

EVANGELISM

The Lord Seeth Not As Man Seeth (Dwight L. Moody)

These words occur in the Bible in connection with God's selection of David to be the King of Israel. Samuel reminded them that man looketh on the outward appearance but the Lord looketh on the heart (I Sam. 16:7). God has always selected his great leaders by a different standard than men seek to select theirs.

A striking example of this is found in American history. On April 21, 1855, a young shoe salesman in Boston, Mass. decided to become a Christian. The young man had a very poor education. His silent reading was poor and his reading aloud was worse. Samuel Holton said of him that his public attempts at reading sounded like blackbirds chattering. Many words were so far beyond him that he left them out entirely and the majority of the others he mangled fearfully.

The shoe salesman wanted to be a soul winner. He returned to his home in Northfield seeking to win his six brothers and two sisters to Christ . . . he failed. He was considered such an

ungrammatical bluster that one of the deacons took him aside and asked him to serve the Lord better by keeping still. It didn't work! The cultured ladies appealed to the preacher. The preacher said to him, "Don't you think you could serve the Lord by keeping silent?"

In spite of all opposition the young man wanted to be a Christian and applied to the church for membership. The examining committee said that they "seldom met an applicant who seemed more unlikely ever to become a Christian of clear and decided views of gospel truth, still less to fill any sphere of public or extended usefulness." He could answer but haltingly, chiefly in monosyllables, and then only when the question was the simplest and its answer was obvious. Here was the chief question and its answer — the longest that he gave. "What has Christ done for us all — for you — which entitles Him to our love?" His answer — "I don't know. I think Christ has done a good deal for us; but I don't think of anything in particular, as I know of."

The minutes of the church, item No. 1079 stated that this man became anxious about himself. Saw himself a sinner — hated sin and desired holiness. He had been baptized. He loved the scriptures. He prayed. He desired to be useful. He was not ashamed to be known as a Christian. He was 18 years old. Still they voted to deny him membership in the church.

Two members of the examining committee were appointed to watch over him and teach him the ways of the Lord more perfectly. Almost a year later their minutes item No. 1131, indicates that he had made some progress. He had maintained his habits of prayer and Bible study. He vowed he would never give up his hope, or love Christ less, whether admitted to the church or not. "His prevailing intention is to give up his will to God." He was admitted on May 4, 1856.

That same year he moved to Chicago and became a part of the Plymouth Congregational Church. They treated him as did "Boston's cantankerous deacons" and he transferred to the First Methodist Church. He was never really accepted, however, until

he began working with a little mission on North Wells St. He moseyed in one day and asked if he could teach a Sunday School class. He was told that they had all the teachers they needed, but he could use their facilities to teach if he provided his own class. The first Sunday 18 barefoot, ragged, and dirty students showed up for his first class. Within a year that class had grown to 650 . . . and soon to over 1000.

With no formal training or seminary education he launched into a campaign for souls. He toured Scotland, Ireland, and England. He evangelized among the troops who fought in the Civil War. Thousands came to Christ during this ministry but still he never escaped the stigma of an unlettered farm boy. Everywhere the cultured were shocked by his brashness. Criticism came from every side, but he never swerved from his desire to serve Jesus. The Philadelphia Press described him as very "unevangelical looking." Reporters said that he spoke too rapidly, that his voice was unmusical and even harsh. The sophisticated frowned upon his "highway and hedge" evangelistic methods. Some accused him of being inaccurate in the quoting of the scriptures.

Only eternity will reveal the full impact of this man's life, but suffice it to say that he probably accomplished more than any of those who found the time to criticize his efforts. His name was Dwight L. Moody. These facts came from a book entitled *They Call Him Mister Moody* by Richard Curtis. Remember "The Lord Seeth Not as Man Seeth."

Ahimaaz

“And the king said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings” (II Sam. 18:27).

The Kingdom of Israel was involved in a tragic civil war. The forces of David were in battle with the forces of Absalom in the woods of Ephraim. Twenty thousand men died in a single day.

David’s men forbade him to be anywhere near the conflict. “. . . thou art worth ten thousand of us. . . .” they said. The forces of Absalom had specific intentions to kill David.

Thus, David was miles away from the battle standing between the gates of Mahanaim eagerly awaiting news. The watchman on the roof informed him of the approach of two runners. When the first runner appeared alone David correctly concluded that he was bringing tidings. Many men running toward the city would have indicated that they were running for safety or refuge. One man indicated news. The first runner, however, was overtaken by a swifter messenger whom the watchman identified as Ahimaaz. David, on the basis of this identification, concluded that Ahimaaz would bring him good news.

This verse has always been a source of interest to me. While I cannot in good conscience be dogmatic about it, it seems to me that Ahimaaz had established a reputation with the king of always bringing good news. There may be some other explanation which escapes my attention. Perhaps there was some prearranged agreement with Joab, for example, that one runner would bring good news, and another bad. Be that as it may, it seems to me most plausible that the reason David felt Ahimaaz was bringing good news was simply that this was what he always brought. Regardless of the circumstances, Ahimaaz always brought a positive report.

Earlier in the narrative (II Sam. 15:32ff) we informed that David had a system of espionage to keep him informed of Absalom’s plans. Hushai the Archite would give messages to Zadok

and Abiathar the priests. The priests would then confer with their sons Ahimaaz and Jonathan. The sons would then run to David with the news. Perhaps you will recall that Ahimaaz and Jonathan once had to hide in a well to escape detection by Absalom's men (II Sam. 17:17ff).

I have noted in my own life that there are some people who are consistently positive. Every time they take me aside to tell me about something I come away smiling. Regardless of what news they bear they communicate it in such a way that it is good.

There is an old story out of World War II about the American General who refused to be defeated. Regardless of the overwhelming odds against him he established a track record of victory. Once when completely surrounded by German troops he informed his men of their circumstance with these words, "Well, the Germans have got us surrounded again . . . the poor devils." The American troops then achieved another astounding victory.

Ahimaaz must have been this kind of man. A man who was predictably positive. The very sight of him running on a far horizon was an indication that good news was on the way. Let Cushi or somebody else make front page news out of Absalom's corpse swinging from an oak tree. Let some other reporter bring back ghastly reports of twenty thousand soldiers lying dead in the pitiful residue of their own gore. Let someone else mourn the many problems of trudging back to Jerusalem to pick up the pieces and patch together a wounded nation. Ahimaaz was a good man and the King knew he would be bringing good news. He was right!

May God give us more men like Ahimaaz!

. . . And Phillip Ran

This simple statement of fact provides us with an interesting insight into the explosive power and growth of the first century church. The Holy Spirit provided Phillip with an evangelistic challenge . . . and Phillip ran (Acts 8:30). There was no dismal delay . . . no poisonous procrastination or postponement . . . no slothful approach to the commands of Christ . . . Phillip ran. News from a panting messenger is permeated with a note of urgency. It contains an aura of excitement that is absent from a fireside chat. It exhilarates the intellect and stimulates our being in a manner which is difficult to understand or describe. It leads us to believe that Christianity can be caught as well as taught. The same bell that chimes us into a deep sleep can assume the alacrity of an alarm clock by simply increasing its speed. The same trumpet can either put us to sleep . . . or wake us up . . . depending, of course, on how it is played. The fact that Phillip ran to that chariot had something very eloquent to say to the African executive who was puzzling over the Scriptures.

The solution to the problems of a sleeping church is not for every personal evangelist to spit out words like a machine gun or to preach in a lather like a man fighting bumble bees. Such a course of action may actually impede our progress. But I must emphatically assert that evangelism without urgency is less than God intended evangelism to be.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray for the will of God to be done on earth in the same manner that it was done in heaven. This leads us to the rather obvious question "how is the will of God done in heaven?" A clue to the answer is found at the time of Jesus' arrest in Gethsemane. When Peter attempted to defend Christ, Jesus rebuked him with the reminder that God could send 12 legions of angels to His rescue if He so desired. The answer to when these angels would arrive is explained by the Greek word

arti which means “now” . . . rendered by many versions as “at once” (Matt. 25:53). Angels do not “table” their instructions from God, neither do they postpone His commandments until a more convenient season. They obey God “now” or “at once,” just like Phillip did. Dusty Bibles and casual calls are not effective instruments to generate enthusiasm.

The scriptures declare “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:14-17). The word translated, circumspectly, is *akribos* which means accurately. The word walk is used figuratively to indicate our manner of life. “Redeeming the time” means to take advantage of every opportunity for doing the will of Christ. In other words, the Christian is to make a deliberate, accurate, attempt to live in such a way that we take advantage of every opportunity to advance His kingdom. That’s what Phillip did.

Phillip was alert and his manner of life was “accurate.” There was no lacadaisical, slip-shod, half-hearted approach to evangelism in his life. I like to believe that this contagious enthusiasm rubbed off on the eunuch and enabled him to evangelize the Ethiopians. I see him in my imagination hurrying to his Queen and redeeming every opportunity to share his faith with those about him. I do know that the church in his part of Africa became strong and influential. Historians call it the “Coptic” church. Perhaps it all began because Phillip ran . . . I wonder what would happen if we would do the same.

Andrew

Andrew, one of the twelve apostles, was from Bethsaida in Galilee (John 1:44). He was the brother of Simon Peter and his father's name was John (John 1:42). We know very little of Andrew. His name occurs but 13 times in all the Bible. An analysis of these brief appearances upon the stage of inspired literature provides an interesting insight into a practical and useful ministry.

Andrew's name occurs in each of the four listings of the twelve apostles: Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14, Acts 1:13. His name occurs nine other times in six different settings.

First of all we see him on the banks of the Jordan as one of our Lord's first two disciples (John 1:35-42). *His first act as a disciple was to bring his own brother to Jesus* (John 1:42). If it were not for Andrew, Simon Peter may never have become a Christian.

Next we see him on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, dropping his fishing nets and *accepting the challenge to become a fisher of men* (Matt. 4:18, Mark 1:16).

He then appears in Capernaum, *opening his house for the proclamation of the gospel* (Mark 1:29-34).

The next specific mention of Andrew occurs near Bethsaida Julius when *he brought a lad with five loaves and two fishes to Jesus* (John 6:8-9).

We see him again in Jerusalem *bringing some Greeks to see Jesus* (John 12:22).

Finally we find him in a quiet consultation on the Mt. of Olives. He was *asking questions of the Master and seeking to know His will more perfectly* (Mark 13:1-4).

Andrew was quiet, dependable, helpful, thoughtful, and sincere. His name did not make the headlines, then or now. His service, though overshadowed and obscured by others, was essential to the work of Christ and is essential to the functioning of

ANDREW

every congregation. Not everyone can be a Simon Peter, but everyone CAN be an Andrew. Every person can engage in the same meaningful ministry. You may never be noticed by your friends and worldly acclaim may never make its way to your door. But you may be assured that your service will not be forgotten by God. On that day when the last shall be first, Andrew and those like him, will finally stand up and take a bow.

