
Zion News

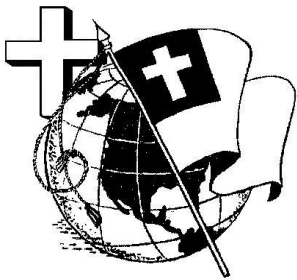
A newsletter of Zion Ev. Lutheran Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia – February, 2010

“Come let us declare in Zion the work of the Lord our God.” Jeremiah 51:10

Evangelism and the Book of Acts

by Pastor Nathanael Mayhew

How long has it been since you read the Book of Acts? This important book is often overlooked by many Christians, who instead prefer to read the Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus or the doctrinal sound bites of the New Testament letters. But the Book of Acts is an invaluable



commentary on the message and work of the early New Testament Church. For this reason it serves as a resource on the topic of personal and corporate evangelism.

During the Epiphany season this year we have been considering sections from the Book of Acts and considering the implications for us today. But we have only scratched the surface. Dig into it on your own. Here are a few things to look for as you read it:

→ The focus of the Book of Acts is on the proclamation of the Gospel through many different individuals. While the Book of Acts focuses much attention on the work of both Peter and Paul, it mentions many others in a supporting role, such as the apostle John, the deacons Stephen and Philip, Barnabas, James (not the apostle) and Apollos. Then there are many others mentioned who play a smaller role such as Mark, Silas, Timothy, Aquila and Priscilla, Aristarchus and others - showing how the

Holy Spirit was working through each of them. So we are assured that the Holy Spirit can and does work through each of us – whatever our role – to bring the knowledge of the truth to others!

→ The Book of Acts is full of examples of preaching and teaching. This shows us what the message of the church was from the very beginning. In all there are 20 addresses or parts of addresses recorded in the book of Acts. In these addresses we find the doctrines which formed the foundation of the Christian Church being proclaimed: Sin and Grace (Law and Gospel), the death and resurrection of Jesus, Jesus’ atonement for our sin, Repentance, Forgiveness, Jesus is the only way to heaven, and much more. Look for other doctrines as well.

In the Book of Acts we will see how the Holy Spirit was at work using His people to bring the message of the Gospel to both Jew and Gentile alike. Such mission work was carried out in many ways and by many different people, some of whom were “unlikely” candidates for the Gospel ministry. The Holy Spirit is able to use each of us, no matter how incapable we think we might be.

We pray that the Holy Spirit would increase our knowledge and zeal to ***“proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9)*** through our study! †

In This Issue:

Evangelism	p. 1
Five Easy Ways	p. 2
James Montgomery	p. 3
Quotation page	p. 4
Evangelism study	p. 4

Five Easy Ways to do Mission Work Everyday

By Debra Mayhew

Why another article on mission work, and why now? Does it feel a little out of place? It might, until we remember that the fields are white for harvest today. At this very moment there is an urgent need. Mission work can tend to feel like an abstract or vague concept, but in reality it's a very active and exciting calling. Our dear Savior extends this Call to each of His children, and that includes you and me. Rather than putting it off as something to be accomplished "some day", there are many ways we can work it into every day. Mission work is more accessible than you might think!

1. Meet and Greet. Make it a point to introduce yourself to visitors at church and to extend a warm welcome to them. Greet your fellow members. Take an interest in each other. Too shy or uncomfortable for such a direct approach? Just remember that the person who can do this effortlessly is the exception to the rule. For the rest of us, practice makes perfect and after a while you'll find it comes easier to you.
2. Talk to your pastor. More often than not, our pastors have more ideas, projects and work available than time in their days to accomplish everything. If you aren't sure where to start, this is a great place. Whether it's delivering flyers, visiting shut-ins, or assisting in various roles at church there is always work to be done. The list is endless. Any hours you can spare can easily be filled by your pastor with work for the Kingdom.
3. Make your personal Bible study and devotion time a priority. Do your homework, so to speak. Feeding your own soul daily is essential to being an

effective witness to the Gospel. In doing so, you prepare yourself to **"always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear"** (1 Peter 3:15). In addition to being well prepared to witness, your own faith will grow and you will be abundantly blessed!

4. Pray. It seems simple enough, but the prayer of a Christian is powerful, so it bears repeating. Why else would Jesus teach us to pray, urge us to pray without ceasing, and remind us that prayer is effective? (Matthew 6:9-13, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, James 5:16b) Pray for stateside and foreign missions. Pray for our pastors and teachers. Pray for missionaries Koenig and Ude. Pray for your Christian brothers and sisters, your children, family and friends. Pray for the unchurched and the lost. Pray. Pray. Pray.
5. Watch. The Lord will put the opportunity to witness before you. Will you recognize it when you see it? By keeping your eyes open and remaining alert, you may well be surprised at how much you see! In addition, remain watchful for the second coming of the Lord. Keeping His return at the forefront of our thoughts will also guide our speech and actions accordingly.

As you read through my short list of ideas, you may have thought of several ideas of your own to add to it. Now, with the Holy Spirit on hand to bless our efforts, let's go forward with our work in those fields. And as we go, let's remember the words of our Savior: **"I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work"** (John 9:4). †

We continue our "Hymn writer" series with a feature on James Montgomery. Montgomery was a Scottish newspaper editor, and a member of the Moravian church. More than a dozen of his hymns have been included in our hymnal. We pray that our readers will benefit from his short biography.

Hymn Writer: James Montgomery

Adapted from *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*

Relatively few great hymn writers have been laymen. Such, however, was Montgomery, a newspaper publisher and editor and a determined advocate of social reform. Indeed, he was twice imprisoned for his outspoken articles.

Montgomery was born in Scotland, the son of Moravian missionaries to the West Indies, both of whom died while he was still a boy. His early years were difficult ones, but eventually he found his place on the staff of a journal in Sheffield, England. In time he became the owner of the publication, which he renamed *The Iris*.



James Montgomery

Scottish hymn writer

(1771-1854)

Through it he championed many causes, such as the struggle to abolish child labor in the factories. Not surprisingly, his Moravian background gave him an ardent concern for foreign missionary endeavors.

He was closely associated with the efforts of evangelical Anglicans to win acceptance for hymn-singing in their churches, a practice still opposed by many of the bishops. Together with his friend and minister, Thomas Cotterill, who was also a hymn writer, he won the approval of the archbishop of York for the use of a hymnal they had compiled.

Montgomery had a keen sense of literary style, as well as a fine lyrical gift. He was one of the finest hymn writers of his generation and one

of the first to write critical articles on the subject of hymnody.

Of his own fine hymns, the best-known is probably "Angels from the Realms of Glory".

"Go to Dark Gethsemane" is a masterpiece in its poignant brevity.

"O Spirit of the Living God", among the greatest of missionary hymns, contains a couplet that epitomizes his sense of urgent mission: "Give tongues of fire and hearts of love, To preach the reconciling Word."

Hymns of Montgomery

Here's the list of hymns by James Montgomery found in our hymnal:

2. To Thy temple I repair
35. Songs of praise the angels sang
59. Hail to the Lord's Anointed
136. Angels from the realms of glory
149. Come to Calvary's holy mountain
159. Go to dark Gethsemane
454. Prayer is the soul's sincere desire
455. Our heavenly Father, hear
484. We bid thee welcome in the name
490. Pour out Thy Spirit from on high
504. O Spirit of the living God
516. In the hour of trial
616. Forever with the Lord
635. Here in Thy name, eternal God

†

Quotation Corner

Sanctification in its proper perspective...

The truth is, all of the New Testament's imperatives are based on its indicatives. In other words, everything God demands of His children He first gives His children. Everything God wants us to do He has already done in His Son, and He continues to work in us in and through Jesus Christ. He is not a departed hero gone off to heaven to watch how well we're doing here on earth without Him. He is present here and now with His church in those sacred mysteries we call the Word and the Sacraments. There's a link between the life Christians lead and their living Lord. And that link is Baptism.

People keep looking for the key to a dynamic Christian life, some magic formula to bring zest to dull, half-hearted commitment. Unfortunately, most of the formulas suggested tend to be do-it-yourself projects. A do-it-yourself approach to the Christian life is doomed from the start. Reform a sinner and you get a reformed sinner. Discipline a sinner and you get a disciplined sinner. Educate a sinner and you get an educated sinner. In every case you still have the same sinner you started out with.

No, the Old Adam will not be tamed or reformed or disciplined or educated. He can only be killed. And this is just what God does; in Holy Baptism we are put to death and buried. But since it is the death and burial of Jesus, it makes all the difference in the world. His death and burial brings with it resurrection and new life. By Holy Baptism the Triune God crucifies our Old Adam, buries our sin, raises us as a new creation, and clothes us in Jesus Christ – thus giving us a whole new life to live. This is the authentic formula for Christian living!

Excerpt taken from *Dying to Live: The Power of Forgiveness* by Harold L. Senkbeil (page 79). This book is published by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri (Copyright 1994). †

Evangelism Bible Class Study

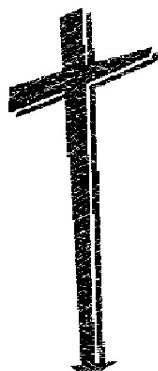
Over the past few weeks we have been going through a new Bible Study titled, "You are the Light of the World." In our study so far we have laid the Biblical ground work which establishes the "who, what, when and why" of evangelism. (This information can be found in lessons 1-4 of this study which are available on our website at www.zionlutheranlawrenceville.com under Resources and Evangelism Studies. You can also ask the pastor for a copy.)

We are now beginning our study of "how." Over the coming weeks we will be discussing the practical side of personal and corporate evangelism, including:

- Misconceptions and excuses
- The difference between Active and Passive evangelism
- Fitting witnessing into your everyday life
- Ideas and suggestions for personal witnessing
- Responding to excuses
and
- Assimilating the new member

Won't you join us? Our study continues on Sunday mornings at 10:00am for Adult Bible class. Come and study with us this important subject. We look forward to seeing you there!

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). †



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