

By All Means Winning Some

Dear Faithful Evangelists,

Evangelism is the telling of the complete Good News of the Redemption wrought by Christ to save sinful man born of Adam. This telling to someone by others in the past saved our souls and we now exist as a Church worshipping Christ's blessed name ever since. We would not gather together weekly in gratitude to the Lord if somebody didn't put aside timidity, self consciousness, and self interest to tell us about the Lord. Christ's Body, the Church, comprised of the saved ones now exist to pass on this message of the Gospel to our local lost. As we are thankful for those who led us to the Lord, the unsaved around us await for us to tell them. This is no option or personal preference but it must be done for it is the marching orders for the Church by the Saviour Himself. This cannot be passed up as '*not my thing*' or postponed for people die every day lost forever in Hell. The Great Commission to reach the unsaved is a divine mission and purpose for the Church, US, YOU and ME, as long as we live.

What are the best ways to share the Gospel?

The Answer: "*I am made all things to all men, **that I might by all means win some***" (1 Cor. 9: 22b).

First of all, '*all means*' are simply **efforts** to an end. The end is the actual oral or print communication of the Gospel. That is, the message of Christ's redemptive death must be spelled out or proclaimed with actual words to the unsaved. All means/efforts must lead to this end. The methods are the different ways in which the whole Gospel content is proclaimed. Opportunities for proclaiming Christ differs from people to people, place to place and circumstances and situation. We are to apply all methods available to us to declare the Gospel. It is a multi pronged effort and thrust and hopefully all efforts may WIN SOME.

An example: A birthday or any excuse for a party is the means to invite unsaved friends to your home. During the socialising there may be opportunities to talk to someone showing interest about our Faith. Engaging with one like that is *Personal Evangelism*, which is the oral communication of the Gospel. However, with most invitees, who have mainly come for a good time and not for 'religious talk', the giving out of the printed Gospel-tract is non offensive or confrontational. That is TALKING the Gospel via print. They will take the tract out of courtesy or curiosity and read it at their leisure. Let the Lord work in their hearts. The means is the party and the end is the opportunity for the proclamation of the Gospel and the method - personal evangelism (person to person proclamation or print to person evangelism - giving the spelled out Gospel be it a tract or a book).

The great apostle Paul's prayerful wish is to employ every effort hopefully to WIN SOME. Who are we that we should differ with Paul and say I don't like this method or that method or I prefer this one over that one or a mysterious "*my way*" to the exclusion of the many tried, tested and proven methods over the decades by past saints. No carpenter builds a house with just one tool but uses all the available tools in his possession. No tool is lesser or greater but all play a part in the whole. It is not, '*my preferred way*' or that '*way is not for me*' but **by all means (tools) we must WIN SOME.** How can we afford not to use any and every method when even '*by all means*' only *some can be won*? When all efforts may produce only some to believe how foolish of us to narrow the methods and the means? Whatever the means, it ends up with words – spoken or printed.

Without Spoken Words or Printed Words, the Gospel Cannot Be Proclaimed.

Ultimately, proclaiming the Gospel is by words. There are three ways for that.

1. **By word of mouth.** By word of mouth is the most intimidating method and a lot of Christians are timid or lack confidence and the knowledge to explain in a cohesive way. It is confrontational for most people loathe talking about politics and religion. Even the most experienced and mature Christian will find it very difficult to find an unsaved someone to engage in spoken evangelism in this modern world. To have a captivated audience sitting for even an hour to listen to our presentation of the Gospel is rarer still rarer. Such is the world today which has no time for God or finds those who believe in God a joke, a loser. So we have to apply all means and methods all at once to save the ONE of the SOME. Like gold nuggets, much soil needs to be moved to find that one nugget in the midst of them. Like the lost sheep, we have to search **by all means**, in the high ways and the by ways of our neighbourhood, to get to that ONE caught in the thicket of the damning world. **Can we afford to narrow our search to one street (method) and miss that ONE who may believe?**

Let us not be presumptuous. Reality demands us to apply every means to present the Gospel. Nevertheless, when opportunities arise we must open our mouths and trust God to lead us for after all it the Holy Spirit who convicts the sinner not us. It will surprise many Christians as to how much they know of the Word when they overcome the initial confidence stumble for after all they have heard so much of the Word over the years from their teachers. Speaking the truth in love and without debating we can speak what we know confidently. After all, we are called out to be a mere faithful witness not a debater (Ac 1: 8).

2. **By word in print.** The other most effective way to proclaim Christ is the Gospel in print - the TRACT or other. All can easily do this without having to personally engage in talk. Through print the Gospel is spelled out comprehensively and clearly that the reader cannot argue with but left to ponder in his/her privacy. It is the quickest and simplest way to pass the Gospel message. Sure some tracts may be thrown away as much as our word of mouth approach can also be rebuffed even before we start (wasted tracts, wasted words?). But nothing is wasted for the Gospel sake for it will be called to account for by God in judgement Day of those who rejected Christ. Without the words from our mouth or the words in Print/TRACT, we cannot proclaim the Gospel to the LOST. **For only words convey the message.**

At least the Gospel in print may be read and thrown away or it may lie around the house for another to read. Even withering old tracts left around keeps presenting the Gospel message since its first handing out. There is anecdotal evidence of many coming to believe by reading tracts since the invention of the printing machine. So there is the continuous power in the printed page. It is the easiest way to pass on the good news of Jesus to almost every one without confronting them face to face. Letter boxing or personal giving of a tract is the friendliest way to declare the Gospel. It can be done almost any time of the day at our convenience and as many times as time avails in the busy day to all without fear. The most people will do is throw the tract away and if they do let it be on their heads. The sowing of Tracts is like the sowing of Gospel seeds. Not all seed come to germinate for they may fall on the 'way side' or on 'stony ground' or on 'thorny ground' but some will fall on 'GOOD GROUND' and will regenerate. As the Lord has said, *"He that hath ears to hear let him hear"* (Mk 4). To sow is our responsibility, nothing more, nothing less. How easy is the task!
THAT! IS WINNING SOME BY ALL MEANS!

3. By word of mouth and by word in print. Some occasions may present to us whereby we may have to **explain** to the seeker or interested listener the Gospel message using the Gospel **tract**. The Gospel tract helps us immensely to present the Good News Christ in a crisp, cohesive and comprehensive way. Even the most timid of saints will find this approach confidence boosting. The Gospel message having been spelled out in a clear and complete manner in a good tract, all the Christian have to do is elaborate on them point by point making sure the listener understood them and moving on from there to the next point as laid out in the tract. Many Para-Church Christian organizations in the past have used this method of **'talking the print'**. Even the most experienced evangelist will find this the preferable method for the listener sees the words and hears them as explained by the Witnesser. This *'audio-print'* presentation helps the listener to focus on the words in print and reinforced by the Christian with spoken words it may well provoke an interaction from even the simple of heart which is indicative of the level of interest in the seeker for an intelligent commitment for salvation. **Here we activate the power in spoken words and print for the proclamation of the Gospel.**

What Is 'Bridge-Building'?

Bridge-building is NOT a method of evangelism! *Bridge-building* is merely a "Friendship-making" with the non believer to eventually proclaim with words the Gospel to the unsaved friend. It is a *bridge of friendship* to cross over to the other side to share Christ. *Bridge-building* ought to be an everyday lifestyle for a Christian. And it happens with all mature, godly Christians, everyday. Making friends and establishing a genuine friendship with the unsaved is paramount. BUT IT IS NOT EVANGELISM! It does not replace any other means to get the message across to the unsaved. It is NOT a special effort but a normal way of life in everyday life. We can always start with those we already know. *Bridge-building* is simply making new friends and seeking the opportunity to pass on the Gospel message via spoken words or in print. It is one of the means to an end. It is the slowest way for it may take days, weeks, months or even years before a word of the Gospel can be spoken or a tract given to the prospect. Even then the unsaved friend may not read a given tract or throw it away or refuse to take one and even rebuff the spoken presentation. There is no certainty that the 'bridged' friend will act favourably to our approach with the Gospel. Such response equally applies to the letterbox by letterbox tracting too. But the advantage in letterboxing is, it is quicker and reaches more people in five minutes than waiting for an indefinite time just to present one Gospel tract or even remote is the prospect of getting an audience to present the Gospel with the friend. **Human life and eternal life waits for no man for today is the day of salvation!**

It is a false notion to ever think that the lost is going to walk over this *'friendship-bridge'* to the Christian wanting to be saved. It is even blatantly sinful and boastful to think that this so called *'Bridge'* is the means to showcase the 'goodly' life of this *bridge-building* Christian whereby their unsaved friends so deeply impressed cross this *'Bridge'* and ask, "What must we do to be saved?" Or say, "We want to have what you are having!" It is sinful self-righteous pride to think that our lives are above that of our non Christian friends. Many of those who hold to this mistaken idea cannot even make the grade within their local Church and are found wanting in grace and conduct without a good word or praise said about them by fellow believers. The only praise that flows about them is the self endorsement or stories about themselves by themselves or what others have supposed to have said about them. Self praise is no praise and is self disqualifying. When the Church is silent about our character the praise of the world for a Christian is not a credit but discredit. If the world praises you without earning that endorsement from fellow believers, it means a failed life. Unbelievers often far exceed the righteousness of Christians. Dare we think they are dazzled by our righteousness? Superior righteousness are found among the unsaved and so said our Lord (cf. Mt 5: 20)

Bridge-building is nothing more than a daily effort of all Christians to make new friends with the prospect of sharing the Gospel – a means to an end. Eventually it is the spoken word or the word in print that conveys the Gospel. Those who use this as a pretext not to letterbox the Gospel tract either lack knowledge or spiritually smug or deluded to think that their lives are preaching a better Gospel than the printed or spoken word of the Gospel. For some it is mainly a socializing 'eat-fest', a 'gut-building' exercise. Others may be impressed with our lives but there are many unsaved who also display an exemplary virtuous life. It is presumptuous to think of ourselves very highly in self worth. We must remind ourselves that all our good works and righteousness are nothing but '*filthy rags*' compared to that of our Lord (Isa. 64: 6). **Just as you are, talk and tract!**

The Power of Words, Spoken or Written

It was Peter's powerful spoken word of the Gospel of Jesus that compelled people to ask, "*What must we do to be saved?*" (Ac 2: 37). No matter how 'bridged' we are with our unsaved friends, their salvation depends on the spoken words that flows from our lips for "*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (Rm 10: 17, 18; cf. Rm 10: 14). Even godly Paul had to use words to persuade the unsaved (2 Cor 5: 11). The Gospel is not waiting for 'Holy Joes' but any saved Christian in any spiritual standing. Many a carnal Christian had won souls by just passing out a Gospel tract.

And how can this happen? They must be SENT. Not necessarily to the uttermost remotest jungles of yonder ocean but just here around the corner of your neighbourhood. Jerusalem and *Samaria* must be reached first, before reaching the uttermost part of humanity (Ac 1: 8). That is the actual leaving of our homes and walking the streets to give away the divine gift of salvation fully paid for by the sending Saviour (Rm 10: 15). That is from house to house, street by street, suburb by suburb and wherever people are (Acts 5: 42). In a world of people distracted by crowding activities, some may take a tract but not want to listen to the spoken word of the Gospel. If there are no givers how will they take that which is not given?

The best and quickest way today is through the print. Expensive *Crusades* are over. Our opportunities are few and our means are slim. We must saturate the town with the Gospel tract over and over to win **SOME**. Let those who are of other minds answer the Lord but we must carry on doing the tried and proven method. Get the children involved at infancy for they are the most enthusiastic for the Lord *for to such belong the Kingdom of heaven*. A godly discipline that is learnt at this age will make them ambassadors in adulthood. Train them young. Make it a family outing, '**Tracting for the Lord**'.

Walk and talk or walk and tract every home, letterbox, passerby and friend to find the ONE of the SOME that may believe. Nobody is going to ask you for the Gospel but it must be given. Don't worry about knock backs, smile and carry on. They are NOT rejecting you but Him who will judge on that day. Tis the last call of heaven. Tis the last days of opportunity lend to His servants to reach every person around our surrounds. To worship Him who died to save us and not proclaim Him to others is ingratitude and selfishness. **This is the primary, paramount, purpose of the Church of God.**

Just as you are, talk and tract!

Brutus Balan

22 Oct 2008