

## EVANGELISM AND EMOTOMALISM

Various contributors

Evangelism, the preaching of the Christian gospel to result in people being possibly saved and converted to the christian faith, has been with us for centuries.

There is nothing wrong in that since people have a right to promulgate what they believe to be true. It happens in all walks of life. It happens in the world of commerce and advertising for example and is potent and often inflammable in politics.

We have products ' thrown' at us as the very best you can buy and you simply cannot afford to be without them. We have political campaigns to influence us how to vote and often they are emotional and highly charged. They can be disruptive, change attitudes and purpose and, at times, be revolutionary.

In evangelism, and since the end of World War II, some evangelism has become emotional with strong agitation and heightened feelings and, it must be realised, that feelings are not facts.

The pop music industry produced feelings and emotions with teenage girls becoming both obsessed and neurotic over male pop and rock stars and some would sit in their concerts in short skirts and take off their underwear and open their legs. They would unashamedly talk about potential sex with their pop heroes. It was madness, promiscuous and dangerous.

There was the added problem of drugs in the pop scene and some songs actually promoted drugs and their usage. Many girls had unprotected sex imagining their local lover was really an admired pop star. We had an epidemic of unwanted teenage pregnancies, understandably irate fathers, and social division.

Feelings are not facts but are distinguished from cognitive and volitional consciousness. What is cognitive is concerned with knowing, perceiving, sound judgment and reasoning while volition is to chose of the will rationally.

I suppose the first modern day evangelist was Billy Graham who was born 1917. He was ordained a Southern Baptist minister and is still widely admired. His first crusade was in 1949 and he has travelled the world first appearing in London in 1954. It is said that he has had great success and someone has estimated he may have had 3.2 billion converts. His appeals to potential new converts to come to the front which may be over dramatic and the sensual singing of the choir is somewhat emotional. But he appears to be both sincere and genuine and his ministry has helped many to new secular lives away from crime and worthlessness.

On the other hand, there was Aimee Semple McPherson who was born in 1890 and died in 1944 of an overdose, probably accidental. She was a charismatic, being Pentecostal, and conducted faith healings. A lot of money passed through her hands and she built the Los Angeles Temple at 1100 Glendale Boulevard. She fabricated her being kidnapped and was often at loggerheads with her staff and in financial difficulties. Her services introduced her sitting down and removing her boots, lots of singing, dancing, hallelujahs and testimonies. Her sermons dramatised Bible stories which she often forgot to raucous laughter from the audience. She was married three times and always in the law courts over money. She was a religious show woman and it is reported that when she died she was buried with a telephone in her coffin so she could ring up God.

There are many Christian evangelists who are frauds. Lonnie Fisher was a Pentecostal and a ' true prophet'. He condemned gays and yet was gay himself and died of AIDS. Billy James Hargis was

involved in sex scandals. Neville Johnson, another Pentecostal, was grossly immoral. Morris Cerullo healed many including a child with cancer who died shortly afterwards.

Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3.5 that there are those who have a form of godliness but godliness does not influence them. From such turn away.

John Wember was another charismatic and a Kansas City prophet. He said that anything Jesus did, we can do. At a London meeting someone said that the charismatic position had to enter every church. Wember had a healing clinic and listed some of his miracles. At the end of the meeting, the bar was open and a lot of alcohol enjoyed.

It seems that I am condemning Pentecostals but I am not. It appears that much divergence stems from these groups but many in this movement are faithful and honourable and that must not be overlooked.

But, as in every walk of life, there are hypocrites—people who pretend to have virtues, moral or religious beliefs which they do not actively possess.

God, Christ, the Bible and Christians are condemned because they believe that if you are not saved, you go to hell. However, if someone has never heard the gospel, one cannot envisage eternal punishment. We have come full circle and now show that evangelism is necessary.

Christians are also condemned for their stand against homosexuality and it is true that the Bible teaches heterosexuality for the survival and continuance of the human race and normal relations between a man and a woman. HIV/AIDS was thought to have started with chimpanzees in West Africa but it is a gay disease caused through anal sex. It is said that there is little risk of HIV through normal vaginal intercourse but 18 times more of a risk through anal sex. HIV/AIDS has killed 33 million and there are 4 million innocent children with the disease. In view of these facts, were we right to legalise homosexuality?

93.5% of people in the UK say that they are heterosexual whereas the gay rights movement, Stonewall, says that up to 7% in the UK are gay. In the USA, 25% of men are gay and the same figure applies to lesbians. HIV/AIDS is self-inflicted and has reached epidemic proportions just as the unwanted pregnancies among teenage girls reached an unacceptable scale in the 1960s.

There is a school of thought that teaches that people are born gay but this is offset by very many who say, I am gay but I was not born gay. Some gays are in clinics to rid themselves of homosexuality and there has been some success.

When it comes to emotionalism in evangelism many Christians do not use these devices but, rather, are matter of fact. The teaching is, This is the Biblical way, make your own choice.

I have recently been listening to many political speeches and rallies and the use of emotionalism is blatantly evident and people respond with feelings. It is right for politicians to generate emotions but wrong for Christians to do so. Political rallies can change people's attitudes and purpose. They can be disruptive and revolutionary. Marxism, Communism and atheism are all products of political emotionalism and dictatorships.

There is a real need for Christian evangelism to show people the way and allow them to make their own choice.

To evangelise was the Lord's last command to His disciples in Matthew 28. People need to know that God loves them and has proved His love by sending His Son to die on the Cross in our place.

People need to know the love and mercy of God and about His forgiveness whereas they are battered constantly by sin and evil.

There is an apocryphal story of a man who died and did not reach heaven. He complained, Why didn't someone tell me?

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