

## **Evangelism In the Early Church**

Without question, it can be stated that evangelism in the early church was rooted in the transformed lives of those who accepted the reality of the resurrected Christ.

Whatever else may have transpired in their minds and hearts as they listened to Christ while he was preaching and performing his miracles in Palestine, this one thing is certain: after the resurrection, they truly believed him to be the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world. Such a conviction called forth action. They abandoned themselves to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah of God. In him was the source of salvation and strength to all who would repent and accept him.

Whether it was Peter, Philip, Stephen, Paul or lesser known Christians, they all had one message: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself." (II Corinthians 5:19). With sincerity, devotion and urgency, those early Christians went forth as ambassadors of the good news. Their methods were varied; their message the same. They preached man's sinfulness as contrasted to God's mercy.

In the market-place, the temple, homes and mountains, they declared Jesus the Savior. Sometimes they spoke the Word to individuals; other times to crowds. The basic thing to remember is that they preached the Word - the Divine Revelation of God's love in Christ. There was little time to waste with lesser things.

We too, must acquaint ourselves with their fearlessness - their courage. They were not to be stymied by threats, nor thwarted by beatings. Their message would not cease even in death. Regardless of shame, affliction, or death, their conviction of Christ gave expression in word and in deed. Some of the political authorities, sensing the futility of punishing those Christians, felt that the wisest thing to do would be to let them alone and permit the future to decide the issue. Others, not so patient, nor so kind, found out that the "Blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." The attempt to destroy their faith resulted in its spread.

Such faith, courage and conviction is needed and necessary in the church of Jesus Christ today. It is needed in me! It is needed in you!

William Allen Zulker  
(Written in January 1957)