
(d) The details of arrangements should be checked each night no matter how well the previous meeting went.
(e) Arrangements should be made for day meetings, too. Often these are overlooked.
(f) Check with pastor from time to time.

• Transport committee

(a) Arrange transport where required.
(b) Areas to note are:
   (i) Visitors requiring transport.
   (ii) Aged folk.
   (iii) Invalids.
   (iv) Very young people.
   (v) Church people without adequate means of transport.
   (vi) Inquirers from counselling room and counsellors - especially after counselling is finished.
(vii) Check to see that proper arrangements have been made for missioners, including visiting musicians.

In the section above, under arrangements committee, it speaks of studying the check list. There are two check lists given in this chapter for your help.

1. Checklist for Executive Committee and/or Crusade Director.
2. Checklist to check your plan.
Checklist for Executive Committee and/or Crusade Director

To help you plan a guide for all types of missions indoors and outdoors. Please adapt and check regularly.

• Arrangements

* Seating facilities.
* Lighting, adequate for reading. Avoid glare or dimness.
* Public address system for pulpit, choir, organ and piano.
* Platform facilities. Speakers' platform approximately 30 foot wide by 30 feet deep. Desk approximately 24 inches by 13 inches. The speaker should be clearly seen with no shadows on his face; Piano and organ. Quality instruments must be in tune with one another; Sufficient chairs with hymn books for each seat.
* Decorations. Drapes across front of platform. Freshly cut flowers, ferns or pot plants. Large sign across back of platform.
* First-aid facilities - St. John's Ambulance group and nurses.
* Choir on tiered section (behind platform if possible).
* Transport for team (special transport arrangement).
* Tape recording facilities.
* Photos for publicity or record purposes.

• Finance

* Share partners, donors, budget (thank offering for department of evangelism).
* Appoint someone each night to collect and count and take care of money.
* May need to use a safe.
* Bank as soon as possible.
* Don't forget monies for book stalls, badges, hymn books - check with ushers to see if all money is in for counting.

• Counselling and follow-up

The items listed below are mainly applicable to large-scale combined missions.

* Nominations from minister.
* Classes to be started well in advance.
* Selection of counsellors and advisors.
* Issue badges.
* Counselling tent with P.A. system for adults and children.

• Prayer

* Individual prayer cards (with names of people who personnel would like to invite and/or see there.
* Prayer groups in churches and homes.
* Special prayer meetings, and all night or half-nights of prayer.
* Special prayer spots in Sunday services.

• **Music**
  * Conductor's stand.
  * Choir badges. You will need to recruit more than the choir than the number envisaged to make up for illness, etc.
  * Rehearsals each night half an hour before starting time.
  * You will need a good song leader. If necessary, you may have to borrow more adequate music and instruments.
  * Musicians should be at their instruments well before starting time.

• **Ushers**
  * You should recruit one usher for every 50 people. Sometimes you will require more.
  * Provide space for storage of any hymn books, give-out literature used. There should also be a place for lost property.

• **Collecting cups**
  * Have plenty of these available in order to get offering over with quickly. Hand the offering immediately after reception to a representative of the finance representatives.

• **Group representatives (key to large crowds)**
  The general idea is for tickets or some sort of pass for group leaders, who have been encouraged to bring groups of 20 or more. They are shown to a special roped-off area, but must be there 15 minutes before the start of the program (unless some special arrangements have been made because of some limiting factor). Otherwise, the area will be left open for anyone to use when the 15 minute mark is reached. If the meeting is held in a hall or church because of rain, certain seats or pews will be roped up, and this is often called the 'pack a pew' plan.
  
  If there are people to be counselled after the meeting, the ideas shown under 'Transport Committee' should be noted, and then the idea set out below should also be studied. See also the section on 'Counselling and Follow-up' shown earlier in this chapter.

• **Follow-up Committee**
  * Typewriters.
  * Transport of workers (following work in follow-up room).
  * Designation Committee (to deal with inquirers not specifying any church).

If you decide to to visitation in your area to awaken interest, here are a few ideas to work on. Co-operate with Publicity Committee in order to obtain advertising materials for distribution.

• **Visitation**
  * Determine area of visitation (including homes, groups, schools, etc.).
  * Dates of visitation.
* Seek interest of all visitation supporters (use a film strip).
* Enlist.
* Are instructions clear?
* Are all materials available? For example, advertising leaflets and any other materials considered essential.
* Keep in touch with transport committee (see below under transport).

**Decision cards**

* Take or send to minister each night, replies attached to inquirers cards - to be in the counselling room with materials. You should have an adequate supply of these before the crusade starts.

**Young people's committee**

* Survey students in the area (university, high school, private and public schools, teachers college, primary schools and overseas students).

**Publicity**

* Program of outreach working:
  (a) News coverage through press, radio, etc.
  (b) Advertising through press, radio, printed matter, outdoor.
Don't forget to use free advertising by sending reports to the news media, or using the radio and TV station saying what is on in town or coming shortly.

**Promotion**

* Church bulletins for distribution.
* Crusade interest centre.
* Book stall with tracts, etc.
* Slogan board.
* District promotion before and during crusade.

**Transport**

* Liaison with visitation committee to keep check of transport required each night.
* Adequate cards and drivers.
* Pick up and take home. Arrange for any being counselled.

**Nursery**

* Adequate clean buildings. Watch air, warmth, draughts, etc.
* Have an adequate number of suitable baby sitters.
* Liaison with visitation committee for names.

We now come to a second check-list. The first check list was to check your plans so that nothing will be missed in the planning and to help you to plan well.

Ú Õ“•Check list - to check your plan•ú

Kindly check each point in order to see how things are shaping up:

**Prayer**

Adequate? Focussed? All membership in? How? - Cottage meetings, ladies groups, men's groups, church prayer meetings, youth groups,
Sunday school, etc. Subjects for prayer? Leaders, speaker/s, committee members, people visited, thanks for blessings etc.

•Publicityœ

Being done thoroughly and by personal contact? The latter is most important. Means - local papers, radio, theatre slides, notice boards, co-operative advertising with other churches, printed matter, posters, signs, shop windows, trams, buses. Continue publicity throughout actual meetings, etc. Look for places where people gather and place notices there. Don't forget, prayer makes all our efforts more effective.

•Promotionœ

Promoted by all possible means? Every department of the church? Announcement periods have some reference to it. Little 'news items' when crusade snippets are given.

•Visitationœ


•Counselling and follow-up (see counselling materials)œ

Counsellors will be needed. Experienced, kindly folk, about the same age and sex as those who are being counselled. Follow-up is vital! The decision brings the babe to birth. The follow-up is the nurturing of the babe. New converts need fellowship and friendship. The counsellor has a part of bringing it about too. Encouragers or Big Brothers or Big Sisters should be used to keep an eye on the progress of the convert for about six months. If a pastor feels he needs an evangelist in these meetings, then use one. These are only ideas to build on.

•Arrangementsœ

Seating? Lighting for pulpit or platform? Public address system? Is is adequate for all outlets needed. That is, the number of microphones required and speaker being used? Musical instruments? Flowers? Tape recording facilities (if required)? Drapes across platform? Nursery for babies? Seats for elderly people? Accommodation and transport for speaker.

•You should contact speaker to work out program for each night - music, methods, chairman for evening, etc.œ

•Special nightsœ

Youth; family; special film nights. Please arrange with your speaker/s.

•Musicœ
Important to develop. Need a good devoted leader. Congregation singing should be hearty; varied; thoughtful; unusual sometimes; always warm and God-directed. The praise service should help to create a fine worshipful and spiritual atmosphere. A choir can be a great asset both in leading and giving messages in song. A small orchestra would help provided it is good music. Local talent for solos. Outside talent too. Music should be directed to evangelistic ends. Choose the right leader; the right music and hymns that people know. The speaker may want to bring some musicians with him.

• Other helpful suggestions

• Meetings – informal atmosphere, be friendly and warm.
• Holy Spirit's guidance must be sought continually.
• The pastor should have some major part in the meetings as suggested earlier.
• Counselling procedure and room should be carefully prepared.
• Ushers will be needed to be in place early; books ready; warm handshake for visitors; courtesy to all.
• Open-air witness before services or 'street fishing' by youth.
• Schools should be informed of meetings regularly.
• Missions should be taken to Sunday school and youth groups, etc.
• Pastor and missioner should visit important contacts where possible.
• Finance – Local church will decide its own methods of finance in terms of evangelistic committee methods, printing, films, travelling expenses, unforeseen expenses.

It is requested that every effort be made to get the programs fixed up as soon as possible. Your missioner will appreciate your suggestions and will only be too glad to make suggestions regarding the meetings. Thanks in advance.

My dear reader, please don't give up because of what seems to be the magnitude of the plan. You may be only a small church with limited help. Then adapt this to your needs and borrow helpers from other churches if possible.

This chapter has been written with both small and very large churches in view, especially those with many helpers. Let me say that I have worked some of these ideas in very small churches with very small membership, and they have worked.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, seek God's face and God's plan for your church. It doesn't really matter if God lays on your heart committees which have been combined or with only one or two members in them. Pray! Seek God's face. Seek God's plan. Adapt, revise, borrow helpers, seek financial support from others. God will bless you.

Ú·Ô”·My final thought on planning•

It is very essential when planning well to do two things at least:

1. Giving strict attention to detail. For example, go over every step of the way, if meeting a visiting speaker at an airport, ask yourself what does he need? Transport? Information? Where is he to stay? Who will be looking after him to get him to meetings? His contact, etc.
2. Always have a carefully planned 'count-down'. What I mean by that is set out in steps below:

• Step one — note date of meeting.
• Step two — work out time needed to do a good planning job (for example, six months).
• Step three — count (six months) backwards from date of meeting.
• Step four — Allow a small amount of extra time in case of hold ups.

• Note — it is necessary to go through all on the committees estimated needs in order to do an effective 'count-down'. Estimate the time to be taken by each committee, and then count back on each one from the date of the meeting and you should get the starting time. It could be six, five, four or three months. Don't forget to allow a little 'buffer time' in case of delays.

The counsellor training gave at least two months time for preparation, also intensify prayer and don't forget to check and recheck arrangements for the meeting place.

On the two months mark, also intensify promotion in and around the church buildings. Enthusiasm is essential from church members and adherents. One month before it will be essential to begin to display advertising — three to four weeks ahead of the meeting at least — but not too soon. The only exception of advertising further ahead is to give news items to the mass media to get the meetings in their files for future use. See check-lists earlier in this chapter and go over them very carefully. See that counsellors are all chosen, and materials on hand.

• Two weeks before:

1. Begin intensive visitation.
2. Check transport arrangements.
3. Recheck all arrangements. Stop any holes in the planning.
4. Every committee makes a final check.

There is much more that could be said in this chapter about detailed planning, but because space does not permit and churches have different needs, it is essential to develop your own God-given, God-directed pattern. Do this, and the Lord will be with you.