

Biblical Patterns of Evangelism...



...today!

by Korky Davey

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FOREWORD

More than 30 years ago, I met Korky Davey; he has challenged and changed me and my family ever since. His overwhelming passion for evangelism has never slackened. Both figuratively and physically, he lopes along leading an army of evangelists young and old. Best of all, Korky collected a treasure trove of information and inspiration concerning evangelism and evangelists.

In this rich volume, I have a handbook for evangelism today. Let me suggest several reasons to read and digest this valuable information.

1. Its depth satisfies the serious student. Beginning with his conversion to Christianity under the ministry of **John Stott** at All Soul's Church in London, Korky introduces the reader to key people in the world of evangelism. This recital of recent history skims along on a pattern of powerful, yet humorous, illustrations.

2. Its breadth stretches our understanding. As I have read, and re-read Korky's book I am continually amazed at the breadth of his reading. He peruses books and periodicals from every possible perspective. Then he distils the best and delivers it in his own inimitable style. By the way, I know the word, "inimitable," is a hackneyed phrase. In my estimation, Korky Davey personifies it—no one can imitate him. Yes, even his knowledge of evangelistic literature is unique. I speak as a professor of evangelism.

3. Its perception of post-modern society. Within the Christian church, there has emerged a superficial approach to ministry. Nowhere is this more evident than in the "amateurisation of missions." Korky traces the rise of religious tourism, by which well-heeled Christians travel around the world claiming to be missionaries. Their would-be evangelistic witness is silenced by their proximity to post-modernists. In an effort to counteract this trend, Korky led the way in forming the Bristol School of evangelism.

4. It's a "who's who" of evangelists. Having met many evangelists worldwide, Korky assesses them and their approach to the task. Despite his distinctive method of evangelism, Korky does not use his method as the criteria of validity. He analyses contemporary evangelists

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based on biblical principles. I love this about Korky. He is consequential in his commitment to Scripture.

5. Its financial sanity. An entire chapter is entitled, “Evangelism and Finance.” Korky has observed the spiritual shipwreck of many evangelists. In many cases, that disaster was caused by a casual approach to finance. Korky challenges evangelists to uphold a high standard of financial accountability. The guidelines laid down by Korky are “must reading” for every evangelist, indeed for every person in Christian ministry.

6. Its enthusiasm about evangelism. Korky presents a compelling case for the effectiveness of evangelism. Many observers have claimed that evangelism is passé. Knowledgeable clergymen have maligned the ministry of evangelism. With the end of Dr. Billy Graham’s ministry, we have lost an eloquent voice for evangelism. Thank God that Korky has written this book as a resource for generations to come.

Korky’s approach in this book is unconventional, just as his ministry has shattered traditional forms and practices. The uniqueness of this book is only matched by its significance. It is compulsory reading for evangelists and pastors. For professors it is a wealth of information and insights. In fact, every serious Christian should read Korky Davey’s heart cry for evangelism.

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We also want to thank Sammy and Veronika Fischer who designed the original layout for us in Vienna, and Mark Howe and Steve Poulard of Poulard Howe Associates, who created for it one of the most successful websites in Christian literature.

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We are most grateful to Philip Tory of Authorgraphic Ltd, whose re-editing in 2010-11 has produced a greatly improved and up-dated edition.

It has been a wonderfully inspiring team effort, which we deeply appreciate.

Korky and Anni Davey

January 2011.

INTRODUCTION

The latest statistics from Christian Research published in **Dr. Peter Brierley's** excellent book "**The Tide is Running Out**" show that in England 46% of church membership, across all mainstream Christian denominations, has been lost in the last 21 years. During the "**Decade of Evangelism**" in the 90s, the decline steepened and Dr. Brierley believes that today something like 1,000 teenagers a week stop going to church. Yet those involved in the front-line activities of **street preaching** and **Christian education** in the public school system find a sympathetic and ready response to the claims of Christ: we find there is very little cynicism about Jesus.

Recent publications on evangelism tend to display a non-comprehension of what evangelism is or what an evangelist's ministry is about, or even who the evangelists are. A couple of years ago, a book published by the **Church Army** in Australia, written by a number of contributors who are Anglican clergy working in Australia, set out to identify the evangelists in their congregations and to suggest ways in which they could be encouraged. The evangelist is identified as a "Hail fellow, well met" type with the ability to build relationships with visitors to church fairly easily, but nevertheless the kind of person who is likely to have behavioural problems, be a non-academic, and to be likely to say the wrong thing at the wrong time! These sort of misconceptions are common in evangelism today - in fact there is so much ignorance about the whole subject that we must establish a **Biblical pattern** for this tremendously important ministry if the Church - in England at least - is to be more than a few tiny groups of elderly people meeting in empty buildings in 20 years' time.

There has also been such a loss of confidence in the ability of the Holy Spirit to convict and convert that Church pastor/managers today preach the Gospel with little or no expectation of any result - so there is an increasing tendency to move into sociological patterns and change the message - one of the latest being "God wants you to feel good about yourself". Messages like this produce friendly audiences, but not converts.

Having spent the last 42 years (25 full time with **Open Air Campaigners**) working with the world's leading evangelistic and

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missions agencies, I hope this Report will convey something of the thrill of sharing the Gospel with the spiritually hungry in the world, who stand in their hundreds eager to hear what God is saying today. People from all walks of life, in all countries where I have had the privilege of preaching, have a profound respect for the Gospel and are greatly interested in knowing how a personal relationship with Jesus Christ can be possible.

Preaching on the streets of **Vienna** with local missionaries for the last 5 or 6 summers has demonstrated to me how even in a materialistic, sophisticated European country like **Austria** there are those who want to know how they can know God. The astonishing thing is that in the 55 years since Church-planting began in Vienna after the war, no one had actually gone out and preached the Gospel to the Austrians in public - where all of them are to be found! It seems that almost nobody will follow Jesus in his public preaching ministry.

I lead seminars in **Bible colleges** principally in Britain and the **United States**, and also in some Western European countries. I find neither students nor staff (some of whom are ex-missionaries) have ever contemplated the public preaching of the Gospel.

To see the slides of this incredibly effective ministry in action evokes cries of surprise and delight and an eagerness to learn how to do it. Whether it's in the shopping precinct on a Saturday morning, outside the Bull Ring late at night in Portugal or Spain, or talking to 1,000 or so teenagers in a Secondary School assembly, the interest and the sincerity, the thoughtfulness, and the gratitude are all there as people hear things that often their national Church has never told them before.

In **Greece**, where I have been working for 22 years, the Church itself has become the message, rather than the Gospel - their history, their saints, their icons, their traditions, their religious practices. After a campaign in a town or village in Greece, young people will come up and say, "Thank you for being here this week in the park with your team - if you go into the bars you'll meet hundreds of young people talking about Jesus, and last week they had hardly heard of him."

Listening to the radio on the way home, Dan Truitt and I were astonished to hear the Archimandrite of Athens say on the Devotional he gives each week that he was very much more interested in what the

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Greek philosophers say because they had a better grasp of life than the Old Testament prophets! Even in England, the Church today tends to have all the characteristics of a group of secular institutions run by civil service procedures - whereas Biblically we should be a mission, with a sense of direction and purpose, determined to build the Kingdom of God. This book explains how this vision can become a reality, in which ordinary members of local churches can play a key role in reaching out effectively into their own local communities.

I have undertaken the writing of this book with some trepidation, as there is a desire on my part to encourage and not criticise. Many of the ministries undertaken by the modern church are superb in my experience and meet felt needs of those concerned. However, if the Christian message is to have a wide appeal in the modern world, then the ministry of the Evangelist is going to have to be clearly understood and facilitated on a proper basis.

For ease of writing, I have used the term “he” to describe an evangelist - this is in no way meant to demean the many excellent female evangelists who are doing the work, and I hope you will read it as an inclusive term not an exclusive one. In fact, our first full time trainee was a Senior Sister Tutor from St. Bartholomew’s Hospital in London, **Karen Bolton** (nee Dillon), who for many years now has been a fine evangelist both here in the UK and on the mission field in **Africa**.

This is not a book about prayer. One of my greatest treasures is an early edition of a book on prayer by E. M. Bounds, the reading and re-reading of which changed my life. Everything we do hinges on our prayer life and our direct link with the Lord in every step we take. Without prayer, the events described in this book could not have happened. Through prayer springs the strength and motivation to evangelise. Prayer also brings the love without which that motivation descends to mere worldly ambition. Hundreds of faithful prayer partners around the world are the foundation of the work that God does in reaching out and touching people’s lives by his Holy Spirit.

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ONE

The Evangelist - The Call

The old army barracks had been turned into a **prison camp**. The long, low, grey wooden buildings with corrugated iron roofs stood in rows down one side of the compound. On the other was the parade ground. On a rise in the middle were a dozen or so bamboo cages, which housed the uncontrollably dangerous prisoners. There were about 700 terrorists in the camp surrounded by an earth bank with palisade and rolls of barbed wire. At each corner was a timber platform with mounted machine guns and guards. Nobody had much hope of results from inviting the missionaries in, but the Governor had decided that everything had to be tried in the effort to rehabilitate these men, who had committed such dreadful atrocities, principally against members of other tribes.

They were a miserable looking lot and it was early evening on a grey day in **East Africa**. We had borrowed a lorry to stand on and **Earl Martin** was going to do the preaching. I had been invited along to lend support as **Ed Reis**, the local **Navigators** representative, had come straight round to recruit me an hour after I arrived off the plane from England. Earl Martin's house was a huge ranch-style bungalow with a fridge outside the back door so large they hadn't been able to get it into the kitchen. Earl was a very tough customer indeed who had been a teamster's shop steward on the New York waterfront and I was told that people tended not to shake hands with him more than once. Intrigued, I made the mistake of doing so - only to discover it took several minutes for the blood to get back into my hand! Earl's other claim to fame was that he had a Cessna 180 parked on his back lawn and one of the reasons I went along was to get a chance to see the aeroplane. Three of us were on the truck, which had drop sides, and was loaded with about a ton of John's Gospels with helpful notes. Two Askaris, each holding a Sten gun, stood with us on the truck for our protection.

We could tell the prisoners were hugely impressed by Earl's appearance. His barrel chest and huge shoulders, neck the same width as his head, and his very short haircut, made him someone they could look up to and relate to. He started to speak, quite simply, about his own life and the awful things he had done. He said that accepting Christ had provided the forgiveness, direction and purpose he needed to

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become a different man. He preached about the power of the Holy Spirit to make new people. Initially a few rocks flew past our ears and I was terribly glad to be standing right behind Earl - but a hush came over the whole company and you could tell that most of them were really touched by what he was saying. It was as if the hand of God was reaching out, changing people's minds. One could sense a powerful peer pressure in the group emanating from many individuals for evil. But when Earl asked those who wanted to be different, to start over again and get out of their old life into a new one, you could tell many wanted to respond but were afraid to do so.

About 8 or 9 of them came up and took a John's Gospel to signify their response, and we had time to spend in discussion with individuals in the huts afterwards, still under armed guard. They had been misled by ruthless political figures, who compelled them to undergo obscene rites and then drove them by fear to participate in the most horrendous atrocities against men, women and children out in the villages. These guys were appalled at what had happened to them; desperately lonely and fearful of the future. They were terribly keen to get home to their families and friends in their villages - now a remote and distant memory. Standing on the truck that first evening with Earl and Ed, I was very conscious that I was witnessing something historic and profound as the Holy Spirit got to work amongst those men. Sadly, in the following week, those first converts were all found dead, but that did not prevent 350 responding next time. Altogether some 3,500 of the prisoners in camps turned to Christ, many of them becoming leaders of the emergent evangelical African church.

In 1963, a Foreign Office Report published in London asserted that the Emergency had finally been brought to an end successfully not through the barrel of the gun but the widespread dissemination of the Gospel of John.

That was **Kenya** in 1958. The first thing Ed Reis had asked me was "Korky, what is your ministry?" As a member of **All Souls, Langham Place**, under the leadership of **John Stott** (I was converted in September 1951) I had absolutely no idea that a Christian was expected to have a ministry. For me, Christianity made few demands other than attendance at All Souls on Sunday evenings. Keen young men invited me on conferences at Cambridge University and I attended two or three Cambridge Inter-Varsity Christian Union meetings and

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heard some fine speakers, but never received a challenge to do much more than be a regular attender and watch. Earl Martin and Ed Reis, however, treated me as an equal member of their team, although it must have been obvious to them that I was a raw recruit!

Ed taught me how to study the Bible and knew how to go about doing so. He prayed with me a lot, took me with him on his rounds, and got me started on the Navigators “**Topical Memory System**” for memorising Scripture. He also got me to “help” him - he asked me questions and I would search out the answers in the Scriptures; he showed me how to ask the right questions, and how to use my **Thompson Chain Reference Bible** to best effect. I am still engaged on the studies he set me. The Scriptures became to me as much of an operational manual as a devotional document. I also now knew what I wanted to do with my life: I felt I had become part of God’s Team, and desired more than anything else in all the world to be a preacher. These experiences contrasted quite dramatically with subsequent experiences of church, whose leaders seemed to regard it as part of their job to prevent those with a sense of calling from playing any sort of active role.

I have since realised how absolutely essential it is to witness a role model at work for it to be possible for someone to receive a call from God to the same sort of ministry. Elijah as role model inspired Elisha. Jesus as role model inspired the disciples. Paul as role model inspired Timothy. We need **role models** today. **Billy Graham** has been a role model for many but, unfortunately, his ministry is not transferable: he is unique. Reading his autobiography and learning of the large number of divine appointments which brought his wonderful ministry into being, one realises he is a historic event - the most successful evangelist in history, his like may never be seen again.

I was once a young broadcaster on the BBC, principally on children’s programmes in the early evenings. I had got to know many of the famous media people of the day, and was quite well known to large numbers of children who listened to the radio in those days. As a consequence of this, I was from time to time invited to speak at children’s church services. While I enjoyed this very much, I felt quite keenly the need to learn how to preach. The principles of this were not made available to me for a further 22 years, after Bible college, as a trainee street evangelist with **Open Air Campaigners (OAC)**. Studying

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under the founder of OAC in Britain, **David Fanstone**, I learned that “Jesus spoke about issues that interested ordinary people in order to teach them all they needed to know to become members of God’s family”. This is the method God uses to communicate his message to ordinary people. St. Paul is perfectly clear about this - he says, “How shall they hear, except a preacher be sent?”

This is one of the fundamental reasons why Christian entertainments – drama, the use of music, etc., – can play no more than a peripheral role in evangelism.

My father, who was a very highly qualified scientist, and my mother, who had been a newspaper sub-editor, were heavily imbued with the cynicism and the liberalism of the 1940s and 1940s. He regarded Christians and church as hypocritical and totally irrelevant.

Our local vicar was a delightful chap who would often visit and be entertained to tea by my mother, more as a family friend than as a minister, and this was just as well as he didn’t sue us when Sally, our Alsatian dog, destroyed his black trousers and long johns when he came upon her unexpectedly one day!

My father was absolutely furious when I announced that I had committed my life to Christ on 21st September 1951. Let me explain. **Broadcasting** was all “live” in those days, and between sessions I used to go and have a snooze on a back pew in All Souls, which was next door to Broadcasting House. I was very embarrassed to wake up one day and find I was in the middle of a service! For the first time I heard a **clear presentation of the Gospel**, and after attending more services (awake this time) I decided to commit my life to the Lord. My father would occasionally attend All Souls with me, but this was not an experience I looked forward to, as during John Stott’s brilliant sermons my father would mutter under his breath (but nevertheless very audibly) one of his favourite words as applied to Christianity - “Poppycock!” or “Balderdash!”. People sitting in the nearby pews would dart us quick glances and several would go purple with embarrassment, fearing the clergy would think it was they who had said these dreadful words. **George Cansdale**, the first TV zoo presenter, who was the Senior Sidesman at All Souls in those days, always treated my father’s antics with great good humour and was not in the least put out - which impressed my father very much. George’s favourite question was

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always “When are you going to nail your colours to the mast, Mr. Davey?”

The turning point in my parents’ spiritual pilgrimage came when I insisted they hear the dynamic young American evangelist at **Haringey** in 1953. My father only consented to come because he really liked the things **Billy Graham** had said to the Press on arrival at Southampton on the Queen Mary. The Billy Graham publicity machine had made the error of criticising “anti-Christian socialism” in their handouts without appreciating that, in America, “socialism” referred to communism, and in England to the new labour government, which wasn’t at all anti-Christian. So a hostile Press stood in front of him as he stood before the microphones at the bottom of the gangplank. One question of many was, “The Lord you say you follow came in humility and poverty, riding on a donkey, and here you are, travelling like a film star with a large entourage and at high expense on the largest liner in the world. How do you answer that, Dr Graham?” To which Billy replied; “Well guys, if you can find a donkey that can cross the Atlantic, I’ll sure travel on it!” And then he was gone.

The Press reports on his meetings came on radio every night, and my parents consented to come with me and hear him. They loved the whole Billy Graham team, having never heard anything like it before, and for the very first time heard a Gospel presentation that really touched them and spoke to them. However, it was not until one Sunday morning in 1967, when Billy preached to the Oxford University chaplaincy service, broadcast live on National radio, that they both made their personal decision - though they would not admit it to anyone, nor would they attend church. This is a typical response of English people of their generation. So that’s evangelism - a clear proclamation of the Gospel presented in a manner that speaks into people’s lives, followed by the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the individual.

Edwin Jaques died recently. In the 1940s, he was a clarinet player in an American band and his friend played the trumpet. In 1937, they both sensed a clear call to go and preach the Gospel in **Albania**. They spent a year doing shows on market days in towns and villages all over that country, gathering crowds with their music, and then preaching the Gospel through local interpreters. This was the very first attempt to

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bring the Gospel to Albania and broke all the rules of the modern missions movement.

For a start, they were only in each place for a day or two, had very little personal contact due to the language and cultural barriers, and there was no follow-up. To the modern missionary, that is all quite unacceptable, and would be classed as highly irresponsible; but it was the foundation on which God built the modern evangelical Albanian church. In 1938, the Nazis overran the country, which was subsequently taken over by the Communists. In the early 90s, we found Christians in several parts of the country with a lively faith, who had found Christ through the Jaques mission and who had been faithfully meeting in secret for worship despite the appalling persecution handed out by the Communist authorities. One of these believers had spent 28 years in solitary confinement. He survived the ordeal still praising God, but many others perished.

I have stood and preached in many of the places mentioned in the New Testament, in the book of Acts, always through interpreters, often with the same results that the **Apostles** saw. People coming under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, through the preaching of the gospel, can react in all kinds of ways: once in Omonia Square, in central **Athens**, I preached for 20 minutes to about 50 or 60 people who at the end started to argue with me. Realising that it would be almost impossible to get counselling going in the hubbub, I took the team away, and as it was a lovely sunny evening, we went round the corner to a quiet street where we could have our meal sitting in the sun. We had a great time of fellowship. Being on a team together and preaching the Gospel enriches fellowship enormously, and the 15 or 20 young Greek Bible College students who were with me would, I know, spend the rest of their lives in effective public ministry. We were longer at the restaurant than we intended. It was getting dark when we walked back round into Omonia Square to catch the underground back to college. We were astonished to find that there were now about 300 people arguing about the message we had preached earlier.

Over the last 22 years in **Greece**, we have faced all kinds of situations, some of them violent, and I was glad when God sent me a “minder”, a young peach farmer called “big Takis”, 6 ft. 6” tall and about 4 ft. wide. His hands are like bunches of bananas. Once, the mayor, a religious fanatic who happened to run a town in northern Greece, sent 8 soldiers

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to chuck us out of the town. It was satisfying to see that once they had shaken hands with Takis they were happy to listen to the message quietly. As it happened, they were as interested as everyone else, and stayed to chat for an hour or two.

A Biblical Pattern for Evangelism

There are myriads of different Christian ministries, probably the best known being those providing succour and help for the **underprivileged**. It is a delightful characteristic of the Lord's people that this overwhelming desire to love and serve has been such a glorious part of Church history. On missions in some of our industrial cities in England, one is struck by the presence in the industrial slums of what were called "**medical missions**" providing free medical help for the poor. Usually non-conformist, the mission would be attached to a small chapel where local people could benefit from the ministry of excellent Bible teaching and worship.

My wife Anni is involved with The **Crisis Centre** in Bristol, which provides much-needed help for street people with life-controlling problems, and there are sometimes marvellous results from this ministry. One young woman used to try to come into the drop-in cafe with a rat on her shoulder. Livestock are definitely not allowed, so she would be asked to leave. Outside the cafe she would stuff the rat down her shirt and button it up, coming back for her cuppa with a heaving bosom ... she was eventually wonderfully converted, and is now a practising barrister!

Laurence Singlehurst, in his book on the beginnings of **Youth With A Mission (YWAM)** in the late 40s in England, describes their experiences on taking teams to **Spain**. All the weeks of spiritual preparation at their base in England did not provide them with the practical skills necessary to attract crowds of people to hear the Gospel at their attempted open air meetings in Spain. Neither was their use of **drama** in Mediterranean countries and in some of the big cities like **Paris** successful in attracting crowds or communicating the Gospel effectively, so they developed the concept of "prayer evangelism", walking round towns and villages and praying for them.

This led more and more to YWAM involvement in the care ministries, which now appear to be the core pursuit for their ministry and the

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vehicle by which it grows so successfully around the world. One is particularly inspired by their work establishing orphanages for **street children** in **South America** and the wonderful way they are able to involve young Christians from the United States and Europe. In the future marvellous enterprises like this will undoubtedly have a strong evangelistic effect on those they help, and will form the basis for the establishment of indigenous churches in the years ahead. However, Scripture outlines a specific **pattern for evangelism** that does not appear to be followed today.

The Old Testament

Moses outlined very specific instructions for the children of Israel as they entered the promised land: in Deuteronomy 30, he stresses the importance of being **faithful to Jehovah God** and none other. In Chapter 31, one of the main duties of the Lord's people is to gather together and teach God's laws so that the people may:

- listen,
- learn,
- fear God and
- follow Him.

Those who were to be assembled were the Lord's people and all others living in the land including aliens and those who worshipped other gods: they must learn God's laws and obey them. One of the first things we see happening when Nehemiah re-establishes the city of Jerusalem is the gathering of the people and the Law being taught all day by Ezra, the scribe. In the following days, people were horrified at how far they had strayed from obeying the Law, and often had to take traumatic steps to put their lives straight. The hardships involved must have been horrendous as illegal wives were put aside, for example. Refer to Deuteronomy 31:12 ff.

The prophets were sent by God to the people often over the heads of national leaders. It was a job from which the prophets shrank but nevertheless felt compelled to do - a difficult and dangerous ministry, they were the means by which God sought to bring back an erring people to Himself. They were God's communicators, often using extraordinary means to impress his message and to make it clear. The astonishingly creative methods used by Ezekiel to communicate God's

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message to his people in Babylon must have been an incredibly difficult ministry to perform but the clarity of the vision given to him sustained him.

Archaeologists found over **140 pagan temples in Babylon** and the city itself is said to have been about 120 miles in circumference. That huge population must have been highly amused by this ridiculous little Jew and his street performances, but God gave him this wonderful promise in Ezekiel 33:30-33, “Son of Man, your people think you are nothing more than an entertainer ... but all that you prophesy will come true, and then they will know that a prophet has been among them.”

The New Testament

Leafing through the **Gospels**, it is instructive to identify the passages where **Jesus is speaking to outsiders** and those where he is speaking specifically to his followers, often after the day’s work. For every 9 occasions where he preaches, the ratio is 7:2 , seven times to outsiders, usually in the open air, and twice exclusively to his disciples. That is to say 78% of these occasions are devoted to preaching to people who are not his followers. It is worth pointing out at this point that whenever in Church history revival has occurred it has always been preceded by the public proclamation of the Gospel. **Kenneth Scott Latourette** states conclusively in his multi-volume “**History of the Christian Church**” that the greatest influence on the Protestant churches has been the **revivalist preachers** of the last three or four centuries, and he states further that the Roman Catholic church has never experienced anything like this, to their loss. The Lord established the pattern of ministry: walking from town to town and village to village, with the wonderful demonstrations of love and power in the miracles; the release of sinners from their awful burdens; the rehabilitation of that dreadful little character Zacchaeus and others like him, and the clarity and relevance of his message. These demonstrated the kind of ministry he wants his Church to have, but it is costly in many ways, and very few will pay the price. The huge crowds that followed him because of the amazing things he did and said, periodically melted away when repentance was demanded. The same is true today.

Imagine the scene in Palestine 2000 years ago: the **Teacher** with an authority that transcends even the Pharisees, the remarkable

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pronouncements, and the amazing stories of miracles. Huge excitement everywhere he went and often very large crowds. The frantic widow wanting help, wondering if she will ever get anywhere near him. The Roman Centurion “a sincere man” come to see for himself whether it is all true. He stands up to speak – wonderful statements like the poetry of the Sermon on the Mount: the call to follow, to obey God’s laws, the presentation of God as one who loves sinners, the call to repentance – but it is not a political message. He is not going to lead a rebellion against the Romans, which is what people hoped the coming of the Kingdom would entail. Having seen him and heard his message, in the end people drift away.



It’s like that in the parks in **Spain**. I have vivid memories of the September campaigns where after the summer holidays Spaniards will be out in the parks in huge numbers every evening; Plaza Flores in **Malaga** full of University students and other young people – hundreds

and hundreds of them, very happy to listen as Pepe Jurdao and Farid Lozada spelt out the Gospel to them painting their messages up cartoon-style on the usual OAC **sketch-board** generating terrific interest from all the students; Aluche Park, **Madrid** surrounded by apartment blocks housing 150,000 people - faced with the impossibility of contacting them all in a great European city like that; setting up 200 chairs (borrowed from local churches) in the centre of the park, and arranging loudspeakers all around. (In Spain if anything significant is going to happen, there will be loudspeakers - so we put them up even though we have no electricity supply.)

Returning about 8pm we find well over 1,000 people waiting for the programme to begin - our young Spanish girls with their guitars made a super music group, singing some lovely Spanish spiritual songs; Bernardo the clown came and did some backward somersaults, people throwing coins - it’s a warm evening and the programme can run for an hour or so.

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We have testimonies, a short drama, more music, Bernardo gives his testimony, then the local missionary **Jim Reed** (a second generation Missionary Kid from **Guatemala**) speaking native Spanish spends 15 minutes spelling out how a person can know Christ and receive him as Lord. Very simple. Very good teaching. Very well explained.

Most people drift slowly away chatting amongst themselves, but 65 form a sort of unofficial queue because they most definitely want to talk to someone about it; we can't even begin to clear up until midnight. The Pastor of the local church finds himself talking to people he has been trying to reach for years, some really good relationships are established, and the little local church begins to grow. After one such meeting, an alcoholic who had lost his job, his wife, his home, everything he had, listened intently all through the programme. He insisted on quiet from some youngsters who were trying to interrupt. He had been a local Doctor and his life was in ruins. He made contact with **Scott Hill** of **Worldteam** in Madrid and over a period of about a week was wonderfully converted. His life changed so dramatically that his wife accepted him back into the family home after quite a short time and was herself converted, as were his two teenage children - who joined the evangelism team in southern Spain the following year. **Dr. Paco** is now Senior Elder of the little church that meets in the suburb of **Santa Eugenia**.

Experience in **Spain** and **Portugal** shows that it takes about 15-20 years to establish a fellowship of about 25 people when personal evangelism is the only method employed. **Bill Wooten**, a missionary in Portugal, told me that his reliance on personal evangelism had meant that building a relationship with a Portuguese family to the point where he could share the Gospel with them took about a year. Most of those he got to know, ultimately proved not to be interested in the Gospel. The **Operation Mobilisation** strategy for **Italy** was for each of their families to evangelise one Italian family each year. On that basis, it would take thousands of years to reach the population - yet for some extraordinary reason many of those involved in missions regard **friendship evangelism** as the only responsible and effective way to do the job. Many of them seem to be hung up on the idea that one needs to earn the right to speak. Fortunately, the **Apostles** did not suffer from these sorts of hang-ups and regarded the preaching of the Gospel as their prime function in every town.

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According to Dr. Norman Geisler, President of **Southern Evangelical Seminary**, Charlotte, North Carolina, a prolific author and commentator on issues facing the **Christian Church in America** today, we are moving beyond the post-Christian era into the anti-Christian era. To advocate the Christian ethical system as superior to any other, or to speak out against perversion, for example, can lead to losing one's job in the Company. One simply is becoming a lot less free in the United States to speak out for what is right and Godly on pain of prosecution by the authorities. The Apostles faced much greater challenges: **Bill Baldwin**, founder of the **Greek Bible Institute**, says we tend to forget that those who preached the Gospel in New Testament times risked their lives. The extraordinary courage of Jesus to stand up and speak as he did in his culture is even more remarkable when we realise that the authorities running Judaism at that time had the power of life and death over him, an option they of course ultimately took. Bill Baldwin also says we tend to forget that when St. Paul stood up on Mars Hill to present his new religion, several previous individuals who had dared to do so had been put to death.

Today in many parts of the world travel is relatively easy and straightforward, not very costly, and we have pretty well total freedom to go and preach the Gospel anywhere - but our Training Colleges do not offer either suitable programmes to equip for the task or even to teach how to communicate the Gospel with sinners. Billy Graham's extraordinary ability to speak into the lives of my parents, and of course many thousands of others, helping them understand how real and relevant and significant Jesus could be for them, was something none of us had ever seen before. It is those kinds of skills, and the framework to enable the evangelist to function effectively in unstructured situations, that should be at the top of the list in all our Bible colleges and training institutions today.

This is the Vision many young men and women want to be part of today

Usually, when I preach in a church somewhere, I share some of the remarkable things I have seen God do in different evangelistic situations. Whenever I can, I show slides on a large screen so that people can actually see the events described, and the impact is very considerable. One or two will recognise at once that this is the ministry

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to which God is calling them, too. Sometimes they will be individuals who have been searching for years for their ministry. Some, particularly in Anglican churches, may sense a **call to evangelism** but not have the slightest idea how to go about it, as the ordination system does not provide for evangelists. Simon - a member of Christ Church, Nailsea, near Bristol, was one such. He was to become a brilliant **street preacher**.

He got married, and because his church was not prepared to support him as an evangelist, he went through theological college and was ordained as a vicar in the Anglican church. Serving two curacies in the Bradford area, he was rather depressed until last year when he was appointed **Diocesan Evangelist** to one of our great University towns, where at last he is able to exercise the ministry to which God has called him. It is quite usual, even for a really excellent evangelical church like Christ Church, not to have any idea what to do with someone like Simon. Many others I know have had similar experiences.

Booked to speak at a **Baptist Church Conference** on evangelism in Bristol. I had prepared for the main message of the evening: after 2 hours of discussion about whether or not they ought to open a cafe for young people in the High Street, I realised they had forgotten all about me. In the event I got ten minutes at the end - but in that ten minutes, **Mark Detzler** (son of the previous pastor Wayne Detzler, and a graduate of Trinity Theological College) received his call to be an evangelist. He became OAC's Director for Italy.

St. Paul says that these people have "the gift of the evangelist". I am not at all sure myself that "gift" is the right word. My experience is that people who make the grade in evangelism are not necessarily gifted; they are individuals with a very clear call. Most of them struggle to preach effectively. All of them find living by faith a very difficult life and many have to support themselves by part time secular employment but within a few years, many of them become some of the finest preachers I have ever heard. When I knew that I ought to be an evangelist, there was nobody to turn to for training but Open Air Campaigners. They provided the direction, a superb training programme, and the leadership and orientation that enabled Anni and me to succeed. We endeavour to provide the same for our trainees, but with the benefit of hindsight and of our trials and errors of the early days.

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Mike Getley is one of our favourites: he had been a pig farmer and relief milker in North Devon, and was one of the most inarticulate people who had ever asked to join us. He was a very difficult guy to understand as he was so softly spoken. The Baptist churches of North Devon used him to drive their bus and to help put up the Scout tents for the youth group summer camps. A hugely strong chap, Mike could drive pegs in really easily! I told him he would never make an open-air preacher: Mike's response, going home in his car, was "I'll show that Korky fellow a thing or two!" Refusing to give up on the idea, he asked for training in voice production, which we (and his wife Jean) helped him with and he came on the summer campaign in Bath greatly improved. He preached one afternoon to a good crowd of people and then led three men to Christ. That evening he came up to me at dinner and said, "NOW can I be an evangelist?"..... indeed he did. Next summer, it was Mike who was running the Baptist youth camps, not just putting up their tents; and their pastors said to me, "What have you done with this guy? He's brilliant!" - so if you have the vision and the calling, do not give up - persevere, and make sure you get some good training, and don't let anyone put you off. Most importantly, talk to specialists who really do know something about the ministry of the evangelist.

At the **World Missionary Conference** in Edinburgh in 1910, the chairman of the proceedings, **John Mott**, set forth as the theme of the conference "The Evangelisation of the World in this Generation". It was thought that this could be practical with a striking force of 45,000 missionaries - which at that time would have meant the quadrupling of the entire number of missionaries in the world. Today it appears from attendance at conferences such as Urbana in Illinois - attended by young people from churches worldwide, but most from the U.S.A. - that there are probably about 30,000 of them ready to volunteer for missionary service. Their vision is based on the unexceptionable principle that each generation of Christians bears responsibility for their contemporary generation of non-Christians in the world, and that it is the business of each generation of Christians to see to it, as far as lies within its power, that the Gospel is clearly preached to every single non-Christian in the same generation. This is a universal and permanent obligation; it applies to Christian witness both within what is commonly called Christendom and beyond it. If the principle is to be rejected, the New Testament must first be re-written. (Quoting Bishop **Stephen Neill**, "**History of Christian Missions**" 1986, p.332)

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In discussing this book with evangelists over the last several years, in many different evangelistic and missionary organisations, it is striking how each one alludes repeatedly to the fact that their local church managers simply do not understand their evangelistic ministry. Paul Wakefield, for example, with a substantial Christian education programme in schools in Nottinghamshire, combined this ministry with a training programme for street evangelists and schools workers in Romania. He states that the ministry of local clergy to him and his family has amounted to little more than repeated attempts to persuade him to do something else; anything, even full time secular employment, would be, in their view, preferable to his being a missionary evangelist.

Some of the reasons for this surprisingly myopic attitude so prevalent in some areas are discussed in the next chapter.

TWO

The Evangelist and the Church

If Christian Research is correct, then the Decade of Evangelism failed to arrest the steepening decline in church membership in England, let alone promote growth. A number of good things emerged during the Decade, most notably Nicky Gumbel's Alpha programme. This provides a valuable resource in the form of a really well-presented Christian basics course. It has achieved wonderful results amongst those attending church.

As a former barrister, now ordained and working at **Holy Trinity, Brompton**, Nicky has excellent presentation skills and many have come to a saving understanding of the Christian faith through this course. The Navigators in the United States offered a similar programme in the 1940s widely used amongst University students, at Christian meetings for businessmen, and on the mission field overseas where I first met up with it in 1958. In our own church in Bristol about 350 people have attended Alpha over the last four years and many of those have found a personal relationship with Jesus Christ - quite a few having attended church services for many years, and never having understood the Gospel before.

Once upon a time Anglican ritual was a valuable means of assisting people to understand aspects of faith: at a time when most of the population were unable to read or write, the images portrayed in the theatre of ritual would have been a valuable teaching tool. For many, ritual still achieves this. I remember being very moved by my friends, Roy and Sylvia Percy, describing the superb service at St. Alban's Cathedral when their son Martin was inducted into his ministry there. Martin is a wonderful scholar who has written some very helpful books on the Church. Roy and Sylvia were practically in tears describing the event, which had clearly affected them deeply. Sadly, in the modern world the majority of our population do not understand these codes or the messages that are hidden within them. Having taught at the Greek Bible Institute for twenty years as a visiting lecturer on open air evangelism, I know quite a number of Greeks and often enjoy fellowship with them when they visit England. It was a great privilege to assist with arranging a Greek wedding in Bristol recently, the bride with a Greek Orthodox background, and the groom the son of an Elder of a

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Greek evangelical church in Athens. Each family, of course, wanted the wedding to take place in "their" particular church. It was ultimately agreed that there would be an evangelical service at Pip'n'Jay in Bristol, which Canon Malcolm Widdecombe and his church laid on superbly. This was followed by an Orthodox wedding service at the local Greek church, conducted in Greek, with a certain amount of translation. The latter service was incomprehensible and the ritual surrounding the actual marriage ceremony impossible to follow, although most entertaining. It is rather like this for most people in England today, who fear to enter a church lest they be made to feel out of place.

The "Greater Grace World Mission" fellowship in Baltimore has come up with a magnificent solution. Their building is actually an old supermarket, cleared out and carpeted, with a platform and seating for a congregation of 3,500. Half the floor area is clear. Many people from the community, which is notorious for high levels of crime and drug abuse, will wander in during the service to see what is going on. Chatting quietly in small groups, they are provided with coffee and Bagels and counsellors are on hand to assist them with their needs. In passing, it is worth noting that the Greater Grace church people are almost all involved with the church's mission in one way or another, and Pastor Carl Stevens leads 1,000 of the men out on the doors each Saturday morning at 10 a.m. after the Saturday morning prayer meeting. Every Friday night the Youth Group go out on the streets with questionnaires.

Youth Leaders shepherd them in small groups as they seek to talk to people, and I was practically in tears acting as chaperone listening to one girl lead a middle-aged woman back to faith in Christ. She asked the woman if she had a New Testament to read, and when it transpired she had thrown it away on losing her faith years ago, the girl gave her own. Going back to an ice cream parlour afterwards with them all, I asked the girl if she would mind my asking how old she was, as I would be writing a report for OAC and I felt the way she had helped the lady was absolutely marvellous. She turned out to be 14 years old. In the Baltimore world of Christian ministry, the introduction of obscure ritual associated with mediaeval costumes would merely present an additional hurdle to faith rather than a means of grace.

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In our modern European societies, I am finding more and more that those beyond the reach of the Church no longer find the theatrical ritualistic elements provide a means of authenticating its activities.

At theological college years ago, most of us felt that the Anglican ministry was by far the “best boat to fish from” to facilitate a life of effective Christian service. Ordination provided a respected position in society, a free house and a regular salary. It was obviously the sensible way to go for an intelligent young professional with wife and young family to support. Many of those being ordained in those days through my college were of Baptist and Brethren background, and many were from industry or the teaching profession. Talk in the common room was much affected by the revelation from one of my fellow students who had been a statistician that over the previous 20 years, 45% of those ordained to the Anglican ministry had moved on to some other occupation within 8 years. This greatly occupied our minds for a number of weeks, and all sorts of theories were propounded as to why this might be. The general consensus was that, hopefully, they were within the Lord's will, and had found something productive to do for the Kingdom.

My favourite fellow student was Tom. Tom had been an executive in the Post Office and was a year or two older than me; he and his wife were terrific fun to be with. Each morning at 8am, Tom would stroll down to the newsagent to get his Times and, years afterwards, the folk there were still asking after him. When he was ordained, they left for their ministry in the Midlands, and although we kept in touch occasionally, we did not see them again for twenty years. Three years ago, we pulled up outside their Vicarage in an industrial suburb near Birmingham - it was wonderful to see how little they had changed, and talking to them it was as if we had seen them yesterday. Living in a large Georgian rectory with substantial outbuildings including stables and workshops, in a large garden surrounded by a brick wall in the middle of what appeared to be a mainly World War I period housing development, they struck me as being rather isolated. Walking round the parish, Tom met only one friend to introduce me to; otherwise, people in the High Street ignored him. It was the same everywhere we went, nobody really knew him. Few regulars attended his church, and the Church Army lady assistant had a ministry to the elderly rather than to the young; so the Sunday we were there it was announced that the Sunday School had closed. But

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Tom had an ace up his sleeve: he buries people. Each month, he held a special memorial service for the bereaved families, very well attended by about eighty people, and obviously very much appreciated when we were there. Apart from that, the ministry did not appear to be touching the community on a grand scale.

Tom had been able to achieve small things through membership of the local Council, and got a public telephone kiosk installed on the estate down the hill where most of the old people live. As Governor of 8 local schools, Tom did a lot of committee work where he felt he had established useful relationships, but he did not feel qualified to help with Christian education in the local schools, or have the training to secure children's attention during assembly.

Tom's experience is that the ability to run a church really well does not bring many people to faith in Christ. These days the non-conformist churches have similar problems: in Tom's area, the Methodists had closed 15 years earlier; the Baptists were very few but holding their own, and the Pentecostals were apparently also very discouraged. Clearly, new patterns of ministry must emerge if the church is again to serve some useful purpose in the community in the 21st Century.

The picture I have in my mind is of a car slowing down on the Motorway because only one of its four cylinders is functioning. St. Paul clearly says the Lord has appointed "Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors/teachers". None of the denominational establishments in Britain today appoints evangelists to positions of responsibility in the church. One of Peter Brierley's statistical forms sent round to church leaders a few years ago, identifying the different ministries within the churches, did not include a box for evangelists. When I rang up to question this omission, Peter explained that there are so few of them, they are statistically non-existent.

In church in Dallas, Texas, with one of the Dallas Theological Seminary students who attended there, he and I were invited back to lunch by Pastor Bill. He explained that if Matt went ahead and joined Open Air Campaigners as a missionary evangelist in Europe, then his church of 2,000 or so members could not afford to support him. But if he did what the Elders suggested and accepted the position of Youth Pastor with their church (Matt had been a very popular and successful Youth Leader there while studying for his Degree) then they could offer him a

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free car, an apartment, and a salary of \$20,000 p.a. In fact, Matt chose to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, and after his training with OAC went to France, married a French wife, and developed a highly productive ministry, partly in street evangelism, but principally as a superb Bible teacher much in demand at conferences all over France. Not having the support of his home church meant that they had a really difficult time financially, and have now had to return to the U.S.A. in order to raise sufficient funds to continue.

Those who sense a call to evangelism invariably face this problem. Those who manage church ministries have a total focus on the weekly services and the church programme, and even reaching the community in which they live for most of them is of very little interest. In Bristol, the most "successful" church by far is Christ Church, a very lively evangelical Anglican fellowship with a membership of around 1,000. The focus is the Sunday worship led by a large and outstandingly good music group made up of church members of all ages, originally under the direction of Berj Topalian, an absolutely marvellous musician who is now a Vicar himself. The services are a super experience with excellent teaching and very popular with the large student population. Canon Paul Berg, recently retired, for many years built a very effective teaching ministry there, even to the extent of seeing two of his trainee clergy appointed Bishops, encouraged our evangelistic ministry in Bristol and provided a small amount of financial support each year.

Paul made a prophetic statement to my Administrator, Brian Raybould, some years ago which helped me a great deal to understand where church leaders are coming from. He said, "Evangelism is alien to the modern Church and irrelevant to its ministry."

Brian had been an executive with British Aerospace, had played a large part in the sale of aeronautical technology to the Americans in California in the '40s and '80s, and was absolutely shocked by this statement. He never again visited another church leader in Bristol on our behalf. His report of what had been said was the most enormously sobering experience for me. I realised that reaching the lost in Bristol was our call, not theirs, and we might as well get on with it. Certainly, experience over the last 25 years in Bristol has shown that most churches are not in the business of raising up men and women to be evangelists.

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A year or two ago, I visited all the Anglican Deanery groups in Bristol to offer help in the form of training for Sunday School workers and possibly to recruit people to work out of local churches in their parish primary schools. I was disappointed to find only one individual interested in the opportunity. Trinity Theological College offered a module on evangelism to their students this year (2000) and out of 140 or so, received only 5 applications, so the module was cancelled.

No church manager has ever attended any of our Christian education programme presentations in Avon and Somerset schools where our team can now lead over 35 school assemblies in a week for something like 7,000 children and staff. In a month, we minister to



something like twice as many souls as attend all the Bristol churches put together in a year. I will be saying a lot more about the opportunities in schools in a later chapter but want to record here that no support specifically for schools ministry has ever been provided by any church over the last 25 years. It appears that if a ministry is not for their own congregation, on their premises or at one of their services, it is of very little interest. One of the reasons for this is that evangelism is seen as a rather uncomfortable pursuit, which "we know we ought to do, but we are not quite sure what it entails, and in any case we are awfully busy and can't really see how we are going to fit it in". Research shows that most Christians "know" that they are saved on an intellectual level, but they don't actually "feel" saved. The Church in Western Europe has been immensely successful in establishing the Christian ethic as the basis for living, even having it enshrined in the law, so that most people are perfectly reasonable citizens before they get saved. Becoming a Christian actually makes very little difference to their weekly programme, apart from attendance at church on Sunday; so helping other people to get saved is not a life-and-death issue, which is how it is perceived in Scripture. Often, the few people who find conversion a really life-changing experience and are dramatically different as a result, go on to achieve wonderful things in Christian service and in evangelism. I shall talk about Ian Loring, the famous missionary to Albania, in the next chapter.

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Those who do go on to exercise wonderful ministries go through five stages:-

1. Repentance and faith
2. Discipleship leading to full church membership
3. Discovery of God's call on their life
4. Proper training to fulfil the vision
5. Release into ministry by the church

Very few churches understand the relevance - or even the existence - of the last three stages and see the ultimate destiny of every believer purely and simply as a faithful church member. Indeed, evangelism to them is the process whereby people come to attend their church, not the process of bringing people into the Kingdom. The evangelist is seen as some sort of pastoral assistant with the ability to make friends and influence people, rather than someone who leads people to Christ. Evangelism in our Bible colleges is often about social programmes that somehow result in people coming into our building. David Watson, a huge influence on us all through his superb books, said in "Discipleship" that he did not see how anyone could truly become a believer other than as a full Member of a loving fellowship.

Like all sensible church leaders, David saw the extreme importance of establishing lively fellowships and the value of peer pressure on the life of the individual, to be found there. Clearly, however, this is not the same view of evangelism that St. Paul had - or the great revivalist preachers, either.

The Failing Church

Dr. Dan Peters, one of America's foremost writers on church growth, publishes wonderfully succinct diagnostic sheets pointing out the undesirable and desirable characteristics of different kinds of churches. Those that fail have the following characteristics:-

1. A failing church is primarily focussed on meeting the needs of people who have been in the church a long time, and their family members.
2. Limits its programmes solely to meetings on church property.
3. Seeks to grow by transfer growth, not evangelism (i.e. recruiting members of other churches).
4. Regards its community as unreachable.

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5. Has a “fortress” mentality.
6. Continually refers to past glories.
7. Allows nepotism to severely limit access of new people to ministry and leadership.
8. Regards evangelists with suspicion.
9. Spends its budget on social needs and edification of those within its membership.
10. Is interested in foreign missions but does not welcome them in church.
11. Requires its pastors to do all the work.
12. Has no desire to grow.
13. Has a core group based on long-term relationships.
14. Has a strategy directed towards maintenance of the status quo.
15. Measures success on quality of church services.

Dan Peters considers that a church like this can survive for ages as a sort of social club, but there will be little opportunity for change. In fact, the church services themselves are often rigidly programmed to the point where individual members of the fellowship may never have the opportunity to share a testimony or even take part in leading prayers. My own experience of churches in the United States, which are mainly non-conformist, is that they will often be the responsibility of a local family who may be owners of the largest local business, who will effectively control everything that happens even to the point of hiring and firing the pastor. Very occasionally, this will be the family after whom the town or village is named. In England, by contrast, the pastor is all-powerful; one way or another, if a dispute arises in the church, it will be the eldership that resigns, not the pastor. In the last 5 years, this has happened twice in my experience in Bristol.

In either case, it is almost impossible for the church to play a responsible part in co-operation with others in local mission. In England particularly, if a member of a congregation senses a call to evangelism or mission, the first question asked by the pastor is “How will this affect my control of the candidate?” and “Will I be Chairman and Director of his local support group?” Church pastor/managers of this sort, while not necessarily being “control freaks”, are nevertheless extremely anxious to have the whip hand.

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The Successful Church

Dan Peters says that any church that wants to grow must have the following characteristics:-

1. An active programme to fulfil the Great Commission.
2. Requires all staff members to be primarily involved in equipping the saints, to enable them to play a full part in the church's ministry.
3. Cares deeply about lost people in the community.
4. De-centralises ministry out into homes and into various community institutions.
5. Sees the community as having many reachable, open people in it.
6. Studies the community to develop strategies to reach these people.
7. Has its focus on the future, having learned the lessons of the past.
8. Clear paths to involvement for people joining.
9. Small groups provided for new people at all levels.
10. Commits the budget to reflect the priority of evangelism.
11. Accepts local minorities into the church.
12. Its focus is on making more and better disciples.
13. The pastor's ministry is as a facilitator enabling the congregation to reach their world.
14. Helps people to discover their own ministry styles.
15. Helps people to discover spiritual gifts and encourages them to go out and use them.

Dan Peters outlines several steps that can be taken to promote the idea of the local church as a ministry team. Amongst various things he suggests are practical teaching in evangelism with on-the-job training; the re-evaluation of all the church's ministries in the light of the Great Commission. He advocates advanced study for the Elders, to enable them to play a greater part in leadership, and suggests - very importantly - that evangelists should be recognised and authenticated as a valued part of the church's ministry. Leaders must help the church to have as big a vision as the harvest. That is to say, if there are 100 schools in your neighbourhood, put in progress the infrastructure to raise up and train enough people to establish an effective Christian education programme in each.

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One of the sad things in Bristol is the churches' ability to see the need to minister in schools in disadvantaged areas while young people from the vast majority of middle class homes in the community go unreached.

Dan sees it as very important to encourage the dissemination of news about evangelism taking place, both locally and on the mission field, so that as a church, through their prayer meetings and financial support, they can really be an effective part of building the Kingdom on a wide scale. He is not afraid that, as a result of this sort of activity, numbers of people of all ages may sense a call to evangelism and the mission field. My own experience in Bristol suggests that the absence of role models in any of our churches means that those who might to respond to a call either to evangelism or to mission effectively cannot receive a call from God. Over the years almost every time I preach in a church, someone somewhere is challenged seriously about full time ministry in this field.

It must now be perfectly clear to anyone involved in Christian ministry that England (or any other country for that matter) cannot be reached merely by pulpit preaching. The idea that you can reach a community simply by preaching at a Gospel service once a month on a Sunday evening is unbiblical if not clearly absurd. Likewise, the wrong-headed idea that if you consistently teach people they will automatically reproduce converts. The current major focus on special interest groups such as the poor, those with life-controlling problems, etc., etc. means that the majority of ordinary people in society go completely unreached. Many churches I know have become so inward looking without any knowledge at all about what God is doing in the world or even in other parts of Bristol that they have a powerful isolating influence on all those who attend them.

This actively discourages their members from playing any part in Christian ministry in the city - or elsewhere. Many years ago, one house church (with whom I have an excellent relationship) said they were not inviting me to preach that year because they did not want to hear anything new from the Lord. For many fellowships, there is a real fear that God might speak to them and really upset the applecart!

As we enter the third Millennium, the Christian Church stands at a particularly exciting crossroads; whatever modern politicians may think, by and large the nation accepts the Christian ethic as a basis for living.

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However, needs which the church has met more or less successfully in the past, such as welfare, medical help for the poor, schools, trades unions, hospitals etc. etc., are now almost all the province of the State. They no longer remain the avenues they once were for Christian service and witness. So, rather than try and make the church fellowship meetings the only avenue for Christian witness (“Go to Church or go to Hell”), the Church needs to establish front line ministries that stand on their own feet out in the community. They need to win converts from the vast majority of people who will never darken the door of an ecclesiastical building.

On housing estates in Southern Europe over the years, we have been able to present the Gospel to around 12,000 or 13,000 people in 4 days; from those we would see 2,600 enquirers and 63 converts. In the modern world, to find the converts the net must be spread very wide. In the chapters 6 to 9, I will set out in detail how this works.

The ministry characteristics of any individual church are greatly influenced by the leadership. In the long term, the outlook of the individual pastor will be the major factor in determining the world view of the individuals in the congregation. Average church members do not make notes during teaching sermons and their memory recall is very much clouded by the pressures of everyday life. Employment and family are their main concerns. Most pastors do not have teacher training, and their ability to impart digestible Christian teaching is restricted. Many Christians are surprisingly inarticulate, and very few would feel comfortable sharing their faith with a non-Christian. Very few would be able to give a coherent account of the Resurrection (the foundation of our faith) or give any account of the implications of that event. The best they can do is to rely almost totally on their pastor. At one church where I was preaching, I heard a full time parish worker ask the vicar “Is that what I believe?”

For all these reasons, in England particularly, the church pastor will determine the church programme. During my church experience over the last 49 years, I have identified 3 specific categories of pastor.

The Pastor/Manager

He is a superb management specialist, probably with experience in industry. His theological knowledge will be basic rather than profound

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and his church fellowship will be very well run indeed. The worship services will be an excellent experience with a professional worship group, well led prayers and a very carefully prepared teaching programme. Attending the church, one will be greeted by well-organised and friendly welcomers, providing for an excellent overall service experience. The church will grow and the different people groups represented will be encouraged to join clubs or house groups. Mums and toddlers, Sunday school, Pathfinders, teens, single parents, young marrieds and old wives, musicians and men, will all have special fellowship groups. Experienced people will be recruited to run these groups and there will be a steady flow of individuals becoming Christians through these excellent ministries.

This pattern of ministry can only succeed in the areas where people are “Club-oriented” and will therefore succeed in mainly middle class areas. While having an outward image of great success, such a church has a very limited contact with the community as a whole. The important part of a tyre is the bit in contact with the road, and even a large and impressive tyre is only effective if it makes good contact.

The Pastor/Evangelist

He will have many of the characteristics of the Pastor/Manager but is likely to have been exposed to world mission on an Operation Mobilisation or similar team in student days. He tends to see church worship meetings as an evangelistic enterprise and has a burden for church revival. He may have good preaching ability and will welcome Alpha and outreach programmes such as Evangelism Explosion. He will have a lively interest in reaching out to people on the fringes of the fellowship through door-to-door visiting. He will probably regard care ministries as an important opportunity to bring people into contact with the church.

He will have a burden for world mission and will endeavour to assist with support for missionaries overseas. He will seek to identify areas of opportunity for personal evangelism such as university students or remand centres. Scores of people have become Christians through such ministries in Bristol in the last year or two. Where the rubber hits the road however, their impact remains relatively small.

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The Evangelist/Pastor

The Evangelist/Pastor has a vision that embraces the whole potential harvest. His vision is not only for his church to grow, it is to establish a ministry that embraces all the people groups in the entire community. To do this he is keen to establish a team ministry. Jim Reed of Madrid, who established 11 churches in Madrid in about 11 years, had as his vision the establishment of the Apostolic team. Like Frank Tillerpaugh in Denver who had the same idea. Jim's vision involved preaching the Gospel to as many people as possible as often as possible and implied a very high dependence on the Holy Spirit - as opposed to modern church growth canning-factory techniques.

Having worked with the most successful missions ministries in Europe, I find a surprising number of them are from the Columbia Bible College or the Navigators or both. Such people regard the establishment of the Apostolic team as an imperative step in their work of church planting across an entire country. Ian Loring, whom I shall be writing about in a later chapter, has so far been the only Evangelist/Pastor produced in Bristol in a hundred years. He was trained at the Bristol School of Evangelism. Two other good examples are Dr. Al Nucciarone and Pastor Rob Prokop of Vienna, whose Apostolic teams touch a number of neighbouring countries as well as Austria. These teams include professionals with excellent ministry skills. This opens up all kinds of opportunities for ministry such as street teams, which can reach many thousands of people with the Gospel in a few days. These can provide many opportunities for individual church members to practise their evangelism skills on interested live contacts. This is a much more encouraging experience for an average church member than doing door-to-door visiting, which may lead to a discouraging and sometimes hostile response. Another opportunity open to professionally trained specialists who have done an appropriate course of training, is the Christian Education programme in our schools, where one can meet tomorrow's potential congregation today.

THREE

The Evangelist and World Mission

Like evangelism, world mission comes fairly well down the list of priorities of the usual local fellowship. In fact, world mission is comparatively small compared to the colossal resources available to the churches in the “sending” countries. Furthermore, according to Dr. Robertson McQuilken, a former missionary to Japan with The Evangelical Alliance Mission and recently retired President of Columbia Bible College, only about 9% of those on the mission field are actually involved in Christian ministries. Most of the remaining 91% are care or aid workers of one kind or another. In writing this chapter, I actually witnessed most of the events described, many of them miracles of God’s grace and very evidently dependent on God’s divine appointing. However, this subject is of such enormous importance to the countries touched by mission, and to the church itself, that this report must be absolutely frank and “tell it as it is”. The problem is that dysfunctional sending churches promote their dysfunctional characteristics overseas and sometimes cause untold harm.

As long ago as the 16th Century, the reformist Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier criticised his predecessors in Goa for attempting to win the province by involving its political leaders in elaborate rituals in the European style Gothic cathedrals they were building. He saw these leaders, steeped as they were in pagan and occult practices, as infertile soil for the Gospel and advocated the building of schools where children could be taught Christianity, thereby winning the province in one generation. “Don’t build churches, build schools!” he said. Danish pietist Bartholomew Ziegenbalg established five principles, broadly followed by pioneers like William Carey, on which most modern missions would base their strategy (see Stephen Neill’s book on the History of Christian Missions, published by Penguin).

- Build schools (and churches), and establish Christian education programmes for children.
- Make the Word of God available in the local language.
- Preach the Gospel to as many people as possible as often as possible, being aware of their cultural background and beliefs.
- Work for the personal salvation of each individual.

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- Train up local leaders to do absolutely everything that the local missionary does and then go home. The local leadership can then enjoy the respect of their people, and actually begin to function as an autonomous local church, shouldering the burdens and responsibilities of reaching their own people.

It goes without saying that fellowships not living by these principles at home are unlikely to be successful in an alien environment with all its extra difficulties of language, customs, etc. I am constantly astonished by the number of fellowships who seem to think they can be successful on this basis. Dan Truitt, a missionary evangelist heading up the OAC open air ministry in Greece, insists that much greater commitment is required by those going on the mission field and specifies the following priorities:-

- A strong sense of personal calling.
- A godly life.
- Mastery of the language.
- A real understanding of the culture.
- Most important - an intensive prayer ministry for the people.

Studying the subject in a limited way at theological college, I found most books on mission addressed the theological issues faced by the leaders rather than entering into a description of what the churches were like, what the believers were like, and what they were doing in practical terms at the grass roots.

Helpful Books

The books I have found most helpful and which I use extensively for teaching on mission, are **“The History of Christian Missions”** by Bishop Stephen Neill, published by Penguin. This reads like an adventure story - which of course it is! I find it almost impossible to put down every time I pick it up. In rather greater detail, Professor Kenneth Scott Latourette’s large, multi-volume **“History of the Christian Church”** covers the whole period of its history almost up to date, and contains many stories of local individuals and their struggles. I think **Michael Green’s** excellent book **“Evangelism and the Early Church”** sets out very well the factors that hindered and facilitated church growth in the first few hundred years. The interesting thing is that the system of

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beliefs of most people in the world at that time made it a great deal more difficult for people to accept Christianity than it is today.

Experience also shows that in many countries where results in terms of converts have been apparently good in recent years, many of those who we think are becoming Christians are actually joining the church to meet their material needs. This is natural where destitute populations, with little food or fuel, are desperately hoping for handouts from Westerners; so even there, there are no short cuts to real church growth.

Professor David Shutes, who has studied European Church history for two decades, asserts that the continental European countries have in fact never been evangelised: Christianity came with conquering armies. Their conquering gods (God, Jesus and Mary - a mystifying and misunderstood relationship) naturally took precedence over the existing local deities, who became assimilated into the local pantheon as "saints". David maintains that St. Bridget of Ireland is a good example of this, having originated possibly in Iron Age times as a pagan fertility goddess. As the Church became an instrument of the State, its Bishops became princes with their own armies who enforced allegiance to Church and State. Vestiges of this can be seen in Greece today, when being a "good Greek" is synonymous with membership of the Orthodox Church. This concept is still assiduously encouraged by the local priests, who in past years have sought to promote laws outlawing evangelical Christianity and, even today, will sometimes physically attack those who preach the Gospel in public!

On the ground today, the results of this quasi Christian cultural outlook are that preaching the Christian Gospel in public arouses great curiosity and at the same time, in some, a lot of suspicion. I find that in most European countries, East and West, people have never ever heard about the Lord at all. I remember speaking at an evangelistic dinner party in Milan where a lady, probably in her late fifties, listened to my interpreter obviously with rising anger. Thinking I had offended her, I asked afterwards why she was so upset. She replied that she had been attending Mass every Sunday since the age of 5, but no priest had ever explained the Christian message to her, and she was furious at being kept in the dark in this way. In fact, she became the means of the Gospel reaching her entire family and, although she died three or four years later of cancer, she also brought others into the Kingdom.

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The Methods

In Italy in 1985, Anni and I were on a campsite in Florence and met an American tour bus full of teenage Christians on a “mission to Europe“. They would stay on campsites and dress up as clowns, distributing invitations to campers to attend their evening performance, which consisted of a long mime with explanation in fast American, totally beyond the comprehension of any of the onlookers. However, tracts were distributed and friendly Italians enjoyed their company. Each teenager was paying \$5,000 for a month’s trip (a lot of money in those days) and Christian travel agencies may well have achieved something. However, the amount of money invested in the trip could have been used much more effectively to fund an Italian evangelist for ten years - which would actually have resulted in people joining the local evangelical church.

Much less acceptable was the way some American fellowships turned up unexpectedly on, say, a beleaguered Romanian pastor in the middle of the night with a request for accommodation and food for 25 young people who have come “to encourage the church“. There might be a telephone call at 4 a.m. from some unknown group, requesting breakfast on arrival at 6.30 a.m. It seems that telephone numbers are passed around back home and the opportunity is taken to “do a mission trip“. To say that one is involved in some way in Romania makes your church sound a lot more exciting. The fact that it’s nearly always Romania is because of the publicity surrounding the ending of the Communist regime on the world’s media, and the suffering involved by so many people. Aid continues to pour into Romania whereas there are far greater needs in other surrounding countries such as Bulgaria and Albania, which actually receive very little aid. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that an awful lot of “world mission” is media led, not Spirit led.

The Amateurisation of Missions

Dr. Peter Hammond, long term missionary to the suffering peoples in war zones bordering South Africa, writes of his concerns:-

“Despite the hard realities and desperate needs of the mission field, we are seeing an increasing amateurisation of mission work. More and

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more Christians are pouring into the mission fields but for very short periods of time, and often for very superficial goals.

“I have been astounded to come across large tour groups (calling themselves missionaries) travelling across the world just to spend four or five days ‘in the field’. The high cost of international air travel would seem to make such short visits cost-ineffective.

“Even more incredible is how most of these short termers have undergone no selection procedure, received no training, and are ill-equipped to benefit the local believers. In most cases these religious tourists have a lower grasp of Scripture and a spiritual maturity that is dwarfed by the local believers to whom they presume to minister.

“For some obscure reason many Christian seem to think that any church-goer can be a missionary! The flood of untrained, ill-disciplined, unaccountable ‘lone ranger’ so-called missionaries into Third World countries is disastrous.

“Many don’t even know enough of the local culture to realise how much damage they are doing to the Christian cause.

“I have seen many female missionaries in slacks or even shorts ministering in rural Africa. They seem oblivious to the fact that all the local Christian women only wear dresses. Once a team of 6 American medical missionaries flew out to work with us in Mozambique. As they arrived in Malawi, the two women were detained by police for wearing slacks. They didn’t even have a single skirt between them in their luggage. We had to go into town and buy some dresses for the ladies before the police would release them.

“In Africa it is generally considered a disgrace for a man to have long hair. This is not only cultural but Biblical: ‘does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair it is a dishonour to him?’ 1 Corinthians 11:14. Yet you will see many long-haired, pony-tailed men heading out to ‘evangelise the pagans in Africa’, oblivious to what a stumbling block they are.

“I have met Christians heading out to the mission field with nose rings, belly rings, tongue studs, and who knows what other body mutilations. It is not that these piercings are unknown in Africa or Asia; in fact, every pagan culture practises them. Hindus and Animists in particular practise

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body-piercing and tattoos extensively. However, once converted they repent and turn away from such abominations.

“It is generally quite easy to tell the difference between a pagan and a Christian in Africa by how they dress and how they treat their body. The Scriptures are clear, ‘you shall not make any cuttings in your flesh ... nor tattoo any marks on you; I am the Lord.’ Leviticus 19:28. Earrings on men in the Bible were a mark of slavery. Exodus 21:6, Deuteronomy 15:17.

“How can you expect African Christians to respect long-haired men with pony-tails and ear-rings who presume to come and teach them? I first came across the term religious tourists in Romania. A pastor related to me the bizarre story of 89 Californian Christians who had flown in to ‘minister’ in Romania. Naturally, none of them spoke Romanian. Neither did they have transport. They were totally dependent on their local hosts, whom they presumed they were coming to help. On Sunday morning, they all wanted to speak at the main service; each was given 2 minutes to bring greetings. So began a seemingly never-ending procession of 89 religious tourists delivering their greeting through an interpreter with successive camera flashes accompanying! ‘We never saw these people in the dark days of persecution’ declared the Pastor.

“Recently a group of 29 Americans and Europeans flew in on a single aircraft to one location in the Sudan. When asked how long they were going in for, they proudly announced ‘2-3 days, maybe even 4’. I could only stand in amazement at their superficial understanding of what is needed in missions. ‘What do you plan to accomplish?’ I asked. ‘Oh!’ the man answered ‘We plan to hand over some relief aid and buy some slaves!’ So this is now what missions are coming to - large groups of people flying half way across the world to hand over some relief aid, say a few nice words and set some slaves free, and in just a few days they fly back home thinking that they are now missionaries.

“They have no understanding of the people to whom they are going. They have never bothered to study the history of the nation or the culture of the people they say they are sent to. They are untrained, unprepared, unaccountable, and even unaware of the way the local people perceive them.”

I have quoted Dr. Hammond’s letter in full. What he describes so graphically is a very common attitude towards evangelism and mission

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by church managers generally. Similar things also happen in England. Groups of young people going out on missions for a couple of weeks led by, say, the local Youth Pastor, will be equipped to do little more than paint the fellowship meeting hall and hand out tracts. They don't learn much from this sort of experience.

The churches in Bristol recently got a large group of young people together and sent them to Manchester without any adequate preparation and those I spoke to ended up clearing rubbish from a housing estate hoping to generate opportunities to talk to individuals, but very little actual Christian ministry could take place. It would have been rather more intelligent to secure the services of specialists in using young people, such as Operation Mobilisation, who have the experience and infrastructure to make an adequate job of these kinds of opportunities.

In fact, organisations like Operation Mobilisation (OM), which rely on young people to sustain their various ministries in different parts of the world, are severely hampered by the increasing popularity of Christian festivals such as Spring Harvest and Green Belt. These enterprises are wonderful experience for the young people to take part in with excellent teaching and music, and are a tremendous blessing to many. Yet with the need to raise funds now for University courses, students must spend part of the summer working, so they can no longer do two things. Most, obviously, will go for the Christian fun time. Far fewer of them now ever get missions experience of any kind. This has affected Open Air Campaigners to a lesser extent - ours is essentially a training ministry. Our strategy is to spend time training local Christians in the countries we are seeking to evangelise, and to provide them with the back-up and equipment they need to establish on-going, viable ministries. Language and culture then cease to be a barrier and they can actually reach their own countries far more effectively.

The Bristol School of Evangelism

Graham Loader of Bristol is a Brethren Evangelist with years of experience on the Hartcliffe housing estate, one of the largest in Europe, home to people with wide social problems. His years of door-to-door work and the establishment of the Teyfant Christian Fellowship on the estate are a glorious story of faithfulness and perseverance. Graham was the first person Anni and I visited to discuss the possibility

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of starting a ministry in street evangelism in Bristol, rather than becoming an Anglican vicar. He was a mentor, as was Mike Hencher, an absolutely wonderful full time Brethren preacher - they did more to help me get started than anyone else. After a few years, Graham and I both realised that people coming into evangelism needed a lot more preparation (particularly in the area of practical skills) than one could learn in training colleges - so with David Harris and Malcolm Widdecombe we set up a full time training programme at Pip'n'Jay church. The Senior Elder of Bristol Christian Fellowship at that time was Dr. Nic Harding, and he sent us 50 students for our first year - so altogether we had 65 to teach every day. Over the 6 years that we ran the School, numbers fluctuated a lot, but we helped some absolutely brilliant young men and women get started in evangelism and missions much more effectively than would otherwise have been possible.

One of these was Ian Loring - another Caralee Albarian from California. Caralee had been on a mission with us in Bristol for 3 weeks when Operation Mobilisation joined us with a team for a "Love Bristol" campaign. A number of young people were to join OAC and/or Bristol School of Evangelism because of their experience on the streets that year. Caralee returned to the States and was back with us 5 weeks later with all her worldly possessions; a very mature person with excellent qualifications as a dietician, she had already done a stint as a missionary in the Sudan. During her training Caralee was successful in establishing a fine ministry in a number of churches and especially in taking assembly in a substantial number of primary schools in Bristol. However, I reckoned that Ian was somebody unlikely to get through the course. He had had a most unhappy life experience to date, clearly had quite a lot of problems and had only been a Christian about ten days - but David Harris came to see me and said it was no good my turning him down, as he had already accepted Ian for the course himself!

Ian wasn't too sure about how to take notes during the lectures, and clearly struggled with a lot of the concepts being taught. He obviously thought many of our methods were pretty daft, so I relaxed in the knowledge that I had been right all along.

However, during the second year of the course, Ian went on a mission to Bulgaria. This involved taking aid in a large truck to some of the dreadful orphanages emerging from obscurity, thanks to the media. Next, he went with a team led by Caralee to preach on the streets in

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Thessaloniki that summer; while there, the dam of oppression in Albania burst and huge numbers of Albanian refugees poured out of the squalor of their surroundings into the adjacent countries. The Greek police corralled several thousand of them in the square in front of the railway station in Thessaloniki where the Greek churches did a fine job of feeding them and caring for them and Caralee's team went and preached to them. Our street work is characterised by the use of large sketch-boards on which we use cartoons and other drawings to illustrate the message. The bright colours and the live nature of the presentations do attract a great deal of interest, and substantial crowds - I think something like twenty or thirty Albanians became Christians. These men went back to their families with the Gospel and a desire to win their villages for Christ; a few months later, after their marriage, Ian and Caralee followed them. The little local church of about twelve people rapidly grew to over 100 through Caralee's sketch-board preaching in the open air - once to several thousand people at an evening meeting in the local stadium in Korce. In the next few years, living in a single upstairs room with no running water, Ian and Caralee learned the language well. The greatest achievement in my view was their success at understanding the very complex mores of Albanian culture, which still defeats most missionary efforts in Albania.

Ian and Caralee's move to Erseke, the purchase and reconstruction of the various church properties there, and all the extraordinary adventures resulting from their courageous decision to stay in the country during the 1997 uprising, has given them a love for and a credibility with the local people unsurpassed in my experience on the mission field. The vision now is to complete the establishment of 22 churches, many quite large, the training of much greater numbers of indigenous church leaders, and the necessary training programme to achieve that, and the handover of local churches to local leadership.

On a visit in May 1998 I described what I saw and it's a good description of what a successful foreign mission looks like and involves:-

"Grenade-thrower" is a 15 yr. old gypsy boy with a short lifetime of begging behind him. This is of course a rather thin way to make a living in a country such as Albania in desperate poverty. However, he acquired fame and developed newfound skills during the flare-up of violence that spread right across Albania about a year ago. As this

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declined, he once again found himself unemployed. Walking through Erseke one day, Ian found him sitting by the side of the road and offered him a job on one of his building sites. Today, this lad is bustling around with the other builders, delivering cement to the block-layers and concreters. He has pride in his work, works harder than anyone else, is paid each month just like the others, and has joined the Youth Group.

Ian is known as “Yanni” to all and sundry, and is a sort of “Lord Jim” character in this small city of 8,000 people. Everyone wants to talk to him and he is currently running about 5 businesses as well as 9 substantial churches, most having an attendance of over 100. He has the astonishing ability to have got right into Albanian culture to the point where he knows a large number of families and all that is going on in their world. He has developed a very large number of friendships, beyond where the church is at.

This is partly because he and Caralee stayed there during the troubles; (early in 1997, anarchy broke out due to the public rage at being cheated of life savings in various pyramid schemes which, as pyramid schemes are wont to do, collapsed like a house of cards).

They played a large part in quelling the violence when Ian called the townspeople to the Peace Meeting, which stopped the fighting; they also took the initiative in supplying the hospital with medicines, which took Ian and his team through various terrorist battle lines on the way to the frontier with Greece on 5 or 6 separate occasions. All of them put their lives on the line doing this. Once, when they were trapped in Albania five or six miles from the frontier, a Greek Special Forces Unit with helicopter gunships intervened and probably saved their lives.

We visited the villages, which number about thirty in the region, where in the summer the team has an on-going regular street ministry for the purpose of establishing Bible Study and Prayer Groups in local homes. We traversed roads that one would imagine no wheeled vehicle could cope with. Travelling up 1:2 gradients tyre-deep in mud with the occasional rock outcrop forming a step, is a really interesting experience!

In these villages Ian and his team are regarded as saviours, largely because the 4 yr. old son of one of the mayors fell from a 3rd floor window on to concrete last year leaving him paralysed and in a coma,

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with his brain hanging partly out of a large hole behind his right ear. Ian organised a doctor and an Albanian ambulance and got them across the Greek frontier without any documentation whatever, and arranged for them to be met at the intensive care unit at St. Luke's Christian hospital in Thessaloniki. The Director, Dr. Kazarkas, provided both his brain surgeons, who then operated on the lad for 48 hours continuously. They succeeded in putting this little boy's head together, and today his hair has grown over the huge scars at the back of his head. He has suffered no ill effects whatsoever, and was rushing around the garden of the stone hovel where he lives, just like any other 5-year-old would do.

I walked into a little village and met a woman making butter in a barrel, the old-fashioned way. She didn't understand a word I said and I couldn't understand her, but was able to meet all the family and share 45 minutes with them in their living room (about 8 ft. square) the floor level of which was below ground level. This was a common arrangement in mediaeval houses when it was thought desirable to cut out draughts, when you sleep on the floor. They produced a little glass of peach Raki, which was quite delicious, and with great ceremony some Russian sweets on a little tray. They had several married daughters aged 16 or 17 living in adjoining huts, and their 15 yr. old daughter was beside herself to meet somebody from the West and desperately trying to remember a few English words from school. Albanian culture means she will have been excluded from education at about 11-12 yrs, and will be kept at home until married off to a local farmer in about a year's time. She was so bright I thought how sad it is that she should be denied all opportunity of a proper education and a life of her own.

This was a Muslim village where the Saint Eleanora sect has established a Muslim shrine. She established her status in Albania by levitating publicly in the air and I would say demonic forces like this are very evident in the lives of many Albanians. Probably this accounts for the fact that the guards on our properties in Erseke have to be on 24-hour rotas and each week these young men face armed intruders. Everyone still has a Kalashnikov and one young man with a large pistol attempted to disrupt a meeting for 102 teenagers I was preaching to, on our final evening there. Andy, the 20 yr. old guard who turned this guy round and sent him packing, has often faced challenges like this and it

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is a measure of the spiritual depth of man of the workers that Ian employs that they are prepared to risk themselves in this way on a regular basis.

Ian and Caralee have a profound understanding of the Albanian culture and the way the people think. Because the Church is a new entity in the country, everyone seems to know everyone else even in quite different towns. Ian is alarmed by the inability of many missionaries to understand what is going on in their own churches. On occasion, he has had to tell them. Westerners continue to be fleeced left right and centre and continue to be a ready source of money for the unscrupulous.

The Faith Church in California continues to support the Muslim from Korce who is divesting them of substantial amounts of dollars. The Dutch group who founded a bakery in the area unfortunately put the property in the names of Albanians who had been Christians a very short time, and now the missionaries have left (because of the troubles) the entire property was sold by the "Board" to relatives for \$1. This sort of naivety is still seen when so-called evangelists visit Albanian towns and speak to large crowds of people, many of whom take leaflets and make "commitments". The evangelists imagine that revival has broken out when in fact Albanians desperate for work and keen to meet foreigners will stand around and listen and will take leaflets in the hope that this will result in some sort of hand-out.

Another group, "Every Home Crusade", has a sort of race round the villages and deposits as many leaflets as they can through letter boxes: the Albanians regard this as quite a joke. Less funny was the group who had a meeting in Korce at which they photographed a rather unusual man standing in the crowd with rather high cheekbones. Last year this photo was used in a leaflet to publicise the group's prime objective, which is to de-bunk evolution. The photograph of this unfortunate man was thus distributed in his home town with the caption "Man or monkey?" He was the subject of ridicule, had a nervous breakdown, and has lost his job. Ian's remonstrations with the organisation concerned led to a lawyer coming from America to assess suitable damages to be paid to the man and his family and an agreement was entered into - hardly surprisingly with these sorts of people, the amount promised has not been forthcoming.

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These sorts of activities, by people who appear to be either stupid, ignorant of Scriptural methods, or unscrupulous, are seriously damaging the efforts of those in the country with long-term effective relational ministries. Many of the people involved in these activities are graduates of Missionary training colleges in the U.S.A. and one can only assume these people have no understanding of the kind of public proclamation ministries that actually win people for Christ and build God's Kingdom.

Ian and Caralee's current activities involve the reconstruction of the town's primary school in Erseke where Ian is employing a team of builders under an engineer to rebuild the walls around the playground to discourage theft and vandalism, and providing proper facilities in the building itself which he will completely refurbish. At the Church Centre he has constructed a sports area with netball and basketball facilities, he has completed the secure garage for the Land Rover and over the top is constructing a large brick room with a tiled roof which will be used as the publishing centre for translating and publishing Christian books in Albanian. An Oxford graduate, Dan Baynes, who has a brilliant mind and a profound facility in Albanian, will help with this. Ian is also re-developing the large property opposite the Centre, a 4,000 sq.ft. stone house that will form accommodation for the School of Evangelism and the computer skills training centre. This work will be completed during the summer of 1998.

The building operation is led by the Albanian engineer Petrit, who has little understanding of calculating weights and loads, so we need to show him how this is done. Ian is using the Land Rover to keep a local taxi driver, Mondri, in business - he lost everything in the collapse of the "Pyramid" scam.

The Erseke dentist is leaving town and leaving his Christian daughter behind - her name is Viola, and she is an excellent dental technician. Ian is fixing her up with accommodation in the Church Centre and our job is to provide her with the equipment she needs. At the moment she has a really awful Bulgarian electric drill clamped to a work bench with a sanding disc, and a piece of mahogany with four 6" nails driven into it to use as a manipulator to put upper and lower sets together. Amazingly, she produces really first class work in this way!

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Ian has also recruited 24 Albanian knitting ladies and has important large spools of Jaeger dyed wool for them to produce the most wonderful Arran style jerseys to various designs. The quality of the work is perfect. The wages for producing a jersey, which takes 2 weeks, amount to \$18, which is more than the local monthly wage, so in a month they can earn about two and a half times what they could otherwise get. The wool is expensive to import, and export of the jerseys via DHL will also cost a substantial amount. If we can sell them for \$100 in the West, the profit will support Ian's Albanian church workers. Ian also has an agricultural project under way up in the mountains, and has ploughed 15 acres of land, part of which we own. An agriculturalist is advising on new strains of potato and ways of getting this poorer land to produce higher yields. Ian hopes this project will bring under-used local land into use and provide an income for church workers in the mountain villages. I think he rather hoped that the representative from Tear Fund who visited the country recently would be able to assist in this area of work. Although they were unable to help in the medical emergency at the hospital due to their extremely long reaction time to emergencies, they are nevertheless a very good Development Agency with many of the skills we need. However, they chose instead to work with a Reformed Dutch group living outside Albania, whose work in the country was destroyed in the troubles. (In early 1997, anarchy broke out in Albania due to the public's rage at having been cheated out of life savings in various pyramid schemes which, as pyramid schemes are wont to do, collapsed like a house of cards.)

As these people have no experience of establishing projects in Albania, they have asked for Ian's assistance. He is of course very glad to help. It seems a pity that Tear Fund's work will not now be anchored in the emergent Albanian Church.

Sunday services continue to be led by the Albanians themselves; two of these, Tony and an 18 yr. old girl, who have matriculated from the High School and who have been believers and members of the Youth Group right from the beginning, are about to apply for University education in Los Angeles where a relative of Caralee's is Admissions Director. Tony wants to study Computer Science and Business, and she wants to be a Doctor.

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Every day as you visit all these activities you see people busily occupied in all kinds of areas of ministry. Lots of young people throng the sports area in groups, while others visit the hospitality house where a delightful American couple (who have retired from business) have friendship and counselling sessions. This takes a terrific amount of pressure off Ian and Caralee. Mark and Ruth Stoscher (2nd and 3rd generation Missionary Kids) are graduates of Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, have now mastered the language and have a terrific teaching ministry not only for the church but particularly for the indigenous leadership. Fuller seems to produce people with the kind of practical skills relevant in front line church planting ministries. One of the Faculty there designs church programmes for us. This is of course a terrific help to someone in Ian's situation. He has an on-going training programme for his 35 church leaders who are deployed in groups of three or four in surrounding towns. He is pulling them in to give them further training for about 4 days every 6 weeks. He has asked me to recommend suitable people to assist with this.

Looking round Bristol as I do, there seem to be very few people with any sort of understanding of front line public ministry who can actually be of assistance - Graham Loader is a prime example of someone we would like to have with us in Albania as often as possible.

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Looking back on my time there last week, several things occurred to me.

The depth of commitment of the **Albanian** converts. Christ really has become the centre of their lives. Very few of them are salaried yet most of them are involved in the church's ministry in one way or another.

There is very rapid growth taking place: new people join the Church each week. The services are designed to bring people into a relationship with Jesus. Discipleship training is very good. I think the work will double in size in the next two years and the challenge of producing enough leaders from the churches themselves will be a very difficult thing to achieve.

The small premises for meetings mean that worship sessions take place in people groups. Sunday morning services are for children, Sunday afternoons for teenagers and young adults. These services are great fun - the teenagers particularly have a marvellous sense of humour and there is a lot of laughter.

Older adults are far fewer in number than other groups and seem to suffer from a deep sense of hurt through their experiences of oppression by their old political masters. Trust and the ability to relate to one another, have been severely damaged, because a third of them seem to have been employed as secret police to spy on their own relatives.

Ian himself is now an outstanding Christian leader. A Bristol man, and a trained Accountant, his knowledge of business as well as his deep conversion experience have produced a man with just the right skills in just the right place at just the right time. His training at the Bristol School of Evangelism provided him with the skills and background that have equipped him for the kind of public proclamation ministry largely unknown in Bristol nowadays. I think his story and what he is doing is an epic of the modern missionary movement. As Paul Alkazraji, OAC's Press Officer, said during our visit: "This is not a newspaper article; it is quite a large book."

The Albanian churches have a sense of direction and purpose, which seems to be lacking here in England. Our rather "religious" church-centred approach to faith seems to me to be isolating us from the real

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lives of the vast majority of people in our society, whereas in our Albanian churches, faith is at the centre of their lives every day. Our lack of any sense of mission here at home means that a project such as the Decade of Evangelism becomes a meaningless charade without discernible substance. Our lack of responsibility for the ministries of Missions Agencies means that most of those going abroad as missionaries need to raise their own support and many of them end up in partial secular employment to make ends meet. Many of them even in Western Europe would not be able to run a car. This is absolutely disgraceful.

“One is struck by the fact that the burden for the greater part of modern missions is borne by the Americans, with a few remarkable exceptions like Ian Loring and Dan Baynes. Groups from the U.K. like Tear Fund are completely out of their depth and tend to do things that would appear to be sometimes rather ill-advised. Somehow, British agencies need to become part of the very large network that is world mission. Frankly, as I speak to many of their representatives, I find they tend not to know what is going on or who is involved.”

As I write this, Ian and Caralee are with one of their sending churches in the United States working on a programme to train over 100 Albanian church leaders every 2-3 years; they see the possibility of establishing about 100 churches every ten years for the foreseeable future. This is at a time when very few successful church plants are taking place in Albania that show long-term results. The key element, right from the beginning in Korce where the church grew from 12 to over 100 in just a few months, was taking the Christian message out on to the streets and preaching it. It was the same story in Erseke, which is where Ian’s main church centres have been established. The children’s open air meetings in the villages each week, the public preaching actually in the town, and all that followed, have been activities which have brought people into the Kingdom. Ian, Caralee and their team are there for the whole town. For the last 2 years, Ian has been Chairman of the local Football Club, so he meets up with many people who are not church members every day.

The significant thing to note is that few people became believers and church members through attending worship services. Ian’s ability to pass on the ministry means that these services are actually led by church members who form the worship group and preach the

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messages, all of course under his direction. This means he can call on 30 - 35 full time church leaders and probably about 100 part timers to lead the churches' various ministries. However, Ian remains such a key figure in the community that when he tried to resign the chairmanship of the Football Club to go on furlough for an extended period, there was a protest demonstration outside the Church Centre. 200 men closed all the surrounding roads and refused to allow him to leave until he agreed to go and discuss the matter. It was solved by Ian's agreeing to remain as Honorary President, and an Executive Director being appointed to do the work!

FOUR

The Evangelist and Finance

This is probably the chapter that most budding evangelists will read first! It is a complete mystery to most people how those in the ministry of evangelism can possibly survive. Many things in the life of the church give the appearance of being a shambles and this is one of them. There is little or no teaching on the subject and because most people in Christian work today are paid salaries for ministries principally to Christians, church managers tend not to understand the situation either. The best advice Anni and I received as young innocents beginning a work of full time evangelism in Bristol came from Canon Roy Henderson, our vicar: he advised us against relying either on the Church or on people. He said, "Put your trust in God". With a home and two young daughters, and having enjoyed a regular salary as a Chartered Surveyor in London, suddenly to have nothing coming in was extremely difficult. However, Anni was able to get a full time job and won an electric typewriter in the Bristol "Top Secretary" competition run by the local Chamber of Commerce, so she was able to do our secretarial work as well.

After about 3 years our own church started to support us in a small way, 2-3 other fellowships would send us a couple of hundred pounds or so at Christmas, but we never really raised sufficient funds to survive, let alone pay our ministry expenses. Accordingly, in the early years I would walk the couple of miles into the centre of Bristol carrying my sketch-board and paints because bus fares were beyond us. Walking back one evening I stopped in at the Cathedral to see a full choral service in progress with 6 in the congregation. The contrast with my own activities that sunny afternoon in the shopping centre, Broadmead, where I had spoken to 8 crowds of well over 100 each time, made an indelible impression on me. It may be a jolly difficult ministry in many ways, but I have always felt that the freedom to minister the truth to so many people makes it tremendously worthwhile.

When I talk about the number of people being reached so effectively, those without these experiences tend to throw up their hands in disbelief, which is why everywhere I go I show slides of the events I describe. Recently, preaching at the Fellowship of the King in Bristol, who are real enthusiasts for our ministry, the Pastor, Stephen Abbott,

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was utterly amazed to hear how our schools team had spoken to 10,300 children during the week before Easter. The potential for proclamation is boundless and only restricted by the lack of funding.

I was delighted to meet a group of young, keen, newly appointed Elders at a Baptist Church in Nottinghamshire a few years ago when a young couple with 2 children were in the process of training with OAC at the Bristol School of Evangelism, hoping to go as missionaries to Romania. They had had the call for a number of years and were excited to see it all beginning to happen. The Elders wanted my advice about priorities for finance, and in fact had been reading journals kept by previous church administrators going back to 1863. As far as they could see, in all that time their Church had never ever supported a missionary. They were keen to get the matter sorted out as a young single pastor was about to join them to lead the fellowship and it was his first incumbency. They also had a young family at All Nations Bible College in training to be missionary clergy. The figures they ultimately adopted were £20,000 per annum for the new pastor, £2,450 for the young family at All Nations, and £1,500 p.a. for the couple going to Romania. Over the years, I have discovered that this is generally the level of priority in the minds of most churches. In one church, the verger received a salary in excess of the sum given to world mission.

It seems that in adopting secular priority patterns where perceived seniority dictates the level of remuneration, we are totally failing to meet the needs of those in Christian ministry.

In no other “industry” would those going overseas on service for the Company be expected to sacrifice their home and all their possessions, to pay for their professional training for the privilege of serving the Company. They would live in rented accommodation, at a very low salary, in a foreign country, where they could not hope to provide for the education and welfare of their children as they could at home. And the children lose all their friends.

Sadly, this kind of situation is the norm - and not just for those going overseas. It seems to me increasingly the case that as The Christian Family we present the worst possible witness to the world behaving in this way. It is of course Biblical, in the sense that Joseph’s brothers (who were not terribly happy about his special calling) recognised his gifts, took him out and dumped him in a pit. This happens to evangelists

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all the time! One brilliant guy, who has assisted me with the overseas ministry for more than twenty years, preached to huge crowds in Vienna and Bratislava last year. On returning home to his fellowship, he was told by his Elders that he clearly had no ministry and they had no intention of supporting him and his family. I much enjoy the memory of something Dr. J. I. Packer said to me: “Korky, you’ll find it is really very difficult trying to work with the implacably obtuse”.

The church system for raising finance is constantly to ask congregations for their support; in most of the non-conformist churches, Church Membership implies a commitment to tithe on a regular basis each month. This enables all those employed by the fellowship to be properly salaried and properly accountable to the Pastor/Eldership. On this basis, additional full time and part time pastoral assistants are taken on, and often these will be described to the congregation as “evangelists” although of course they are not. The title “evangelist” is applied to all kinds of people and the word “evangelism” to all kinds of activities. Please refer to my chapter on “The Evangelist”. I particularly enjoyed meeting a wonderfully gifted young couple, both musicians, from the United States, who were performing in church in Budapest some years ago. They announced that their ministry was “a ministry of evangelism helping the church to worship better”.

Administration of Finance

The generosity and unselfishness of the Lord’s people are remarkable. However, it is difficult for anyone to “live by faith” and attract gifts to support themselves, when church Administrators have a policy of controlling all funds coming through the fellowship for Christian work of any kind. There is so much ignorance on the subject, that most of these dear people won’t have the slightest idea that those who do live by faith need financial support at all. If people say “How are you supported?” and you reply, “I live by faith” they will take that as meaning they are absolved from all responsibility for your support. I have often been in a situation of going to preach to a large church, not knowing whether I would have the money to get home again afterwards. This was particularly true when I was on missions in Liverpool with a team of 40-50 people working on a housing estate. Travelling around in our team bus, no local church offered us support of any kind - quite the contrary! They wanted to charge me for the use of their premises.

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On the Ford Estate where unemployment was over 60%, drug abuse problems abounded, together with gang warfare and widespread vandalism. Our team did a tremendous job locating 300 or so mainly young men and women interested in becoming part of God's family. The local Brethren church was brand new, constructed like The Pentagon, with quarter inch steel plates bolted over all external windows and a steel roof. I could not make them hear me when I knocked on the door, and an urchin with a little white dog on a piece of string said "Do you wanna get in, Mister?" so I said "Yes!". He said, "I'll show yer!"

He prised a brick off one of the low walls nearby, broke it in half, and chucked the brickbat on to the steel roof with great force. It made an absolutely splendid noise, and an unbelievably furious Brethren chap appeared at the door, very smartly dressed, and holding a broom. The urchin said "Geezer to see ya, mate!" whereupon I was allowed in. The urchin followed close behind me with the little white dog, obviously curious to see what it was like inside.

There was some sort of meeting in progress, about 35 men and women in what appeared to me like 19th Century costume, looking very serious. The leader was a dead ringer for the Soviet President, Mr. Brezhnev and was clearly not amused. It looked to me as if he had never been amused. I asked whether I might have the use of the building for the team, as we would be in the area for a couple of weeks working amongst the teenagers. He did not like the fact that I was a member of an Anglican church, but they were prepared to allow me to use the building for £100 per week. Obviously, I did not have that kind of money and we were not able to use the building. Of course, if the building isn't the Lord's, if you want to use it, you have to pay for it. The lad then asked for a drink of water for his little dog, which further stretched our welcome - such as it was. But the chap with the broom gritted his teeth and very reluctantly brought a saucer of water. Unfortunately, on the way out, the little white dog peed on the end of one of their pews, and the urchin was grateful to be under my protection; he kept darting little glances at me and the broom and was careful to keep me between him and it.

I never saw them again - but the chap with the broom turned out to be Doug, who was the only guy from all the churches to come along and take part in the wonderful experiences we had talking to teenagers on

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the estate, and to help organise the follow-up. I was interested to receive a letter a couple of months later from the Anglican minister who said he felt our time on the estate had been a complete waste of effort as nobody had turned up to join his church. Mr. Brezhnev and the vicar were clearly the sort of people unlikely to see the need for bringing Christ into the lives of local teenagers. Their interest in raising finances and providing other resources likely to bring real results would be non-existent. There are many churches in Bristol like this today - delightful little local fellowships led by splendid sincere people, making absolutely no impact on the community at all as far as one can see. They seem to be locked into their own little ghetto world absorbed completely in each other's needs and in faithfully making sure that the church survives. They regard all funds as belonging to them and members are expected to give only through the church Treasurer.

Our experience is that people, who know us, believe in what we do and pray for us, will generally channel their giving through their church, and the Church Council will allocate the amalgamated funds to all kinds of different Societies. The donors tend to take the view that the Elders know best and loyalty precludes debate. Tax refunds are retained in most cases by church treasurers. In Victorian times, wealthy benefactors set up Trusts "for the evangelisation of the locality". In two cases I know of, these funds were long ago subsumed into denominational coffers and in North Devon one was used a few years ago to provide holidays overseas for clergy families. In the case of the Church of England, giving is on such an enormous scale that in a London diocese a few years ago a clergyman in the administration department skilfully salted away £350,000 into a personal account. This went completely un-noticed until accidentally discovered by an accountant. Huge Diocesan Quotas leave local PCCs with little room to manoeuvre financially. The £140 million or so required by the Church Commissioners towards maintaining our Cathedrals imposes restrictions on what the Bishops can do to help our poorer parishes. To the country as a whole, Cathedrals amount to little more than ecclesiastical museums today.

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It is extremely difficult to live by faith, totally dependent on God, when nobody else is doing it. Living by faith means not talking about money at all and depending on the Holy Spirit to prompt people to provide the financial support for you, your family and your ministry. George Mueller of Bristol was a super example of someone who put this into practice and his story is a glorious testimony of God's faithfulness. However, the editor of "Evangelism" Bill Spencer pointed out to me that Mueller may have lived by faith, but he had the biggest advertising programme in town! Right near the city centre, the continuous building programme of magnificent orphanages, and the hundreds of hungry-looking orphans being so beautifully organised and cared for, made his enterprise a very supportable project. Likewise the television images of the Kosovar refugees and their desperate plight stimulated so much interest and love that we were able to raise almost £100,000 in two months which (with help from World Relief in Chicago) enabled Ian and Caralee and their church teams to provide accommodation and food for several thousand refugees in Erseke and elsewhere.

People will give sacrificially for material needs, but not for spiritual ones. Support for our full time Albanian evangelism and church-planting teams in Albania and Kosova is at a negligible level. TV news teams send pictures of people in the final stages of starving to death in countries like Ethiopia and the Sudan, and as a result, support floods in for the aid agencies. Spiritual destitution fails to evoke concern amongst Christians who do not see the preaching of the Gospel as a life and death issue. In fact, most of them do not seem to regard it as important at all, yet brilliant people still turn up asking for training and involvement in this greatest ministry of all.

Gordon's story

I was invited to preach at Portsmouth Elim because later that summer we would be bringing a team of 100 or so to work on one of the local housing estates where the needs were very great. University students would be coming from all over the country to take part - half of them recruited by Operation Mobilisation, who are wonderful mission partners. In church that Sunday night in January, the place was packed out, the worship had finished, and I was free to share the vision. The congregation were obviously animated and interested, and loved the slides of previous similar campaigns that I was able to show. A young

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Scot called Gordon was walking past on his way to his own church but felt compelled to come in and sit at the back, though he had never been in a Pentecostal church in his life. He told me afterwards how absolutely stunned he was by what he had seen and heard. After the meeting, he bought me a cup of tea and said quite simply, "God has called me to work with you." I asked when he could start, and he said "Tomorrow week."

Sure enough, he turned up in Bristol that Monday morning and camped in our sitting room for a month or two while we found him somewhere to live. He played a full part in all the activities of street preaching and schools ministry, maintaining the old bus, and worked really hard, learning the skills that **OAC staff evangelists** are required to have. He was tremendously inspired by some of the other young men, too. There was Ken Barrett who had studied law at Bristol University; Neil Simpson with red hair and purple trousers who always found himself doing a lot of counselling after the open air meetings; and of course David Cullimore, the young Rolls Royce turbine engineer, who was headed for the mission field.

Gordon fitted right in and became a wonderful preacher. As a German speaker, he decided to go and preach in Graz, Austria, wearing a kilt we'd bought from the Oxfam shop, and playing a clarinet, as he didn't know anything about bagpipes.

His ministry was a huge success, with good participation from a local church who learned how street evangelism works, good crowds of rather surprised Austrians, who greatly enjoyed his sketch-board cartoons and messages; notably a young Muslim was saved. On the way home in the train, Gordon found himself sitting right next to this young Muslim and was able to do quite a lot of follow-up counselling on the long journey back to the U.K.

Gordon married Pauline, a young OM missionary, and God called them specifically to a schools ministry in Gloucestershire where they had settled. Gordon shared his vision with the Elders of his church and was told to demonstrate faithful membership for a year or two and to get a secular job to support his family, as this would be good for him to do. Accordingly, he and Pauline both trained in the nursing profession.

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Looking back on it, these dear chaps evidently saw Gordon and Pauline as recipients of their ministry, as opposed to having a ministry that the Elders themselves should encourage and support. Being totally focussed on their own concerns has made it quite impossible to work in partnership with them. Twelve years were to pass, and the Eldership never displayed the slightest interest in releasing Gordon from the need to work in secular employment - a whole generation of young people in Gloucestershire schools has come and gone, and the opportunity to share Christ with them lost.

Last year I advised Gordon and Pauline that if they were ever going to fulfil their original vision, they might as well get on with it. Gordon took part time employment (nursing now out of the question following a back injury) and started to book primary and secondary school assemblies. This Spring of 2000 he spoke to about 4,000 children in the Easter term. He is a very popular speaker at assemblies particularly to teenagers. At one of these schools, 10% of the young people wrote to say they had identified totally with his message, and with God's help would turn away from wrongdoing and seek to lead a godly life, getting to know Jesus.

Several of his current church Elders have now accompanied Gordon on these visits to take assembly and have been very impressed with his directness, his professionalism and the fact that those listening are riveted on his presentations. I wrote to the Eldership suggesting that really this would be a good moment to provide some financial support so that his ministry could grow and develop - and that maybe there might be men and women in their fellowship who would like to learn the skills Gordon possesses. They have recently advised him that they don't intend to help him for a further two years when they might be willing "to release him for evangelism". Gordon and I feel that God has already done the releasing.

It is difficult to see how these sort of people can play anything more than a very peripheral role in winning England for Christ. They are under the huge disadvantage of having little or no formal theological training and little understanding of the ministry skills required, particularly in presenting the Gospel to teenagers. It really does not take much basic intelligence to appreciate that those in school today are potentially the church of tomorrow. Evangelising the very small number met through personal contacts can never be a means of

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winning a whole generation for Christ. Likewise their non-involvement in missions means that their church messages lack the sort of exciting illustrations that are so demonstrative of the power and the love of God in action. They are much more concerned about their own positions in the fellowship than about accepting someone like Gordon as an important part of the ministry team and they certainly regard church finance as their own. Sadly, it would be easy for me to add a couple of dozen similar stories at this point.

Needless to say, the pressures on an evangelist's wife are appalling; I know of at least one marriage breakdown resulting from it, in another Christian organisation. One of Britain's nationally-known evangelists had to support his family for many years by decorating houses.

Over the last 25 years, individuals from many of Bristol's evangelical churches have caught the vision for what we do and have helped establish the largest OAC Branch in the world. We now operate in 17 countries and assist with the training of Ugandan clergy and schoolteachers thus enabling the struggling Ugandan church to survive. Most of this has been achieved through the sporadic giving of individual Christians who know us and consider that the preaching of the Gospel to the lost is a significant enterprise. A very small percentage has been church support. In an average month, we minister to about twice as many people as attend the churches in Bristol every year.

For all these reasons the establishment of professional Societies such as Open Air Campaigners with the ministry of effectively presenting Christ to the lost, by all means, everywhere, is absolutely essential. A professional Society such as OAC performs for its members many of the same functions as the Law Society for lawyers, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors for surveyors, and the General Medical Council for doctors. Not belonging to a professional body in my view severely limits the credibility and effectiveness of many evangelists.

I have come to admire the work of Roger Forster very much. He is great fun as a street preacher, and on the few occasions I have heard him preach, I have been really thrilled with his messages. I like his description of St. Paul's team of travelling evangelists as "the mobile church". In Bristol today our team is the mobile church. Some apologists excuse their lack of support for missions agencies by describing them as "para-church", meaning "they are nothing to do with

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us“. There are many examples like this of ways in which we spiritualise our disobedience to the Holy Spirit’s instructions to evangelise. The missions agencies are not *para-church* organisations; they are part of the Christian church with a particular ministry. An individual evangelist may be “*para*” in that he may work alongside a fellowship for a time, but he is not *para-church* - he is *part* of the church. I feel very much that the ministry of the evangelist is so little valued that one of the reasons for writing this book is to put things straight. For the record, those who have played the greatest part in helping me find my way spiritually in the world have all been American missionaries. The almost total indifference of church pastors/managers to those in full time Christian work is more understandable when you appreciate their ministry takes place on only one day a week: most pastors in continental Europe, for example, would regard their ministries as part time and most support themselves with secular jobs.

In fact, the life of a full time evangelist is a 6-day week, and will probably include a number of preaching presentations every day, so a successful evangelist will not have an opportunity to do secular work as well. Most people in Christian work simply do not understand this. Another reason for this indifference is that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that many of these pastor/managers are purely motivated by ambition and personal interest in their careers within their particular denominational "Company". David Watson wrote a whole chapter on this subject in his excellent book on “Discipleship”, which I found extremely helpful.

When Jesus is not Lord, indifference can very occasionally manifest itself as enmity. One of our evangelists, with an international ministry going back many years, is from a fairly well-to-do family; he and his wife happen to be very well spoken. Christian friends tended not to regard them as the kind of people who “need our support” therefore for a number of years their finances were in a very perilous state with the wife in a full time job, the husband away a lot, and the children often being cared for by a surrogate granny down the road. I hoped very much that eventually he would inherit the family business, which would have provided a small income to enable the family to lead a more normal life.

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Unfortunately, however, his sister was married to a Bishop who insisted on liquidating the business as this might secure them a few thousand pounds extra. This exceptionally unpleasant couple then made threats of legal action in the courts to enforce their demands - all this took place while the evangelist was on a number of missions overseas and the whole affair caused a terrific amount of stress and an eventual complete rift in the family, which had been very close. At the funeral, this loutish Bishop mounted a vitriolic attack on a rather outspoken charismatic couple who happened to be there; apparently, he cannot stand charismatics or evangelists. It is unfortunate that people with dysfunctional personalities occasionally are promoted to a position where they are able to do tremendous damage to the Church.

However - the Lord honours those who honour him, particularly those who preach the Gospel to the lost - so do not be discouraged if you find yourself facing attack or opposition from the most unexpected quarter. Becoming an evangelist means sticking your head up over the battlements in the front line, and you are bound to be shot at! Incidentally, one of the most usual forms of enemy attack appears to be on the family of the evangelist - particularly on close family members, when the evangelist wants to concentrate on a mission or conference. **It is most important to get all the prayer support you can - not just for the finances, but also for protection from these spiritual attacks.**

I remember being invited by telephone to speak to the Missions Conference at the San Martine de Val de Iglesias Conference Centre, near Madrid, in 1980. I put the phone down very excited and thrilled at the privilege of addressing so many fine Christian workers only to discover later that day that the lowest fare was £ 161.50p, and we were skint. The last moment for confirming the flight was Friday and in the post on Friday morning came a cheque for £ 163 from a couple in Sussex I hadn't seen for years! Obviously, they had no idea of this particular need - so I was able to enjoy a small glass of wine with my lunch on the flight as well (drinks were extra in those days). It has been like this all down the years, and in the lean times Barclays Bank have stoically stood by us in a way that churches have been unwilling to do. The manager even lent me a couple of thousand pounds to buy an old bus for our Spanish and Italian campaigns - and although he said he was not a believer himself, he was happy to say that in 40 years of

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banking he had never been let down by a Christian. This contrasts with Tear Fund who, in the emergency in Albania, refused to work through the Albanian church “as a matter of policy” we were told...

People new to living by faith will notice that income dries up at the beginning of the summer. This always happens, but generally, by the end of December things will have picked up again. It would be lovely for the housekeeping budget to be able to rely on a regular pay packet on a regular day each month. But living by faith keeps you on your knees, keeps you listening to the Lord for the next directions, and lands you with the most amazing miracles along the way that assure you He is in charge and knows about all your needs. Looking back, all the bills have been paid, our needs more than met, our four girls educated at the best grammar schools in Bristol (courtesy of the Assisted Places scheme), and we have been given the cream of the Lord's people to work with.



God was in that visit to Spain in a very big way. As I stood up at 8 pm on 6th June to do my first presentation on open air evangelism, the Spanish Parliament in Madrid ratified new laws on public order. These legalised the holding of evangelistic open air meetings in the streets and in all public places, but

with the interesting proviso that the Gospel may not be preached within 40 metres of a Roman Catholic building!

Today, England and Spain are the only two European countries where the right for Christians to hold public meetings is enshrined in law.

Many marvellous young men and women joined our training programme and undertook the twice-yearly visits to Spain where we would often speak to between 10,000 and 15,000 during a week of evening meetings in the streets and squares. Once, on a visit to a small town in central Spain, we identified so many enquirers and possible converts that the beginnings of an entire new church fellowship came about in less than 36 hours.

On the way home, we ran out of money. We realised that we could fuel the bus and just possibly afford the occasional cup of coffee, but coming over the Sierra Nevada during the night we were all extremely

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cold (the heater wasn't working) and absolutely exhausted from long hours of street preaching. At about 6 a.m. we noticed a very smart white concrete cafe at the side of the road with a number of lorries and cars outside and decided unanimously that we could just afford to have half a cup of coffee each. As we walked in, we trooped past a long counter with a perspex lid, loaded with the most marvellous cakes and pastries. By now desperately hungry, we noticed a very muscular, tough-looking old Spanish lady all dressed in black, stuffing a bin liner with food left by some of the customers. We were all wondering how we might get our hands on that bin liner!

Our coffee arrived, and we watched each other like hawks to make sure each only drank half. Suddenly the family of five on the table next door got up and left, abandoning all their food - a tray of delicious toasted teacakes, quite untouched. Quickly, Neil Branscombe, our most slippery team member, nipped across and grabbed the tray before the bin liner could arrive, and we polished off the lot in double-quick time. To our absolute horror, the family then came back! They were looking high and low for their food, and they began addressing angry words to the gorilla with the bin liner, who in turn responded angrily. Our Spanish was not able to cope with the vocabulary being used, and we all thought the safest course of action was to withdraw speedily. It really was a dreadful experience, and we were not at all amused at the time, although the dozens of stories we have (most of them not like that!) are a great source of amusement looking back today.

One of the reasons for our difficulties on missions was that many of the young Bible college students who came with us would not have the finances to help cover their costs, and it was our policy never to refuse a place to someone who really felt God wanted them to come. I remember sitting outside the Billy Graham Crusade meetings at Anfield - our bus parked in amongst a row of others - waiting for people to come out. I overheard a vicar walking past with his Youth Group, and one of them saying to him "Oh, look - there's the OAC bus! I'm booked to travel on that to Spain next month" to which the vicar replied confidently "Don't be silly - they'll never take you all that way in an old banger like that!" But we did!

(In fact, we did 16 or 17 trips over the years, doing all the maintenance on the bus ourselves - eventually it went for village evangelism in Scotland.)

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Our financial struggles meant that we were very grateful when supporters gave us their old cars. Over the years, I totally rebuilt eleven engines and gearboxes to provide transport for us and the team. Each one took about a fortnight and would then run for 150,000 -200,000 miles. We always passed on cars in very good condition, which gave me a great deal of satisfaction as I enjoy working on engines. It was then a great surprise when a local businessman drove in with an almost new Volvo estate car, bright red, with less than 30,000 miles on the clock, handed me the keys and said, "It's yours - but you've got to pay for it." "How much?" I said. "Give me three...." I assumed he meant three thousand pounds, a very good deal for an £8,000 car. I thought quickly how I might get Barclays to help me yet again and said yes, only to discover that he actually meant £3, not £3,000!

Apparently, under our British tax laws, businessmen can write down cars against tax in 3 to 5 years and I think it is extraordinary that more of them don't do this.

Having the Volvo absolutely transformed our ministry in Italy and central and Eastern Europe, where I was able to go on extended trips carrying five people and towing a half ton trailer full of equipment for the seminars I was holding for would-be evangelists. Many of them are now in full production all over the southern half of what was the Soviet Union and in the so-called "closed" countries further east. I have a tremendous admiration for the work many of them are doing.

Paul was in the Fleet Air Arm all through World War II. As navigator, he had to find the carrier again in the middle of the ocean. He would refer to his pilot as "my driver". He and his driver went after the Bismarck but in the bad weather were fortunately unable to find it. Later that day others who did find it were all killed. A businessman in Bristol, Paul and his wife Mary were a terrific source of encouragement and support right from the beginning and longed to see the church as a whole play a much more active part in Christian ministry. He would arrive in their ancient MG and chat for ages about engines and aeroplanes, and then quietly hand me a cheque for a thousand pounds. This was an astonishing help to us, and often arrived when we were seriously wondering whether we could survive another week. What made it so very special to us was quite simply that it was from them. We have been made acutely aware that God does have very significant people, who have such a commitment to the Gospel that they are moved to

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take concrete steps to assist God's messengers. We have never contemplated fund-raising, but have depended quite simply on the Lord and his provision. Looking back, it is extraordinary how we have survived, paid the bills, and been free to do some really remarkable things. These mainly involved the mobilising, training and equipping of hundreds of men and women who now have highly effective ministries to the lost.

Starting out, it is no good simply sitting back and waiting for the phone to ring and gifts of money to start arriving. They won't. Most of our recruits and most of our support have come through being seen to be doing the work. The very first open air meeting I had in Bristol I was alone for only a very short time before seven or eight Christians joined in to help with counselling enquirers.

The opportunity to begin what was to become the largest schools ministry in Europe came when a school teacher in the open air crowd asked if I would take a school assembly for her. As you walk through doors that God has opened, others open ahead of you, and the finances come. Anni's job was no less one provided by the Lord, and the training she received there has equipped her for the work she is now doing for OAC.

When the OAC work became too much to handle in her spare time, the funds were there to enable her to give up that job and work at home. By all means, take secular work part time to help you get started, and you will see that as your ministry develops, so the ministry gifts will increase. A very helpful book is "**Friend Raising**" published by **YWAM**. The secret is not to set about fund-raising but to make lots of friends, and to keep them regularly informed of what you are doing so that they can pray for you and feel part of what you are doing, becoming your supporters in more than one sense of the word. From time to time, some of our friends will come with us on the big street campaigns in Europe during the summer, which they really enjoy, and which gives them first-hand experience of the super things that happen.

In the next chapter, I shall explain how evangelism becomes a truly effective ministry.

FIVE

Evangelism that Really Works

“The Preacher ... imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many sayings. The Preacher searched to find just the right words and what he wrote was upright and true. The words are like goads, the collected sayings like firmly-driven nails ... given by one Shepherd.” Ecclesiastes 12:9.

If we are to take the guidance of Scripture, the central feature of Biblical evangelism is to proclaim the Message. Modernists, who desire to escape the responsibility of preaching to the lost, who will not necessarily react in the same way as a nice tame church congregation, would have us think otherwise. Peter Gilbert in his book “Radical Evangelism” says, “Whilst there is a place for other forms of evangelism, the development of authentic friendship remains the centrepiece of any coherent evangelistic strategy.” Friendship evangelism is certainly the centrepiece of courses on evangelism offered in Bible colleges, etc; but unfortunately, neither Jesus nor Paul would agree with this position. Friendship evangelism has been the almost exclusive response of Christians to the Great Commission for many years with the inevitable result that our churches are full of friends who have never understood or responded to the Gospel. The wonderful success of the Alpha course demonstrates conclusively that very large numbers of churchgoers had never before understood or had the opportunity to respond to the Gospel.

People who have very little experience and possibly no training in the ministry of the evangelist courageously aspire to write books on the subject. These cause considerable amusement. I feel rather like J. D. M. Derrett, the Jewish legal scholar, who writes most entertainingly about Christian theologians making huge assumptions and building great arguments often without any real understanding of what Jesus was talking about or what was going on.

John Clarke wrote a book of the same title as this chapter, described by Gavin Reid (who ought to know better!) as “a classic amongst books on this subject”. It is indeed a classic, but not in the way he proposes. John very honestly in his introduction admits to his complete failure as an evangelist, and goes on to outline ways in which people can be drawn

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into church and have the opportunity to become real Christians. He offers all sorts of creative ideas such as flower shows, the blessing of pets, anything to get people into the building. Unfortunately getting them into the building doesn't achieve much. In street logic, going into a greenhouse doesn't make you a tomato. His ideas are driven by his research, which showed that only 2% of his congregation actually found Christ through Billy Graham and 98% through being brought into the Church fellowship by family or friends. What he doesn't understand is that he is looking at a "Catch 22" situation: evangelistic missions/crusades, which very rarely take place - maybe once in 15-20 years, do of course have less effect than what happens in church every week.

The problem with evangelistic crusades is that few non-Christians attend, Billy Graham having been vastly more effective in attracting interest among non-Christians than any other major evangelist. Yet I was interested to see, while assisting with the 1987 relays in New Brighton near Birkenhead, that of the 1,000 in the cinema auditorium watching the broadcast, only 7 or 8 were not from one of the local churches. (On each of the four evenings, the presenter at the microphone would ask for a show of hands.)

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Very few people from Bristol who were not church-goers attended the crusade meetings at Ashton Gate stadium; we actually reached many more non-Christians with the Gospel going round the local schools with members of the Billy Graham team than attended the actual crusade meetings. Every afternoon hundreds of coaches pulled into Ashton Gate from all over the South West, mainly full of people from church congregations. The large number of responses was in the main from existing churchgoers or those on the fringes of church life, but very little new ground was broken. The recent Luis Palau campaign in Bristol attracted about 8,000-9,000 young people in total over 4 nights, many of them coming only on the Friday night to hear Sir Cliff Richard who was absolutely super. This represents the equivalent of one good normal week's worth of ministry by the Bristol OAC Christian education team, at no cost to the churches. The £50,000 that the Palau mission cost could have funded five full-time, properly trained schools workers for a whole year to reach vastly greater numbers far more effectively - for all the reasons set out below. The most charitable reason that one can come up with for this never happening must be profound ignorance of the nature of Christian ministry - which I hope this book will do something to address.

Christian road shows of various kinds passing through Bristol also secure support from our local churches, which would be more wisely directed towards on-going local ministries that actually reach people on a regular basis. Great national advertising campaigns like "Jesus In Me" (J.I.M.) and "Minus to Plus" attract vast amounts of Christian funding and result in the finances of local evangelists never quite recovering from the impact.

Evangelism that really works has three main characteristics:

1. Effective evangelism is RELATIONAL in that even in unstructured situations like street preaching you are building relationships with individuals who come to listen. Over the years, our regular Wednesday lunchtime meetings outside the Pump Rooms in Bath would attract office workers who would come and listen while they ate their sandwiches. Tony came every week and we were able to share a lot with him. An executive, wearing a very smart suit, he had the misfortune of an over-zealous Christian wife who had apparently been lecturing him. Exciting experiences made our meetings memorable for people. One occasion, I remember

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preaching to a crowd of about 60, when a drunken South African gentleman came round the corner shouting incoherent obscenities about black people. Here was I in the process of presenting the Cross (it is interesting how often disturbances will arise at this point in a presentation in the open air) with this guy standing in the middle of the crowd making it very difficult for people to hear. Just then, the very largest young policeman I have ever seen in my life appeared. He asked quietly "Having a spot of bother, Sir?" to which I replied, "Yes, can you get rid of him for me?" He strolled quietly over to the drunk, put an arm round his shoulder, and marched off round the corner with him. As they disappeared, I noticed through the corner of my eye that the drunk's feet were well off the ground. Many people we spoke to remarked on the incident and in fact, my "congregation" of regulars were still chatting about it several Wednesdays later. I went round to the Police Station to say thank you and nobody there could recall ever having seen a police officer of that description. Was he an angel? God has been so wonderful to us. In fact, demonic activity is rampant in Bath and on several occasions people have leapt vertically into the air, screaming, when I have challenged people to turn to Christ and away from their sin. Roy, the splendid retired brother from the Elim church, was always there to help - and Charles Stammers often came too from the University. Roy in fact was out there every day and remembers many memorable occasions like that.

In unstructured situations such as street preaching, the genius of OAC is to achieve what no other Society has done, which is to provide us with transferable skills that others can learn fairly easily, giving us a framework within which we can minister reasonably comfortably on the street.

In structured situations such as school assemblies and classes where we are not evangelising but teaching, we are building relationships with large groups - in which each person considers they know us individually. With something over 700 schools on our list in the West Country, and others slightly further out, we are ministering to far larger congregations than the local fellowships and in each case, the individuals involved are making exciting discoveries about faith, and their own personal spiritual journeys. The huge number of on-going relationships established over the

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last 25 years (in many cases we are unofficial Chaplains to the school) means that the Christian church has a friendly face to almost all these youngsters. I remain of the opinion that schoolteachers are working far more effectively for the church of tomorrow than local pastors.

2. Effective evangelism is LOCAL. The Anglican concept of the parish ministry (though now sadly breaking down due to lack of manpower and the unimaginative inability to mobilise what they call the laity) is an essential element of bridge-building amongst the unchurched. People really do appreciate seeing faces they recognise. We become a sort of security to them and the message we preach becomes much more acceptable than it would be from a total stranger on a "mission". In my view, this is one of the reasons why missions - though a good exercise for the fellowship - are not necessarily very effective in terms of converts. Also, people rarely become Christians at a single meeting: there is usually some sort of background, and if the local evangelist is part of that background, this is a great advantage.

A local ministry also has the advantage that much greater care can be taken to reach every section of the community. For example, all the old people's homes desperately require friends from the neighbourhood outreach team for regular visits to relieve the appalling boredom and loneliness that elderly residents often endure. This ministry alone requires properly trained people who are prepared to spend time listening and it has been one of our greatest joys to meet some truly wonderful old people. One of these was a remarkable lady, Peggy Spencer Palmer, who had been accompanist to La Marechale in the early days of the Salvation Army's forays into France. "La Marechale" was the daughter of William Booth, whose ministry there began by preaching in Paris bars and cafes at great personal risk. Gladstone, the Prime Minister, described her as the most brilliant young woman in England. Peggy had been the best friend at school of a young woman whose father had been Chaplain on the Titanic, and who had led many to Christ during the disaster, sacrificing his own life to ensure that others had a place in a lifeboat. Experiences like this have confirmed our belief that sitting in church for an hour a week talking about it all simply is not sufficient.

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3. Effective evangelism is LONG TERM. In the United States where Baptist ministers are usually under the control of a strongly entrenched local Eldership, survival rate for a Pastor is about 18 months. The **Salvation Army** has the extraordinary policy of moving their officers every three years - so that they move just as they are becoming most effective. Gerhard Weiss, the Major responsible for the Vienna Corps, is hoping to be allowed to stay for at least ten years, and he is certainly being highly successful in building a really effective street ministry team. The same applies to all evangelists who successfully build a ministry that stands on its own feet as an effective bridge for the local churches into their communities.

Local churches tend to be hamstrung by their own problems. Co-operation between fellowships is limited by on-going political rivalry, as the body of believers in Bristol slowly shifts from one church to another. Because churches are not generally involved in much evangelistic activity of any kind, growth tends to be by transfer. As the local evangelistic mission, we are fortunately spared the unhappiness this often brings.

Several of our workers are housewives who have been involved in Christian education locally and have been with us for over 17 years. Occasionally one or two will represent OAC heading up training seminars in Africa, Albania, Slovakia and as far away as Hawaii! They are achieving a level of competence that marks them out as the finest professionals in the world in this field. Their long-term relationship with individual schools has built a level of trust, which allows even Head Teachers to unburden their problems and troubles. Staff will sometimes want counselling as well. Housewives are often academically excellent and naturally gifted for work amongst children, and a truly wonderful advertisement for the Christian Church. Sadly, not one of those who work in this ministry in Bristol is supported by their fellowships more than by a nominal amount. Last time Pauline came back from Uganda, neither her church nor their Missions Committee were interested enough to ask to hear her Report or see her slides - but most of her local schools were keen to do so.

Two Secondary Schools expressed an interest in sending teams of VI Formers led by their teachers on a mini-bus mission to Kosova,

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to help with the re-building of the shattered homes of “our” refugees. They also wanted to help the widows re-establish their farms. In the event the situation was still too dangerous to allow them to go, so one of the teams went instead to work with a Christian project in Soweto near Johannesburg. We were unable to elicit church assistance or Tear Fund help for projects like this.... though several people were happy to “send a hen”...

The Apostolic Message as set out in the Gospel of Mark is the way we are told Peter habitually spoke about Jesus. Without using irrelevant Greek words or obscure theological terms, “The Gospel” presentations made by the Apostles included the following elements. Paul, particularly, in Galatians 1:8 is specific in his requirement that the Church preach no other message. Sociologically influenced variations on the Christian message directed towards making the Church “popular” do not produce believers. Those who have never been involved in the public preaching of the Gospel to outsiders, 100% of whom have probably never heard it before, cannot possibly grasp the sheer stature and power of this most remarkable of all messages.

It must ALWAYS include:-

1. Jesus Christ, the Messiah, has come. It is fundamental to an effective presentation of the Gospel that the preacher knows how to talk about the Lord. While any word picture or description of him will always be inadequate, he does nevertheless become real to people principally through preaching - or by reading the Gospels, which few people do.

He has died on the cross for our sins. The Gospel accounts of the Passion draw striking parallels with the Old Testament idea of atonement and the ritual surrounding the sacrifice of the Red Heifer. Clearly intended as an account primarily for a Jewish audience, the whole idea of God being crucified was a contradiction in terms, to Gentile listeners. To them a god was a glorious figure with stunning victories to his credit as an essential authenticating feature of the story.

In a world in which sin isn't sin any more, the preaching of the Cross as a life and death issue for people today presents a tremendous

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challenge. Truth is not self-evident to people - they are taught that truth is whatever is true for them.

2. God has raised him from the dead. The historic accounts of the Resurrection have never been clearly presented to me at any church service I have ever attended in the last 49 years. It was not until theological college that I was encouraged to study Frank Morrison's superb book "Who Moved The Stone?" Also a lawyer, I think he must have been very like Nicky Gumbel in his ability to present events clearly and well.

In Secondary Schools, I have often been asked to produce materials illustrating the Resurrection and to give an account of what actually took place. On one occasion, it was for 37,000 sitting in a congregation in West Africa. The preacher must be able to present a lucid account of this event firmly anchored in Scripture. He must also be able to unpack some of the immense significance the Resurrection has for believers today. Paul sets out a wonderful account in Ephesians, Chapter 1.

To any group of listeners it is essential also to draw on some of the accounts and testimonies of the powerful way the risen Lord affects many people's lives today. Whole societies are changing in some areas of Central and Eastern Europe as the emergent national churches are established. These stories inspire young people in particular to think of the Christian church as a truly significant agency of which they want to be part.

3. Therefore, we should repent of our sin. It is most important that people are helped to understand what sin is, in terms of a life lived without regard to God. Sins (plural) flow from such a life. This step of turning to Christ is like a legal contract, the fulfilment of which, on our side, will take time. Becoming changed or "holy" is called sanctification. This flows from our determination, with God's help, to lead a new life, and the powerful work of the Holy Spirit enabling us to do so. Some Christians are more sanctified than others! In my experience, many missionaries working overseas do not understand the decision to follow Christ as the significant event that Jesus taught it to be. They look for sanctification as the only yardstick and may require a new convert who is, say, alcoholic and leading an immoral life, to have his life in order by next weekend. That kind of message

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reinforces despair and is an abrogation of the gentle way the Holy Spirit deals with people. Jesus called for repentance everywhere he went, so did St. Paul. It has always characterised the effective preaching of the Gospel and is the essential requirement for all those who wish to join the church. Repentance should be presented as something much more profound than mere regret: it involves a 180-degree change of mind, involving a real desire for a changed life. Baptism is the outward sign of the inward truth.

4. And we should believe in him. This word “believe” is misleading and refers to a lot more than intellectual assent. It is an action word implying that our belief in Christ shall be the motivating factor in our everyday lives. It is our lives becoming an outward expression of his goodness. There are of course many very obvious ways that the life of a Christian becomes different, in countries where Christian ethics are not the way of life for the local community. In most Western countries, it can be very difficult to tell who is a Christian and who is not, as most people have very reasonable and law-abiding behaviour patterns. However, believers do need to find their way in discovering God’s purpose for their lives: one of the very significant ways in which missionary churches differ from those at home is that the Christians are expected to play a much more active role in the work of the church in the community.

Evangelism that really works involves the preaching/teaching of all these elements.

As can be imagined, this is a tremendous challenge, using methods pioneered by the great Bible figures to bring people back to God in their day. The Lord used beautifully constructed rabbinical poetry forms to present stories which addressed issues that were really important to people. (Kenneth Bailey’s book “Jesus, Poet and Peasant, and Through Peasant Eyes” published by Eerdmans, is an excellent resource.) “Should a woman caught in adultery be stoned?” There were huge misgivings at the time about the Mosaic Law which, as Jesus pointed out, were due entirely to the Pharisees’ wrong-headed approach.

- “Who owns treasure found in a field?”
- “Can it be possible that God really does love sinners?”
- “Is repentance really all that is required for a notorious sinner to be accepted by God?”

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(Judaism at that time required 7 years of compliance with rabbinical observances for a repentant person to be accepted in the synagogue.) For a Rabbi to eat with a sinner implied acceptance of that person by God; so how could Jesus eat with them? His actions, not just his words, demonstrated that a decision based on real repentance was the principal requirement for a person's salvation. This even applied to such a notorious undesirable as Zacchaeus! Using issues that were familiar and of real interest to people, Jesus taught them all they needed to know to become members of God's family. Those who follow Jesus in his street ministry today must use his methods to teach a crowd of interested people all about the way of salvation - and indeed their need for salvation. This requires intensive preparation and training of the evangelist. The OAC training programme, which is the best that I have seen, is set out at the end of this book.

The evangelist really must involve himself in serious Biblical study and reflection if he is ever to be a useful communicator able to educate the lost who know nothing about God. I first became acutely aware of the truth of Hosea's statement "There is no knowledge of God in the land" (Hosea 6:6) when a young man came up to me after an open air meeting in Bristol years ago, apparently honestly believing that Jesus was a South American footballer. Teaching young people in schools has greatly improved our ability in the open air to include really good information in our evangelistic messages. Listening to some of our leading evangelists, I have been astonished at the lack of Bible knowledge some of them display. The lack of confidence that pastor/teachers have in the ministry of the evangelist often shows itself in the form of words they use - such as "I am not after decisions, I make disciples". This is a particularly silly statement since you can't have one without the other. Some feel you can "grow into" salvation through long-term membership of the local church and I think many of the Christians in church today have done precisely that - the problem with this kind of approach is that the vast majority of people never come to the church. "Go to church or go to hell" really is not a Biblical option - quite the contrary!

Some put their trust in programmes - and there are many programmes on offer claiming to be a sure-fire route to success - I get the impression some of these people think that their methods are a lot more effective than the Lord's. I sometimes feel like responding along

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the lines “What a pity the Lord didn’t know what we know today.” The Lord and the Apostles seem to have been successful in reaching their world in less than 20 years. With all our modern communication facilities and ease of travel, we should now get started with a vision that matches the harvest ... as follows:-

Evangelism that really works mobilises the Lord’s people.

Church members require an outlet for their faith. Many long deeply to be used by God in a significant way. Anni and I were invited to a Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship International meeting where I was to share testimony of the wonderful things I had seen God do. At the end of these dinner parties, it is usual for the speaker to share his experiences and to offer what they call “ministry”, when people can receive the laying-on of hands and prayer for specific needs, generally healing. However, on this occasion nobody came forward at all. The President was about to call the evening to an end, when I felt compelled to ask if any of them wanted to know how God wanted to use them in his work - and maybe discover what specific job he had for them to do. Most of the people in the room flooded forward for prayer. I closed my eyes, held out my hands and prayed what I hoped was a suitable prayer for each one. On hearing a series of muffled thuds, I looked up and was astonished to see most of them lying peacefully flat on the floor! (In charismatic circles, this is known as being “slain in the Spirit” and apparently those who experience it find it a wonderful blessing. As an Anglican, I was a bit surprised to find it happening under my ministry!).

Everywhere I go, people come up to me and say, “I want to be involved in your kind of ministry; I want my life to be significant for the Kingdom of God.” Sadly, church ministries are so stereotyped now that it’s almost impossible to recover some sort of Scriptural pattern in which people can be free to serve, be recognised and valued.

One early experience was preaching in a church in Bath, to be met at the door by a very smart gentleman. He showed me into the church and eventually was handing out the hymn books to people coming in. He looked exceptionally bored with this job. At the end of the service, he told me how much he had enjoyed the message, and how he too would have liked to play a more active role in the church’s ministry over the last 30 years he had been a member there. He turned out to be

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Chairman of Britain's fourth largest industrial conglomerate with astonishing abilities. I think I could have found him a better job to do....

We must repent of this quite disgraceful inability or unwillingness to release people for Christian service.

Ken Kerton was for many years a faithful Sidesman in his local fellowship. It was not until an evangelist friend invited him to go along to pray for him while he visited some Romany people, that Ken realised he had a ministry himself to those very same families, where his visits are valued to this day. Many of them have become vibrant Christians.

Effective evangelism produces results.

This was brought home to me very powerfully when I started training the students at the Portuguese Bible Institute near Lisbon; after the lecture programme in the day we would visit a local church in a suburb of Lisbon and go out with various church members on to the streets. The pastor, an American missionary, acted as a wonderful translator - according to the students, very fast and accurate - but nobody was coming forward at the end of the presentations to discuss what they had heard. This went on for 2-3 days, we would get very good crowds who would listen intently, and they would all turn and walk away. Very surprised, I began questioning my translator who, it transpired, had not included all I had said about the Resurrection, and had not put a personal challenge to the listeners as individuals for any kind of response. He said "Korky, on the mission field we don't do that sort of thing. We lead people to faith gently. We want the local church to be seeker-friendly so we don't actually preach the whole Gospel message straight away."

He said, "I told them where our church is and where they can come if they want to hear more." As you can imagine, I was extremely disappointed and instructed him to translate me word for word next time round: we were inundated with responses and he was to spend over an hour and a half himself with the local Doctor's wife, someone he had been hoping to meet for 17 years.

That Saturday, on the sea front, not being permitted to preach on the beach (which I felt would be a pretty insensitive thing to do anyway) I took my by now rather chastened missionary and the other students,

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and set up my sketch-board along the side of a very long ice cream queue on the promenade. I can produce a message in four or five minutes using cartoons, which are quick and bright and fun - but which nevertheless help to explain the way of salvation. The only response we got from the fortunately slow-moving queue was from an extremely tubby young man I took to be about 18 years old, who laughed so much his whole body shook! I was increasingly concerned about the security of his swimming shorts, as the "landslide" appeared to be pushing them down; he told us he thought it was about the silliest message he had heard in his life.

A year later, I was based on the same missionary's church for another week-long campaign. At the very first meeting we held, we were in their local shopping centre, which happened to be adjacent to the main gates of the Benfica Football Club.

We set up the sketch-board and I positioned the team in the usual way, painted the yellow border round the edge of my board, and a tornado arrived in the form of Jorj - the young Portuguese of the previous year who had had such a good belly laugh. He confessed he had not been able to stop thinking about what he had heard that day in the ice cream queue. He had started reading his Bible, and desperately wanted one of us to pray with him as he had decided to receive Christ himself. He had had no further contact with Christians, it was simply the power of God through the preaching of the Gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit convicting and convincing him of his need to start again in Christ. Some of these experiences can be very moving.

On Friday evenings, Ken Barrett and his wife Alison used to go with their two children to a dormitory suburb to the south of Madrid, where there was a square with a large number of teenagers meeting by the fountain, drinking Cokes and having a good time together. Rows of old people would sit on benches all around and there were palm trees and flowerbeds, and the lovely old Spanish buildings - it was a lovely place to be on a summer's evening, and full of people. Ken and Alison, by now fluent in Spanish, would set up their sketch-board and do Bible stories and all kinds of messages - some entertaining and funny, others challenging and serious. The young people would gather round and listen, and chat to them afterwards. It was what God had called them to do some years before in Bristol and a long and difficult path had led them to Madrid bringing light and life to this little community. I only ever

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went to see them in action there once, but the evening I went, before we could put up the sketch-board and get started (I wanted to get some good slides of Ken preaching to large crowds of people) he and Alison were completely swamped with young people wanting to talk to them about the Lord. Spanish teenagers have a terrific respect for God because of their Roman Catholic background, and are particularly rewarding to talk to.

Situations like that have in the past led to small fellowships developing. A priest at Malaga Cathedral, who was a believer, collected a group of young people around him, but was fired by the Bishop for holding evangelical views. He and his little group subsequently met under a tree in the park and eventually became a fellowship of over 100.

The Church Growth movement produced many books about evangelism identifying the various elements which tend towards greater effectiveness (church growth is of course an excellent marketing term if you want to sell something to churches). C. Peter Wagner, a Senior Professor at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, writes excellent and very well systematised books on the subject and the movement as a whole has been very influential in church circles over the last twenty years. He identifies what he calls “P3” evangelism as being the most effective. The three “P’s” are as follows:

P1 = PRESENCE

This denotes the evangelistic effect of living a Christian life in an alien society, performing acts of Christian love and goodwill and generally being concerned about injustice etc. In years past, pioneer missionaries working in very difficult societies characterised by religious fanaticism of one sort or another have found this the wisest approach - as it is today in places like Afghanistan.

P2 = PROCLAMATION

The public dissemination of the Christian message by various means - even including public preaching! Professor Wagner says the problem is that follow-up cannot take place and therefore this form of evangelism is largely ineffective.

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P3 = PERSUASION

Persuasion evangelism, he says, goes “one step further” - seeing the only satisfactory outcome of evangelism to be the convert becoming a disciple of Jesus and a faithful member of a local church.

This dismissive attitude to proclamation evangelism in general, and open air evangelism in particular, seems to be a distinguishing feature of many modern writers like Peter Wagner - rather in the way that the cults are anti-Trinitarian. As far as I am aware, none of these people have any formal training in this form of evangelism, or much in the way of experience of it. Historically, the public preaching of the Gospel has been the major element in every revival: it was the major strategy adopted by our Lord and the Apostles and the means by which the Christian Church became a worldwide movement. My own experience is that public preaching produces more live contacts susceptible to effective follow-up than any other form of evangelism. It is unfortunate that so many academics seem to be willing to step outside their own particular field of expertise to make tendentious, inaccurate and misleading statements about ministries of which they know little.

The Church Growth movement advocates P3 evangelism based on local meetings to which non-Christians can be persuaded to come to hear the Gospel in a setting where personal contact can be securely established. It is a well thought-out processing package where certain procedures are followed with a product in view - a bit like a canning factory. Nothing is really left to chance and whether or not the Holy Spirit is there, things are as watertight as possible - there is nothing wrong this approach as such, in that it does produce people who go to church - nevertheless they may not have been affected by the work of the Holy Spirit. The biggest disadvantage of the Church Growth approach is that it is hopelessly inadequate to deal with the task of winning a generation for the Kingdom of God. Neat and tidy little ministries, which don't touch the lives of many people and whose objective is principally to win individuals mainly through personal evangelism, simply fail to have an impact on the community as a whole.

The huge numbers of people Jesus preached to, meant that personal contact was minimal - although of course he was able to feed them all once or twice. St. Paul, too, while his initial strategy was to preach to his

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own people in the local synagogues persuading them that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, nevertheless spent most of his time subsequently in public preaching daily in the markets. The Church Growth movement would describe Jesus, St. Paul, and most of the Apostles, as “hit and run” evangelists!

In Old Testament times, Jonah’s successful ministry to Nineveh only lasted three days. At theological college, I discovered this was one of the reasons some scholars relegate the Jonah ministry to the realms of myth. However, as a street preacher myself I am well aware it would have been a perfectly straightforward task to reach a city the size of Nineveh in three days. This is really the problem of theorists - a lot of the time they fail to be vindicated by experience.

The Church Growth people regard an evangelist as a reaper and organise meetings where an evangelist can come and speak to their church fellowship in the hope that church members will find faith. As most church members have in fact made their decision one way or the other, it’s a very, very difficult situation for an evangelist to succeed in - most of his audience having decided to become Christians up to a point - beyond which they are not prepared to go.

However, in public preaching to crowds, some of the seed falls on very good ground - as explained in the parable. There will be those who have maybe never understood the Christian message before, and who will want to step out in faith as a disciple of Jesus.

Evangelism that really works can only take place through effective proclamation of the Gospel to those who need to hear.

From time to time, I come into contact with people in Bristol and further afield who heard the Gospel years earlier, either at an open air meeting or through our work in school, whose lives have been transformed by Christ as a result - but who never professed conversion at the time. An 8 yr. old girl sitting at the back of the very first school assembly I ever did in Bristol made her decision to invite Jesus to be her Lord and Saviour. I had not made an appeal for a decision at all, having merely presented the story of Zacchaeus on the sketch-board. I met up with her a couple of years ago in Vienna where she is now a missionary. A young man in a hardware store in Bristol had heard the Gospel in the open air, and remembered speaking with Neil Simpson afterwards (I

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know it was Neil as he described a man with red hair, yellow shirt and purple trousers!). He is now Youth Leader at his local church in Bishopston, a Bristol suburb. A girl, who had lost her faith in her thirties, had moved to Bristol, walking through the shopping precinct, heard the Gospel: she decided to recommit her life to Christ. We linked her up with Christ Church where Alison became a House Group leader. I could list many more.

Evangelism that really works is entirely dependent on the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in a person's life, not a canning factory process. This is not to say that we do not do everything we can to make personal contact with individuals and to be available for them as they take their early steps as members of God's family. However, in England, people are very private, and like to make these big decisions on their own when they have had time to think about it - and are often loath to part with their name and address nowadays.

Evangelism that really works usually takes place in situations where the organ is not playing in the background and there may even be a certain amount of commotion. I remember very well an extraordinary situation where the Christian Union could not make any sort of impact at all with their bookstall on Freshers' day at the University.

So they asked me, rather courageously some felt, to come along and try a Gospel presentation in the middle of the hubbub. Being relatively inexperienced at the time I took my sketch-board along and set up on the main staircase where I could be seen from all 4 floors of the Students' Union building; David W., a young Baptist Minister, kindly agreed to hold the board up for me to balance so that I could paint and preach. I got well into the message and many students were leaning over the balconies listening; there was quite a large crowd coming up the stairs, and not being able to get past but being pleasant people, they stood and listened.

There was another large group wanting to come down the stairs standing behind my sketch-board. There was a certain amount of good-humoured barracking but the security people couldn't get to me because of the crowd. A humourist on the top floor emptied a waste paper basket on me, the contents of which floated away rather ineffectively. They then had the splendid idea of filling it up with water, tipping it over the balcony, missing me and absolutely soaking the

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people coming down the stairs! BUT - I was able to complete a presentation of the Gospel to this group, which was in fact heard and appreciated by most of those present. Months later I was to discover from the Navigators representative, who spoke to a number of the listeners, that three young men had made a commitment to Christ. Strangely, David, who had played an important part in the whole proceedings, his face red with enthusiasm, forever afterwards crossed to the other side of the road whenever he saw me coming!

SIX

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The Christian Church underwent a huge sea change in the 4th and 5th Centuries which goes a great way to explaining why it is the way it is today. Initially a grass roots movement saw Jesus as Lord and felt it was imperative to preach the Gospel to the lost before the End came, which was expected quite soon. The preaching of the Gospel and the building of the Kingdom was a life and death issue that demanded total commitment from everyone. Joining the church was joining a team. It involved ghastly persecutions, secret meetings, non-comprehension by the vast majority of people, and the preaching of a message very hard for people to accept. The total commitment of each one in all the various ministries they undertook was to bring the Christian church close to becoming the faith of the Empire by 96 AD and indeed St. Paul was able to say much earlier that the Gospel had even reached the fringes of the Royal family in Rome.

By the early years of the 4th Century under Constantine, Christianity was to become the official religion of the Empire. While this must have seemed a great victory to the believers, and a great relief to be free of persecution, the Church had now become an instrument of the State. The prodigious diversity of Christian beliefs and practice had to be brought under the unifying influence of the State and the Bishop in Rome was given the task. This meant that only employees appointed by the central authority of the Church were allowed to head up local church communities and teach. Later, the law made it an offence subject to severe penalties to engage in Christian ministry without the authority of the Church. The awful persecutions of believers who had the temerity to preach the Gospel in the face of the Church's widespread nominalism, led ultimately to the **Inquisition**. Even in England, the clergy sought out and imprisoned **Anabaptists** and other evangelicals in the last 250 years or so.

What had happened was that the Christian Church had become an Institution: the very big difference in activities and attitudes as compared with those we read about in the New Testament, become much more understandable. The whole institution of ordination in the Church of England flows from this Roman concept of succession, originally to provide authentication for official Church appointments.

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This was claimed by Luther to be a fraud. At theological college I was appalled by the awful battles, massacres, and indeed plainly evil acts perpetrated by those who felt their positions were under threat. The terrible things that happened to that exemplary group, the Puritans, were often alluded to by Dr. J. I. Packer in his lectures to us.

Often those who take the initiative in desiring to serve face considerable difficulties and even suspicion; David M. and David Cullimore, two young graduates and part time evangelists with OAC, attended an evangelical church in Bristol - at that time a really popular Brethren fellowship with an excellent leadership. They felt God wanted them to go and preach the Gospel in Paris for 3 months, so the Senior Elder (one of Britain's foremost Bible teachers) convened a meeting of the Missions Committee. One evening, the two Davids were ushered in before these worthies, Alan as Chairman, and two 80 yr. olds. The interview lasted about an hour, the vision was duly shared, and Alan asked a number of questions. After about 15 minutes, the two elderly gentlemen fell asleep and one appeared to be in imminent danger of falling off his chair. Towards the end of the meeting, the other was snoring quite audibly. The two Davids had to exercise enormous self-control to keep a straight face - however, nothing came of this meeting.

The lads went off to preach in Paris, and not having any financial backing, survived sleeping on a concrete floor in a church building and eating refuse from the street markets - which, fortunately, took place every day. Obviously, their preaching ministry was not valued by their fellowship. Often the Gospel appears not to be a significant aspect of church life.

If you want to be an evangelist, you will not have a well-worn path to follow. People assume you will want to lead crusades like Billy Graham but few succeed in this for long. Even a renowned and successful evangelist like **Eric Delve** found the pressures on himself and his family so great that he retired gracefully into the Anglican priesthood. International figures like Luis Palau do not find crusade evangelism particularly effective in Europe: in fact, it is a struggle to get a group of local churches to agree to host a crusade on any scale nowadays. However, the work of an evangelist can be extremely worthwhile as a long-term, regular, local ministry with impact on the lives of large numbers of people.

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Evangelism that really works uses transferable skills as part of its training programme to enable part time workers to play a significant part: some very fine young men and women coming through the part time programme, and enjoying success in the ministry as a result, go on to become full time evangelists/missionaries - but age doesn't really matter. After a Christian Caravanners' conference where I was speaker one evening, a retired vicar and his wife, Vernon and Stevie Ball, shared how they longed to go as missionaries but had been turned down by all the agencies. I was able to help with some suggestions, as they had already sold their home with a view to being more mobile, and that summer invited them on a team in northern Greece working in the towns and villages. Afterwards they went on to work very successfully as full time missionaries there for three years and made a splendid contribution both to church life and as evangelists amongst the Albanian refugees, often living in very difficult circumstances out in the countryside. On returning home, they became our schools workers in Oxfordshire and have some wonderful experiences to share with the children.

Transferable skills are an essential element in Christian work but not many people appear to understand this. Vernon and Stevie could not have functioned in Greece without the necessary skills needed by the local fellowship, nor could they have pioneered their really excellent schools ministry without learning how to do the job properly from professionals. It is astounding to me how even Christian organisations will commission workers for schools ministry with no practical training. Church pastors/ managers seem to think evangelism is something you just do. You appoint somebody, pay them a salary, they will tell people about Jesus, and that's it. The consequence is that the Department of Education guidelines are broken, teaching staff are offended, and the school is closed to further visits from Christian "outside" speakers. Enormous damage has been caused in Bristol by this sort of approach.

Local evangelism requires leadership and co-ordination. For many years, OAC has been the only evangelism/missions agency offering this in the South West on any scale. A shared vision is a very strong basis for fellowship. The team fellowship prayer meeting and meal each week in our home, to which all involved in evangelism are invited, gives the recognition and encouragement needed by people involved in this front-line work. Ideas, difficulties, inspiration and "being part of a large team"

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mean successes become the shared property of the group. This combats the feeling of discouragement that can beset someone working in a difficult area.

For most evangelists who succeed in establishing a regular full time ministry in the community, management of their programme can be a real problem. Many will not have served an apprenticeship nor had the benefit of any formal training, and their life becomes a series of more-or-less similar preaching opportunities, which may not appear to them actually to lead to a recognisable “end product”. It is essential to have aims and objectives set for each week, each month, each year or 5 years, so that they can sit down periodically and tick off ACHIEVEMENTS in their diaries. This leads to an appreciation of how God is using them and the direction their ministry is taking. Being part of a team or an organisation involved in similar work is terribly important for the same reasons. Networking in this way has given Anni and me the satisfaction of keeping in contact with dozens of our trainees in many different countries, and sharing the joys of their achievements as well as encouraging them with our prayers when things seem to be hard.

Prayer backing is essential for the work. We seem to have been unsuccessful over the last 25 years in getting much prayer support from the churches in Bristol - just one or two phone us for up to date prayer requests - yet there are over 400 churches in the area. What happens to our prayer letters and news bulletins? Presumably, they are put in the bin. It has become increasingly apparent that prayer letters from those operating in the front lines are no longer an effective means of communication. Many people will express astonishment on hearing about our work, or that we have been doing assemblies in their local schools for years, yet we know that our letters have been sent regularly to their church secretary and/or to a “keen” member of the congregation.

At his home church in Plymouth, where Mike Getley was based for many years as an OAC Staff Evangelist, his ministry was never mentioned to the fellowship - in fact there were about twenty there who had become Christians as a result of Mike’s street ministry. His Christian assembly programme in about 65 local primary schools reached about 220 children each morning. That is far more in terms of sheer numbers than all the churches in Plymouth have ever had in

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Sunday school! Furthermore, Mike had become by then an extremely professional worker for whom Christian leaders in the city had a great respect. My niece and her husband attended the church for 5 years and had no idea that Mike was part of that fellowship. His ministry was never mentioned for prayer or news. The church did not support him and his financial situation was very difficult though we did what we could to help. As a result of his ministry in Spain, leading teams on open air missions at Easter, he was very well known in Madrid - he was always the first to be welcomed. His Pentecostal church elders clearly had no interest whatever in reaching either Madrid or Plymouth with the Gospel and much of their growth came through transfer from other churches. They were not able to offer him support as an evangelist - they were however able to spend £8,000 on chairs for the minor hall. Eventually, Mike was recruited as a Pastoral Assistant, and went on to become pastor of an Elim Church in the North. Mike is a very fine Christian minister of enormous experience and maturity and it seems a great pity that such a man cannot be supported other than as an employee of the Corporation.

John and Nicky Kingston were keen supporters of our work in the early days; they joined a large Anglican church in Bristol and became isolated from us through their involvement in various church activities and new loyalties to the leadership there. This eventually resulted in their losing touch with us completely: only three years later, I was to meet Nicky in the street, and she wanted to know whether we were still in Christian work.

Most fellowships seem to be possessive to the point of isolating their congregation from what God is doing in the real world. My own experience was that when I got to Bible college after 22 years in the Anglican church, I knew nothing at all about Church history, what Christian missions there were, had never even heard of the Christian Brethren! I had been led to believe that the Anglican church was pretty well all there was, of any significance.

This attitude is not confined to England. My daughter Anne was attending a charismatic fellowship in Tauranga, New Zealand, when news broke about the Kosovar refugee crisis in 1998. She telephoned the pastor to ask for permission to share the need for prayer and possibly financial help for her friends Ian and Caralee, who were coping with the influx of several thousand refugees to feed. But he was

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adamant that on no account must she do so: he “had other plans for the fellowship”; so the people in that fellowship are not allowed to choose what their priorities are or even to pray about them. Keeping the congregation in ignorance of certain things seems to play a significant part in management tactics of many local churches. This can only hinder the work of the Holy Spirit as he seeks to lead and guide.

Factors that assisted the growth of the Early Church

- Mostly, there was peace in the world.
- Most people could understand Greek.
- The road system facilitated travel, which was reasonably safe in groups.
- The old religions and worship practices they involved did not satisfy thinking people.
- There was widespread respect for the ethical monotheism of Judaism.
- The geographical location of Palestine made it a crossroads for world travel.
- Preaching in the market places meant that merchants who became Christians then took the Gospel far and wide, so the middle classes were reached fairly effectively.

Factors that hindered the growth of the Early Church

- The Cross was a huge barrier in that the worship of someone who had been crucified was unacceptable particularly as gods were supposed to be winners.
- There was widespread religious confusion with all sorts of competing ideas, many of them fairly similar to the New Age ideas we see today.
- The public preaching of the Christians took place in population centres where they were susceptible to identification, arrest and imprisonment or worse.
- The very poor out in the countryside were never reached with the Gospel, as far as we can tell.
- In times of persecution, which were fairly frequent, meetings were held in secret often in catacombs under various cities. The

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catacombs in Rome are well known, but those in Syracuse extend for 10 sq. km.

- The practices involved in worship, particularly the celebration of Holy Communion, could easily give rise to misrepresentation and rumours that aroused disgust amongst the local population. It was sometimes alleged that cannibalism took place.

The fact that the Church grew so dramatically is a terrific testimony to the faithfulness of the believers who all worked so hard at such great risk to make Christ known so widely. I have produced a short analysis of the Apostolic ministry on a sheet of A4 (see Appendix) which sets out who was preaching, who the listeners were, what the result was, and where it was all taking place - beginning with Peter's preaching on the Day of Pentecost. I have always felt that he stood up on a number of different occasions to reach the numbers of people to produce 5,000 and then 3,000 converts.

I imagine him in the general area of the Temple courageously preaching possibly to crowds of 500 at a time, which is in my experience straightforward without loudspeakers. The very large numbers packing such a small area meant that many people would have heard the message who didn't necessarily intend to listen.

These early evangelists knew that they were sacrificing security, career, and sometimes even their lives, to the urgent call to bring the Good News to a needy world - that Christ, the Saviour, had come, died on the Cross for our sins, and rose from the dead. Their simple message, a call to repentance and faith, their total commitment, and their immediate availability to those who heard them, were all factors that made their ministry very effective indeed. Perhaps the greatest hindrance to the spread of Christianity today is that most of these factors are missing - indeed with 9,000 separate denominational groups in the world (according to David Watson) there seems to be some doubt about the precise nature of the message to be preached.

In many European countries, the established Church as an instrument of government led to church membership being the imperative call, rather than the acceptance of salvation by grace.

This led to a series of quasi Christian cultures with an intellectual religious framework in which Christ is largely unknown. The public

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preaching of the Gospel in many of these countries therefore inserts the central key to the jigsaw in people's minds and means that most ordinary people in, say, Roman Catholic or Orthodox countries, are very interested and very reachable: they want to hear how a personal relationship with Jesus can be established. Although opposition will arise from committed religionists and even religious fanatics, even these people will quieten down and listen and often their sincerity wins through as we establish personal conversations with them.

In a television age where on average people watch for hours each day, some say about 9 hours, statements by a British TV chat show host such as Ludovic Kennedy or Michael Buerck carry enormous weight. Their conversations with carefully selected humanists and liberals often allude to the out-dated nature of Christian belief in a modern world. The fact that so many Christian leaders do not themselves embrace traditional Biblical Christian faith also adds to the confusion in the minds of ordinary people. The man in the street is totally unaware that none of these people can really offer more than unqualified personal opinion. People who do know something about the issues - such as Dr. J. I. Packer, or Revd. John Stott - are carefully excluded from the debate presumably to allow sufficient leeway for fanciful ideas to be aired. The effect is that of a carefully organised propaganda campaign to discredit the Christian message.

As modern societies move through the post-Christian era into the anti-Christian era, all kinds of factors emerge. There is almost total antagonism towards the whole concept of sin. Right and wrong within the law appear to be perfectly acceptable - i.e. as long as you don't actually break the law, doing wrong to others is not considered sin any more; in fact it is regarded as clever and amusing. Programmes such as "Men Behaving Badly" and "Absolutely Fabulous" are highly subversive in that they portray immorality and immoral fantasies as fun comedy entertainment. Christians as portrayed in "The Vicar of Dibley" are a bunch of quaint idiots, and Vicars are usually written about as bumbling fools.

The total relaxation of the Sunday Trading laws has had a powerful impact on church attendance in the U.K. and this impact will undoubtedly increase. To most families today, Sunday seems to be a time to spend at the local shopping Mall, or watching videos at home with a beer. The very large numbers found in the Malls on Sunday

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mornings would seem to be an opportunity for the Christian church to provide some sort of Christian entertainment programme for the children, which would be very much appreciated by their parents.

It could also provide a means of making contact with the parents. However, the church is not equipped for the kinds of mobile ministries and all the new skills involved that such future outreach opportunities are going to demand.

The Christian Church is faced today with enormous opportunities for growth in its history. Worldwide communication is now instantaneous, you can reach the other side of the world in a day by air, and in Europe particularly, the old cities are full of millions of people available and open to hearing the Gospel. Travelling to different countries in Europe over the last 25 years, working with churches who have never before taken any serious steps to sharing their faith, the response of the crowds on the streets has been excellent.

Twelve years ago, Jim Reed (President of the Evangelists' Conference in Spain that year) and I took a sketch-board and Jim preached in Spanish in one of the smaller squares in Madrid. Jim was a very large man in his thirties with a delightful manner and an ability to make good contact with his listeners. In the crowd was a shortish guy in his twenties, who says he listened because he had never seen such a big man or painting on a sketch-board before. He came back to lunch with us, and joined the street team that week as a new Christian. He had trained as a mime artist in Rome, and was currently earning his living as a janitor in a Madrid hotel.

Farid Ernesto Lozada is a Columbian and joined Jim's church, living in their tiny flat with Jim's family. Four months later, Farid came back to England with us on the OAC bus. A tremendously vibrant and entertaining person, he had become a much appreciated part of our open air team; he had written a mime about a faithful worker called Manuel, who does everything right in his life. Farid would dramatise the daily routine of this man in a wildly expressive caricature, which the crowds really enjoyed. Manuel then dies, the ambulance takes him away, and he wakes up outside the gates of Heaven. The scene is then one of great pathos as his name cannot be found written in the Book of Life: the presentation ends abruptly with an absolutely huge voice from a member of the team standing behind the sketch-board, playing St.

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Peter, saying “WE DON’T KNOW YOU. GO AWAY!” At this point, the crowd was always absolutely thunderstruck that such a good man would not go to Heaven and the message of grace could then be powerfully presented by the preacher.

On arrival at Dover, I had no idea that Columbians could not be granted a visa for entering England other than in very exceptional circumstances. As we filed through Immigration, the officer stamped Farid’s passport “Entry Refused”. Not knowing what to do, I was advised that I could appeal against the decision. I appealed! Farid and I were ushered into an office where a Senior Immigration Officer met us. This gentleman should have been on leave that day but was substituting for a colleague who was taking part in a golf tournament: he said “Hallo, Korky! How long do you want him in for?” “Three and a half years, so he can complete the OAC training programme, please...” Peter said, “I don’t think there can be any problem with that,” and granted him a 4-year visa. I still have no idea how the Officer knew who I was ... but he certainly seemed to know of us.



Farid came to stay with my colleague Christopher Mathieson in Bristol, and we entered him for Trinity Theological College where he was given a great deal of help by both staff and students. He obtained an excellent Diploma and during the summer holidays, played a leading part in evangelising cities in **Spain** on our summer teams. Often at Easter, there will be 2-3 million people in the streets of Seville, Malaga and Cordoba for 4 days and Farid’s absolutely brilliant communication skills played a significant part in tens of thousands of people hearing

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the Gospel. Eventually he married America, sister in law of the pastor of the Spanish Church in London, and he and “Miss America” as he calls her returned to Bogota, joining the Worldteam church-planting team there. In about 18 months, he played a major part in establishing a new church with a membership of over 1,000. He trained many others in the skills of the public ministry of preaching the Gospel and went on to evangelise two cities in Venezuela.

Today Farid is involved in planting a church in Medellin, considered the most dangerous city in the world. His brother Fernando became a Christian on one of our summer campaigns in Spain, and was involved in the ministry to street children in his home city: he was killed on a street corner a few years ago. Farid is in constant danger from the drug barons who see evangelical Christianity as a threat. When he visited us in Bristol not long ago, he told us about a drug gang member who had become a Christian, and was then instructed by his bosses to fly a planeload of drugs to the north. He telephoned Farid in the middle of the night for help: Farid told him “Brother, I can’t help you - but I know someone who can - let’s pray!”

The plane was subsequently found to be faulty and the flight was unable to take place. Farid can tell of a dozen such instances where God has intervened, and points out that it is very important to share the Gospel with those in power in Colombia, as without change at the top, the society will never be free of such evil. He says we are quick to preach to the poor, but the rich need to hear as well. Farid’s story is a continuing saga illustrating the sovereignty of God at work in a person’s life. No fellowship ever displayed more than a very tenuous passing interest in him or his work but the solid commitment of people like Jim Reed and Christopher Mathieson gave him the encouragement to continue, no matter what the cost. More importantly, Farid found himself amongst many of the leading role models in the world in the field of evangelism.

Farid’s story illustrates vividly how the Holy Spirit works to over-rule quite insurmountable difficulties. Farid could have been classed as “unreachable” in terms of the normal restricted area of church ministry, but here he was brought into contact with people who knew just how to communicate with him.

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Every step of his future life consisted of a series of divine appointments that ultimately brought him to his present highly effective church-planting ministry in his own country.



To look back on this series of events, having been involved myself at every stage, I have come to appreciate that no organisational bureaucracy could possibly have achieved what God has done in Farid's life. The way in which seemingly insurmountable barriers were pushed aside, has taught me that difficulties we perceive as major problems are not barriers where God is concerned. A remarkable event in Jim Reed's life showed me the extent to which the Holy Spirit is in charge when we listen to him.

An old college associate of Jim's was being married in Lima, Peru. Jim - having arrived at the airport - had to catch a bus to a district the other side of Lima. Getting off the bus, he realised he was in totally the wrong place. Two Indians, sitting on the ground at the bus stop, re-directed him. They asked him where he was from, as his Spanish accent was not South American. Jim told them about his life in Madrid as a missionary: the old couple shared their concerns for their son, who was in Madrid with some cult, who wore saffron robes. Apparently, the lad had got into the drug culture, his parents had not heard from him for a long time, and they asked Jim to find him. Not wishing to explain to them how impossible a task that would be, Jim gave them a blessing and left.

A few weeks later, back in Madrid, Jim was on a hospital visit and, passing through a ward, saw an Indian lad with a strange haircut, lying in a bed. He went up to the guy, addressed him by his name, and offered to take him home. This was indeed the lost son. Jim picked him

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up and walked out with a very reluctant young man whom the hospital hadn't quite known what to do with next. Jim and his wife Marilyn nursed him back to health (in the tiny apartment where they lived with their four boys) and often spent nights in prayer dealing with the lad's demon possession. Jose Marie eventually became one of the church leaders in Moratalaz and has now returned to Peru as a missionary.

Jim Reed taught us all so much about missions. When he died at the age of 45, he had been instrumental in establishing 11 churches in the suburbs of Madrid. Always keen to encourage evangelism, he was the first to recognise the value of street preaching as a means of reaching Spain. He trained many others in the necessary skills, and had many wonderful stories of his experiences. He told me that on one occasion in the middle of one of his messages in a town up in the sierras, a wind carried his sketch-board 100 metres up into the sky: he said he had no idea his message was so powerful! He set up a factory to produce sketch-boards in Spain and sold 150 to his trainees. He loved working with the gypsy churches and visiting the gypsies, many of whom had been re-housed in municipal apartment blocks - often rather against their will.

We were both highly amused to see a donkey looking out of an 8th storey window and enjoyed the idea of it travelling up and down in the lift.

Jim Reed was one of the finest role models I have ever met. To work alongside him was always a memorable and joyful learning experience, which blessed us all. When you are part of an international team that includes people like Jim, the hindrances to evangelism (which in our perception seem so great) pale into insignificance. It becomes so much easier just to get on with this marvellous work and forget about the problems - most of which aren't half the problems we thought they were, as God pushes open doors in all sorts of areas. Missions and evangelism appear to attract the very finest men and women who give their lives sacrificially, very often working in extremely difficult areas of ministry.

While these wonderful events are taking place, the Church back home in England continues to suffer huge losses on a First World War scale. Part of the reason is surely attributable to large numbers of leaders whose beliefs do not encompass normal Christianity. I was astonished

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to be told by a Presbyterian minister that Samuel is a mythical figure. He gave the impression to the congregation that much of the Bible is fiction, in his view. A visiting preacher in my own church stated one Christmas that he realised not many people believed in the Christmas story any more and that provided our beliefs were sincerely held, God would be perfectly happy. He also said that, as the wise men were astrologers (in fact they were Magi, not astrologers) it was quite acceptable to look at horoscopes for guidance! On Bristol radio twenty years ago, the pastor of a very large and “successful” Baptist church described the doctrine of the Atonement as “a barbarous and thoroughly unpleasant idea”.

With turkeys like this in positions of leadership, it is hardly surprising that the Christian Church today very often appears to lack any sense of direction or purpose or even self-belief. Gerald Ratner, describing his firm’s popular jewellery products as “trash”, destroyed confidence in his nationwide chain of retail outlets within a week. Inexplicably, Bernd Pischetsrieder publicly described the Rover workforce, which his firm BMW had just acquired, as incapable of making quality cars - thus making them almost un-saleable. Poor leadership that totally fails to inspire is the greatest hindrance facing the Church today. Belief in the product - as any businessman will tell you - is fundamental to the success of the Company. Attempts to broaden the appeal of church attendance by changing the Christian message in line with sociologically derived wisdom and removing, say, the call to repentance, reduce the Church to a rather meaningless club. It would be a service to the Christian Church were such people to have the intellectual integrity to remove themselves from office.

SEVEN

The New Testament Pattern for Evangelism

Following the example of Jesus, the Apostles went to places where the people were and presented the Good News to them. The Jesus ministry by the lake, in the towns and villages, in the synagogue, at the Temple, and in Solomon's Portico (which may have been just outside the Temple) attracted very large crowds of people - on several occasions the numbers amounted to many thousands. In all probability, the Apostles' ministry was but a shadow of what the Lord had achieved, in terms of numbers. St. Paul with his little group may well have hardly been noticed by the crowds in the bustling cities -magnificent classical marble metropoli with business on a large scale in shops and market areas. Dominated by vast marble temples, representing pagan religions (some involving obscene practices) the Gospel was usually most unwelcome. Powerful local priests, anxious to preserve lucrative and prestigious positions in the community, offered a dangerous threat to anyone presenting a new message.

In the early chapters of Acts, Peter is preaching to very large crowds at numbers of meetings in and around the Temple area where people would normally gather. Other parts of the city were characterised by very narrow streets, and in any event, rabbinical expositions / seminars would be natural and expected in the area of the Temple. These meetings were to become gatherings of the early Church, and in a short time were attracting people from far and wide. Acts reads very much like a Mission Report, and there is no doubt that it is a factual and accurate account of historic events taking place over a fairly substantial period of time. For all these reasons, it is of necessity selective. What is clear is that in those very early days several thousand people had already joined the Church. Many of them were from other parts of the empire, visiting Jerusalem for the Passover, and these would have been the first missionaries to their own countries on their return home.

Their greatest need was for a reliable written account of the Lord whom they sought to serve, and the demand for the original disciples to produce the Gospels would have been immediate and very great. The idea that they were not written until late in the first Century is absurd to anyone who has been in a situation like this. The Gospels were undoubtedly co-existent with a much larger body of oral tradition which

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for the first few hundred years would have supplemented the written records. Dr. J. A. T. Robinson sees the whole of the New Testament as completed by April or May AD64. James' Epistle may have been written in AD34 or 35 and the author was almost certainly the Lord's brother. Dr. J. I. Packer told me he thought Mark was most likely written by AD40. OAC Staff working in countries with no Christian tradition, dealing with numbers of converts from their street ministry, find the most urgent need to be Gospels written in the local language. In all probability, Mark's Gospel at least would have been written within 2-3 months of the Crucifixion, which if Graham Ogg is correct, most likely took place in AD33 when the Lord would have been 40 years old (born 6-7 BC).

One of the major problems faced by scholars who write about this earliest period of Church history, is that none of them has ever been in a similar situation. Those earliest converts of course needed follow-up and good teaching. For many of them, the absence of either led to a really quite remarkable diversity in doctrinal beliefs. This resulted in several hundred years of schism before the great Councils of the Christian Church at Nicaea and elsewhere were to more-or-less resolve the major issues. The freedoms enjoyed by the early Christians to minister and preach produced exponential growth.

Stephen's message to the Sanhedrin (Acts 8:1-25), which resulted in his martyrdom, was instrumental in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Even in a profoundly hostile environment, the preaching of the Gospel always has positive results.

The mission to the city of Samaria begins in John, Chapter 4, with Jesus' ministry to the Samaritan Woman: in Acts 8:1-25, we find Philip, Peter and John all involved in evangelising the city. Preaching the Gospel there produced tremendous results, "almost the whole city was baptised". This long term local ministry, which took place over several months, underlines the value of being available to a specific, identifiable group.

Philip gives us a wonderful example of a Divine Appointment as he finds himself on the Gaza road, which was the main coastal trunk route to Egypt and would have been very busy indeed. Somehow, he makes contact with this Ethiopian official, who only needs a simple explanation to come to faith and be baptised. This seems to have been part of a

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preaching tour along the coast, which touched a number of cities. Read Acts 8:26-40.

Paul's ministry in the synagogues in Damascus (Acts 9:20 ff) has some of the hallmarks of the delightful enthusiasm of the new convert. Often people converted through our street ministry in Europe will want to be part of the street team next week, seeking an opportunity to make their stand for Christ by sharing their personal testimony. People who make their life on the street, like gypsies, are often bursting to do this and may give their testimony at any time, with or without invitation! Paul's preaching with his great learning in Judaism had a profound impact: the report states, "The Jews were confounded." The feeling you get from reading Acts is of Paul's great burden to share the Gospel so that his own people should have an opportunity to respond to Christ - you sense particular confidence and assurance as he speaks to Jews. It may be that speaking to the Gentiles initially would have closed the doors of the synagogue to him - but I think he went to the Jews first because he was most at home amongst them. He spoke their language; he understood their thought processes; he of all people could get through to them - and he did. Paul then engages in church ministry for a year and is involved in welfare work (Chapter 11). Both these activities flow naturally from successful evangelistic campaigns.

Acts 13 and 14 have Paul and Barnabas setting out on their first missionary journey, through Salamis, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Derbe and Lystra. The last two are most interesting because the report states that they preached outside the city gates: in a Jewish city, the city Council met at the city gates. However, in the Graeco-Roman cities that Paul knew, outside the city gates were situated the "Park and Walk" pens. Hundreds of camels were held in huge pens by their drivers awaiting or discharging loads and/or passengers. Camels were not allowed in the city because their droppings indelibly marked the white marble pavements (what's dung cannot be un-dung) ...so Paul preached to the crowd of travellers, merchants, camel-drivers etc. We are not told of the results of this mission.

Acts 14:22 ff and 15:40-41. Paul and Barnabas, then Paul and Silas, are involved in a follow-up programme. Chapter 16 is particularly interesting because it describes the recruitment of Timothy and the system of guidance that Paul and his team relied on. The whole team agree after much prayer and heart-searching that Bithynia was the

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place they should go to next. However, Paul has a dream in which he is invited to Macedonia by a man in national costume. Unquestioningly, they agree that this is the leading of the Holy Spirit even though it was not their logical choice. Logic directed them to Bithynia to pursue their call to evangelise Asia Minor: Macedonia was in a sense going off at a tangent. In those days, travellers had great reluctance to put to sea at any time, and to a Jew in particular it was the abode of demons and equated with hell... but they went.

Philippi was an immense city - walking over the site today, you wonder how this little group of perhaps four or five people must have felt, facing such a huge challenge. The temples there were amongst the largest in the world, and the municipal buildings and the general lay-out of the city were magnificent - all white marble.

However, down by the river was a prayer site used by those who sought God, and on preaching to them, a business-woman called Lydia was converted. As a result, much personal evangelism took place and a church was established.

The latter part of Acts from Chapter 17 onwards finds the evangelism team travelling from Thessaloniki through Veria, Athens, Corinth and Ephesus. There are many famous accounts of the synagogue visits, the daily preaching in the market places, preaching to the religious freaks on Mars Hill, and the great days of debate in the Hall of Tyrannus in Ephesus. These went on daily for two years. In Corinth, we are told that the whole region heard the Gospel - but it appears that the results were small in terms of converts. Apparently, many Gentiles believed in each of the cities, but we do not read of a church being established in Athens, for example. In Veria today one can still visit the site where it is alleged St. Paul stood when he preached the Gospel there. Veria is one of the most wonderful places to preach the Gospel as it is attractively situated on top of an escarpment overlooking the Macedonian plain, on which stand the ruins of the palace of Philip of Macedon and his son, Alexander the Great. It is an historic city full of bars frequented by thousands of young men and women, very open to the preaching of the Christian message. On occasion, we have been able to put on a Christian show in a bar packed with young people, for a whole evening.

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The day to day ministry of the early evangelists to so many thousands of people on such a wide scale in so many places, was instrumental in the Gospel spreading far and wide throughout the world.

There were many different channels, Jews hearing the message and going back to the Diaspora, Gentile traders travelling the caravan routes (particularly to East, West and North). Paul's missionary journeys encountered others involved in similar evangelistic activity, such as Apollos, who was also gifted with outstanding eloquence. The task facing them was impossibly big so they sought the leading of the Holy Spirit as they proceeded. Living on the edge, as they were, they depended on each other and also on their ability to support themselves. Totally focussed on sharing the Good News with as many people as possible, most of the practical and strategic concerns that frustrate evangelism and mission today were unknown to them. They just got on with the job.

We don't know how the Gospel came to England initially. What we do know is that houses of the 3rd and 4th Century occasionally exhibit Christian symbols. The venerable Bede writing in the 7th Century gives a few fragmentary details of the ministry of Aidan, who with his travelling team, brought the Gospel to various parts of England. An English preacher called Patrick evangelised much of Ireland. The early Christians did not build ecclesiastical meeting places, as far as we know, until the early 6th Century - which is about the date of construction of the earliest stone churches still extant. What we do know is that travelling preachers proclaimed the Gospel at meeting places marked by stone crosses mounted on raised stone platforms. Erected sometimes at crossroads, or on village greens, each week on a set day local people would gather there to be taught the next instalment of the Christian Message.

Many of these crosses can still be seen in various parts of England and Ireland, some covered in runic inscriptions and diagrams of Bible scenes. In some of our earliest churches, one sometimes finds very early pictures of scenes from the Gospel narratives painted up fresco style on the walls. These must have been an enormous help to people attending services, most of whom would have been unable to read or write. Much later when Augustine arrived there was a flourishing and fairly widespread Church in England. The sites of the crosses became

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venerated to the point where, when church buildings came to be erected, they enclosed the cross. A number of these can still be seen.

In mediaeval times, the history of the Church is very much bound up with power politics and the Reformation really did not change this. As a consequence, the public proclamation of the Gospel at different times led to conflict between the religious authorities and those who felt called to preach to the lost. The Gospel that Paul preached was regarded by the established Church as an alien message, and those who preached it as part of an alien ministry.

By the early 1700s, the Church had become largely discredited in the eyes of the great mass of the people, who were by then falling victim to very low moral standards. In our theatres, acts of shocking indecency were common, and the clergy (who at that time seem to have been inadequately equipped for their ministry) were sometimes objects of ridicule. Novels written by Jane Austen and others rather later than this period describe the situation in the country well. Religious observance had definitely taken the place of Gospel preaching. In town and country, the poor in particular endured a great deal of suffering and there was little or no medical care. There was a huge crime problem, dreadful prison conditions prevailed, and the treatment of the insane was awful. England suffered a deep sense of spiritual hunger.

Then in May 1739, the Bishop of Bristol licensed a young Mr. **George Whitefield** to preach in the city: George had been born in Gloucester where his mother ran the Bell Inn, his father having died soon after his birth. Brought up in the profane world of the public house, he nevertheless did well at school and had a fine speaking voice, which meant that he often read poetry at school functions. He went up to Oxford in 1732 and was to become a fine Greek scholar with a profound comprehension of the Gospel. In 1735, he had been marvellously converted at the age of 21 accepting the salvation of Christ by grace. He enjoyed a real assurance in his salvation. Being unusually shy, he found it very difficult to talk about his personal experience. Temporary Chaplain at the Tower of London, his startling sermons began to attract wide attention in London society so that packed churches could be guaranteed whenever he was advertised to preach. Arriving in Bristol, Whitefield visited the dreadful shanty towns of the brick-workers and coal-miners in Kingswood and Hanham.

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Few dared to venture here because of the violence and profanity of the inhabitants. Standing in the road he would preach to very large crowds, sometimes for 3 hours; he preached in the brickyards of Warmley, and the huge clay pit there, where 9,000 workers, knee deep in mud, stood to listen to him. The doors of the churches in Bristol were locked against him because of the jealousy of local clergy who objected to “this new doctrine”; so he preached in churchyards, standing on a tomb, so that those leaving church could hear the Gospel! He is said to have preached to 30,000 on College Green outside the Cathedral in the centre of Bristol, and to 50,000 miners in Hanham, sitting in tiers above him in a huge quarry. His journals at the time noted the white streaks on the black faces of the miners as the tears of repentance poured down.

On leaving to start a preaching ministry in America, George advertised that the open air preacher on the following Sunday would be John Wesley. Wesley was furious! He did not like the idea at all, not being an open air preacher; but Whitefield’s response was to say, “Well, if you don’t turn up, you’ll look pretty silly, won’t you?” Compelled to preach, Wesley thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

The remarkable public preaching ministries of Whitefield and Wesley led to many thousands finding faith in Christ around the middle of the 18th Century. Quite a number felt burdened to do what they could to change the state of society. Among them were William Wilberforce, who fought to abolish slavery; Robert Raikes, who established schools in the West Country; Charles Kingsley, who campaigned for children’s rights; Helen Cadbury and Elizabeth Fry who campaigned for better conditions in our prisons.

Christians in many of our poorer cities, and a group of Christian businessmen in Clapham (who became known as the Clapham Sect) founded the Church Missionary Society. The public preaching of the Gospel did so much to change British society in the 18th Century, that many historians believe it prevented a revolution taking place in England along the lines of that in France in 1789.

In the United States a similar tradition of fundamentalist Gospel preaching, through men such as Charles G. Finney and much later D. L. Moody and others, had a profound effect on that country also. The Roman Catholic scholar, K. S. Latourette, asserts that the Bible-based, fundamentalist Bible preachers were the greatest influence on the Protestant church in the 18th and 19th Centuries.

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Late in the 19th Century William Booth's street preaching ministry in the East End of London led to the establishment of the Salvation Army as a separate denomination. Not understanding the opposition of local churches to the work he was doing, I had always been rather critical of him for establishing a separate church organisation. However, when you come to read books on the events of the period, you understand that the people who were being saved were not those who would easily be assimilated by the middle classes who attended church at that time - nor would ritualistic observances mean much to those with such pressing needs. Meeting those needs became the aspect of their ministry for which the Army was to become most famous (after World War II, they did a marvellous job repatriating prisoners of war from POW camps in South East Asia and elsewhere; they found my Uncle Frank for us).

"Stone's Justices' Manual" is a 2-volume tome in which we find the Case Law on which Magistrates and Justices base their decisions. It contains most inspiring accounts of prosecutions of Salvation Army officers by the police as the evangelists fought for the right to take the Gospel on to the streets. Involved in a few similar battles myself, it has been an inspiration to me to be able to rely on precedents won by the Army.

The Billy Graham Crusade in 1953 at Haringey was extensively reported nightly on B.B.C. news programmes. Stories of the amazing conversions and the things that the Evangelist had said, would be carried in the centre spread of some newspapers almost every day - as were photographs of Billy Graham jogging in Hyde Park. It is difficult for people to realise today the enormous impact he had on society. Absolutely everybody was talking about him! Going into town on the bus, I was struck how the passengers would be discussing what he had said the previous evening. The Crusade, which went on for several months to packed audiences of around 10,000 a night, resulted in great curiosity and a desire by very large numbers of people to go and see and hear for themselves - even people like my parents, who were really unimpressed by the Church. They went to hear him once, and during that evening in an astonishing way they felt they knew him and he was their pastor. His message really did address how they felt as unbelievers and ever afterwards, they would seek every opportunity to hear him on the radio. He was the one person they trusted and admired, and they accepted his message wholeheartedly. Probably it

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was their liking of him as a person that went a long way towards making his message acceptable. Most commentators agree that Billy Graham and his ministry to England have had by far the greatest impact on society in the 20th Century. His message of course was a very direct presentation of the Gospel.

The public preaching of God's Message, as commanded by Moses, put into effect by the prophets, by Jesus himself, the Apostles, and throughout subsequent history, and commanded of us in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), should still be our first concern as we enter the 21st Century - but of course it is not.

Today the Church seems to have a much higher regard for academic achievement than for a call to serve, and those who preach the Gospel are often regarded as inadequate and their message as superficial. So, an evangelist coming back from a brilliant open air preaching and training programme in, say, Poland, can be told by his church Elders, "You have no ministry. We will not support you." They are more anxious about their own small concerns than with the urgent need to take the Message out to the people wherever they can be found. The evangelist I have in mind, on a campaign with me in Plymouth once, stood up and started to speak beside a beer garden full of young people with their boyfriends and girlfriends and their pints of beer. On hearing him, they turned the juke box off! and all listened with great interest as he presented the Gospel in his usual highly engaging way... many of them wanted to talk to us afterwards and actually sat and read our counselling leaflets..... and this is a man with no ministry?

In England, those of us in front line preaching ministries are often surprised at how the widely reported statements of people like the late Bishop of Durham really do influence the nation's thinking. He seems to be a sort of built-in handicap to church growth - obviously a delightful chap and a very open and honest one at that, but he does not accept the Gospels as historical documents. These views attract surprisingly wide acceptance even though they fly in the face of any well-researched view of the events they report - particularly in the light of contemporary culture in Palestine.

People are simply not aware that the views he holds in no way represent the views of the Church or the vast majority of reputable scholarship - much of which would classify him as rather quaint. That such people, who do not embrace mainstream Christian beliefs, and

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therefore by definition cannot possibly subscribe to the 39 Articles of the Church of England, should nevertheless be appointed to any position of authority in the Church is ABSOLUTELY EXTRAORDINARY! On quite a number of occasions preaching to students in our teaching establishments, such as groups of Sixth Formers or University students, I find that many will regard us as naive and gullible to hold the beliefs that we do.

That so many of our leaders - many of them Bishops - do not subscribe to fundamental Christian morality greatly weakens the Church's witness to the new life towards which Christ seeks to lead us. The current desire to adapt "to modern ways of thinking" in the frantic rush to make church-going popular, clearly emasculates any attempt to reach out to godliness or holiness. The exhortation from Archbishop George Carey last year to his troops to cut sermons down to 10 minutes and try to present a more friendly face to the world smacks more of a damage limitation exercise than an inspiring call to battle for the King of Kings. Never ever in his ministry did our Lord remove one jot or tittle from God's laws. George Whitefield often said, "Those who eat the Church's bread should subscribe to her Articles of belief".

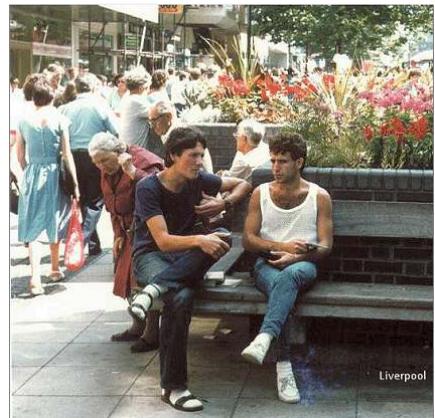
In a situation like this, the Church does not appear to have very much to offer to thinking men and women with great ideals and aspirations, who long to be inspired and offered the leadership they need. They deserve better than what the Church is offering. The Church should be offering the Gospel and all that follows, rather than platitudes. So-called "seeker-friendly" messages are not the Message we are called to preach which is quite uncompromising. Unfortunately, those who do have this ministry are unlikely to be called upon to speak for fear they will "rock the boat" and upset someone. If in those sorts of fellowships the Gospel will rock the boat then it's high time it was preached!

David Cullimore was one of the finest young men Anni and I ever had the privilege of knowing. He came down from the University of Sunderland with a First in Gas Turbine Engineering and went straight to an apprenticeship with Rolls Royce in Bristol. His great friend David M. came with him, having qualified as a Pharmacist. Both had a call to evangelism and straight away joined our street preaching team in Broadmead, Bristol. To differentiate between the two, we always addressed Cullimore as Dave, Culli, or Rolls Royce.

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His sartorial elegance was rather jeopardised by a tendency to long hair, a sloppy jersey, ancient jeans and trainers (which were new then, and lasted him many years!). Our attempts to smarten him up were never more than partially successful... Dave and his brothers were superb musicians and Dave constructed his own guitar, which sounded marvellous. (His brother, a professional musician with a group called the Housemartins in the Midlands, always said Dave was the best musician he'd ever heard). He worked all week at Rolls Royce to the point where he was within two and a half years of a Doctorate in Turbine Engineering (he worked as a development engineer on the Concorde engines) but his life was evangelism. Dave and Ken Barrett (who had qualified as a Barrister at Bristol) produced an endless succession of superb open air messages that inspired us all. They always attracted a good crowd who thoroughly enjoyed listening to them.

Dave came on all the summer campaigns as a leader, and was normally found sitting among a group of teenagers in a High Street somewhere, talking about Jesus. He never owned more possessions than he could carry at one time, rode an old bicycle, lived in a single room in Bedminster, and gave most of his salary to world mission. At Christmas, he earned huge sums of money as night watchman in a local factory, as this enabled him to give more away, and spent the long hours walking round the factory praying. He read books and was always "redeeming the time" somehow or other. On nights during the week he helped the Cyrenians as they brought hot soup etc., to the down-and-outs on the streets. He spent a lot of time with our family and was always enormous fun for the children. Dave built up a wide ministry in Bristol particularly leading school assemblies whenever he could.



For years afterwards, children and teachers would ask after him.

He and David M. spent 6 months on a kibbutz in Israel where they succeeded in learning Hebrew well enough to speak about the Lord. In

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Liverpool the next summer, Dave asked a lad on a bench in the city centre what he thought of the open air message just preached: he replied, "I don't understand. I am from Israel." Dave then shared the Gospel with him in Hebrew and in fact conversed with him for over an hour. My photograph of this event shown above is one of my treasured possessions.

Dave felt that God was calling him to full time service as a missionary in Africa. His firm tried terribly hard to keep him but he knew what his life was to be. Turbine technology not being much help in a Third World country, he set about learning agricultural engineering with a view to going to Uganda as a missionary, helping to rebuild after the disastrous regime of Idi Amin. Full of excitement he spent 18 months at the Royal Agricultural College at Silsoe in Bedfordshire, living in a caravan, and succeeded in securing three First Class Post-graduate Degrees - each of which should have taken three years. Every weekend he would come down by train to London to join in the OAC Leicester Square outreach, after which he would go back to Plaistow to pray into the small hours with his pastor there - Patrick Sookhdeo.

Dave's street messages were very unusual and depended a great deal on humour - he liked to preach about parrots - in fact, he was very interested in parrots! I remember him preaching about a parrot that wanted to go to heaven, but St. Peter wouldn't let him in, saying "It's no good, you're a parrot!" Whatever the parrot did, he couldn't stop being a parrot: saying all the right words didn't impress St. Peter at all. Dave was able to mimic a parrot brilliantly, and the crowd would be in stitches - and of course, he was able to tell them how they needed to be born again and become a new person. By then the crowd absolutely loved him, they liked the way he could draw the crazy expression on the parrot's face with a few strokes of the brush on his sketch-board - his parrots always looked slightly mad! Everybody could see what a smashing chap he was and would stand around and talk with him for ages.

One Friday evening after the open air meetings in Leicester Square Dave went out to dinner with some of his friends and his new fiancée Rivka. At the prayer meeting soon afterwards, Dave collapsed and had to be taken to hospital, where he died of acute viral pneumonia only a few hours later. None of us could believe it. I was asked to preach at his funeral. Arriving at Patrick's church twenty minutes late because of the

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traffic, I walked straight into the pulpit and was astonished to find the church was packed with around 500 people whose lives had all been deeply affected by him. There wasn't a spare seat anywhere. Many came up afterwards to share how Dave had either brought them to faith or greatly deepened their experience of Christ. I think we all felt we had been in the presence of a very great man indeed. He was twenty eight.

Obviously, during the seven years he was one of our team leaders in Bristol, although he was only able to be with us on a part time basis because of his career, Dave's life had a great impact on all of us. Looking back on it now, it seems quite extraordinary that neither his fellowship nor any other in Bristol ever invited him to preach. For most of those years his own church attracted a good number of University students and I thought at the time what a tragedy it was that he was never permitted to become a role model for them. He had been a very inspiring speaker at one or two student house parties when invited to do so by the Polytechnic Christian Union, as indeed had Ken Barrett. However, I felt a lot more could have been done with Dave to inspire the young men and women in his fellowship to a deeper commitment to Christ - and maybe a call to Christian service.

So many lost opportunities ... by an Eldership more concerned with what was going on in their own very small world.

The Gospel is being preached today, by people whom God has raised up for the purpose. They are men and women of all ages with the very clear vision that Christ must be presented to the lost. They come in all shapes and sizes and from all different mainstream Christian denominations. Usually the vision they have is caught by seeing a role model at work. The general pattern today is that they will have to support themselves financially and exercise their ministry on a part time basis; their own fellowships will not recognise their ministry because of the limited outlook of the church managers, who may even see their work as a threat to their own positions. They benefit greatly from fellowship with other evangelists with similar ministries in organisations like OAC who can provide a great deal of help in the form of proper training for the kind of work to which they are called.

This is the day for ordinary men and women to exercise their ministries in the field of evangelism and play the most significant role in building the Kingdom of God.

EIGHT

Strategies in Evangelism

On the international level, strategies for evangelising cities, provinces or even whole countries emerge through a network of relationships involving leading figures in the world's mission agencies. Working together in partnership, they establish and promote effective ministries on the ground. Most of the missions involved in continental Europe are American; British agencies desiring to be involved need to become part of that network. I have learnt a lot from the splendid efforts of American agencies who assist each other to maximise the effort.

In the late 1980s, I was invited to lead a number of seminars in Italy for U.S. missionaries, and in particular built an excellent relationship with the fifteen couples involved in church planting in and around the city of Milan (which has an extended population of 8 million). This UFM team with its highly qualified members were greatly interested in the possibility of open air evangelism enabling them to reach much larger numbers of people than they had so far been able to do. One of their number, Dr. Al Nucciarone, had already done a number of open air meetings in downtown Dallas, while a student at Dallas Theological Seminary. As a Doctor of Missions, he appreciated the OAC training programme whereby the practical skills of the street preacher can be systematised and transferred to ordinary church members.

Tom Job, one of the missionaries on the team, had been discouraged by the apparently slow results produced by friendship evangelism in Milan - he was a brilliant cartoon artist and recognised the use of the sketch-board as a natural outlet for his skills. In fact, during the week of the first seminar in Milan, Tom attracted a very large crowd outside Milan cathedral and made an excellent job of presenting the Gospel to them - his cartoon drawings of Bible story characters were hilarious! The following year, when he was back from furlough in the States, David Jones emerged as a very fine street preacher indeed, and established a regular Friday afternoon ministry near Milan cathedral. He found these meetings were attended on a regular basis by quite a good number of businessmen. (Surmounted by a tall gold effigy of the Queen of Heaven on the dome, the cathedral entrance has an elaborate mosaic of the signs of the zodiac embossed in the floor; it is a great focus for the citizens of Milan as a meeting place. The great

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bronze doors, bearing reliefs of the Disciples, are said to be the largest in the world.)

Al Nucciarone became convinced that he was being led to Vienna by the Holy Spirit following a series of very unusual events - it was a most unexpected move for an Italian-American. The whole family have had to learn German, and he is now pastor of Grace International Church in central Vienna, which is about one third Asian, one third African, and one third more or less English-speaking European/American. The lively worship at this delightful fellowship benefits from many cultures and a lot of good humour, but the fellowship is different to most others because Al is not only a pastor but very much an evangelist/pastor. As a result, the whole church has a vision to be a means of the Gospel reaching many citizens of Vienna. Al also collects "Timothys", and always has one or two young men/women in full time training. He invited me to set up an annual training seminar in Vienna, which has now been running for 6 years, and is part of the "Reach The City" campaign.

Some 16 years ago, Pastor Rob and Mary Prokop arrived in Vienna from the Greater Grace World Outreach training college in Baltimore "to undertake a ministry of evangelism". Using all kinds of different methods such as questionnaires, mime, one-on-one, street-preaching and personal contacts, they slowly built up a small fellowship. Other church leaders, ignorant of their background, provided little encouragement.

An OAC evangelist running a seminar in Vienna for a week was not well advertised and Rob missed the opportunity of taking part - however, he was able to video tape 45 minutes of training material just shortly before evangelist Rob Vollebregt had to leave for the airport to catch his plane home to Ireland! This information greatly assisted Rob's street ministry as he led his church out on the street every Tuesday and Saturday not far from the St. Stephan's cathedral. According to the team, sketchboarding has been, by far, the best evangelistic method for this city. Many of Pastor Rob's team, which is now quite big, help with our annual seminars and it has been a joy to welcome trainees from Greater Grace church planting teams in Russia and the Ukraine. Pastor Rob is clearly an evangelist/ pastor.

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It has become very clear to me that where a church leader is an evangelist/pastor it becomes possible for members of their fellowship to have an active role in effective evangelism. This is also true of the Roman Catholic church. One of the participating groups in our ministry there is the People's



Mission, led by evangelical Catholics. One of their Elders, Erwin Slezak, who is Director of Austria's ecological refuse disposal unit, has become a very keen street preacher. Each year he spends a month in Mumbai, India, training his contacts there.

One of Al Nucciarone's great achievements has been to draw in partners from other missions with complementary skills. He regards two of these as essential to the effective evangelisation of continental Europe. One is the Open Air Evangelism (OAC) training programme; the other is C. James Kennedy's "Evangelism Explosion" (EE) programme. Al seems to know all these people personally, and it's always a terrific help when Bob Maistros leads the seminars in personal evangelism during our annual week's training programme. Bob, I understand, drafts the EE training manuals. OAC's contribution is to provide staff with many years' experience in street ministry to be role models for the ministry of the evangelist, as well as providing a professional "umbrella" under which local churches can work together comfortably. 11 churches co-operated in Vienna in the summer of 2000 and the number is growing year by year. It was thrilling to see Pastor Helmud from the church in Baden preaching on the street for the very first time - his tall bearded figure and considerable eloquence absolutely captivated a crowd of pensioners out for a stroll in the afternoon sun - they were obviously terrifically impressed with his message.

Having completed a year on the Staff Training programme ("Snowball: run by Europe Now - see Chapter 10) Stefan and Judith Hoefler will commence a full time ministry of street and schools work in Vienna as OAC Staff Evangelists. Their objective will be to mobilise and equip teams all over Austria. Over the last five years or so, Church leaders have become aware of the very large numbers of people who stop and

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listen to the preaching of the Gospel, giving local evangelical churches the opportunity to make contact.

The Greater Grace church grows largely through street evangelism, and Pastor Rob has become a most important trainer for their mission to establish churches in the region. For Rob, Sketch-board Season opens April 1st and ends in the fall. He and his teams can be found sketchboarding up to four times a week in Vienna alone, plus once a week in nearby cities like Bratislava, Slovakia, and Salzburg, Austria.

In Vienna, he and his people will be out two days a week through most of the year, and in July and August every evening in teams. Through these street meetings, many remarkable people have become converts to the faith and joined the fellowship, including a young man who has become one of Austria's leading medical researchers on the nervous system, a top representative of Siemens Electrical (one of Germany's largest firms), several people from show business (including an actress and two top models) and refugees from Africa and eastern Europe. Others join because they long to be part of a church that is actually involved in significant ministry in the city. Most church members are involved in the church's various ministries in one way or another, which greatly deepens the quality of the fellowship they enjoy. It's good fun to meet up in Rosenberger's, a market cafe near the Stephansplatz, after the evening meetings - everyone shares the encouragement of conversations they have had and we have a prayer time for all those contacted.

Towards the end of one such evening, when we had witnessed the Holy Spirit touching people's lives with great power through the preaching, the gathering at Rosenberger's were very moved: just before we were all about to go home, a young man stood up to share how at the first meeting he had been very interested in the message. During the second, he had decided to receive Christ as his Saviour. By the end of the third meeting, he already felt he was part of our team. Mary Prokop led three women to the Lord that evening, too. Sometimes evangelism is like that.

One of Rob's key sketchboarders, a Serbian guest worker with the super name of Dragan, came to Christ 8 years ago watching the sketch-board in front of a Viennese ice cream parlour. Ever since, he has been sketchboarding throughout Europe and America, and has

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even pioneered a street preaching ministry in Ghana and Mali, where he has been a number of times now. It was very moving to receive a postcard from his group of trainees this year with a short progress report on their work.

Altogether eleven local churches were represented at the OAC Vienna training seminar this year, and it has become necessary to set up an additional training week for Eastern Europeans in Bratislava, Slovakia. Tracy Lesan and his wife Brenda have lived in Bratislava for a number of years now, and have the vision to take the Gospel through open air evangelism on to the huge Communist-built housing estates, where between 150,000 and 200,000 people live in single communities in areas around the city. It is much cheaper and easier for Eastern Europeans to come to another Eastern European country; for many of them, visas are required for entry into Austria, and these are difficult and expensive to obtain. While Pastor Al led a team into Poland again, each evening Pastor Rob and his wife Mary brought their Country & Western band the 35 miles over the border to assist with ministry to the very large crowds in the main square - one of the items which really attracted people this year was the dancing and colourful banners so expertly presented by Erica Bebb from our home church. Music and dance are great bridge-builders for the preacher.

We have recruited and provided full time training for two Slovak ladies, Elena and Katarina, who have science degrees: they have a vision to establish a Christian education programme in the public school system in their country, and to train many others themselves. An important part of the OAC strategy is to train trainers. They also have a super ministry to youngsters in summer camps, which are run by a number of church groups in Eastern Europe, and present a fine opportunity for evangelism and discipleship training.

A professional ministry on such a wide scale has the potential to reach a whole country in one generation. These sorts of developments are not planned; they are an outcome of a work of the Holy Spirit. This strategy could not possibly have emerged from a committee meeting in an upper room at mission headquarters, it has emerged as the Lord's people have worked together over a period of years, building and developing relationships and trust, and walking through the doors that God has opened.

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Many doors have opened over those six years, presenting opportunities to mobilise, train and equip evangelists in all the surrounding countries. The team in Vienna now feel we should establish "The Vienna school of Evangelism" to provide full time training for students with a call to full time ministry. The courses on offer will be to degree standard, and will provide the theoretical and skills training to bring students up to Staff Evangelist status. America's foremost missionary training college will assist with some staff and students and also with programme development. A fund of \$2 million is being prayed in.

Summary: progress to date:

In Central Europe, based on a group of churches in Vienna, and led by three of the world's leading missions agencies, a strategy has been put into operation to mobilise and equip local Christians in teams to undertake the ministry of preaching the Gospel in public in towns and cities, to the very large crowds of local people gathering there at different times in the week. Although they may exhibit an apparent commitment to materialistic and even anti-Christian values, nevertheless experience shows that most ordinary people do want to hear about Jesus and a very high percentage suffer spiritual hunger. In Eastern Europe, where Christianity has been actively discouraged and even punished over a period of very many years, the emergence of the new democracies brings an enthusiasm to go back to "our old national values". In Western Europe, spiritual hunger shows itself in the confused emergence of "New Age" ideas and occult practice. (In Milan, for instance, the telephone directory contains twice as many practising witches as medical Doctors.)

In many small evangelical fellowships, there are men and women, some with considerable academic achievements, who are willing and able to undertake the professional training necessary to establish effective ministries in local schools. More often than not, these schools welcome high quality Christian teaching input for their Religious Education programme or are happy for a Bible Club to be run after school hours.

By these means a coherent strategy has emerged under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to present Christ on such a wide scale as to EMBRACE THE WHOLE OF THE POTENTIAL HARVEST.

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Churches led by pastor/managers will be unable to play an active part in such a strategy because their world is much too small. Their focus will be solely on recruitment to their fellowship, as they perceive this to be the only sure way to win people for Christ. Those active in the church will be encouraged to play a part in the friendship evangelism programme, which can only affect the lives of very few people. Such churches subscribe to my friend Canon Paul Berg's assessment that publicly proclaiming Christ to all and sundry is of no practical benefit to such a fellowship. Gospel preaching is in fact an alien ministry to them unless they are in their own pulpits.

A more extreme view held by many of them - and repeated to me on a number of occasions - is that it is highly irresponsible to preach the Gospel to the lost, who may well respond and find themselves in a worse situation than if they had never heard the message: if there is no human follow-up or encouragement, the newly saved soul will just wither and die. Hence, their adherence to "canning-factory" techniques.

Fortunately, experience has shown that the active work of the Holy Spirit in bringing people to faith in Christ can also be relied upon to provide the means of growth. Romans 8:38-39. It is astounding to find people with such wildly unscriptural opinions in responsible positions of leadership.

Churches led by evangelist/pastors will actively pursue strategies of evangelism that effectively engage with all the people groups in their communities. School children, old people, mothers, singles, young teenagers, young couples, factory workers and shop keepers, the unemployed, Universities and colleges.... the list could be endless. The scale of the operation will embrace the potential harvest. Personal evangelism will be encouraged but the central thrust will be for everyone to have an opportunity to respond to the claims of Christ. Leadership will face up to the challenges of mobilising part time and full time workers in all these areas of opportunity - providing proper training, equipment and even funding for those ministries to succeed. Most of the work will be done out of sight of the fellowship as a whole and will usually involve a busy week's programme of activities, but steps will be taken to ensure that the whole fellowship feels part of the outreach by means of prayer, teaching, and testimonies of those taking part. The result is that each member of the fellowship becomes a part of the great vision to build God's Kingdom in the local community and

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beyond. Pastor Al and Pastor Rob already have evangelistic input not only in and around Vienna but in a number of surrounding countries. They are the role models for evangelist/pastors there too.

It is only through the leadership of such men that the Christian church can face up to the greatest challenge in history: that is, the evangelisation of the colossal neighbourhoods comprising gigantic municipal condominium developments in which the majority of Europeans live today. In many of these places, hundreds of thousands of people live isolated lives. In the West, many of these huge estates are unreachable by door to door visiting due to various entry security systems - yet evangelistic agencies and missionary societies continue to rely on this form of ministry to make contacts. In Eastern Europe the desolation is appalling; unemployment is very high, often the lifts have not worked for years, and the social problems arising from poor living conditions crumbling into decay result in wide scale vandalism, crime, drug abuse - for the old in particular, life becomes a living hell.

In the Ukraine recently I spent a week in one of these condominiums, constructed on such a vast scale around the city of Kiev that it is very difficult to find your way in what appears to be a rabbit-warren of tunnels. An extremely dangerous society for Westerners, it was quite an intimidating prospect walking up dark passages and stairways under surveillance from creaking doors opening and closing behind me. The likelihood of mugging and robbery has made it now so dangerous that it has become necessary for missions to construct their homes in secure compounds in the countryside outside the city. No church or group of churches, no mission agency or Society, has ever come up with a strategy that addresses the opportunity such neighbourhoods present - yet if the Christian Church is to succeed in its mission, this challenge must be met, forthwith.

God is already at work. Richard Witt lives in a huge apartment block outside a town in Poland; he was a machine tool operator in a factory but was unpopular with the management because of his Christian stand.

More or less living by faith, he and his wife courageously set out to establish a church in their neighbourhood and after 8 years have now gathered a small fellowship around them. Without any opportunity for transfer growth in such a situation, these delightful people have steadily

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and faithfully - mainly through personal evangelism - won all their converts themselves. Further growth is limited by many factors, one being the size of their apartment in which the group meets.



Richard has never had the benefit of a theological training, but has received some encouragement in recent years from having fellowship with the few Baptist and Brethren church Elders in neighbouring towns. Richard believes that further growth can really only take place through local open air evangelistic crusades. He would love one day to have Sir Cliff Richard and his guitar available for a few days to get the whole community together! Pastor Al is in touch with Richard, and doing his best to encourage and help him and a number of others in similar situations in Poland.

My own experience is that open air meetings in these places, held in the evenings after school, do regularly attract good crowds of young people and usually quite a number of parents as well. I well remember one Sunday evening in the Petrszelke estate in Bratislava, going about tea time with a small group and a sketch-board, and setting up un-announced near the supermarket in a small square with trees and grassy areas. It was a lovely afternoon, and soon the kids gathered around as Phill Willer put on one of his hilarious children's programmes involving a lot of participation by the children themselves. Phill is so good at this that one often feels that not speaking the language doesn't make a lot of difference! Until you come to the Bible story ... when excellent instantaneous translation is required. (Of course this is true in

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all countries - our translators often catch the vision for doing the work themselves when they realise what fun it can be.) On this particular occasion, I was taking the photographs, and being ready to deal with any officials who might turn up and ask what we were doing.

In the crowd was a man who wanted to talk: he turned out to be a Canadian alcoholic who had recently returned to his ethnic home in Slovakia. He asked why on earth we had come to such a God-forsaken place, and was clearly very depressed. He saw no hope for any of those living on the estate, deprived, destitute and without the means of getting out and going somewhere else. Loneliness is a major problem and the suicide rate is frighteningly high - in fact, this year the statistics included five 13 yr. old girls.

Oddly, such living conditions seem to have an isolating effect, whereas you would imagine that people would have many opportunities for developing a community spirit.



In 1998, we planned to do a children's meeting every evening on that estate at 6 p.m. The first meeting drew a crowd of about 30, with parents standing round the back, happy to watch their children enjoy the song, puppet show, quiz, and Bible story. Arriving at the car park the next day at about 5.40 pm

we were met by a group of enthusiastic helpers already waiting to greet us and carry our equipment to the site where we found even more children waiting expectantly as word had got round. It was a wonderful week! We left Tracy Lesan with a group of 34 (mainly children plus a handful of adults) whom he was able to meet every week for 2-3 months in the local school gym for Bible study. Following a similar children's programme in 1999, Brenda had her first contacts willing to come to her apartment to have coffee and chat with her about Jesus. There was still no help at all from local churches - which underlines the need to train and mobilise people like Elena and Katarina.

I am absolutely convinced, after many years of leading and taking part in such meetings, that they offer the only practical solution to identifying the contacts likely to join a local fellowship. These meetings can take a

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number of different forms and one such is the arrival of a “Country & Western” band singing Christian songs, even in English, as most record sales of pop songs are in the English language. It has also been excellent when we secure the assistance of a member of the Fellowship of Christian Magicians, who can offer really professional Christian “magic” shows in which the illusions themselves form illustrations teaching aspects of the Christian message. Christian puppet shows draw big crowds - surprisingly not just children, but people of all ages - and create a happy atmosphere. All these items, however, need to have their message crystallised by the clear preaching of the Gospel, usually with the focus of a sketch-board, for the Message of new life to be clearly put across, and the opportunity given for a decision to be made or at least for further discussion to take place.

In Birkenhead (near Liverpool) the new Elim Church Centre was created out of the remains of an old hospital and provides extensive accommodation for all kinds of activities - for young people, sheltered housing for the elderly, the Church Centre itself, meeting rooms for clubs, and even a Medical Centre. In this way, the church has usefully become a tool for the local social services, which form the basis for its evangelistic activities. It has become a model for inner city churches.

Dr. Nic Harding went from Bristol with a church planting team to establish a ministry to the poor in the centre of Liverpool. Each night, teams go out to minister to the down-and-outs and hopefully to rescue prostitutes, drug addicts, youngsters sleeping rough, etc. This very successful ministry has seen miracles of grace, and attracts participation from young Christians wanting to play an active part in this kind of work in the future. Nic has also developed a large Sunday School in which the children are collected by bus from all kinds of poor areas of the neighbourhood, and have a brilliant programme of Christian teaching and activities under very strict rules of behaviour (highly necessary in that area). Nic’s church is well on the way to becoming one of the largest in Liverpool.

Little of the huge resources available to the successful churches in the “sending” countries are set aside to establish or support ministries in these largest population centres of the modern world. Men and women are not being raised up by the churches for ministry in such situations and the few people God has raised up - such as Pastor Witt and his wife - remain unsupported and abandoned. Neither theological

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colleges, seminaries, nor missionary training colleges offer programmes likely to impart the practical skills necessary to succeed in this kind of outreach. People are trained to be vicars at home or pastors abroad, but with no idea how to go about acquiring the congregation to pastor. The potential harvest is on a scale wildly exceeding anything faced by the Christian Church to date. This is particularly true in Asia, with huge concentrations of very poor people and massive unemployment. For example, OAC teams with specially equipped mobile film units will arrive in an Indian village and show the “Jesus” film over two or three nights - in the open air - and several thousand people will meet Jesus for the very first time. The follow-up programme with Bible studies involves around 8,000 to 10,000 enquirers on most occasions. (Sometimes it is the very first time that villagers will ever have seen a film.)

In England today it has become increasingly clear that the continued survival of very small local parish fellowships (Anglican and non-conformist) is unlikely on any scale. Local home groups for fellowship and Bible study, prayer and mutual support, meeting during the week are clearly the way forward in most cases. The continued expenditure on now largely unused ecclesiastical buildings is insupportable. The large and successful eclectic fellowships (such as Christ Church and Pip ‘n’ Jay in Bristol and All Souls and Holy Trinity Brompton in London) where the local home groups can meet together for worship is undoubtedly the way forward for the Christian Church. The smaller numbers of full time ministers need about a year’s full time training to equip them for the mobile ministry, which is now so much more effective in presenting Christ to the different groups in society.

“Church-based” but not “church-centred”: the strategy for the future.

In the course of our day to day ministry in the Gloucestershire, Avon and Somerset areas, I occasionally meet up with small ecumenical clergy groups trying to minister in really difficult housing estates with huge social problems. Having a very successful school assembly programme in many such areas, I have long desired to draw the clergy into our work so that they would be in a position to attract church membership through the substantial goodwill we generate. Last year (1999), a clergy group invited me to one of their meetings on an impoverished estate, to discuss our involvement in an open air meeting they were proposing to have that summer. These lovely people meet regularly and pray for each other in a very committed way.

As I entered the house at the appointed time, the others had already arrived and were sitting round the room in a little semi-detached Council house in a street of similar homes, not far from the badly vandalised neighbourhood Centre and the adjacent tower blocks.

The delightful Catholic priest had inherited a successful on-going work - his predecessor having been a charismatic believer with a fine preaching and teaching ministry who had won many converts to faith in Christ. The Anglican churches on the estate were led by two young couples recently graduated from the local Anglican college, finding little success in making the contacts they needed to build a ministry there. The Baptist minister had recently closed his building because it had suffered yet another serious arson attack.

The Methodist church was run by two middle-aged lady Deaconesses who were good at counselling, encouragement and generally taking the love of Christ into very needy family situations.

There were also one or two lay workers present, one of whom had been called into part-time ministry as a result of a conference she had attended at Lee Abbey in Devon. There was a lovely atmosphere in the room and I recognised an overwhelming desire to serve the local people, whom they all obviously loved very much. I felt I wanted to do all I could to help these fellow missionaries.

The conversation began by one of the Methodist ladies saying quite directly, “I don’t want to see evangelists working in this area. What

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these people need to see is real commitment from people who really care!”

Obviously acutely embarrassed, one or two of the others sought to remedy the stunning silence which followed this statement by attempting to offer encouragement, saying how much they valued my ministry; apparently the problem had been that the previous year Colin Piper (of the Mueller Foundation in Bristol) a fine Youth Worker now working in Exeter, had taken a small team on to the estate at the invitation of the local churches and had recruited about a hundred youngsters who were really interested in knowing Jesus - in fact a few had made definite commitments.

Unfortunately when the campaign was over (I understand it lasted 3 weeks) all the young people had failed to become members of the local churches and the leadership group felt very let down. What they really wanted was for Colin and his team to stay very much longer and build a viable church ministry for them. The message to me was “You would be useful to us if you would work exclusively on this estate for a number of years and do the job for us.”

Jim Petersen, who founded the Navigators work in Brazil, won tens of thousands of converts through his University missions work over the last thirty years. He recognised that modern forms of church-centred ministry have no relevance or even meaning for new converts coming from a totally un-churched background. In fact, he found it necessary to construct different ministry patterns altogether in nurturing and discipling, with far more informal worship situations which his converts developed - which bore little or no relation to “church” as most of us more traditionally-minded believers find acceptable.

Observing the ministry of exciting Christian leaders, like Stephen Abbott and his Fellowship of the King in Bristol, introduced me to much more fluid worship services in which unexpected happenings (in the form of unplanned contributions by members of the group) are welcomed and encouraged. In this way, the participants are motivated and encouraged to play a much more active role in the life of the fellowship. Led by the Spirit as they are, attending these services is inspiring and exciting.

Ian and Caralee Loring in Albania have a similar mind-set and although dealing with new believers all the time, who require much more in

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preparation and leadership, nevertheless they invariably contrive to sit at the back of the church, leaving services in the hands of the Leadership Team. Pastors in ministry to an un-churched society need experience with pioneer churches in developing relevant forms of church ministry.

My little ecumenical group are all people who are more than willing to dispense with “clerical dignity” in the pursuit of godly effectiveness. They were offered opportunities to work with our local team to gain experience of ministry to youngsters, and acquire some of the practical skills they need to succeed in this sort of work. Maybe one day they will find the time to do the training and no longer be dependent on imported help. Many clergy in these situations are becoming more and more aware of the irrelevance of traditional ministry patterns in the modern world and seem to me to be hanging on in the hope that one day “God will do something if I faithfully keep going somehow”.

Archbishop Carey has rightly pointed out in one of his keynote addresses that the Christian Church is one generation away from extinction in every age. Research shows that young people are far less likely to follow the example of their parents in church membership and the number of really committed Christian families has rapidly declined over the last thirty or forty years.

The sons and daughters of successful businessmen are much less likely now to commit their lives to church ministry, with so many far more effective and exciting Christian alternatives now available. In fact, the Church of England must now compete with visionary outfits like YWAM, UFM and Worldteam.

I was preaching in the autumn of 1999 in a small town Baptist church in Minnesota to a couple of hundred rugged-looking farmers and their wives and families, telling some of the exciting stories of the mission field in Europe and Africa. The pastor and his wife signed up for a summer of service with our OAC team in France, MEPA (Mission En Pleine Aire) with a view to long term service with us there. I was very surprised to find that this very experienced couple were seeking a way out of church ministry - the sameness of which, Sunday by Sunday, with so little in the way of discernible progress, was most discouraging.

Forty years ago as a member of All Souls, I knew many brilliant young men in their final year or two at Oxbridge who were committing their

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lives to ministry in the Church of England which they saw as a relevant and ideal basis for a lifetime of winning local communities for Christ. This is no longer the case. Far-reaching and imaginative strategies for training and equipping both existing clergy, and in particular ordinands, must be adopted if the current decline is to be arrested. Theological colleges will need to involve experienced professionals in the front line ministries if their Ministry & Missions courses are to be of practical use in the future.

In the United States, many churches and organisations like OAC run Recreation and Homework Clubs after school, to get the kids off the streets into a Christian environment. It is all part of the Vision by evangelistically-minded churches in the larger cities, to win whole communities for Christ.

Without this vision, the church will perish.

NINE

The Evangelist and Christian Education

My little sister Ann and I were sitting up to table under the apple trees in the orchard: I remember the summer of 1940 as exceptionally sunny and warm. I remember vividly the contrails of the fighters in the sky above but they meant nothing to me at the time. We were trying to listen to Lambert, the French refugee nun, who seemed to us as old as the hills, and in her very French accent trying to teach us reading, writing and arithmetic. Golden Girl, a huge chestnut mare, was wandering about having arrived a few weeks previously in a very smart dark blue horse box - she had been a trooper's horse in the Blues and Royals and for some years had been one of a group of golden chestnut coloured horses playing their part in the Trooping of The Colour. As soon as war was declared, the horses were demobbed and ended up on farms like ours. Lambert constantly endeavoured to persuade us to call her Sister Lambert, which was something we couldn't cope with at all, as she obviously wasn't our sister! She and other members of her Order were billeted in the village in a requisitioned mansion and I clearly remember my father's intense anger that a criminal regime should pose a threat to such delightful people. The lesson went on and on, and we paid attention as best we could.

We knew that a huge treat was in store, and soon we were rewarded. Lambert produced her puppets - ten little characters - which appeared over the edge of the table. She did it so well, it was ages before we realised they were actually on the end of her fingers! They all had French names we could never remember, but they were tremendous fun, and with them she taught us basic Christianity - how Jesus loved us and wanted to be our friend. We were absolutely enthralled and I can remember the excitement today, 60 years later. In a remarkable way, Lambert made Christianity relevant and alive for us even though we were very small, and obviously our ability to understand most of it was very limited. She came each morning dressed like a French schoolteacher in a long, grey dress down to her ankles and I remember the excitement with which we ran to meet her as she opened the 5 bar gate and came up our grassy driveway. (Uncle Frank was off to the war and I remember his arrival too - in a Lagonda sports racing car with no doors. The handbrake was on the outside, and he was so dashing he would arrive at speed, put the handbrake on and lock the back

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wheels, and be over the side walking alongside the car before it came to rest.)

My father's anger about what was happening in Europe sent him to London to volunteer for the Royal Navy, but the War Office, on hearing of his qualifications, drafted him as a member of the team laying out new airfields, which disappointed him very much. However, as a civilian, he was obliged to join the local Home Guard and as he was the only member of the squad able to ride a horse - or who had a horse, for that matter - he was official Dispatch Rider, and was often deputed to be the "enemy" on manoeuvres.

He would disappear on Golden Girl with his work and more often than not could spend a quiet day not being found on Ashdown Forest!

The memory of those first lessons by Lambert and her puppets made an indelible impression on me and I am very conscious that our Christian presentations in schools today, with good quality representational paintings on the sketch-board, and the new figures and extra words that are painted up as the story unfolds, have a very powerful impact on the children.

One Saturday I was preaching in Broadmead, the city centre shopping precinct in Bristol, when a school teacher called Mrs. Parry came up to me and asked whether I would be willing to lead a 20 minute school assembly, using my sketch-board with cartoons etc., the following Wednesday morning.

Of course, I was thrilled to accept, but was somewhat apprehensive, not having set foot in a school other than for a few days when I was about eight. My father had been an amateur boxer and had always given me strict instructions that one must not hit anyone smaller than oneself.

After a few days at school, walking past the Headmaster's study, I saw him caning a small boy. I was absolutely horrified, as it went against everything I had been taught, he was obviously very much bigger than the boy and should certainly not be striking him!

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I was so put out by this that I marched into his study and remonstrated with him, and said I hoped I wouldn't see that sort of behaviour again! The Headmaster was clearly quite taken aback and had no response at all other than to complain to my father, who removed me from the school. Eventually he secured the services of a Methodist conscientious objector, Michael Beamish, who provided us with the required lessons at home every morning.

Accordingly, on the Wednesday morning, arriving at Mrs. Parry's primary school in Southmead, I was very curious to see how it all worked. The delightful behaviour of the children and the buzz of interest as they saw the painting of Zacchaeus on the sketch-board made quite an impression on me, and as I told the story, I could see that the children were totally caught up in the events as they were described. It was as if they were actually there on the day, watching Jesus, seeing the reaction of the crowd, and listening very carefully to the words Jesus said to Zacchaeus. They were all very struck with the appalling things Zacchaeus had done to his own people and really took on board the need for real repentance and forgiveness. I explained that a few days later Jesus went on, up to Jerusalem to pay the penalty for Zacchaeus' sins, but not just for him, for us too. The hall was very quiet. The staff had never seen anything like it. Nor had I. After a very quiet pause, I led them in prayers and, unknown to me, an 8 yr. old girl sitting near the back made her decision to receive Christ as her Saviour. Three years ago, I was thrilled to meet her working as a missionary in Vienna.

On a monthly basis, I went back to Mrs. Parry's school and the Bible stories became part of the life experience of the 300 or so children. One of the advantages of using representational paintings on the sketch-board is that they can be left at the school - mine were put up round the walls of the assembly hall, where the children could be reminded of the lessons they had learned about Jesus.

I received many invitations to make these sketch-board Bible story presentations in family services in Anglican churches in different parts of the South West. On one of these occasions in our home church, a 15 yr. old girl made her commitment to Christ too. I had been doing a course on the use of illusions or tricks as a means of illustrating the Gospel truths, and that morning I had been using the "Gozinta" boxes, which show very nicely the relationship a Christian has with Jesus. A

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young couple were also very moved by the message and understood for the first time what being a Christian was all about. A week or two later they both committed their lives to Christ at a crusade in Bristol led by Jean Darnell.



The 15 year-old girl wanted her school to hear the message. She asked if I would be willing to lead morning assembly at her private secondary school where about 400 girls attended in smart uniforms. She said they had never had an outside speaker to lead assembly as

far as she knew, but she would talk to the Headmistress about it. Eventually the invitation arrived and I duly attended - with sketch-board and paints. The school is in a large Georgian building with modern additions, rather out of character with the original.

I walked through the front door wondering what to expect, and was met by an absolutely ferocious lady who looked me up and down and endeavoured to make me feel uncomfortable. I explained that I had come to lead assembly and she said she realised that, and it was most inconvenient, and I could have only 7 minutes. I responded as graciously as possible that that would be marvellous and frantically thought how to compress my 20 minute message on the Conversion of Saul on the Road to Damascus. I was horrified to discover this was only the School Secretary and wondered what the Headmistress must be like. Ushered upstairs into The Presence, I discovered an imposing figure who was the daughter of an ex-Governor of Bristol Prison. She promptly reduced me to 6 minutes. On being allowed into the assembly hall to put up my sketch-board, I realised that this was the largest group of people I had ever spoken to. I was praying very busily that it would all be just right.

The girls duly trooped in and were very subdued. The Headmistress and I walked in, in convoy. I was introduced rather peremptorily and was allowed to speak. I told them about the Resurrection of Jesus, Paul on the Damascus Road, and my own testimony - all in 6 minutes, with cartoon illustrations. The impact of this must have been considerable, because as soon as I finished and before I could lead them in prayer, they all stood up and gave me a standing ovation, with

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cheers - the Headmistress was obviously very angry at such unseemly behaviour. I could see from her colour she was about to explode, and as we left the hall I thought I should say something quickly. "Good Heavens, Headmistress, you are remarkably popular!" At this, she crumbled and went very self-conscious and coy, and said, "Oh, really, Mr. Davey, that was for you!"

On another occasion at Bristol Grammar School, I did completely the wrong sort of message for teenagers and didn't really feel I was making contact with the 1,000 or so who were listening. On leaving the school I was literally in tears walking down the street having, as I felt, missed such a fantastic opportunity. I felt compelled to put a great deal of effort into learning how to talk to teenagers properly and have since realised that without that commitment there is very little point in worthies from local churches attempting this sort of work. However, God is able to do far more than we imagine. I was astonished to find years later that five young men at that assembly I had regretted so much had become committed Christians, having made their decisions on that very morning.

Over the next few months, many schools started to telephone me asking for bookings but I was surprised that in each case I was required to give a definite commitment to fulfil the booking. Apparently many had been let down by Christian workers. An ex-missionary friend who was a senior teacher at Ralph Allen School in Bath, Peter Whitehead, told me that on 30% of occasions when church workers are booked to lead assembly at school, the person concerned did not show up. This lack of commitment to take schools work at all seriously does characterise the Christian church in England today. It astounded me.

Because of the impending Billy Graham Mission in 1984, we began in 1982 to broaden the scope of our schools ministry so that we would be able to provide coverage of all schools in our area - hopefully with the assistance of members of the Billy Graham team. Something like 30 schools a day were phoning in asking for someone to come and talk about the Crusade and we realised we had to greatly broaden the size of the team in order to complete the task. Difficulties were caused by some schools that would not have certain organisations in the school again. Apparently, some youth organisations had visited Bristol schools from London and caused many problems for the staff through their lack of knowledge of the Education Acts. Most people at that time were

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unaware that it was outside the guidelines to call for conversion decisions as proselytism is not allowed under the Act, which states that “Each school day shall begin so far as is practicable with an act of worship of a mainly Christian nature”.

This wording takes account of the different ethnic groups in our society today, many of which are adherents of different Eastern religions, so one is well advised to use forms of words such as “the Bible teaches” and “Christians believe that...” and in leading prayers, always to make participation optional for those not wishing to take part.

Teachers are very much aware of the huge influence of the Church on our society historically, and the fact that much of our legal system is based on fundamental Christian principles such as the Common Duty of Care, whereby all of us are required in our daily activities not to injure the well-being of others. OFSTED, the official Government schools inspection agency, take the view that proper Christian teaching on these matters should take place for the benefit of all students, and many immigrant parents have said to me that they regard the Bible stories we tell as highly beneficial, as they help to make English culture more intelligible to their children. In some schools we visit on a regular basis, about 98% of students are Hindu, Muslim or other ethnic or religious background.

The key to successful schools ministry is the ability to tell the Bible stories in an interesting and relevant way. To do this, each talk requires a great deal of work and research - it really is important to read up and try to understand the culture of the people to whom Jesus was speaking.



Important doctrinal issues such as the Atonement require a lot of careful preparation, and are best taught using visual aids. We often use the three block trick to illustrate this tremendous truth, by which means the message becomes truly memorable for many years afterwards. The fundamental principle in Christian education is that in the stories of Jesus, the person of Jesus is revealed to us.

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Because we have been in this ministry for so many years, we now have a great deal of “customer feedback“. A Deputy Head, who was in Primary school in the early years of our schools ministry in Bristol, tells me that we were the only visitors to the school with the Christian message, and that the highly entertaining nature of the presentation made the occasions memorable to the point where “even the boys were still discussing the message two weeks later“. The Head of a large comprehensive school, where I have been taking assemblies and occasionally classes for the past 22 years, reports that we have been the only visitors who make real contact with every one of his pupils and secure their full attention, apart from a local newspaper reporter, who for some years now has been talking about events in the community. I remember one instance where the Headmaster instructed me to preach the Gospel and make an appeal!

Not aware that he was a believer himself, and very conscious of the Ministry of Education guidelines, I questioned this instruction - to be told, “Do what I say, and I’ll explain afterwards.“ I did as he said, and offered counselling leaflets too, many of which were taken by the students. Having coffee later, the dear man explained very emotionally that two teenagers in that group of 900 were not expected to live more than another couple of months and he wanted them to have a clear opportunity to respond to the Gospel. The total commitment that so many teachers have to their pupils has impressed me enormously down the years. Most seem to be well aware that without proper Christian teaching, their pupils are “sitting ducks” for the cults in later life.

Because of the imminent arrival (within 18 months) of the Mission England events, we commenced a weekly training programme for all those who might be interested in assisting with schools ministry in the future. Local teachers such as Peter Whitehead assisted and local churches advertised the opportunities to come and be part of the team.

As a result, 400 or so local churches recruited 20 trainees, about half of whom made it to the end of the course, and actually got started. The course included a lot of work on the sketch-board, and how to tell a Bible story. The objective was to equip our workers so that they would be able to talk about the Lord in a lively, interesting and relevant way. In the weeks and months leading up to the Crusade, our local schools team reached far larger numbers than attended the actual Crusade meetings at Ashton Gate football ground.

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During that week, assisted by members of the Billy Graham team, many of them nationally known figures in the United States, a number of Secondary Schools were absolutely delighted with their presentations to extended whole school assemblies. The excitement was quite infectious and probably resulted in substantial numbers of teenagers attending the Crusade meetings, who might not otherwise have come.

The very considerable extension of our regular schools work that resulted from the Crusade was the only substantial long-term benefit to Christian ministry in Bristol, apart from one or two small counselling ministries that began around that time. I had realised that for the work to develop and grow in the future, it would be essential to establish schools workers in every church fellowship, working in their local schools to form an effective bridge between the church and the community. Karen Dillon and Ken Barrett were attached to a small Brethren fellowship in Southmead of about 35 members. The three elders were teaching 35 people Sunday by Sunday, whereas Ken and Karen were doing on average 6 school assemblies each week - which adds up to about 1500 children, plus all their teachers. Being very much aware that Karen and Ken were teaching tomorrow's church, I was confident that one did not have to be too intellectually challenged to appreciate that this was a very important ministry. However, those particular elders never did catch on to the vision and appear to have learnt nothing from Ken and Karen's time as members of their fellowship.

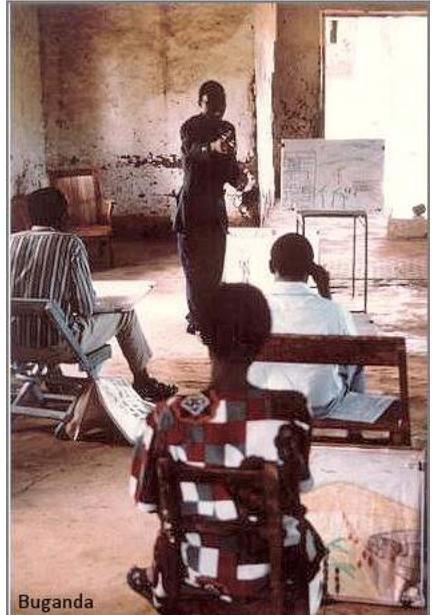
Within a few years of Billy Graham's Mission England campaign, we were working in several hundred schools, and a few people were coming from different parts of the country to join us for a week or two weeks' training. I myself visited Cheltenham, Gloucester, Hereford, Exeter, and Bournemouth, leading church weekends with a view to introducing the idea of working in local schools. Open Air Campaigners nationally had by then begun to see schools as a valuable local ministry, and the training of others for this work as an important objective - in fact an ideal complement to open air work which took place at other times during the week, and not dependent on the weather!

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Throughout these years, as we developed what must be by far the largest schools ministry in Europe, I was becoming increasingly aware of similar opportunities in countries overseas. I found that as an Anglican, although not ordained, Roman Catholics found me perfectly acceptable, and were willing to open their schools too. Some but not all Orthodox priests were willing for me to lead school assemblies and classes in Romania and Bulgaria. I have found Roman Catholic priests often more evangelical than evangelical Anglicans!

Five years ago, the Bishop of Central Buganda invited me through Alan Reader, who used to teach in a high school in Kampala, to undertake the training of school teachers and Parish workers in modern methods of Christian education in his Diocese. Alan Reader has taken responsibility for organising our ministry in Uganda as Bristol Diocesan link representative with the Diocese of Central Buganda.

The quality of these mature students is superb and in the dreadful difficulties they face, they are a stunning example to us all. They have a marvellous sense of humour.



The need to care for their families means that they can't attend seminars for more than 5 or 6 days, so they cram the maximum amount of work into the week by working from soon after dawn until midnight each day. In our first four years, we were able to take 3 schools workers to Trainer level and Pip'n'Jay church agreed to fund a local coordinator. This on-going ministry in which teachers, church-workers and clergy have been encouraged in their ability to relate the Jesus stories to children far more effectively, has, we are told, greatly improved teaching ability in church as well. The link of these people with the most missions-oriented church in Bristol, Pip'n'Jay, has been a huge encouragement to the Ugandans and a means of providing significant help in all sorts of ways. (The recent visit of the Uganda children's choir to Pip'n'Jay - all of them orphans rescued from oblivion

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by an American church organisation - was the most thrilling Christian meeting many of us had ever attended. In missions, it is really lovely how the ministry flows both ways.)

Driving through the bush in the Bishop's jeep to lead assembly at a local school is also a very moving experience! Only about 45% of children are able to get to school, because so many must help with cultivating the family's small-holding to produce the food they all need. Many girls as young as 11 or 12 are now in charge of the whole family of smaller children, their parents having fallen victim to AIDS. Sometimes the school will be a collection of mud huts with grass roofs and the children will have walked several miles to get there, having already walked quite a long way to fetch the family's daily water supply in large plastic containers carried on their heads. They stand neatly in class formation in front of the teachers, who sit on chairs on a raised platform; there will be 7-10 teachers for 800-1,000 children. The high incidence of malaria means that only five or six teachers may be present at any one time. The children regard being at school to be such a privilege that most of them have a burning desire to learn everything they can, and view our visits with huge enthusiasm.

By the time they have heard the elaborate ceremony of introduction, the Bible story fully explained and applied, and the final prayer - all of which must be by translation into their own local language making the presentation twice as long - they will have been standing for over an hour.

Normally, when visiting a school for the first time, Alan and his wife Margaret will ceremonially present the school with a couple of footballs (and a pump!) - a red ball for the girls, and a black one for the boys. Remember - they have no television, and most of them will never have seen one before. Somehow, they seem to know what they are! There is huge excitement at break-time as two very large football matches begin, with maybe 200 players a side.

I have been into a great many schools out in the bush in both Nigeria and Uganda, and must say that those have been the most fulfilling days of my life.

The opportunities that face us today for serious ministry in schools are so great that I continue to be absolutely astounded by the low priority afforded them by all the major church groups. I am very much of the

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opinion, as I drive down through Gloucestershire or Somerset very early in the morning to lead half hour school assemblies for hundreds of children somewhere or other, that these are much more significant congregations than I may meet in many churches. Here are very bright young minds, uncluttered by cynicism or prejudice, making their own important voyages of discovery into faith in Jesus Christ.

A few weeks ago, I had an hour-long telephone call from a young Bible college graduate who had just been taken on by one of our Christian youth organisations as a Schools Worker in South London: he was hired to take assemblies in local primary and secondary schools and to run local church youth clubs. Having heard of us, he rang me to ask, "What sort of things can I do in a school assembly?" He wanted to know whether it was all right to mention Jesus or not. Never having seen a Christian assembly, he was wondering what sort of things he might try as he had booked a few up for the following week. A girl working with a church in Bristol had been asked to do a school assembly on behalf of the fellowship, and was expected to go ahead and do one, although she had never actually seen a Christian assembly led by anyone else. Over the last 20 years, this sort of approach has created all kinds of barriers, particularly in Secondary schools where ethnic issues are so important. It has even led to the break-up of a marriage of a schools worker with a major organisation that simply had no resources to undertake a ministry to young people. Once he had played his guitar (which he was very good at) and given his testimony, he had little else to offer.

On another occasion, a senior school teacher who happened to be a Head of Department resigned his position as he felt God's call into full time Christian work in schools. After a number of years I hoped that his fellowship would get behind him, but instead the elders decided to set up an organisation of their own, under their own personal control. Observing David talk to 120 Sixth Formers on a General Studies course one morning, I was very impressed with the way he was able to secure the interest and co-operation of all those present with an imaginative 3-hour programme, which provided lots of opportunity for participation and enjoyable feedback. He has never secured the support of his fellowship - they do not pray for him, they are not aware of what he is doing, and their niggardly and irregular financial support have not done anything to assist his wife, who has suffered from depression. The best

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you can say about this kind of thing is that it amounts to gross mismanagement by a group totally oblivious to the leading of the Holy Spirit in their fellowship.

Looking back over the last 25 years, I realise that I have been exceptionally naive; I had not realised that to many Christian organisations a successful worker is a valuable asset. Representatives of a number of organisations passing through Albania in recent years, for example, have asked the Lorings to leave OAC and join their particular group, which would enable them to stick another flag in their map and present themselves to the churches back home as having a ministry in Albania.

Some years ago, a Christian organisation set up an organising committee in an area where we had established a successful schools ministry with a full time worker, and sought ways of “co-ordinating” so that their organisation could take the credit for doing that work. Raising funds for Headquarters in London by publicising the work as their own, they then recruited our team member with the offer of a substantial regular salary.

Unfortunately the organisation was in fact unable to meet that financial commitment, and their highly divisive “separatist” attitude led to the schools worker being cut off from a team who had been actively supplying him with the resources he needed to continue his schools work. Being part of a large team that meets regularly and shares ideas, is a huge advantage in front line work. Taking an individual outside that situation leaves him isolated and open to discouragement - in fact he did not survive. I am convinced that Christian organisations should refrain from such policies, which in the secular world would be an offence, i.e. obtaining money by deception.

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The solution for them is to have an effective professional training programme, so that they can establish their own workers properly, with the tools that will enable them to succeed. Many organisations involved in evangelism do not appear to be able to do this. Therefore, it has been a delight over the last 21 years to train candidates who have gone on with confidence to join other groups and succeed in brilliant and inspiring careers. As “grandparent evangelists” now, it thrills us to receive news of their trainees, and to see photos of crowds of people – many of them hearing the Gospel for the first time – with a sketch-board in the background.



In schools ministry in England the desire somehow to get the children into the church building seems to be the major concern. I was delighted to speak to a “Youth Service” in a Brethren Chapel and due to their imaginative poster campaign outside the building advertising the cartoons and Gospel magic, four small children from the estate came in to listen. The whole fellowship were absolutely thrilled by this and obviously felt that their L 10 gift presented at the end of the service had been well spent! However, they did not appear to be at all interested to hear that we had already spoken to 6,500 similar children in their local schools that week and I am sorry to say I never heard from them again.

In rural parishes, schools “ministry” has in the past involved a weekly visit by the whole school to attend an hour-long service in the little parish church. I think it is hoped this will help them to get into the habit of attending “God’s house” and in fact children are often told “This is God’s house and this is where we meet him”. It appears not to be understood that when we go to church, we do not go to meet God, he is actually coming to church with us - he is with us anyway!

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Dr. Samuel Abiara told me of the first missionaries arriving to evangelise his own tribe, the Yoruba, in Nigeria, constructing a little stone Gothic church in the centre of the capital; “This is God’s house” they told the astonished tribesmen who somehow or other knew of the great Creator God and considered the idea that the Great God could be confined to such a small stone structure to be absolutely hilarious! Dr. Abiara’s churches are the fastest growing in Nigeria because of their emphasis on ministry in the community.

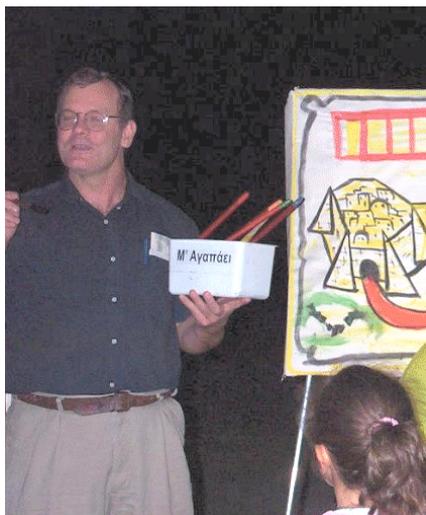
Regular visits to the parish church by schools are now much more difficult to achieve because of time constraints and greatly increased pressure on the school curriculum. The success of such services is very dependent on the skills of the local clergy who generally have no formal professional training in children’s ministry. School teachers today are highly trained professionals who expect visitors to have similar standards. It is unfortunate that many of them dread visits by Christian workers because past experiences have been so amateurish. Because of the heavy burden the pastoral ministry imposes on clergy, the future success of church ministries in school must of necessity require the recruitment of part time and full time professionals.

These may often be local housewives with teenage children, able to give one or two mornings a week to schools work. Experience shows that, with 6 months’ part time training, they are able to achieve a very high standard and form an invaluable resource as part of the local church ministry team. As a regular link with their local schools, with the skills to sustain a good Sunday school ministry, many of the children who see them during the week in school will be keen to join groups at church. Their parents will discover a new respect for their local church and its ministry too, and will attend prize-givings and special events, and hopefully one day become regular church members themselves.

The “Omega” programme I presented to the Archbishop’s Advisers in Canterbury a few years ago may one day be a means of a properly co-ordinated training programme for schools workers being made available country wide.

TEN

How Beautiful The Feet – a Personal History by Dan Truitt



Point A: In 1979, as a 25 year-old atheist, I had to rise at my brother's wedding reception in the suburbs of Chicago and salute the groom and bride with a toast.

I nearly fainted from the stress.

Point B: In 2001, at the age of 47, I go out on a regular basis with a sketch-board where I live in Thessaloniki, Greece, paint up a simple Gospel message and explain, in Greek, to the passers-by, why Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world.

How does one get from Point A to Point B?

In my case it began with a desire to know the meaning of life, despite my atheism.

This desire, as all good things, was given to me by the God I did not believe in. Despite my rejection of Him, He still pursued me in the relentless, kindly, (and sometimes severe) fashion that the benevolent Creator of the universe uses when going after the lost.

I remember lying on the floor of the living room of a home where I was house-sitting in New Orleans during December of 1983, no longer an atheist, but still a non-Christian, and writing the following words in my journal:

"I wish I knew the truth so that I could stand on street corners and proclaim it boldly and fearlessly like the prophets in the Old Testament used to."

Then in April of the following year I found myself in another house, face-to-face with an enormous, husky man in his 40s. I was about to do some repairs on his fireplace. My oldest brother, who had referred the job to me, told me that the man personally knew Billy Graham. I hated

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Billy Graham, and all the rest of the hypocritical born-again Christian world.

“So you know Billy Graham, eh?” I said, pulling my tobacco pipe out of my pocket and loading it. “Say, you don’t mind if I smoke, do you?”

“Yes I do know Billy,” he said in his deep bass voice. He had, I noticed, one of the kindest faces I’d ever seen. “Of course you can smoke. Just open that window next to the fireplace.”

I lit my pipe, and puffing clouds of foul Prince Albert tobacco, said nonchalantly:

“I don’t like Billy Graham. I don’t like the way he presents Christianity.”

The man smiled, his eyes warm and accepting. What a kind face he had! How peaceful his demeanour, and humble his carriage, despite his great physical size: he must have been at least 6 foot 5 inches (195 cm) tall.

“Well Dan,” he answered, “I know that there are a lot of Christians in the world who are hypocrites. What I would suggest you do is to get yourself a Bible, get alone with it, and read it for yourself. Then you decide who Jesus Christ is.”

Thus the wisdom of Mr. George Beverly Shea, long-time close associate of Billy Graham, and a man who at that time I didn’t know from Adam. His advice was the last nail in the coffin by which would be buried my old man, and from which I would, as so many others had in history, rise up again to walk in newness of life in response to the living Word of God.

This is the way people have been getting born again through history - through the Word of God, whether written or proclaimed verbally. Historically, the greatest number have been brought into the Kingdom through the proclaimed Word, and especially during times of revival, during which much if not most of this proclamation takes place outside the walls of the church.

The Beverly Shea episode occurred during Easter week of 1984. During that same week I had decided to commit suicide, because I couldn’t handle the world the way it was, and didn’t see it changing anytime soon. I walked down a busy road steeling myself to throw

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myself in front of a passing automobile, but in the end did not do so due to fear of the unknown, a lack of desire to break my mom's heart, and to avoid putting anybody through the inconvenience of scraping me off the highway.

I continued walking, passed the town limits, down the road, and finally ended up at the farmhouse of another one of my brothers. He invited me to watch TV with him. The movie "Peter and Paul" was playing, starring Anthony Hopkins as Paul. Paul was preaching in the open air to the Greeks of Asia minor:

"And I, Paul say to you," Hopkins/Paul was proclaiming with his magnificent Welsh diction, "that everyone who believes in him shall be saved from shame ... that faith becomes supreme of all human acts - faith in Jesus Christ, whose death has brought redemption from sin in all aspects for those who believe..."

For those who believe...I knew then that God loved me, and, as Beverly Shea suggested, I bought a Bible. Two nights later, I was saved while reading Acts.

Within a month, I had found work with a bricklaying Baptist preacher, Phil King (who spent the next 3 years discipling me as we worked side by side on the scaffolding), had given my whole life and resources to the Lord, and had committed myself, in response to God's direction, to the work of cross-cultural missions. I was just a couple months old as a Christian when I made an announcement of my commitment to world missions, and particularly the public proclamation of God's Word, in the little Baptist church where Phil was preaching.

I was met with ... blank stares and tepid reassurance. Nobody seemed to know what to say.

"Come here, Dan," Phil King told me after the service. He was furious. "Don't you let those people for a minute discourage you. Probably no one in the history of this church has done what you've just done, and they should be dancing for joy. These are a good people, but they're dog-ignorant of what the Lord is doing in the world. I'm committed to pray for you and help you in any way I can." As good as his word, Phil King was either directly or indirectly responsible for nearly half the support I would subsequently raise.

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I began attending another church with a better reputation for support for missions, but the pastor's wife didn't think it was a good idea for me to leave the country. I had realized by this time that the Lord was calling me to Greece, which is the neediest mission field in Europe (maybe 0.15% of her people are saved. My grandfather had been a Greek immigrant). The pastor's wife wanted me to settle down, marry a girl she'd picked out for me, and help out at her husband's church.

"But Dan's committed to go to Greece as a missionary," Phil King told her one day while visiting my new church.

"Oh, he'll never get to Greece," she laughed.

I changed churches again, and finally found a place that was more positive. But time was passing - I was 33, and had completed only a year of Bible school, and feared that another 2 years of Bible school plus 2-3 years of support raising would push me off the track to have any hope of learning decent Greek. On top of that, I'd had to quit Bible school for financial reasons.

That's when I met Bill Baldwin, founder of the Greek Bible Institute in the Athens suburbs, a Greater Europe Mission school for Greek nationals. Bill and his wife Marion had been in Greece since 1966 - a remarkable achievement in this era. But even more remarkable is that they, along with their co-workers, had founded and maintained, against terrific odds, one of the best Evangelical Bible schools in Europe. Just as, earlier in this book, you saw the founding of educational institutions as an important step in the missionary movement, Bill and Marion, along with their co-workers, believing in this principle, worked hard and long to establish a school in a country where virtually nobody wanted them. The Orthodox Greeks did not want them because they believe all Evangelical teaching to be heretical. The Evangelicals did not want them, either, because they believed in their pride that foreign workers were either unnecessary or incapable of learning their language and integrating themselves into their ancient and complex culture. For the most part, they are right - Greece has been for years a notorious graveyard for missionaries.

Or those that end up staying, for the most part, fail to learn the language well, and stick around doing rather peripheral things not directly related to the winning of that needy land for Christ. The Baldwins and their co-workers the Finkes and the Hills, are notable

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exceptions to this on all counts. They have mastered the language, and over the decades found hard-won acceptance in the Greek born-again church. All four of Bill and Marion's children married Greeks, even though they don't have a drop of Greek blood themselves.

In June of 1997, Bill spoke at my church - was one of its missionaries - and I asked to see him privately. We met the next day, and I told him my testimony and of my calling.

"How old are you, Dan?" Bill said.

"Thirty-three." I had told him about a debt that I had incurred and was now in the process of paying it off before I felt I could continue with my Bible education.

"And how much money do you owe?"

"Seven thousand dollars."

Bill thought a long moment, and then let out a long sigh. Then he said, "About all I can suggest to you, Dan, is that you get your debt paid off as quickly as possible, and then move to Greece and finish your Bible training at the Greek Bible Institute. You're not getting any younger, and Greek is a very tough language. This way you can learn Greek and the Bible at the same time. If you don't blow a gasket, you'll make a lot of progress in a short period of time. You'll live with Greeks and learn their culture, as well as their language, and the Bible, of course."

I recognized it for the extraordinary offer that it was, immediately agreed, thanked him, and within a year and a half I was climbing off the plane in Athens, debt-free but totally unsupported (because I felt I didn't deserve financial help as a Bible school student), and ready to blow a gasket.

Which nearly happened over the next three and a half years, but, praise God, I was able to get a good foundation in the Greek language and to finish the course work there, which was all taught in Greek, sometimes with translation for English-language visiting teachers.

Speaking of which, my first autumn there - this would be 1989 - a tall, skinny, bearded, beaming, impossibly cheery man of about 50 blew in from the UK to spend a week teaching the Bible school students open air evangelism through the use of the sketch-board. This is something

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he'd been coming to Greece and doing for several years. I took an immediate liking to Korky Davey and his sketch-board, and saw it as the means by which a whole nation could be reached - by which many people could stand on many street corners and fearlessly proclaim the truth. It is something desperately need in Greece, which, paradoxically, although it gave us the language of the New Testament, has a more Bible-ignorant clergy than any other Christian nation in the world.

But it would be some time until I would actually do a presentation in the open air in Greek. I was committed to a Greek-speaking ministry. My Greek would not be up to speed for a couple of years, and then I had to go home and raise support. I wasn't ready to come back to Greece as a fully supported missionary until 1994, which is when I audited Korky's seminar again, and took the plunge. I was scared STIFF. I remember all day that day I first did the sketch-board I had the sensation that there was this huge cannonball in my stomach. Finally the big moment arrived. I stumbled a bit here and there, but got through the message in a fairly intelligible way. The way things turned out, a couple of teenage boys, who had stopped to make fun of me, were taken in hand by Akis, one of the Bible school students. This gifted personal worker explained the Gospel explained to them, and they prayed for salvation on the spot.

Akis was with us the previous summer when we tried to do an evangelistic program near the seaside town of Xilokastro near Corinth, which is the next village over from the birthplace of my grandfather. It had been my idea for our team to go there. The whole town rose up in arms, made us take down our equipment, shouted obscenities and said we committed orgies and other unspeakable things, and came within a whisker of throwing our things into the sea. This was the reason for my fear the night I did my first sketch-board - Greeks are highly suspicious of foreigners and non-Orthodox Christianity, and often react in hostile, and sometimes violent ways.

I find the Greek people a fascinating study in brilliance with a potential to win all of Europe should that brilliance be unleashed on the rest of the continent through sudden and wide revival here. They are among the most highly gifted and blessed people in all of history: 1st in education and 2nd in earning power of all the peoples who emigrated to America. They are the founders of Western Culture and are deservedly proud of that fact.

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But there are tremendous ancient spiritual barriers here that were erected thousands of years ago with the paganistic tradition of the 12 gods of Olympus (reminds one of the 12 Apostles and the 12 Patriarchs) in combination with the deep and complex philosophical theorems of the classical thinkers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Tragically, both these elements worked their way into the church within a couple generations of its founding here by the Apostle Paul. If you read the Greek Fathers of the church, you will see that they are shot through with neo-Platonist speculation, which goes far afield of Biblical theology. Some of the main spiritual strongholds in Greece which must be prayed down for the open air preaching of the Gospel to take root effectively are pride, lust, slander, control, fear, religiosity, and individualism. Most of the great figures of the Bible and of church history have been wedded to demonic powers from the old religion.

An example of this is the “Zoodoxos Pigi,” the “Life-giving fountain,” found in the catacombs near the ruins of one of the oldest churches in downtown Thessaloniki, where I now live. You follow a narrow, whitewashed passageway to the ancient well where blessed water is said to spring up. There is an icon of the Virgin Mary there, holding the Christ child.

They are situated on top of a fountain of water, which represents life. The message is that the Virgin Mary is the “Zoodoxos Pigi -” the author of life. The ancient fountain is actually the fountain where the goddess Hira, the wife of Zeus, was located. A demonic presence is palpable in that place - so much so that my wife became upset nearly to the point of being sick going down there.

In his very interesting book “Informed Intercession”, which has as its theme the phenomenon of “spiritual mapping”, George Otis says that a body of false religious tradition “does not come all at once, but accumulates bit by bit over generations, each person adding to the common lore ... 'social time' - history experienced by the group - amasses power. This power is more than superstitious tradition. It is the product of thousands of people bringing their faith to specific points of contact... The longer this process continues, the more it attracts, and is reinforced by, deceptive demon agents.” (– from Chapter 6, “Layering Space and Weaving Time,” by George Otis, 1999, Renew Books). We believe that this well under downtown Thessaloniki is one of many such “points of contact” in Greece through which demonic powers are

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enabled to do their deceptive work. I've held small prayer meetings there, serving notice that we are here to preach the truth, and that no supernatural power is going to prevent that.

After my first open-air presentation in Athens in 1994, I was hooked - but soon saw that the work my mission (a Greek-led organization) wanted me to do, conflicted with my desire to do open-air ministry. They were for evangelism, and were even positive about the sketch-board, but most of their evangelistic work centred around their 3-week annual summer campaign. The other 49 weeks of the year, they were doing nearly everything but open-air evangelism. Worse still, as an organization, I saw that as time went by that they were really more about trying to control their workers rather than trying to enable them and release them into ministry, and due to this tendency I left them.

I had to find another missions organization. I didn't want to lose a couple of years in the States hunting one down that fitted what I felt was my vision for Greece, as well as going through the process of raising additional support. Indeed, there was no such organization working in Greece at the time, so I arranged to have one of my supporting churches temporarily handle my financial support for a year or so, until I could work something out with a missions organization.

I signed a one-year contract to work with a new Greek church in the suburbs of Athens, but was given virtually nothing to do. I wasn't allowed to teach, to preach, and was even forbidden to give my testimony in church. It was a difficult year - I'd been in Greece by then seven years, had all the training in Bible and language that I needed, and yet I was forced to vacuum carpets and clean toilets. Nothing wrong with that - I was glad to still be in the country - but I felt the Lord had something else to do with the hard-won money my financial supporters were sending me every month.

I saw the thousands of lost people on the street every day and my heart was aching that nobody was doing anything to reach them on a regular basis. Greeks are an incredibly proud people whom history has passed by. God had given me a deep and abiding love for the nation of my grandfather, and I had come to the country to show them, by the grace of God, as Paul had many years before -

“... that everyone who believes in him shall be saved from shame ... that faith becomes supreme of all human acts - faith in Jesus Christ,

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whose death has brought redemption from sin in all aspects for those who believe...”

Finally in the spring of 1997 I decided to find someone I could do open air with, and began to preach on a regular basis with my friend Wayne Ritchie, a highly gifted New Zealander who had been used of the Lord to bring revival to African merchant marines in the port city of Piraeus. I was warned by one of the elders of the church I was working in that if its sister churches learned I was working with Wayne, who had a different theology than the body I was cleaning toilets for, they might hesitate to work with me. I suppose he meant that the sister churches might refuse to allow me to clean their toilets, too. I ignored him, and had a terrific time that spring preaching the gospel with Wayne and his wife, Adrienne.

When my contract expired, I got in touch with Korky Davey, who had already invited me to consider the possibility, about associating myself with his organization, Open Air Campaigners. I had come to Greece with the intention of working in church planting, but had seen that the crying need here was for the country to be properly and systematically evangelized. There were plenty of decently trained shepherds in the country thanks to efforts of the Baldwins, Hills, Finkes and others at the Greek Bible Institute, but nobody was drag-netting the Aegean, as it were, which teemed with fish. I figured it would be a simple formality of changing my support over to OAC and continuing in Greece doing sketch-board with whomever I could find.

I was wrong.

“Why don’t you plan on coming to Bristol and getting some proper training,” Korky faxed me. “Plan on being here, say, 9 months or so.”

Nine months! No way, was my first reaction. I’ve done the one-week sketch-board seminar here in Greece twice, have I not? I’ve worked too long here to be absent from Greece an entire year, which is what it really shaped up to be, once you factored in going back to the US to explain the change of mission organizations to financial supporters.

But Korky was adamant, and in retrospect, I’m glad he was. The time I spent in Bristol was invaluable. I met a lot of people who had the same vision for the lost that I had, borrowed a lot of ideas from the schools work going on in Bristol, and got some excellent training in story

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composition, painting techniques, and public speaking from Korcky, his wife Anni, Derek Heyman, and many others associated with the work of OAC GB.

It was a tremendously nurturing and encouraging environment, and a time that even now, 3 years later, I look back at with misty-eyed fondness. I fell in love with the Mother Country, and especially with Bristol, the city of Wesley, Whitefield and Mueller.

In addition to that, I was able to strategise, think, and counsel with people older and more mature than myself about the best way of cracking the very tough spiritual nut that is Greece. As mentioned, prayer plays a big role in all of this. The strongholds of Greece must be prayed down in conjunction with sketch-board messages that speak to this ancient culture and people.



For that reason, I believe, God saw fit to give me, in 1999, at the age of 45, the greatest gift outside of eternal life that I could hope for: a smart, kind, attractive Greek wife who is committed to prayer, open air ministry, and helping me in putting together uniquely culturally Greek messages. On top of that, Zoe has recently given birth to our daughter, Catherine.

Follow God's will for your life, stick with Him while you're in the desert, and He will refresh and reward you in ways that you couldn't possibly imagine.

We've established ourselves in a church that is 100% behind us, and are in the process of building a team for regular evangelism and planning different outreaches, utilizing teams of foreigners and nationals. One must be culturally relevant to a people like the Greeks, who have such a strong sense of national identity, and Zoe is full of great ideas on messages that fit the culture here. One example is to take Plato's idea of the philosopher-king: the ideal wise ruler in whom the people can trust because his authority is tempered with the goodness and insight of the philosopher. The philosopher-king is wise,

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kind and fair. Jesus is not only wise, He IS wisdom, and is the ultimate philosopher-king.

Our desire is to establish ourselves here as an official, legal presence, and slowly to build a ministry by which Greek nationals are unleashed with all of their gifts upon a tremendously spiritually impoverished land. We believe that we will live to see revival in Greece, and are grateful for the opportunity to be participants in such an event. It's not going to happen today, or even tomorrow, or possibly not for many years. We can wait. We're not going anywhere anytime soon...

I've just taken off my slippers and socks, and spent a couple of minutes examining my feet. I can't say that my feet are the most attractive things in the world - they smell a bit musty, the heel is disproportionately large compared to the rest of the foot, and my second toe is noticeably longer than my big toe. Feet are, generally, rather ugly objects. If you don't believe me, have a look at your own feet.

But you know what? God doesn't think my feet are unattractive. He says that they are beautiful.

Dan Truitt, Thessaloniki, February 9, 2001

Dan's remarkable story vividly illustrates the hurdles that must be faced by anyone called to cross-cultural missions; the fact that he did ultimately win through to such a remarkably productive and challenging ministry, and mastered the Greek language probably more effectively than most other missionaries in Greece, is a real testimony to his determination to stick to his call. His is a very fine achievement. He has not mentioned that, right in the middle of it, he was very seriously ill and had to undergo major surgery for a potentially life-threatening condition. At the end of it all, the one or two indigenous missions agencies were unable to use him, as they did not wish to get involved in more than short-term summer crusades. Dan's vision is very much to get involved in long-term local evangelism that reaches local communities effectively.

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Dan's former church in Athens is a delightful fellowship meeting in a building just off one of the main residential squares in the northern part of the city. The fellowship comprises some wonderful Christian families, many of whom Dan and I have known for years; the pastor has a fine teaching ministry, and we have always hoped that one day some of them would come with us to do street evangelism out in the square. From time to time we have led open air meetings there for substantial crowds - it is a lovely place with a fountain, children's play area, street cafes, bars, and the underground station is on one corner - in the evenings crowds of people, particularly teenagers, are attracted to listen to a message for 10-15 minutes and afterwards discuss the implications of knowing Christ at some length. Very few of the fellowship ever came to take part and the elders did not appear to see it as part of their task to win these people for Christ - their difficulty in finding something for Dan to do in their midst was the reason for appointing him janitor.

A ministry that restricts itself to meetings on church premises would seem to have little to offer the local community. The national Church claims to be the oldest Christian denominational institution. It has the advantage of presiding over life-cycle ceremonies such as baptism, marriage and funerals, but apart from that, it appears to have very little appeal other than to the older generation.

The Greater European Mission (GEM) founded in the late 1940s by Bob Evans, trains indigenous Christian leaders in most Western European countries, and nowadays extends into Central and Eastern Europe. They offer superb theological training and produce some of the finest young men and women I have seen in Christian service. Evangelism is their core vision and OAC is privileged to play its part in some of their training programmes. Raising up men and women properly equipped for the task of reaching their own country must be the most effective way to fulfil the Great Commission. Ian and Caralee Loring's remarkable success in mobilising, training and releasing so many men and women into ministry in Albania shows what can be achieved.

Hopefully in the years ahead the rapidly declining church in England will come to see the need to adopt some of these methods at home. In the next Chapter, I set out the training programme that those of us in the mainstream of evangelism in Europe today consider essential for anyone attempting front line Christian ministry in Europe.

ELEVEN

'The Snowball' Training Programme

Many years of experience training evangelists for mission in Europe, some of them full-time missionaries of long standing, led us to embark on the development of a full-scale training programme. We aimed to equip evangelists not only to succeed in their own ministries, but also to mobilise and train others. The intention is that evangelists trained by us would build substantial team ministries of their own and so be far more effective in reaching large numbers of people with the Gospel on a regular, day-to-day basis. Hence, the name "Snowball" which of course grows as it rolls along. Mark Howe and his team in France who set up the OAC "Europe Now" European Missions division of OAC produced the following training programme. Paul Hazelden of Europe Now introduces it like this:-

THE BIG PICTURE

Eternal Truth operating through devoted followers produces transformed lives.

The Main Areas

1) Character 2) Ministry 3) Truth

These are the same for any Christian work. The ministry must be based on the truth, and flow from a life that embodies that truth by living in a close relationship with God.

1) Character: who we are and what happens within us; our relationship with God, and how we live to express that relationship. No ministry can be maintained without personal integrity and a rich devotional life.

2) Ministry: extending God's Kingdom both down and out. On the one hand, digging deeper into God's word, deepening our relationship with and love for our Lord and Saviour; and on the other hand, bringing new people into God's Kingdom, and extending His rule in the lives of His children. Ministry is always what we do to serve God and what He does through us in the power of His Spirit.

3) Truth: what God says is true. Also known as "reality". Only the truth has the power to set people free.

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Making it happen

Between truth, ministry and character come the other four areas:

TOOLS, EVANGELIST, AUDIENCE, MESSAGE

These are the four aspects of transforming the abstract and eternal truth, into a concrete and specific ministry that transforms peoples' lives.

TOOLS: what we use. Techniques for gaining attention and communicating clearly, ways to create a context in which evangelism can take place naturally. We need to be skilled in a variety of tools so that we can exercise an appropriate form of evangelism in each situation.

EVANGELIST: what we are and what we do. Personal disciplines, spiritual life, teamwork, how we organise and maintain a ministry, and the accountability structures to support this.

AUDIENCE: the people to whom we are reaching out. We must understand them if we are to love them and communicate effectively with them.

MESSAGE: what we say, and to which we invite people to respond (this is not as obvious as you may think!).

The Approach

The approach to training used by Jesus was "on the job" and we seek to do the same. As far as possible, we use each of the training modules in a specific way in the ministry we undertake, during the course where possible; or we use practical exercises instead.

We cannot teach character or programme the ministry. Just because they cannot be checked as memory verses can, that does not make them unimportant. To be granted an academic qualification you must be able to complete the course by doing all the work and completing the exercises to an acceptable level - but that will not make you an evangelist, nor guarantee that any evangelistic organisation will want you to work for them. Your love for the lost and the way you relate to your fellow Christians have a far greater impact on your ministry than your understanding of eschatology. The syllabus covers what we can

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teach and test. We will help you with the rest, as you are willing to be helped.

TOOLS (THE WORK)

How to communicate.

How to share the Gospel with adults (Evangelism Explosion).

How to share the Gospel with children.

How to proclaim the Gospel.

How to answer difficult questions.

How to use a sketch-board.

How to run an open-air meeting.

How to run a children's club.

How to use questionnaires and local visiting (door to door).

How to use entertaining conjuring tricks and escapology in presenting the Gospel.

How to use puppets and ventriloquism.

How to use music, drama, mime and dance.

Organising a ministry

How to raise support (newsletters, deputation).

How to work with churches.

How to bring other people into ministry.

The Evangelist

Your spiritual life - remaining spiritually healthy, personal discipline, coping with stress, prayer and contemplation, spiritual warfare.

Your social life - friends, family life, singleness and marriage.

Your church life - worship, small groups, leadership.

Your ministry - use of time and money, teamwork, accountability, goals, self-assessment.

Your future - guidance.

Your predecessors - learning from those who have been there, evangelists/missionaries.

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The Audience

Understanding different cultures (national assumptions) and world views (philosophical assumptions).

Understanding different ages (children, teenagers, young adults, middle-aged, elderly).

Understanding different social groups (perceived class barriers, unemployed, homeless, addicts, minorities).

The Gospel Message

Communicating the right message (love and respect).

Communicating what we believe (we believe in Jesus).

Communicating why we believe (testimony, reasons for faith, apologetics).

Communicating yourself (incarnation, integrity and testimony).

Communication with people of different ages in different cultures and social groups.

Communicating the traditional Gospel message

- the problem - sin (nature not actions)
- the cross (substitute, representative and ransom)
- the resurrection
- Salvation (Jesus is Lord)
- the results of salvation (changed lives).

Truth

Submitting to God's authority.

Submitting to the Bible's teaching (what does the Bible really teach?).

How to study the Bible (Bible introduction, overview, reading the Bible for yourself and others, understanding the Bible, inductive Bible Study method).

Other Areas

Follow-up. Christianity and Art. Church History. History of Christian Missions.

History of Open Air Campaigners. What is evangelism?

THE SNOWBALL COURSE

THEOLOGY (100 hours)

ST1: The final authority in matters of faith (12 hrs)

Aims:

- To be aware of the different ways in which God reveals himself.
- To understand the primacy of the written and incarnate Word of God in revelation.
- To be able to deal with questions on the trustworthiness of the Bible.
- To understand the principles involved in interpreting the Bible.

Outline:

Authority - its meaning, its source.

Revelation - its significance, its likelihood, general revelation, specific revelation.

Scripture - the Bible - Grounds for receiving it as God's written Word. Inspiration.

Canonicity. Other issues. **Hermeneutics.**

ST2: Overview of Biblical themes (4 hrs)

Aims:

- To give a coherent overview of the Bible and its message.
- To give the student confidence in his/her ability to handle the Bible.
- To create a desire for further Bible study.

Outline:

The background: God and Creation (distinct but involved); God and Humanity;

God and Rebellion.

O.T. Introduction (Themes): Deliverance. Community. Theology (knowing = experiencing God). Inheritance.

O. T. Introduction: Story.

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In the Gap.

NT Introduction (Themes): Prophecy fulfilled (recognised but not predicted).

The True Israel: Jesus and the Church. The True Redemption.

NT Introduction: Story.

ST3: Walk thru the Bible (12 hrs)

Aim: To give the students a working knowledge of the content of the Bible and an example of how it can be taught.

Outline:

Walk thru the Old Testament (6 hrs). Walk thru the New Testament (6 hrs)

ST4: How to study the Bible (12 hrs)

Outline:

What can I study? A word, a part (verse, paragraph, section or book), a person, a theme (topic or doctrine), a story.

What can I focus on? The key to all Bible study is application and obedience - putting it into practice. With that assumption, a study can concentrate on different areas. I can focus on what the Bible tells me about God - myself - God's Kingdom - the world - common life experiences - common challenges (issues, questions, doubts and fears).

Other approaches: So far, we have looked at objective truth and how to find it; but we also need to consider subjective truth and use our imagination, our feelings, and our creativity. Drama, paintings, poems, illustrations and modern parables can all make the original message live. The objective of all this is to help the student get inside the passage, experience it, respond to it, express (as an individual or group) what it says to us.

ST5: The doctrine of God (10 hrs)

Aims:

- To be aware of orthodox Christian teaching;
- To be aware of some of the more important areas of controversy;
- To understand the application of these doctrines in personal life and ministry.

Outline:

The being of God - The grounds for Christian theism. The rational proofs of God's existence. Presuppositional apologetics. Evaluating the rational approach.

God the Holy Trinity - The Biblical basis. Understanding the doctrine.

The importance of the doctrine.

The attributes or perfections of God - Glory. Lordship. Holiness. Love.

The work of creation - Creation "out of nothing". Continuing creation.

A question of language. The scientific enterprise. Miracle. The question of origins.

Creation of the spiritual world.

The work of providence - The extent of providence. Necessary distinctions.

God's providence and evil.

ST6: Mankind and sin (10 hrs)

Aims:

To be aware of orthodox Christian teaching.

To be aware of some of the more important areas of controversy.

To understand the application of these doctrines in personal life and ministry.

Outline:

Essential human nature - The perennial question. Mankind in relation to God, to himself, to his neighbour, to the created order, and in relation to time.

Humanity in sin - The fall of mankind. The nature and extent of sin. The effects of sin.

Further issues. Present debates. Summary.

Humanity in grace - Jesus Christ, the God-Man.

The Christian, the new creation in Christ.

Humanity in glory.

ST7: The person and work of Christ (12 hrs)

Aims:

To be aware of orthodox Christian teaching.

To be aware of some of the more important areas of controversy.

To understand the application of these doctrines, in personal life and ministry.

Outline:

The humanity of Jesus Christ - His religious life. His limited knowledge. Temptation. Post-resurrection.

The deity of Jesus Christ - Direct statements of his deity. Jesus' identity with Yahweh/Jehovah. Other Gospel evidence. The conclusion of this testimony.

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The one person - The early debates. Other important concepts. Modern interpretation.

Further comment.

The atonement: Biblical teaching - Atonement in the Old Testament. Jesus the Messiah.

The atonement: historical perspectives - Interpretations - objective, subjective, modern.

ST8: The person and work of the Holy Spirit (10 hrs)

Aims:

To be aware of orthodox Christian teaching.

To be aware of some of the more important areas of controversy.

To understand the application of these doctrines, in personal life and ministry.

Outline:

The person of the Spirit - Old Testament teaching. New Testament teaching.

The Spirit of promise - The Spirit before Christ's coming. The Spirit and Christ.

The Spirit and Christian beginnings - The foundation: the grace of God.

The essence: union with Christ by the Spirit.

The Spirit and Christian growth - Assurance. Sanctification. Perseverance.

Means and end.

Historical perspective: the Holy Spirit today.

ST9: The Church (8 hrs)

Aims:

To be aware of orthodox Christian teaching.

To be aware of some of the more important areas of controversy.

To understand the application of these doctrines in personal life and ministry.

Outline:

The identity of the Church - Biblical images of the Church.

Characteristics of the true Church

The life of the Church - Worship. Fellowship. Ministry. Witness.

The Church's growth - The Word of God. The sacraments. Prayer.

Fellowship. Suffering.

The church in history - Forms of organisation. Historical perspectives.

The Church's future.

ST10: The last things (8 hrs)

Aims:

To be aware of orthodox Christian teaching.

To be aware of some of the more important areas of controversy.

To understand the application of these doctrines in personal life and ministry.

Outline:

The Kingdom of God - Old Testament background. Jesus and the Kingdom.

Late New Testament teaching. The Kingdom and Christian experience.

The second advent of Christ - New Testament terms. Biblical passages.

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The Second Coming - its nature, its purpose, its timing. Related issues.

The final state - Death. The intermediate state. The resurrection.

Judgement. Hell. The life to come.

The last things in Christian thought - The early centuries. The Middle Ages.

The Reformation. The 19th Century. The 20th Century.

THE WORLD (50 hrs)

SW1: The Cultural Context (10 hrs)

Aims:

To understand how Christianity relates to the world.

To be familiar with different notions of truth.

Outline:

Christianity and culture - Changing people or changing society. Church and state. Christianity and the arts.

Different cultures - What is truth? Truth in modernism. Truth in post-modernism.

Truth in the Bible.

Science and religion.

SW2: World views and religions (25 hrs)

Aims:

To be familiar with the major world views.

To know how to talk to some of the groups more commonly encountered during evangelism in Europe.

Outline:

"Areligious" world views - Atheism. Agnosticism. Nihilism. Existentialism.

Religious world views - Pragmatic. Judicial. Mystical. Relational.

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Some specifics on: Roman Catholics. Jehovah's Witnesses. Mormons. Muslims. The New Age.

SW3: Answering Questions (15 hrs)

Aims:

To understand the potential and limitations of rational defences of Christianity.

To have a basis on which to respond to the more common questions raised.

Outline:

How to handle questions.

The "big three" questions - Science. Pain. Other religion / ways.

Some other questions and "red herrings".

THE EVANGELIST (50 hrs)

SE1: My identity (10 hrs)

Aim:

To understand my identity in Christ and the importance of my gifting, personality, gender and family circumstances.

Outline:

Who I am in Christ.

My gifts and capacities - Gifts, fruit, talents, skills, jobs and vocations.

What are my spiritual gifts? How should I use them?

My personal style - The Myers-Briggs Temperament Inventory.

Individual applications; team applications.

Gender - Value and roles. Gender in creation, fall, redemption and glory.

Gender in culture and history. Personality/family implications. Ministry implications.

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Singleness, marriage and family life.

Singleness: God's plan for everybody, for at least part of our lives. Single does not have to mean "alone". It is not good to be alone. Learn to be successfully single; desperation is no foundation for marriage.

Marriage: Different expectations and models of marriage (mutual support...)

Not made in Heaven. Hard work: requires commitment to make it work.

Maintain healthy relationships with other people.

Sex and love: Love is an act of the will. Sexuality is part of life; God created humans as sexual beings. Sex only belongs within marriage, whether you are married or not. Simplistic rules do not help. A commitment to holiness does.

SE2: Walking with God (15 hrs)

Aim:

To understand the key spiritual disciplines and practices, and their personal, vocational and corporate applications.

Outline:

Prayer and contemplation

Questions about prayer: Praying about the past; about people; praying with your own words or other people's. Vague prayers. Praying in groups, praying for groups.

Prayer in the Bible: Examples and approaches. Abraham. David. Daniel. Jesus.

Mechanics of prayer: To the Father in the name of the Son through the power of the Spirit. Spoken, thought, written and unspoken prayers.

Models of prayer: Making things happen. Changing God. Changing the world. Changing me. Destined for the throne. Developing a relationship. Understanding God (learning through conversation). In tune with God ("be ye transformed"). Communion. Direct experience. Opening yourself to God. Combining the models.

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Exploring the subject. Getting inside the need.

Prayer and the body: position, environment, health.

Prayer in my life; in my team; encouraging others to pray for me.

Guidance - Be careful of the dangerous examples we can find. Fleeces and tightropes. Over-spiritual - a "word from the Lord" for everything.

Over-confident - He will guide my feet.

Responsibility for guidance: Guidance is God's job and something He is quite good at. God generally does not provide specific confirmation of guidance.

Limits to guidance: God's plan is that with maturity comes discernment.

We do not always appreciate what is important in God's sight.

God sometimes allows us to learn through our mistakes.

Principles of guidance: Scripture. Reason. Consistency. Proportionality.

Wise counsel. Honesty. Desire.

Guidance at a personal level.

Guidance at a corporate level.

God and my time

Principles: Unity. Planning and spirituality are two sides of the same coin.

You can only give to God what you have. If you do not have control of your time, you cannot offer it to Him.

Motivation. Are we motivated by grace or works, by gratitude or grasping?

Do we need to be needed and approved? Should we act only if our motives are pure?

Honesty. Pretence is hard work, but honesty is not an excuse for giving in to the flesh.

11: 'The Snowball' Training Programme

Control: Internal or external?

Balance: Work and play, body mind and spirit, church and home.

Priorities: Clear but flexible.

Practicalities:

- Diary - take control but leave spaces.
- Lists - don't try to remember everything.
- Filing - Know where to find what you need.

Organising my personal time.

Organising my ministry time:

Visions, purpose statements and goals in general.

Visions, purpose statements and goals for an evangelist.

Prioritising: the urgent versus the important.

Planning: why, how (portcullis techniques).

Decision-making: weighted criteria

Handling paperwork: correspondence; filing.

Taking control of your diary; avoiding procrastination.

God and my money - Principles. My "own" money. My ministry's finances. My supporters.

Living with stress - Principles. Stress in my personal life. Stress in my ministry.

SE3: A Workman Approved (25 hrs)

Aim: To develop a healthy, Biblical approach to evangelism and mission.

Outline:

The evangelist - The mythical evangelist.

Evangelists in the Bible: Passages that speak specifically about evangelists.

What we can infer from the life of the Early Church.

Evangelists as the NT equivalent of OT prophets.

11: 'The Snowball' Training Programme

Some famous evangelists: Wesley and Whitefield. William Booth. D. L. Moody.

C. H. Spurgeon. Billy Graham.

Generalisations: Character strengths and weaknesses. What does and doesn't motivate them. How they relate to the rest of the Church.

Evangelists as part of a Ministry Team: What they have to offer, what they have to gain.

Areas of overlap (church-planting, follow-up, teaching....)

Evangelists within "Europe Now"

Mission: What is a missionary? Could I be a missionary? Missionary Societies. "The History of Christian Missions" (Bishop Stephen Neill, Pelican books). "History of the Christian Church" (K. S. Latourette.) Why some succeed and others fail. Crossing culture and language barriers. Building for eternity. The folks back home. Is it worth it? Working with churches. Strategy.

SM1: General Communication skills (8 hrs)

Aims: To understand the principles of good communication.

To be able to apply these principles in a variety of evangelistic contexts.

Outline:

What is communication?

Transmitter, message, receiver, noise, filters, feedback.
Principles from Acts 17.

What is communicated?

The facts. The emotions. The context. The communicator!

Communication media:

Sight vs. sound. Verbal vs. non-verbal. Propositional vs. narrative.

Practical hints and tips:

Making effective presentations. Effective one-to-one communication.

SM2: Evangelism Explosion Trainers Course (52hrs)

Aims: To model a church-based, every-member approach to evangelism.

To ensure that students can make a basic Gospel presentation in the course of their various evangelistic activities. To check that they are themselves saved!

To give them the opportunity to become accredited E.E. trainers.

METHODS

SM3: Sketch-board Preaching (48 hrs)

Aims: Preaching to non-Christians is the core module for the entire course.

How evangelistic messages are put together: to be relevant and effective, this is best done using the sketch-board.

Read:-

“Preaching & Preachers” by Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones

“Lectures to my students on the art of preaching” by C. H. Spurgeon

“Open Air Evangelism” by Mark Howe.

Outline:

Why do it?

Proclamation in the Bible. The case for open air evangelism.

Street preaching using a sketch-board:

Demonstration and analysis of a message. Structure of a message.

Message-writing workshop. Equipment. Painting techniques.

Presentation. Practice.

Teamwork on the streets:

Anatomy of an open air meeting. During the meeting. After the meeting.

Choosing a site.

11: 'The Snowball' Training Programme

SM4: Questionnaires (3 hrs)

Aims:

- To understand uses and abuses of questionnaires.
- To know how to construct a useable questionnaire and how to use it.
- To know how to analyse a questionnaire - by hand or by computer.

SM5: Music and Dance (10 hrs)

Aims:

- To understand what street music/dance is and is not good for.
- To be aware of some of the criteria for judging "good" or "bad".
- To have taken part in a street skiffle band and dance/banners presentation.

SM6: Drama and Mime (14 hrs)

Aims:

- To understand what street drama is and is not good for.
- To be aware of some of the criteria for judging "good" or "bad".
- To have performed at least two simple sketches.

Outline:

Why use street drama? What makes a good piece of street drama?

Basic acting techniques. Turning a Bible story into a sketch.

Some classic street dramas. Managing street drama.

SM7: Conjuring Tricks and Escapology (10 hrs)

Aims:

- To understand what Gospel conjuring is and is not good for.
- To be aware of the ethical issues.
- To be able to perform at least 2 simple tricks with Gospel application.

Outline:

11: 'The Snowball' Training Programme

Why use Gospel tricks/escapology? Principles. Routines. Showmanship. Ethics.

SM8: Follow Up (6 hrs)

Aims:

- To understand the necessity of follow-up.
- To be aware of some of the problems that can arise.
- To be aware of the benefits of various follow-up "systems".
- To know how to present assurance of salvation.

SM9: Working with children (35 hrs)

Aims:

- To understand the importance of presenting the Gospel to children.
- To understand the difference between children's and adults' evangelism.
- To know how to relate to children of various ages.
- To be able to plan and lead a children's club outside or in a building.
- To be able to give a children's talk, e.g. for a church service.
- To be aware of legal and ethical issues relating to child evangelism.
- To be aware of the special issues relating to schools work.
- (France) to be aware of the rules/qualifications required.

Outline:

Children and God. Child development. Contemporary child culture.

Children's clubs using the sketch-board.

Children's work without a sketch-board (just to show it is possible!).

Counselling children. Children and the law.

11: 'The Snowball' Training Programme

SM10: Puppet Shows (22 hrs)

Aims:

- To have an understanding of puppet ministry.
- To know the basic skills needed to perform in and lead a puppet group.
- To build props etc. needed to illustrate your concept.
- To create and perform a musical show as part of a puppet team.

Outline:

Structure of a volunteer puppet team. Recruiting volunteers and leaders. Equipment needed. Puppetry techniques. Scriptwriting/playwriting. Prop making theory.

Prop building. Rehearsal/choreography. Set-up, rehearsal, performance, take-down. Puppet making. Screen building.

SM11: Ventriloquism (6 hrs)

Aims:

- To understand the uses of ventriloquism, its principles and skills.
- To begin to master the skills required. To produce a first routine.

Outline:

Introduction, demonstration, breathing. Puppet manipulation and voices. Imperceptible speech and sound substitution. Dialogue and showmanship. Performance.

SM12: Working with Teenagers (6 hrs)

Aims:

- To understand the special needs of adolescents.
- To know how to present the Gospel to them.
- To know what is involved in running a Youth Group.

Outline:

What is a teenager? Relating to teenagers. Leading thematic discussion.

Playing games. Writing a sketch. Make a Gospel presentation.

OPEN AIR CAMPAIGNERS INTERNATIONAL **DOCTRINAL STATEMENT OF FAITH**

The Scriptures: We believe God inspired all the words of the Bible without error in the original writings to give mankind his authoritative message.

The Godhead: We believe in one God eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ: We believe in his full deity, his virgin birth, his real humanity, his sinless life, his substitutionary death, his bodily resurrection, his ascension into heaven, his present ministry as High Priest and his future personal return to this earth.

The Holy Spirit: We believe in his full deity. He convicts sinners and saves those who believe in Christ. He indwells, seals and places believers into the body of Christ. He gives spiritual gifts and the power to live the Christian life.

Man: We believe that God created all things as described in Genesis. We believe that the first man, Adam, sinned. This brought death to all mankind, who therefore stand condemned, making the new birth absolutely necessary.

Salvation: We believe that God gives eternal life to those who repent and put their faith in Christ alone, justifying them by the blood of Christ and imputing his righteousness to them.

The Church: We believe in the universal church to which all believers belong. We believe in the importance of the local church that is made up of believers who gather for worship, fellowship and teaching. We believe in the responsibility of the Church to fulfil the Great Commission of Christ, preaching the Gospel to all nations.

The Future: We believe in the eternal existence of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the eternal blessedness of believers and the eternal punishment of unbelievers.

TWELVE

Proclamation Evangelism and the Modern Church

Religious Humanism

Returning from the annual Christian Education training seminars in Uganda in the summer of 2002, having checked my luggage in at Entebbe airport, I went upstairs in the modern terminal building to the departure lounge. I was a bit behind the rest of the team and wandered into the wrong doorway; I found myself in a marvellous Club Lounge with very smartly liveried waitresses and waiters, in a superb Club atmosphere with beautiful furniture, restful decorations, delightful pictures on the walls of colourful African scenes, and a huge bar offering all kinds of delights. One wall of the room was a large picture window looking out on to the apron where the aircraft stood below. I could see out over the lake and the hills behind - it was a lovely, sunny evening. We had had a wonderful month with the inspiration of being with the African clergy and I began to feel marvellous. The low music in the background instilled a sense of tremendous peace and well-being ... until I was chucked out! This was of course the Prestige Lounge for holders of American Express credit cards or Business Class airline tickets.

Turning on the radio yesterday (February 6th, 2003) I found myself in a similar situation. It's the largest church in California, with 19,000 people attending each Sunday. This beautiful glass building in the rolling countryside, the continuous low music, the coffee bar and doughnuts given to everyone as they enter, the modern decor with ultra-comfortable seats. There is a special message for you from a God who loves you so much: he wants to meet your every need - he wants you to be rich, he wants you to feel good about yourself, and the mesmeric tones of the preacher assure everyone that God's services are all offered free to those prepared to "be loving, or super-nice". They have certainly found a way to make people feel good in a pleasant club atmosphere and the God who wants to serve you will make everything about your life really successful ... will you support our church?

The super-nice church has arrived: any kind of jarring influence is removed from the service, like the Gospel for example. "Seeker-friendly" messages are designed to remove any kind of godly

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requirement from the individual: skilful preachers allude to the doctrine of salvation as a non-comprehension of what Jesus really meant. "We have moved on from there" is what they say. It is not about our doing something in response to what God has done, like repenting, for example, it is about "being", joining in with our group and being nice to everybody. The service is more in the nature of a floor show than a real worship session - the whole thing backed by continuous soothing music - the tones of the preacher have much more in common with those of a hypnotist than a revivalist preacher like Billy Graham. The entire programme is designed to please the consumer - and those in the congregation become consumers. Participation takes the form of being a good consumer, joining the club.

The salaries offered to ministers able and willing to function in this kind of environment sometimes exceed \$140,000 a year. It seems to me that some of these features may tempt some of our Church leaders to move in this direction. What we regard as "success" becomes confused when certain courses of action lead to larger numbers of people attending our church, effectively voting with their feet and accepting the much lower demands made on them. It becomes easier to understand why so many of our leaders are willing to compromise with the world on quite serious matters of morality, for example. Seeker-friendly messages that leave out the offence of the cross are likely to lead to larger numbers in our group, but not necessarily bring them to Biblical faith.

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These sorts of fellowships are in fact exceptionally successful businesses. I happen to know one of them quite well. Even with a congregation of 6,000, the building is one of the largest Church buildings in the United States - a Mega church in every sense of the word. There is a large book stall open every day, together with several large crèches which care for toddlers for working mothers, a Primary school, two Bible colleges, two huge auditoriums, and various facilities used by a number of local social clubs for their activities. This is a going concern every day, dawn until dusk, generating an annual turnover of around \$19 million. Going to this Church is a wonderful experience: the back-drop is impressive, with a stage set of Biblical street scenes provided each month by the Disney Corporation; (two articulated trucks are housed in garages either side of the stage out of sight, where they can be loaded and unloaded conveniently). In this particular Church, Bible teaching is of a very high standard and the eldership exercises strict control of every activity. Employees are expected to be at their desks 9-5, which restricts activity outside the Church building. Other Mega churches are maybe not quite so fortunate and tend more towards being social clubs - several have Starbucks cafes open all day long on the premises with gymnasiums, swimming pools, singles clubs, old people's socials, and generally mirror the tendency to do everything big, seen everywhere in the newest American Malls.

Many of these Mega churches are far more influenced by the principles of sociology than any Biblical imperative. One Pastor reports that on any day you go to his church, there will be 1,000 people having cook-outs, playing baseball, fishing, walking, enjoying the nature trails - this kind of church concept is spreading very rapidly and is becoming the dominant social force in middle class suburbia in the USA. Indeed the Mega church's approach to social issues can often influence the agenda of an entire community. It is a kind of religious Walmart. The policy will often be to avoid taking a position on controversial issues such as abortion, gay rights, creation, Darwinism, various moral issues. The policy seems to be guided by a desire to avoid any kind of offence to anyone. The Hartford Institute for Religious Research says, "They are playing on a whole different understanding of religion. It is not something that looks anything like your parents' faith, they are tapping into the 'Bigger is Better' Mall-like mentality of America, and it is not going to go away any time soon."

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Sometimes the historicity of Scripture is an issue that drives humanistic tendencies in the modern church. My daughter was astonished on attending Bristol Cathedral at Christmas 2003 to be told that "The Christmas stories do not pretend to be history as we know it. They are stories designed to convey religious truth." This was on the carol service sheet handed out. Dr. Tom Wright in his books on the New Testament refers to statements like that as the result of historians breaking every single rule of historical analysis! He says that what made Judaism and Christianity so different to anything else in the ancient world was the fact that their Scriptures spoke of a God active in human history, and whose Scriptures are accurate reports of historic events. Clearly the writers of the Cathedral service sheet had no knowledge at all of the Magi or who they were, of the shepherds or what they did for a living and why, or even why Joseph and Mary took such tremendous trouble to be in Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus at about the worst possible time for their family.

Tom Wright, in his book "The Resurrection of the Son of God", gives a detailed analysis of the events surrounding the Easter story. Judging by what he says, few believers have much idea of the enormity and uniqueness of the resurrection of Jesus, or of what it means today.

The upshot of all this is a deep sense of dissatisfaction with what the church is teaching, in the hearts of the spiritually awake, hungry for spiritual fulfilment and "renewal". Articles in the secular press highlight the alarming decline of traditional religion and the spectacular ascendancy of "designer spiritualism".

All kinds of spiritualist cults are growing; these can be based on the **Kabbalah**, a kind of philosophical cult in Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and ancient therapies such as **Reiki** and **Crystal healing**. We are living in a multicultural pluralistic society featuring illiteracy in Christianity, but we have not lost our desire for spiritual fulfilment. The mass appeal of some of these philosophies has taken the place of the hippie trail East to Nepal in search of The Truth. We no longer have to go abroad; it's all in our local village hall Yoga centre or possibly even our gym. Many Westerners, particularly women, will master Buddhist chanting in a meditation class, learn about ancient Hindu philosophies during a Yoga class, light an aromatherapy candle, and say a prayer to some nameless god, in search of inner peace and physical wellbeing.

The Pastor's Dream

The objective of most church Pastor/Managers is to see more people coming to church, and anything likely to achieve that objective will be acceptable, even if the effect is to attract people from other churches rather than the local community. In fact, the largest churches tend to be eclectic, where most of the congregation come from elsewhere. Three of the most successful churches in England, All Souls Langham Place (John Stott's church where I myself became a believer in 1951), Holy Trinity Brompton, which now has a worldwide ministry with its various training programmes, and Christchurch Clifton, here in Bristol, are all eclectic churches. They represent the highly effective face of Anglican evangelicalism today. However, Paul Berg, retired Rector of Christchurch, three of whose curates were to become Bishops, and a great friend to me over many years, really did not see the work of the church as extending outwards by proclamation evangelism to the wider community in Bristol. He saw evangelism as the means of introducing someone to his fellowship, not someone else's. His question was always "Korkey, how many have you brought into my fellowship this month?".

Ed Reis, one of the senior evangelists with The Navigators in Ohio, told me recently that one of the local Baptist churches had stopped his support because he was working to win converts who went to another Baptist church the other side of town. The whole concept of the missionary movement in seeking to win converts to the Kingdom of God has now been lost at local level. Someone we know from our fellowship, who has gone on the mission field, will attract some support from those who know them in the fellowship; but by and large, the fellowship as a whole will raise only a couple of thousand pounds a year. There are of course exceptions to this and Kensington Baptist Church in Bristol has a wonderful record of supporting missionary couples, and over the last 20-30 years has generally provided for between 15 and 17 couples. Pip'n'Jay is the only Anglican church in Bristol with a record anything like this, and has given £1 million to mission over the last 15 years or so.

As set out in Chapter 3 of this book, Pastor/Managers and Pastor/Evangelists are categories of Church Manager where very little interest in evangelism is likely - only the Evangelist/Pastor of the kind you sometimes meet church-planting on the mission field has a vision

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for the whole of the potential harvest. It is only those with a vision for all the people groups beyond the reach of the local church in their local community who are likely to understand that proclamation of the Christian message is the only way a breakthrough can be made. No attempt is being made in our Training colleges to equip students with the skills necessary for this kind of ministry and most ministers become so completely convinced by the evident logic of the teachings of the church growth movement as to discount the proclamation of the Gospel as a serious means of reaching the lost. Sometimes OAC evangelists working in countries like France find street preaching such a tough proposition that they are drawn into little local French fellowships where twenty believers can be won in twenty-five years.

The rough and tumble of presenting the Gospel out on the street to large numbers of people is a draining experience but it is how the Scriptures describe we should present the Gospel to the lost.

The Modern View

Sometimes I meet people in front line ministry without formal training in street preaching, who allude to the fact that the people they are preaching to simply do not understand that they are sinners, and do not accept the whole concept of sin being a barrier between us and a relationship with a Holy God. Their experience of quasi-Christian national institutional churches where these issues are papered over in their religious cult practices inoculate them against seeing a need for reconciliation with God, and so heavily inoculated as they are, it is extremely difficult for them to catch real live Christianity. Surely, the response of the preacher should be to find a way of presenting the Gospel in a relevant way, making it understandable, rather than to emasculate the entire message by leaving out the key elements to make what is left acceptable and "seeker-friendly"?

It is increasingly clear that proclamation evangelism is so low on the list of priorities in the modern Church as to make it extremely difficult for those with such a local ministry to survive. Deliberately marginalised as irrelevant, the evangelist and the Gospel message will need to find new ways to survive. The evangelist must stand on his or her own feet financially, encourage their own prayer support group, and gain most team members and trainees while out doing the work. This is where potential trainees can see the role model that inspires them into action,

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and receive their call from God to this pattern of ministry. The evangelist can no longer function as a recognised part of the local fellowship leadership team as envisaged in Paul's instructions regarding church management. The evangelist wishing to survive in the real world needs to have a regular local ministry pattern, and to be able to minister as a professional with his or her own dedicated management team. There are so few parish evangelists that they did not even rate a "tick this box" category in the Christian Research survey of church staff or positions held, a few years ago.

As the huge and widespread local shopping Malls fill up with thousands of people on Sunday mornings, and fewer and fewer people find themselves in church, the relevant ministries are those able to function where the people are. A marvellous local initiative by the ASDA /Walmart directors is to invite the members of the local clergy to be present in their stores as Chaplains to assist people with family problems and other counselling needs. It is interesting that this initiative should come from business rather than the church. The Salvation Army have found an opening in offering a Sunday School children's hour, within the shopping mall area, providing parents with a free hour to shop while their children are looked after.

The initiative for our schools ministry, which inspires substantial numbers of the Christian education team to go into their local schools, came from school teachers themselves - it was not an approach from us. Teachers perceive the need to educate young people in Christian faith and life and they insist on the highest standards. It will be increasingly difficult to find people in our congregations with the motivation for this kind of work, and the commitment required to achieve an acceptable standard of skill, as the church moves into being a body of consumers.

The Way Forward for OAC in England

Many people have gone through our training programme here in Bristol to various levels of competence, and a number have gone overseas and established national ministries. These tend to take slightly different patterns as situations in different countries vary, but most of those we train are able to see these different situations as opportunities rather than problems and their training has instilled what I regard as quite a unique level of adaptability. Most have been very successful in presenting the Gospel to large numbers of people. Always the measure of success is our effectiveness in engaging with the hearts and minds of those we are addressing, not in the number of converts, because in Scripture we find that the evangelist is a teacher of God's message rather than a reaper of souls. In three cases (Colombia, Albania and Holland), our local ministry has led to the establishment of a number of churches, as that has been the need in those particular areas.

So - these are the four main areas that have helped us most to be effective:

1. A really effective training programme: most of us in the work agree that Snowball programme devised by Mark Howe and Paul Hazelden with help from Steve Poulard, contains everything an evangelist needs to establish a viable ministry. Taught at Degree rather than Diploma level, it is unique in this field. See Chapter 11.

2. It is essential for an evangelist to establish a long term local relational ministry out in the community seeking opportunities to present Christ among all the people groups. Evangelism cannot succeed as a poor relation dependent on opportunities to preach provided by a disinterested local fellowship.

3. There must be a properly established leadership team consisting of a board of management of very experienced believers with a vision for the wider ministry of the Gospel; these are likely to be people from the fields of education, business, and possibly law. **There must be a proper accountability group** for the Evangelist to report to on a regular basis, with proper management of the accounts.

4. Those involved on the team under the leadership of the local evangelist must have proper recognition and participation in the local ministry. Those involved in schools work, for example, need to share

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ideas, pray together, and learn from each other's experiences. Street evangelists are most likely to be part-time and need to share stories of their most recent experiences so that those who have had a tough week can be part of the success that someone else has enjoyed. Sharing our experiences and being together, praying together and enjoying a meal together as a combined team at our home every Tuesday evening, has been a source of tremendous strength to us all. **People on the team must be valued**, appreciated and encouraged.

5. Each trainee joining our work is encouraged to set about finding a "Timothy" immediately - someone who can accompany them, learn what they are learning, and be the beginnings of each individual starting their own team. Paul and Sue Blocksidge have joined us recently, and have probably been successful in recruiting their Baptist church in Clevedon. Paul's experience with us over the last year has led to his being invited onto the church Evangelism Committee, made him leader of the church's Open Air team, and has greatly encouraged one middle-aged man who never quite succeeded in getting things going on his own. Paul and Sue have terrific people skills and really draw others into what they are doing - one of the important gifts we should look for in an evangelist.

Anni and I have found it an absolute joy to be part of such a fabulous group of people. Preaching in churches as I often do, I always have lots of stories of the wonderful things that they are all doing - like our favourite Colombian, Farid Lozada and his wife America, running their street church in Bogota and caring for the hundreds of victims of the terrorists out in the countryside. He feeds them, preaches to them, encourages them, and maybe is beginning to turn the tide, as only Christ can bring peace through repentance and faith.

In 1266 the Great Khan, Kublai Khan, ruler of almost the whole of Asia and the greatest empire of the mediaeval world wrote to the world head of the Christian church, the Pope, in Rome. He requested a team of 100 priests to visit his country "To teach the true religion". Apparently, the Great Khan was aware that his people, who practised their mainly Shamanistic religion, were deeply dissatisfied with it and wanted to know the truth. Kublai Khan's grandson wrote a similar letter 19 years later to another Pope. Sadly, both letters were ignored, the Pope having more important issues to hand. Time passed. Certain Arabs - natural

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enemies historically - were interested in the people of Asia and vast areas of that continent are now Islamic.

Today maybe several thousand very sincere and impressive young Muslim evangelists, male and female, are ready to evangelise Europe and Africa. These are fine young men and women, well trained, and totally committed to the task. They are already having a considerable impact on impressionable young people in Greece. Will history repeat itself? The prognosis today is not good. Most missions and evangelistic agencies do not train their people to preach the Gospel to the lost. Most in fact are involved in Christian aid of one sort or another. One of the world's greatest mission agencies is being expelled from Thailand right now, having spent 80 years building hospitals and schools - now the Government acknowledges their help but wants them to leave "because we are a Buddhist country". The Apostles did not go around tacking the Christian message on the back of some other sort of activity. This was one of the major reasons they were so successful - the Gospel was so important, and the Resurrection so vital, that it simply could not wait for various other activities to take place.

Judging by attendance at European missionary conferences, there are far fewer people in our churches in England interested in mission and evangelism than there are in Spain, whose church is comparatively tiny. The vision simply does not exist in the greater part of the Christian church today. One church with a budget of around \$20 million allocated \$125 for a struggling group assisting the persecuted church in the Sudan. That was their annual budget for that particular group. Similar amounts were paid to several hundred other groups involved in missions and evangelism around the world, which means that they can have a long list of supported groups on their notice board at comparatively low cost to the church. This sort of thing is a pretty good indicator of the consumer churches' burden for the growth of the Kingdom of God. In England, the Vineyard churches, as well as a number of other more recent groups, display similar attitudes in some ways. The key seems to be that the church group has become the message, rather than the Gospel.

The People of God?

The peculiarly European concept of the Church as the State denomination and the political necessity for the State Church to be inclusive of every member of society begins with **Constantine** in around 320 AD. The mass baptisms by both the Eastern and the Western Church led early on to Church membership being the key factor rather than the preaching of the Gospel leading to salvation by grace. Church membership implied rectitude and acceptance by society, with all sorts of very important social implications that generally affected one's employment. Religious observance and nominalism on a massive scale now defines "Church". In Greece even Nationalism, "being a good Greek" requires membership of the Orthodox Church.

Inclusiveness requires compromise on a wide range of quite important issues. To pick out just two:

1. Liberalism rejects the historicity of a lot of the New Testament and sometimes even large chunks of the Old Testament. This idea is based on so-called scientific analysis from the University of Tubingen in Germany, which has now been shown to be anything but scientific, and is based on an analysis primarily of the Gospels which breaks every rule of scientific historical analysis - yet this nonsense is still taught in our Bible colleges. The consequence is that a large number of clergy are not believers in the Biblical/traditional sense. This is actually destructive of faith for many. Another problem is that there cannot be a Bible-based consensus on major issues such as the one that Rowan Williams is struggling with at the present time: morality.

2. Morality. To thinking people, the Church now presents a very odd picture. Right from the beginning of the Bible, the people of God are called to be "a peculiar people", called to live a holy life in accordance with God's laws. This now no longer seems to be the case. Lack of Bible knowledge, that is to say a real understanding of a lot of the things that Jesus taught, within the context of his culture, has led to the belief that to be loving means to compromise with immorality and sin. This is simply not the case. Luke's Gospel particularly makes it very clear that those he had fellowship with, ate meals with, partied with, were repentant and had left the life they had previously lived. Large sections of the church simply do not understand this today because a lot of the teaching they receive is so incredibly shallow.

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With God's help the people of God, his Church, can recover themselves. One of my students, writing from the grinding poverty of his remote parish in Central Buganda, has produced a beautiful essay on what the local Church can do to be the people of God again. I set out the letter below exactly as he wrote it, so that you too can catch the flavour of the vision of this great man.

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Rev. Livingstone Mayambala,
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1007b Central Buganda University

To Professor Korky Davey

EVANGELISM AND MISSION

FINAL ESSAY

TO DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL CHURCH CAN PLAY ITS PART IN
THE **EVANGELIZATION OF UGANDA?**

Statistically **Uganda** is a christian Country Consisting of different denominations. Generally speaking, 86% are baptized Christians, with 4% Traditionalists and 10% Muslims.

When Christianity came to Uganda a Century ago, the missionaries started teaching the people the good news of Jesus Christ. There were no church buildings. Sometimes they gathered under big trees. Those who found the Message interesting and had something to do with their life, stayed, asked questions, and those who were satisfied, were converted. They were registered for catechumenism. Thus, they obtained a wonderful name "Abasomi" (Readers) Because they were learning the Gospel. It was the burden of a missionary both to teach and explain, not forgetting to ask questions to find out whether a catechumen is really accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Gradually the converts were baptized.

After baptism the Teaching continued, for every baptized person was sent to extend the good news to neighbours and relatives. We can trace that to the early christian families in Uganda, where a head or prominent member of a family became an Anglican, the whole family was planted in Anglicanism, and vice-versa. The early converts after gaining Knowledge and skills were sent in the country to evangelize people. They did it quite well and they were known as "Ababuulizi benjiri" (evangelists). These are the ones who built churches everywhere. Also, they built schools at every mission station. They had the New Testament as the source of information, especially the Gospel according to Matthew, which was the first translation of Scripture in Luganda. Later on when the first whole Bible was translated into

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Luganda, it was very enjoyable. Through Bible study, Christians learnt more of their faith and the church became very strong, useful, helpful, and the church became a source of civilization and Life, both physical and spiritual.

The church built schools, introduced Western civilization and made many changes in the life of her members. The missionary hospitals introduced new medicines and treatment, which superseded the ordinary African medicines and treatment. These among the many were the major factors that attracted and trapped many people to become converts.

The most outstanding tools of evangelism in Uganda were the local trained people. Nearly 97% of the present church stations were planted by the natives.

Everything became christian in those early days. But the dangers that affected and destroyed Christianity in other Countries were not far from here.

Educated people were appointed to good jobs, got salaries, their ways of life changed. This led very many people to join missionary schools in order to obtain good jobs. It became a policy to baptize whoever joined a missionary school.

After surveying the beginning and the growth of the church, we can easily ask ourselves whether the church in Uganda today is still faithful to her mission of evangelizing all people.

It is easy to note that today a big number of people do not hear the Gospel and a proportion of those who do hear it hear a Gospel different from the basic teaching of the Apostles. A big percentage of baptized people do neither go to church nor read the Bible. That has created a big number of nominal and lukewarm christians. Apart from those, there are those who are both baptized and still have another leg in the Traditional beliefs. And also the Muslim community with its influences.

At this juncture, we can begin answering that important question: "How can the local church help in evangelizing Uganda?"

As noted earlier, Uganda is a Christianised country. We see this practically wherever there is a state function. Church ministers are

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invited to lead prayers and bless the function: and that is all. This means that in one way or another, Christianity is becoming a culture!

In His Ministry, Jesus, soon to be followed by His Apostles, started His Mission with and among the local people and from such people the good news reached the topmost people of the governments of the world. What is needed in Uganda is A FRESH REVIVAL to awaken the nominals, lukewarm, backsliders and reach the unreached.

I come down to grass root, my local church. The first thing to do is to engage myself in prayer with fasting asking Almighty God to send the Holy Spirit, the helper, enabler, Guide and greatest teacher, re-establish his work in the church starting with me.

Like the Apostles in the first century, and great missionaries of the following Centuries, we must start where we are, not necessarily at Nnamirembe Cathedral or any other big church. We must go to the people wherever they can be found. Those who come to church, commit their lives to Jesus, must be trained, thoroughly, to learn not only reading the Bible, but also learn what the message to proclaim is. We are not to preach religions, for there are many religions, but like Paul to the Corinthians, "We preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor.1:23). Our small group, after making sure that the Holy Spirit has directed us to go, we will march out.

The principles before us are exactly the same as the Apostles used. We are to emphasize "One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism". The weather changes, people grow and die, colours fade, but Jesus is the same. At this point, we must bear in mind that there are people with different understanding of Jesus Christ. Some believe Jesus to have been a great teacher and wonder worker and deny his Divinity. Others, like some Jews, still believe Jesus to have been a blasphemer, a criminal, who was crucified for his own fault, and end there.

Some still wait for a political liberator in order to become on the top of all humans etc. But the true teaching was, and is, and will be, that the Messiah has come and appeared in the Life, Ministry, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. He fulfils the O.T. prophecy. In other words, God's plan of salvation, through Isaac, Jacob and the Patriarchs, was sealed by Moses who taught the children of Israel God's ways and laws; that plan is clearly seen in God's dealings with Israel - come to a climax in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

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Thus, he is Lord of all the creation as Peter says "Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 3:36).

The second point is the emphasis on "One Faith". Paul teaches that "We who are many are one body". In understanding of that teaching, our team work should not be directed or limited to people of our own church. We are to reach and include all who are willing and ready to receive, accept and carry on the basic teaching of the Gospel, as recorded in the Four Gospels and preached and taught by the Apostles in the other books of the New Testament. And not forgetting that that Faith was planted in the Old Testament. So the Old Testament and the New teach one Faith.

Thirdly, Baptism is the outward sign that indicates the inwards Grace received by a convert. It is the Admission to the Family of God - the Church. Equipped with that Basic Teaching of the Gospel we face the disturbed confused world. It is important for our trained team members to study and assess the situation, because wrong approach always results in failure. For Instance, it was reported in the Press that in November 2003, a born again Pastor in Eastern Region wanted to convert Muslims in the area; his methods were to use miracles. He told the Muslims that together with his brethren they were going to pray for their (Muslims') miraculous conversion and set a deadline. The miracle failed to happen and the mission failed. We must avoid such ways. What we should do is to:

Go to school, arrange with teachers to meet children at school instead of waiting for them to come to Sunday school.

This can be more effective because it enables us to meet many youths. Also, we must take christian Education to schools. We must encourage parents to buy Bibles for their children. And we must contact helping organizations like the Present World Home Bible League, which distributes Bibles in various languages, and probably include them on our team so that we may have something to offer to our converts. Using different methods of evangelization, we want to reach as many people as possible. Let us go on Open Air Services, use door to door, family to family method, which I think to be more effective in the rural areas but street evangelism is more applicable in towns and big cities. We want to work for the salvation of each individual and deal with his/her personal

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problems and failures. Last but not least, we have to train local leaders of the congregations we establish.

Experience has shown the following weaknesses:

(1) Many people come to Jesus, accept Him as Lord and Saviour, but they do not grow to maturity, because they are neither nurtured nor cared for.

(2) Every year young Christians get confirmed by the Bishop, they disappear because there isn't systematic follow up at different stages.

(3) Elderly members' rigidity discourages the converted youth to express their joy in Christ. As a result, the youth leave the traditional church.

(4) Mass Christianisation, baptising for the sake of acquiring large numbers is a grave danger, because such people cannot withstand the opposition and influence of both Islam and Traditional beliefs.

(5) Generalisation. Taking for granted that every baptized is a full member of the church is not good. It has led many team Leaders to quarrel and complain with the absentees instead of sharing testimony with the present;

Family Prayers, Fellowships, Bible study groups are very very important if we are to succeed.

Conclusion

This is a very important and useful essay. It is in the middle if not the heart of our ministry. It is important for me because it reminds me of my role as an evangelist. I have learnt what true evangelism is. Secondly, we are not the only evangelists; there are others in other corners of the world, who face problems that are not in our country.

Thirdly we have the work and testimony of those great missionaries who went to the toughest areas such as Robert Moffat, David Livingstone, and the first Church Missionary Society members to Uganda whose ways of life, work and persistence made the church take roots in Uganda and other parts of the world.

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Today, Ugandan Christianity needs a revival different from all the previous ones. A Revival which sees the need to reach all people, rich and poor, old, youth and the infant, learned and illiterate, famous and despised. A Revival that crosses barriers and discrimination. If we reach that state, we will be able to overcome the problems that prevent the children of God from enjoying the famous relationship conferred upon humans at the Creation.

We want to see Uganda regaining new life in Christ. The on-going misbehaviour will vanish away and we will always praise God for his unceasing Love that endures for ever.

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Bible Quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version.

Livingstone very clearly understands the disastrous consequences of promoting nominalism by treating baptism and confirmation as life-cycle celebrations, rather than recognition of new-found faith. This is called "Christianising", and while it may introduce the Christian ethic to a pagan community, little is achieved without real evangelisation.

Anyone aspiring to Christian leadership in our churches and capable of learning from Livingstone can take heart that preaching the Gospel is the most profoundly effective way of winning the lost, as the Holy Spirit gets to work in the hearts and minds of the hearers.

YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE IT!!!

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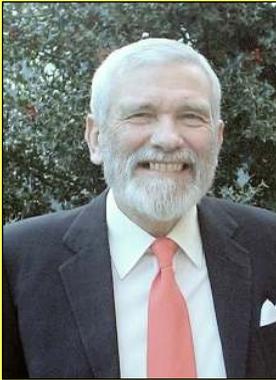
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Biblical Patterns of Evangelism Today!

Pioneer missions in India in the 17th and 18th Century found that the one effective way to evangelise a tribe or nation was to build schools rather than churches: thus reaching a generation of young people, who became well-versed in the Scriptures. This has been a major focus of the Open Air Campaigners mission in Britain, Europe and Africa, S. America, and S. E. Asia. As a result, huge numbers meet with the Jesus of the Gospels. This book provides up-to-date theological understanding of the Gospel accounts drawn from the latest scholarship, to assist Christian teachers in their crucial ministry.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Korky Davey spent his teenage years as a regular broadcaster on BBC radio. He was converted at All Souls, Langham Place, on 21st September 1951 and he was closely involved in the beginning of the Navigators. It was in witnessing their ministry in Terrorist Detention centres in Kenya in 1958, that he received his call to be a preacher.

During the 1960s, Korky trained as a Chartered Surveyor, marrying Anni in 1965. They have four wonderful Christian daughters. Both Korky and Anni understood God's call on their lives and to Christian ministry. He trained at Trinity Theological College, Bristol, under the finest theological brains of the 20th Century (including J. I. Packer, and Alec Motyer). Anni did most of the course too, typing out all Korky's essays and learning Greek in order to hear his vocabulary!

Rejected for ordination by the Church of England, Korky and Anni were free to be led by the Holy Spirit. They received an invitation from Open Air Campaigners (OAC) to establish a new Branch in the West Country. His open air preaching in Bristol and Bath in 1977 led to invitations from Church leaders all over southern Europe. The famous OAC bus transported evangelistic teams from University Christian Unions to Spain, Italy, France and Greece. These visits established some substantial teams of indigenous evangelists.