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The making of an evangelist

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So often people have discussed, and perhaps argued, across the years regarding the types of evangelism which ought to be used. However, very seldom do they go to the New Testament to see what types were used under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Someone has truly said of some Christian actions, 'that it is possible to be more particular than the Spirit of God'. Often those who I have seen putting up all sorts of objections, do not seem to be doing much evangelism themselves. To repeat evangelist D.L. Moody's reply to such a critic, which was quoted in the previous chapter, it has a bearing on many critics of evangelistic method today. Possibly you will remember that evangelists reply, when a critic said, 'I don't like the way you are doing your evangelism' and Mr Moody's reply was, 'I like the way I am doing it better than the way you are not doing it'.

Types of evangelism in the New Testament record of Spirit-directed and empowered evangelism

The book of Acts says that this is what Jesus continued to do and teach, which in Luke's Gospel, in Acts 1:1-4, Luke seems to suggest that Gospel was a record of what Jesus began to do and teach.

With this in mind, I set out for you some things that are put out for your prayerful consideration.

All types of evangelism can be effective as the Spirit leads. Consider the promise set out in Acts 1:6-8. The word 'both' (verse 8) suggests a great simultaneous crusade and later events bear this out. The church stayed at Jerusalem but persecution caused them to be scattered throughout Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1). God said to Abraham, 'Get thee out...' (Acts 7:2-3) and He still says 'go' (Matthew 28:18-20).


Now this plan develops many different types of evangelism all directed by the Holy Spirit.

New Testament types of evangelism

1. Mass Evangelism (Acts 2). This is also team evangelism (Peter with the Eleven - verse 14). Spirit-directed after a long period of prayer with 'prayer partners' in the upper room (Acts 1:14-15 - see also Acts 4). Peter and John (verse 19); their own company (verse 23) and when they had prayed (verse 31). A Japanese evangelist built a prayer town. Some results can be seen in Acts 2:41 and in another effort in Acts 4:4.

2. There is a personal evangelism. Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch. This is a perfect picture of a personal soul-winner in touch with the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:26-28; 35-37).

7. Street evangelism and market place evangelism (Acts 17:16-18).
11. Tract and letter evangelism is seen in the Epistles. Philemon-Ephesians letter is a circular letter. This is also follow-up work on a grand Spirit-directed scale.
12. Jewish evangelism (The Epistle to the Hebrews).

And so the list could be added to. There is work among men; work among women; two by two witnessing; visitation evangelism to every house (Acts 20:20-21); Beach evangelism (Jesus taught by the seashore). The witness was before Kings and court, before servants and slaves. False teachers were rebuked and their views straightened out. ‘Big Brother’ follow-up work (Paul and Timothy - 1 Timothy 1:1-2). Indeed the book of Acts is a great story of the Holy Spirit evangelising through men and the Epistles in the main, the follow-up work to the church. They must go hand in hand.

The evangelism is linked with fellowships and builds them up.

• Acts 2:10. Baptism (verse 41); doctrine and fellowship (verse 42); breaking of bread (verse 42); prayers (verse 42); brotherly love and sharing (verses 44-45); harmony (verse 46); daily soul-winning and adding to the church (verse 47).

• Acts 4:30. After prayer - place shaken, filled with Holy Spirit (verse 31); great power (verse 33); generosity (verses 34-36).

• Acts 5:11. Great fear in church (verse 11); great results (verse 14).

• Acts 6:2. Care for widows (verses 1-3); transfigured Christian (verses 8-15).

• Acts 7:55. Revelation (verse 55); faithful unto death (Acts 13:52). These are but a few of the wonderful results of this Spirit-directed and empowered evangelism.

Ú Ú”Ú”It meets individual needs•œ

• Jews with religious problems; Greeks with intellectual problems; Romans with problems of law and order; slaves; women with interior standing. A brief list of some of the converts:

* Lame man (Acts 3:2-8) and many of the people (Acts 4:4).
* Saul of Tarsus (Acts 8:1; 9:1-5).
* Cornelius the Centurion (Acts 10:1).
* Timothy (Acts 16:1).
* Lydia a seller of people and her household (Acts 16:14-15).
* Greeks and chief women (Acts 17:4).
* Apollos the orator (Acts 18:24-28).
* Pagans with curious arts (Acts 19:19).
* And many others.
It stirs opposition • •

Someone has said wherever Paul went 'there was either a riot or a revival'. In the book of Acts we see not only great blessing but great opposition.

* The priests, the captain of the temple and Sadducees (Acts 4:1-3).
* Murmuring (Acts 6:1).
* The synagogue of the Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians and of Cilicia and Asia (Acts 6:9-12).
* Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:1).
* Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:8).
* Jews filled with envy (Acts 13:45).
* Paul stoned at Lystra (Acts 14:19).
* Some mocked (Acts 17:32).
* Demetrius the silversmith (Acts 19:23-29).

These are but a few but suffice to show that people from many walks of life opposed the evangel. What prayer was offered - nights of it, days of it! The Apostles gave themselves over continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4).

Rivers of God • •

Jesus said that there would be 'rivers of living water' when the Spirit was in control (John 7:37-39). This is God's plan for the church. Not broken cisterns or pools or beautiful oases even, but rivers of living water. As the Old Testament prophet has said, waters not only up to the ankles, knees or loins but to swim in (Ezekiel 47:3-5) and 'everything shall live whither the river cometh' (Ezekiel 47:9).

This river proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb (Revelation 22:1) and whosoever is thirsty may drink (verse 17). Psalm 1 reminds us that the Christian who steeps his soul in God shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water with fruit in season, green leaves, freshness and life.

'God fills the soul that it may pour
The fullness on another heart;
Not that the filled with good may store,
The good God giveth to impart'.

(Author unknown)

There is a need to know how, if we can judge by the statistics that come to hand from time to time.

During a Leighton Ford Crusade an article appeared in one of the newspaper claiming that the method used by Billy Graham and his organisation was not at all what it was claimed to be, because so many of Billy Graham's converts were known to have gone back. This is so under the preaching of course. For example, Jesus 'had those who had gone back' and Paul spoke of those in Asia 'who forsook him and fled'. We felt constrained to challenge the statement of the reporter and he admitted that he was going by figures from the denomination to which he
belonged. This denomination, in the main, was not sympathetic to the crusade and did little or no follow-up work at all. Mass evangelism brings to birth. It is vital that techniques similar to all age Sunday schools should be used to bring to growth and to maturity, if it is so vital to have skilled aftercare.

Here is a most necessary part of evangelistic method whether for mass Evangelism or ordinary church work:

When Jesus said, 'Go, make disciples, teach', etc. the doing and making come first, and this is an exceedingly costly business as far as self-sacrifice is concerned.

Here are some further sections on evangelism and its methods:

(a) The methods we use now.
(b) The methods which are available but not used fully.
(c) The methods we ought to develop and use.

I am aware that in some places these will overlap.

(a) The methods we use now
1. House to house visitation.
2. Cottage meeting evangelism.
3. Parlour meetings. Like cottage meetings but seeking those in higher social status. The 'up and outers' who need the Gospel.
4. Special prayer evangelism.
5. Tract and Gospel evangelism.
6. Open-air meetings. This is still an effective means if well done. Souls are still being saved in the open air, but it needs to be an attractive, skilfully prepared 'open air', with an occasional recruit being used to gain experience one way and another. The Open Air Campaigners (who I mention because they specialise in this kind of work) have had great success in this method in America and Canada, where open-air work was thought to have had its day. Even the Salvation Army has practically given up, they report. It has been called 'the forgotten ministry'. Now the O.A.C. have something like five vans operating full-time in Canada and nine vans in the USA.

There are some striking figures about the position in the USA. There are wide-open doors for this ministry almost everywhere. There are 70,000,000 people in this country who do not go to church. There are 18,000,000 children who have never been inside a Sunday school. Here is a challenge indeed! Take New York City for example, one-third of them are Roman Catholic, one third Jewish, one-third Protestant (but largely pagan). There are more Italians in New York than there are in Rome; more Irish than there are in Dublin; more Jews than there are in the
Holy Land. Eighty per cent of the people in New York will never come inside our churches. For 40 per cent it was a mortal sin; for 40 percent it is national treason. This is the only way to take the Gospel to them!

In Canada, Roman Catholics now outnumber protestants. In Australia, there is a significant trend. Since 1954, Commonwealth of Australia figures, Roman Catholics have gained 22.2 per cent; Church of England a little over six per cent; Greek Orthodox 100 per cent. There are many migrants who will never come into a church ... we need to go to them with mass evangelism, open-air evangelism and visitation evangelism. To bring this up to date, it will be necessary to find out the position at the moment from the Bureau of Statistics, as statistics are always changing.

One of the failures of open-air work, and other evangelistic activity is the serious lack of teaching by real experts - men whose results prove that they know how to do the work. We are not using all the tools we can in evangelism. For example - demonstrations; program preparation; clinics; displays; panels; discussion; visitation (is only used partly); adequate follow-up techniques in service; Christian living; enlistment in church organisation; new members' classes.

It seems to me that it is not the men who write on how to catch fish that are the best fishermen, but the ones who actually keep catching them.

7. Tent work.

8. Mass evangelism. Although I have touched on this by way of introduction, I would like to add a few further thoughts. Some feel that the day of mass evangelism is over but FACTS belie the objections.

The Australian preacher, Rev. Gordon Powell, when speaking about evangelistic services he conducted, said, 'These new avenues of opportunity which I have been led during recent months, in calling for definite decisions for Christ, are proving an increasing joy and blessing'.

'Why didn't I start this sooner! It means that by extending my evangelistic outreach I have a lot more people praying for my ministry. I have naturally been greatly influenced in what I am now doing by the example and influence of Billy Graham. It seems to me that true stewardship must follow in the wake of evangelism. For our church budget of St. Stephen's, two-thirds is set aside 'for others'. We have, for instance, been able to help in the establishment of some 30 new churches in Korea. But it is the stewardship of the whole life that is involved for the committed Christians, not just the matter of money'.

Mrs Powell confirmed the striking change in their home as well as in the work of the church as a result of the Graham Crusade of 1959 and mentioned the place that tithing took. (New Life). He also stated in replying to a criticism of mass evangelism that 300 new members came into his church.

It is a thought-provoking statement by Arch-deacon Harland of Rochester, preaching in Westminster Abbey, 'The church is allowing itself to be conformed to the world; reorganising itself and having stewardship campaigns, and all the while the world is getting further from God'.
Mass evangelism is still a very fruitful method if done in God's way and dependent on God's guidance and spirit.

At the time of writing there are a number of Australian evangelists who are seeing the blessing of Almighty God on their mass evangelism.

9. The use of cars, trailers, etc.
10. Services in the theatres, circuses, etc.
11. Jails, hospitals, aged homes and institutions.
12. Children's meetings.
13. After-meetings for the awakened in a main evangelistic meeting.
15. Conducting funerals.
16. Literature crusade.
17. Colportage work.
18. Advertising evangelism.
21. Film and film-strip evangelism.
22. Aeroplane evangelism to isolated western people.

23. Pedal radio evangelism.

A lot of research of modern methods can be done by frequenting Christian bookstores and reading Christian newspapers or attending seminars on evangelism or schools of evangelism.

Of course, there are many new methods being used every day.

Many of the former could fall within this category in some parts and yet would come into the number (a) category in other parts of the State. There are some, however, that are fairly general in this section.

1. Migrant evangelism open one to such tremendous field. The Southern Baptist Convention in the USA have language classes and departments. They minister to nurses and hospital workers; have interpreting devices in English churches to which they invite migrants. They establish
churches and groups with people speaking to them in their own language, gradually working the children into English groups.

There are 20,000,000 people in the USA speaking other languages. (For Australian readers who need updated figures, contact your local Bureau of Statistics.) The principal languages are Spanish, French, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, Hungarian, Portuguese and many Indian languages and dialects. Some years ago, the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention supported 1,134 missionaries serving language groups. We have opportunities in hospitals, migrant camps, hostels forestry reserves, etc. Some ministries have taken on the task of learning the Italian language or some other language and using thousands of tracts in Italian or many other languages (check with the Bible Society of Australia and/or Scripture Gift Mission).

We could do a great work by having house parties for Asians (or others). They could, as I have seen them do in Armidale, NSW, come to a home, do some of their own cooking, invite their friends and there seek to seal their friendship and their allegiance.

In some parts of the world there are broadcasts for new Australians and overseas people on radio stations like HCJB, Quito Ecuador. There is a far-east broadcast group in Sydney (Far East Broadcasting Associates), P.O. Box 88, Roseberry, New South Wales. This uses 16 different stations and beams out news of the Gospel around the world in 36 major languages with 740 program hours per week - the world's third largest program time.

Rev. F.A. Marsh has brought some suggestions before the Australian Board of Evangelism which will receive some publicity at a future date.

2. Week-end workshops.
3. Operation Friendly Hand.
4. Industrial evangelism.
5. Services evangelism.
7. Camp and convention evangelism.
8. Personal evangelism.
9. Women's evangelism.

Ú Ú”Ú(c) Some types that are not so much in Australia if at all:

1. Fisherman's club.
2. Correspondence course evangelism.
3. Missions to ministers.
4. Library evangelism.
5. Invasion evangelism (taking a team of workers to country areas to visit the area, hold rallies, etc. Especially to churches short of workers to do the job themselves).
6. Visitation evangelism with a definite aim to groups.
7. Telephone evangelism.
8. Life Line evangelism.
9. Professional groups and university evangelism.
10. Evangelism by boat or water ways.
12. Evangelism through journalism.
13. Witnessing to Olympic Games and the like.
15. Deeper life conventions.
16. Simultaneous crusades.

**Evangelism in depth**

Stated briefly is a method used with great success in Nicaragua and was to be tried in Japan by the Evangelisation Association of Japan. The thesis is 'The successful expansion of any movement is in direct proportion to success in mobilising and occupying its total membership in constant propagation of its beliefs'.

One missionary speaking on this states, 'We need experienced people to come and emphasise every believer’s responsibility in personal evangelism. We need to co-operate in area training for practical instruction. Would not such a method put the true emphasis where it belongs? Namely, the every believer shall daily witness to souls and be effective in personal evangelism'.

'Evangelism in Depth' arose from the fact that missionaries felt they were making so little impact on the nation.

Whatever we use as a method or methods, we certainly need to encourage 'Evangelism in Depth' wherever we are.

**Some new attitudes to evangelism (for your thoughtful consideration)**

1. There is an awakening interest, a re-examining of the commission and its order.

2. Christ is being seen primarily as an evangelist.

3. A re-examining of the churches function.

4. In the USA a strong influence on fact the church community does not exist primarily for sinners but for saints. So that saints might be blessed, and 'go' to the lost.

5. There is a need for a re-examination of theological training. Very often we are answering questions nobody is asking.

6. There is a keen desire to see an efficient outreach and the development of techniques for soul-winning.

7. There is a heartening sign of churches developing a world vision and prayer for revival.