

EVANGELISM ON THE HOME FRONT

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This is a day of emphasis. Experts are used to discover just where emphasis ought to be placed to indicate importance. In the war, it shifted from the war front to the home front, and from the home front to the war front. The field of church activity furnishes an interesting parallel. Emphasis is just now being placed upon evangelism in pioneer fields. But a part of this emphasis ought to be swung to the home base, the already organized church.

Too many have the mistaken idea that the main activity of the established church is worship. Worship is important because it is primary and fundamental; but evangelism is a twin activity, and they are inseparable. Worship is the filling; evangelism is the flowing—the one will not function without the other.

The gospel presupposes an evangel. There are so many alluring bypaths for sermons that the minister is in danger of neglecting the main road of salvation. One said two years ago that a sermon was not complete without a reference to Hitler. It doesn't make much difference, it seems, whether Jesus is mentioned or not. Our practical religion is in danger of becoming sterile. A flower which bears only stamens has no possibility for fruit. "It is the Father's will that ye bear much fruit."

In 2 Samuel 18 we have a picture which may well delineate a church breathless with activities but without a message. Absalom had been killed; the news was to be carried to David. Ahimaaz was the fastest runner and of some rank in the army. He thought that he ought to be the one to carry the news. But Joab knew that it would be a sorrowful message and he decided to send one who, when seen approaching by David, would not raise his hopes. So Cushai was chosen to be the messenger. But Ahimaaz insisted and he was permitted to go, but without a message. He outran Cushai and came to David first but, stammering and embarrassed, he was forced to withdraw because he had no message. Programs! Activities! Projects! This "do something" attitude of the church brings us too many times before a needy world with no message.

We need more sincerity, which is simplicity. Too many of us are in a class not analyzed as hypocritical, but professional. Professional is cold and distant. Psychiatry may analyze human problems and psychology may classify, but there is no comparison with the heart appeal, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." The tongue of fire fell on one hundred and twenty for spiritual fitness, and they went out, every one, and witnessed for Jesus.

The church is to be a conductor capable of readily transmitting power. We must be attached both ways, or we are a dead wire. We must be attached to God for inlet and to a needy world for outlet. To prevent breakdown, electric wires are gathered together in a tube and, for further precaution, buried in the ground. We need to be gathered together in the unity of love and then buried in humility. Non-conductors may be absorbers. In the church today are too many who are absorbers. To absorb means to receive without recoil or other effect. America has almost perfected the "dead pan" expression. The gospel can strike us full force; there is no recoil nor any other effect.

Jesus said, "I will make you fishers of men." Fish are elusive; they have to be caught. We have worked hard to erase race barriers, but we have raised the barriers of class. Focus has been limited to the middle class. The high seem to be unapproachable and the low undesirable. Jesus appealed mostly to the disenfranchised, yet He did not neglect Nicodemus, nor Joseph of Arimathea. One of the greatest unexplored veins of wealth is found in the realm of childhood. Evil takes them as they step from the cradle, and they are old in sin before they can sprout a beard. Child evangelism! O church of God, let us start down there and build anew! And what about our record books? Baptisms, deaths, many little personal items may prove of inestimable value, create a fund of interest which may well start a community canvass of those whom the church has one time touched and who could very easily be the fruit of our next revival.

And the time is now. There never were more masterless men. Totalitarianism is possible only because millions of men have no master, yet have the desire for one. And God has provided a Master for men. He is Jesus Christ, who nobly and without reserve lived the life of common men, poor, struggling, tempted, misunderstood, yet keeping Himself above sin that He might be a worthy example. Then He suffered for men the most shameful of deaths, that men should yield to Him their trust and undying devotion.

The world wants a Master worthy of man's strength, and time, and talents. He is here. It is Jesus. Crying out with one of old, in uttermost consecration, "Galilean, Thou hast conquered!" Let the church turn consecratedly to her blessed task of introducing to men, and introducing men to Christ, the Christ for whom their hearts yearn.—Free Methodist.

CHARITY

R. Barclay Warren

The word translated "charity" in 1 Corinthians 13 is elsewhere translated "love." It is the love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (Rom. 5:5) It is the word used in 1 John 4:8: "God is love."

Spiritual gifts of utterance, prophecy, knowledge or faith are worthless without love. Even sacrificial giving to the point of one's life, without love, brings no advantage to the giver.

Love is very patient. It is long-tempered. It does not envy the success of another, nor does it put on airs when it is successful. It is not rude. It would do nothing that would raise a blush. It is not seeking for self. It does not hold resentment against those who have injured. It does not think or talk of sin in others with gloating. It rejoices in right. While love is not so gullible as to be cheated by every rogue, it prefers being generous to judging another evil without cause. Love is greater than faith or hope; for it involves both. "Love believeth all things, hopeth all things."

The way of love is the most excellent way. If the peoples of the world would take this way, then the uneasiness concerning the world's peace would be removed. Acceptance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a saving power in our individual lives is the only hope for the world today. Would to God that we might take the path of hope rather than the road to despair!

THE VALUE OF HOME RELIGION

Keep the home fires aglow. These are the engines that keep in motion life's machinery. When your place of prayer falls into disuse, when the Bible is not consulted daily, when the home-life is below the church-life, things are on a decline. I am satisfied the failures are first in the home-life of the soul. It is true, then, that the private means of grace are of prime importance. In a certain sense, each soul must solve the problem for himself, in the chamber of his own secret living. We live at home before we live in public. The great bulk of moral life is private, not public. We can not long keep the public profession and walk on a higher level than the home-living.

Setting up the Family Altar

Let the home altar of prayer be kept up. We who have had the benefit of the family altar from infancy can never measure its value. My mind was called to this only a few mornings since, by a sister at the altar, just beginning Christian life, and feeling called to erect the family altar, who asked me plainly what to do at the family altar—how and what was to be done. I had hardly thought till then how the idea appeared to one who has never known the privilege of living in a family where this was the custom. I tried to tell her what a family altar was, and she seemed satisfied and helped, and glad that she could begin at once. Two or three essential things are always in place—prayer, reading the Word, and a song of praise, if there are those that can sing. There is no set rule. Vary the custom as to length and manner, to suit those present and the circumstances of the day. *Above all, keep the service from becoming a dry, dull routine.*

Do not be too easily discouraged. It is true the children may not understand the reading. I remember when I did not; but I cannot remember the time when I did not feel the influence, even though the understanding had not come to age. Family worship, where the spirit of worship, is, is a true character-builder for the children. But it is no less so for ourselves.

The same may be said of private prayer, and the personal reading of the Word of God. Our personal home worship, in its uniform modes, methods and tides, gauges what we are away from home. The real spiritual outward endowment is always so proportioned. The measure God reaches with us alone is the measure of our reach for others. If we are only affected in the head, we shall only affect them in the head. If our heart is reached, then God can use us to reach other hearts. If we have reached the kingdom of love, we can be used of God to help others into the kingdom.

While it is true that public meetings have great central elements of power, it is also true that the exponent of power is correctly represented by the measure of home religion the children of God possess.

Build, then, the family altar. Make a business of having more merchantable home religion. It will win in the home life, it will win in the outside life—*Isaiah Reid.*

The Christian graces are a chime of silvery bells, hanging up in the belfry of every truly sanctified soul, and when swept by the finger of God, they peal forth sweeter music and richer harmony than ever burst upon the ears of mortal.

Bigotry is the parent of intolerance, and intolerance has lighted the fagots of many a martyr's fire.