The making of an evangelist

Jarrott, Reginald Edward

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The Perimeters of Evangelism

Heart-cry for help

Present needs of the world

For those with ears to hear, there arises into the mind and heart the dreadful heart cry for help from masses of human beings. They search and search but many fail to find the contentment and peace of mind and conscience which they seek.

Some are hungry for daily food and cannot listen to the need for spiritual food until their physical hunger and thirst are met.

The cry is similar in many parts of the world but the needs are varied. A very hold hymn has a verse that goes something like this:

Don't you know the world is dying
For a little bit of love?
Can't you hear the children crying
For a little bit of love?

There are many religions in the world, but so many of them lack the love of a God like the Christian's God. Many of them promise so much but give so little of real value. As is seen in modern times, some are in constant conflict with large tosses of life, and old hatreds and bitterness unresolved.

There are those who steal food from needy people, to sell on the black market, caring not at all that little children are starving and will die.

There are religious leaders who promise life to the followers, but who are in their own tombs dead for many years.

The news media is filled with the sad tales and sounds of humanity's heart cry and the restlessness, fears and troubles of these days. With violence and rape, murder and conflict.

The world's cures fail

Mostly the world's cures are but a placebo... with no power to cure or heal the hurting heart.

Some believe that education is the answer, but without a change of heart, we will have educated devils. This is not to say education is of no value, of course.

Some look to science to cure the malady of the world's heart-ache. Science can do many things. Medical science can bring much healing to the body, but
science has also brought to the world, the atom-bomb and many other dreadful things.

Others think materialism and wealth will secure peace and happiness for the world. Adequate purchasing power can help, but never forget that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.

Some turn to the occult, thinking that if they could know their future all would be well, but why forsake the living Christ, to speak to the dead?

'Politics is the answer', so others say. 'If we can get the right kind of system then that will be the answer'. but even the political parties cannot agree among themselves, and who is to decide which is the right system, with such divergencies of opinion.

The world's cures are not cures at all - even though there may be a lot of good among them.

Sometime ago I was asked a question by a high school lad. He said, 'Sir, if God is so loving, why doesn't He provide enough food for the starving people?' I answered, 'Son, God does provide enough for man's needs, as UNESCO figures show, but never enough for man's need'.

Today, because of the heart tugging cries of needy mankind, Christians can grasp the opportunity to show the Saviour's love. The wounded and badly bruised people lying on the Jericho road of life, can feel the selfless ministration of the Good Samaritan organisations to pick up the battered, to pray for their help, and to let the love of God and His Christ shine through. Jesus went about doing good in His day, we can be like the Saviour in our day, instead of just going about filling in time.

In James 2:14-18 it says, 'What does it profit, my brethren, though a man says he has faith, and has not works can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled' notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body: what does it profit? Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone. Yes a man may say, you have faith and I have works: show me your faith without your works, I will show you my faith by my works'.

When ministering in Northern Ireland in our All Ulster Crusade, people with bitterness in their hearts, in meetings, prisons, high schools and from every walk of life experienced the supreme love of God, shown to us in His Son, and hearts were radically changed as those of us ministering to the troubled Irish people came to Belfast and other areas with love.

Because out of the heart are the issues of life, it is essential for those of us with an evangelistic ministry to come and minister to the hearts of men and women, seeking by the power of the Spirit of God, to sow the seeds of love where hatred dwelt.
The Golden Rule of Jesus is, as you would that men should do unto you, do ye even so, unto them (Matthew 7:12(a)).

Another thing which is prevalent in our world today is bewilderment. This occurs because of:

* Social changes.
* Technological changes.
* Moral slide.
* Cosmological changes.
* Ecological changes.
* Faster educational changes.

Things are moving so fast in these areas, that mankind seems to have lost his bearing more than ever.

In the work scene, often humans are replaced by clever machines which have displaced the worker in the workplace. Mankind has a sense of instability and needs reassuring. Here is where the gospel can help greatly. In God’s sight even those humans on the lowest rung of the ladder are precious in the Saviour’s sight. The children’s chorus is quite right in its lyrics:

Brown and yellow, black and white. All are precious in His sight. Jesus loves the little children [or people] of the world.

The old Gospel story can certainly restore to a man his worth in a mechanised world, and can give him a heart to seek God’s help in overcoming his problems. Evangelists can help by finding out what is hurting mankind, and by seeking to apply Gospel truths which will help to cure the human ills of the heart.

Jesus said, ‘Come unto me all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light’ (Matthew 11:28-30).

In World War I days, people used to sing a song ‘Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile’. Of course the Bible has a far better remedy than that, and Christians and evangelists ought to bell it out to this distressed world.

In 1 Peter 5:7 we are exhorted to be among those who do not ‘cast our troubles in our old kit bag’, but to be among those who are ‘casting all our care upon Him: for He careth for you’. I believe the French translation of this text has the idea of us having a load of care in a tip truck, and that we should tip all of our care on God, because He does really care for us.
It does not matter which way you look at it, whether in life, death, things present or things to come - nothing from outer space, the depths of the sea, nor under the earth, nor the satanic, can separate us for the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:38-39) and 'If God is for us, who can be against us' (Romans 8:31b).

In all the crises of life - illness, life's struggles, death, present or future things, wonders above, and changes in the sea or in the earth, let us give them Christ who is the one and only way home to God (John 14:6).

Men and women ponder the future of the world - the answer is the same still.
Give them Jesus who is the Christ.

In 2 Peter 3:9-13 it says, 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness: but is longsuffering towards us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Looking for and hastening unto the coming day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with a fervent heat?

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look or new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness'.

Because the days are evil and the time seems to be drawing near, let our hearts be full of zeal and the Holy Spirit, and let us tell the sad, bad world of Jesus, by every method and way at our disposal. 'Redeeming the time (literally - buying back the opportunity) because the days are evil' (Ephesians 5:16).