

Introduction

- What goes through your mind... witness/evangelism?
 - Billy Graham? Soap box orator?
 - Bill board? "Then end of the world is nigh?"
 - Door-to-door - maybe done it at some time in the past; fear of knocking on someone's door, of not knowing what to say...
- These are all, or have become, negative images!
 - yuck! Wouldn't do that to my dog!
- Yet, we know - whether from some vague, but deep seated feeling that we should be out there, telling other, or from our listening to some of the passages we read earlier - we know its something we should be doing.
- We are called to be witnesses; we are commanded to go and make disciples.
- Yet we feel paralysed, scared, uncomfortable - like we want to change the subject of the conversation!
- I don't find it comfortable looking at myself and asking when was the last time I shared the gospel, when was the last I didn't talk in general terms to a non-Christian friend but about what was really important - that a service wasn't simply a "success" but brought people closer to Jesus Christ?
 - indeed, how many non-Christian friends do I have?

Mission Series

- Start of a series on mission through this Winter/Spring.
- Picking up on a number of different aspects of mission - reaching out to others with the gospel
- Hope that we will be both inspired to place mission high on our list of priorities, and helped practically to see how we might go about doing that
- This morning want to accomplish two things:
 - encourage us to start to think positively about mission, begin to see why it is important - not merely a duty but a joy, a delight, and a high, high calling!
 - second, show that mission is something that God has not simply dumped on us all (but only equipped a small number of us to actually be able to do it!). Rather it is a task that God has enabled us all to be part of, and indeed he has specially gifted each and every one of us to play our part!
- Do that by looking:
 - first at our motivations for mission (and how that will issue into a changed mindset);
 - second at the manner in which we can take part in mission.
- Motivation and Manner...

Motivation

- What should our motivation for mission be? Why should we bother?

1. Stockpile

- cf lepers outside Samaria - 2 Kings 6-7. Had to tell good news!
- Pearl of great price, riches beyond compare
- One beggar telling another where to find food - implication that we don't ourselves have anything to share that has not been given to us by God - its his job and responsibility.

2. Agent 007

- We're sent, royal commission - not just a dutiful obedience, but glad response to task given by royalty.
- Toddlers often love to "help mummy", do something just because its mummy that asked them!
- Same with us...

3. Eternity

- Reality of hell.
- Centrality in Jesus' teaching - he confronted all he came across with it.
- Will develop a "Whatever it takes" mentality - not playing church!

4. Party Starter

- Angel's rejoice
- Joy of new baby brother sister:
 - story of youngster at Barcaple; could see understanding coming, faith flowing in - peace coming to her young heart!
- What joy!
- Same joy a father might feel immediately after delivery of a son or daughter - he's stunningly happy, but all the hard work has been done by someone else!

Mindset

- If properly motivated, we are more likely to tell - stage 1 - what's next?
- Will be motivated to alter our priorities...
 - If we think its important, it'll change our mindset
- Could at the moment be on career... family... even just having fun?
- Jesus invites us to have a new mindset
- Fishers of fish - come and be fishers of men
 - Come and be preoccupied with reaching people
- Motivation says its important - mindset changes the way we live
- Steve Redgrave, great rower:
 - motivation: medal;
 - mindset: training, discipline
- We will change the way we live so that we are reaching others.
- True for us as a church as much as for individuals:
 - welcoming, accessible, approachable...
 - ...so that Jesus is clear and highlighted, and not our quirky church sub-culture!

Manner (Style)

- All very well - mission is important!
- ~~But~~ Not Billy Graham! I'm not a soap-box orator!
- But God has created us all different, including style of evangelism.
- Spend some time exploring these - maybe you'll say "that's me!"

Relational

- Basic - all rest are applications of this fundamental
- Jesus - friend of sinners
- Friendship not conditional on response to Gospel
- Contact - Relationship - Communication - Discipleship
- Honesty - integrity
- Me - understood only once married to Helen and I wanted to speak of her!
- Gerasene demon possessed man, sent back home by Jesus - not just full-timers
- Always ready to answer "How do I get what you have?"

Testimonial

- Story of how Christ is/has worked in your life.
- Often response - "whatever floats your boat"
- Sometimes - "that's just like me - tell me more!"

Confrontational

- Peter in Acts 2! Crowd of 1000s: "You crucified the wrong man! Repent!"
- Evangelism by frontal assault!
- Sometimes only way to get people to listen.

Intellectual

- Perhaps you warm to thinking things through, answering people's questions.
- Love it when JW's come to door?
- Paul in Acts 17 in Athens - debating with philosophers.
- Peter's confrontational style would have had him thrown out!
- Or Apollos at end of second passage we read

Invitational

- Invite friends and neighbours.
- Implies having relationship with them.
- Without "inviters", the Billy Graham's of this world would get nowhere!

Serving

- Dorcas, Acts 9, especially service of the poor

I'm a Christian because...

- Confronted at camp... receptive since people played football with me.
- Why at camp? Parents lived out gospel, someone else invited me to go.

Conclusion: Which Link are you?

- Many links in chain to Christ
- Which are you? Exercise your gift!
- 2 Tim 4:5 "But you, ... do the work of an evangelist"

Story about man who wanted to become a Christian

- Convinced of truth - feared telling people
- Couldn't get away ... "Follow me"
- At last, asked older Christian - terrible burden/fear of witnessing
- "Between you & Christ"!
- Could this be true? Yes, for you...
- Ran home, into room, prayed, came to Christ, overjoyed!
- Down stair - wife, father, friends...
- "Did you know, you can be a Christian without telling anyone?"