



## MISSIONS IN A CHANGING SOUTH AFRICA (Continued)

Rev. William Morgan

Evangelistic Missions

Of course every phase of mission labor should have an evangelistic tone and drive toward an evangelistic goal. But here we mean the definite, direct effort of bringing souls in contact with God through personal faith in Jesus Christ and the propulsion of the spiritual life within.

Without any doubt this must be the one great, all possessing, all consuming interest of our efforts in South Africa today. The general feeling is that time is short before our Lord's return. The one great challenge before us is to get souls saved, sanctified and established in the faith.

Apart from this argument is the fact that the white missionary's influence among the African people in general is continually diminishing. This is due to two factors. There is such suspicion between the races that regardless of how frank and open one may be an ulterior motive is suspected. It is easy to see how this attitude, if widely spread could minimize the missionary's influence and tie his hands. However, thank God, that spirit has not yet reached such a disastrous state. But we must not be blind to facts before us which point out the possibilities of the future. Today we can still preach the glorious gospel to an appreciative audience, though there may be an element of suspicion. Who can vouch for tomorrow? We must work today; the opportunity may be lost tomorrow. Two things must receive a priority rating. We must get souls saved and we must provide a means for their establishment in the faith. Should the white missionary find it either necessary or expedient to withdraw in the future he must be sure that he has left behind a spiritual and a doctrinally sound church.

Taking up evangelization, or soul saving, and recognizing it as number one priority we should investigate methods most valuable and advantageous to accomplish the task. Reaching souls immediately suggests the prerequisite of reachable souls, even as catching fish demands the presence of fish to be caught.

With the present great influx of population to the towns and cities the first and most logical places to contact the masses are the Native Locations. The depravity and moral filth of most of these places puts a vibrant challenge on the virility of the gospel to penetrate and cleanse such swamps of moral filth. And that virility does make itself manifest and out of such places lives and souls are redeemed.

In the Locations a hundred people may be contacted for the same expense and labor that it would take to contact ten in the country; a thousand against a hundred. But we cannot utterly abandon the country. Our God given love for the individual soul will not allow it. Neither will the fact that, though fewer in number, they are often more open to the gospel message. It is reported of the early church that they went everywhere preaching the gospel. We must take our cue from the early church. We cannot afford to forget the little places with their hungry hearts. Neither can we overlook the marvellous opportunities in the great cities with their teeming millions. The vital point is not so much where to go. The point is GO. Go with the gospel. Get souls in vital contact with God through Christ.

A common point of contact is necessary in reaching souls. Where there is already an existing church building the problem of contact is greatly diminished provided the people can be persuaded to attend. But in a community where there is no existing suitable building some such point of contact must be established. In such a situation one of the best means is a gospel team, a tent and a public address system. The novelty of the set-up provides incentive to curiosity. People will sometimes come to a tent meeting who would not consider entering a church building. There is a good deal of expense involved in tent evangelistic campaigns but the results obtained confirm the fact that we must double and treble our efforts on this line.

Other means of evangelistic effort are through Youth Camps, Vacation Bible Schools, etc. The value of this type of work in reaching the youth and children cannot be over-estimated and more and more attention must be paid to them. The older generation is for the most part hardened in its ways but the young are tender and pliable.

Number two priority, doctrinization, falls naturally out of evangelization. Converts must be established in the faith. It is not enough even that they have a living hope within; they must be able to give a reason for the hope within. In other words they must be enabled to transmit intelligently to others the "whys" and "hows" of salvation. Without such the Church is bound to be weak and in danger of falling prey to many of the subtle pitfalls of the devil. Trained minds must be provided for places of church leadership. Water rises no higher than its source and a church becomes no greater than its leaders. If the leaders are unable to detect and correct doctrinal errors then surely the Church in general stands in peril.

It is up to us to provide a doctrinally sound nucleus of leadership among the African people if we expect to leave behind us a Church that will remain true to the tenets of the Faith. The missionary cannot hope to teach the entire African Church even when he is present in its midst, to say nothing of what might happen when he must leave. The only evident solution is the thorough training of spiritual, consecrated, intelligent men and women from among the Africans themselves who will in turn transmit their knowledge to the whole Church.

Thus is revealed the urgent responsibility of giving Bible training to as many as will consecrate themselves to the work of the ministry. The vital role of the Bible School in indoctrination can hardly be over-emphasized. The whole prospect of the future hinges on the establishment today of a sound, doctrinally grounded Church.

Illiteracy, though still abounding, is surely giving way to literacy. Official estimates in 1955 were that there were about 1,800,000 literate Africans. Black Africa is reading today! And the Church has been much slower to wake up to the fact than has the devil. The fact is the church has taught the people to read and the devil is producing the literature! Two secular periodicals, both containing a good deal which is far from edifying each have a reading circle of about 100,000. Here is a great weakness in our ranks, a gap through which the enemy is gaining entrance into our very vitals; a gap we must fill at all cost.

It is evident that we cannot force the secular press to close up shop. What we can and must do is to put suitable Christian reading material on the market in ever increasing amounts. A nation just awaking to the great discovery of the enjoyments of reading is going to read. If the Church doesn't produce the material it can only have itself to blame if the minds of the people become filled with the chaff and filth of what will be placed on the market by those who get their instructions from the

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