

# The E – word ...

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## An article for churches preparing for mission

Say the word 'evangelism', and what comes to mind? Perhaps a picture of Billy Graham encouraging thousands to get up from their seats and commit their lives to Jesus? Or a picture of a street preacher haranguing pedestrians as they cross the road to avoid him. One is so wonderful you could never be like him; the other so unattractive you don't want to be like him. Either way: evangelism is not for you ...

Jesus did not agree. To eleven unlikely evangelists he gave what has been called 'the great commission', "Go ... and make disciples of all nations ...". The call remains as valid today as at any time in the history of the Church. But if it remains 'the great omission', that Church will become history.

## Overcoming fears

Keeping the Church like an arctic river – frozen at the mouth – is usually the fear factor. There is the fear of saying the wrong thing, not knowing the right answer, or appearing insensitive in the 'live-and-let-live' spirit of the current age. For some, the fear is that the gospel message itself will not make an impact, even loss of confidence that we have *good* news to share.

The first disciples felt the same way. They had the doors locked against the outside world because of fear. Yet those same men later went out, into the city where Jesus had been crucified, and preached in the open air to thousands. Two crucial experiences changed them. The first was their meeting with the Risen Christ; the second was receiving from Him the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

The organisation supporting you in your mission– *Through Faith Missions* – has found that the same is happening today. God is still using men and women who step out with faith in Him. When the Church goes out, things always happen! As one evangelist put it recently, ***"I have never found those outside the Church more eager to hear, but I have never found the Church more insular or afraid."***

## Opportunity knocks

This was the title of yesteryear's equivalent of 'Britain's got talent' or 'X-Factor', hosted by Hughie Green with his clapometer (you have to be of a certain age!)? This year there's another sort of opportunity knocking, not for the talented but for the faithful, those willing to get out to share good news.

Team members recruited and trained by *Through Faith Missions* have given up a week or more of their holidays. They come to serve God and His work in the local church. What will *you* do to work with them? You could open your home and invite people for a coffee morning to meet some of the mission team. You could invite all of your friends to one mission event or another. These are days of opportunity – seize the day!