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The making of an evangelist

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To begin this chapter, it would be very profitable to open your Bible at Luke 14:12-24. This passage speaks about highways and hedges because hedges often frame the lanes and byways of towns and fields. However, in thinking about the parable in a literal way, the word hedges does not remind us of the homeless and the wanderers whose only home is in the hedges, parks, back streets and even tunnels.

One of the aims of Section D is to give inspiration, exhortation and to show how far out our evangelism must go. Too much evangelism of our day is too .......... It has the outlook of the old prayer ditty:

'God bless me, my wife,
our son jack, his wife,
his four, no more. Amen'.

I have always believed that if God so loved the world, there is a world to be reached.

In Mark 16:15 we read, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature'. (See also, Matthew 28:19-20 and Luke 24:46-48.)

Those scriptures are telling us to have a large vision of our personal world, home, work, relatives, social contacts and such like.

* Our local area - opportunities to reach people on our doorstep.
* Our civic areas - these in the inner city, not forgetting the civic leaders.
* Our state areas - need to assess possibilities of outreach in the whole state.
* Our national areas - opportunities for witnessing to the whole nation.
* The international areas of this whole world - this is also the 'go ye into all the world'.

And if the Lord permits, and the Saviour tarries, we must be looking at unsaved men, women and children - wait for it - living on the moon. If this is in the mind of God, young evangelists may need to think seriously about outreach in this way. This is not so far fetched as it may sound. Nor is it far fetched to believe that on the state, national and inter-national levels, we have cities now widely apart, growing towards one another until there becomes what has been called 'megacities'.

The Scripture in Luke 14:12-24 on 'highways and hedges' if only taken literally, and not looking into its deeper meaning can fail to give us a wider view-point.

The literal interpretation can find many ideas for use in outreach in Section C of this book. It will mean taking the Gospel, for instance, to the open air, forestry camps, wharves, factories, workshops, sawmills, coffee shops, ministry at EXPOs, in parks, at speakers corners, to ships in port, etc.
I will probably develop a little further in this chapter open air work and civic crusades.

The literal interpretation will mean that we should sit down and think in what new ways we can reach various situations set out on page one of this chapter. As you know the word 'lateral' really means that we should get out of easy 'rut-like' thinking, and try to look at each field through new eyes and try to discover our own methods for doing outreach in an expanded meaning of the Luke 14:12-24 passage. This will need to be prayed over and it will need the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to get the deeper meaning of application. For example, to migrants, sailors in port with tracts in various languages. The use of the mass media is most important, video tapes as well. Here are some further hints on open air work and civic crusades.

Ú Ú"œOpen-air Workœ

This spiritual warfare which is still very useful in certain areas even though in recent days some of the famous spots in cities are now excluded because of the increase in traffic, and possible hazards to groups of people standing on a busy street.

It is possible to use some inexperienced people in a limited way, but the leaders of the team, should be carefully and prayerfully selected and fully experienced. Through open-air work, I have seen people who were won to Christ, later build in as solid members of the local church. another fruit of this kind of work is the way it develops preachers in their skills. I know personally of a number of young and not so young preachers who got their grounding as efficient preachers through open-air work.

Ú Ú"œSome necessary steps for this kind of workœ

(a) The whole project essentially begins in prayer for the whole team.
(b) Pray that a suitable place for the meeting will be available.
(c) Pray for police permission.
(d) Pray that the right musicians will be found.

In choosing a situation, go where the people are, for instance, near some fairly busy area where the people congregate in good numbers. Go amongst houses in a back street, preferably with a slight rise to the top of it, or in a kind of amphitheatre setting. Stand at the bottom and your voice will carry right up the hill, especially if you have a P.A. system. However, it is amazing how far the voice can travel even without a P.A. If using sound, you would need power points or batteries.

Your aim should be, not only to win, but also to warn people to the danger of dying without Christ as Saviour.

Your team should consist of good musicians; speakers with dynamic presentation, but especially Spirit filled. Some good testimonies; soloist(s) or singing group(s). Don’t forget to have a variety of good instrumentalists. The emphasis is on quality and earnestness. Avoid flippancy. You are on serious business, actually it is the King’s business.
Don't be antagonistic to those who disagree. Show a sympathetic attitude. At times it is best to ignore interjections.

When speaking to the crowd, keep it short, interesting and interspersed with illustrations. These are like windows to a building, letting in light upon the subject. If the crowd is wearied by what you say, it is likely to disperse. So keep it brief, interesting and to the point. Someone once said about public speaking - 'Stand up. Speak up. Then shut up'.

Always have some people who can counsel those who are interested. Tracts should be offered too. Be courteous and give an explanation about the tracts enough to awaken interest but don’t detract attention from the speaker, by you distribution of the tracts.

It is good to have some of your team standing around in strategic places, so as to encourage passers-by to stop and listen.

Because 'anybody's business is no body's business', it is wise to have a good leader who is sensitive to everything that is going on. He should have worked a pattern of progress for the meeting, and let the team members taking part know where they fit in.

Participants need to have prayer before, during and after the meeting. Because this is serious business, everything should be conducted with decorum and sincerity.

Civic crusades

These combined crusades of evangelical churches can be a great way of reaching a community, and mobilising Christians from the various churches of the district. Here’s a brief outline of how to go about these crusades. This section is in addition to hints already given in the Section C. How to build up to a focal point, or a crusade.

In this section of information is a small guide on some steps to take.

* Call a meeting of interested ministers of the churches.
* Present the plan and have it agreed to.
* Appoint a Crusade Director.
* Appoint a Working Executive Committee who will make contact with a suitable evangelist.
* After settling on your aims and objectives, work out a budget involving all participating congregations, deciding if offerings are to be taken in meetings or otherwise.
* Refer to the previous information on structuring of committees (Section C of this book).
* Also see the count-down section and check lists.
* Work out framework of meeting, musical ideas, counselling, follow-up.
* Make your intentions widely known in participating churches and in the general district about.
* Seek ideas and help from the chosen crusade evangelist.
* Pray, pray, pray and pray some more.

One of the basic rules of administration is to give strict attention to detail, because near enough is not good enough.