



Manual on

OPEN AIR PREACHING

## OPEN AIR PREACHING - WHY?

There has been a marked declension in preaching in the open air over the years. There are several reasons for this, here are just a few...

Fear It is costly to be seen on the streets, possibly as a fanatic, when many would say - "What one believes is a private matter", and "Churches are the place for this sort of thing". It may also be that some Christian lives simply do not measure up to standing and speaking about a life-changing Christ, or even to associating with someone who is doing so.

Adverse Criticism Open air preaching has been brought into disrepute due to the way that it has been done in times past.

Shouting This has resulted in an unnatural and strained voice suggesting fanaticism. Sometimes an impression has been given of hatred towards those who hear.

Pointless Preaching has often been given in places where few people are, and where personal conversations would have been more profitable.

Unworthy Motivation Much has been done as a "one off", perhaps to ease the conscience of those who feel that "something" should be done. Thus, open air work becomes just a duty done,

with a shrug of "They have heard it now, so if they go to hell it will be their own fault". This, of course, is unworthy of Christ's love in a believer's heart.

Unbelief in a Christian's heart. "These are dark days - few are being converted - they don't want the Gospel - they won't stand and listen". BUT faith says, though these are indeed dark days, God is still saving people through the foolishness of preaching, and thousands are wanting the Gospel. They will certainly stand and listen, if what they are hearing is down to earth, relative to their lives, with a note of reality, sincerity and love.

#### A PLEA FOR OPEN AIR PREACHING

I urge you to take a careful look and see that open air preaching is:

#### Biblical

God Himself was the first open air preacher as He calls Adam and his wife, "where art thou?". Enoch, the seventh from Adam, spoke fearlessly. Noah stood before the world, as it then was, a preacher of righteousness. Moses and Joshua spoke in the Name of the Lord to the people in the desert and on the hillside. Samuel concluded speaking amidst thunder and rain and drove them to their knees. Elijah challenges on Mount Carmel. Jonah, at last obedient,

lifts up a cry of warning to Ninevah and thousands turn to God. Ezra and Nehemiah teach and preach to the public in the open air. Most of the preaching and teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ was in the open air and it was natural and easy for Him to illustrate in the way that He did. The Acts of the Apostles are largely an account of preaching. Out of 32 chapters, 28 record preaching and the other 4 relate to problems arising from preaching. In these days when so much time is given to singing and relatively little to preaching, can we wonder at the paucity of conversions! "They continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers." Acts 2:42. Note the order! If we were to follow this God-given order, what a difference there would be in the churches of God. See Acts 4:29-33 and look what they had prayed for v29-30, and the result v33.

### History Affirms Blessing

The valour of the Puritans as they stood in the open air is not questioned and many gave their lives - Bishop Latimer at Paul's Cross, to name but one. We also have the example of George Whitfield, John Wesley, William Grimshaw of Haworth, Daniel Rowlands, John Berridge and Henry Venn, all of whom God graciously and mightily used in the open air. Charles Haddon Spurgeon strongly advocates open air preaching and encouraged the students that gathered around him in his day.

In recent days, God has blessed "Open Air Campaigners" around the world and much good is done when the Word of God is preached through the use of the sketch board.

### PERSONAL COMMITMENT

In order to prepare you to share in team work in the open air, a surrender to certain basic truths is essential. Search your heart over the following, though there are more.

#### Awareness of Sin

Know God's judgement upon your sin and in your heart trust in God's provision in Christ, His dear Son. Accept His death as a substitute to pay for your sin and to remove it. Have a whole-hearted dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ as your **living** Lord and Saviour.

#### Saved by Grace Alone

See Isaiah 59:2, Isaiah 53:6, Hebrews 7:25, Ephesians 2:8-9.

#### Activated by Concern

Be aware of the lostness of all without Christ, let this grip your heart. "Preach the Gospel to **every creature**" must haunt you. Have a heart's desire to see people saved at any cost - "by all means save some".

See John 8:21, Psalm 9:17, Matthew 25:46, Revelation 21:8.

Consider carefully 2 Thes 1. The second coming of the Lord Jesus will be "to take vengeance on those who know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ...punished with everlasting destruction". The same compassion that the Lord Jesus had in coming to save the lost should urge us to proclaim the mercy available today!

### Aglow With Love

All attempts to serve should be saturated in prayer - before, during and after. Pray to be constrained by the love of Christ and love for the lost. A strong belief in the sovereignty of God and His ability to save must tug the heart. Consider that although you do not know who will come to Christ, you know His love is constantly at work on human hearts.

See Romans 10:1, Romans 9:1-3, 1 Tim 2:4, John 3:16, 2 Cor 5:13-14.

The above scripture references should be carefully studied, in context, and learnt by heart.

## PRIOR PLANNING

"Go and preach...I am with you"

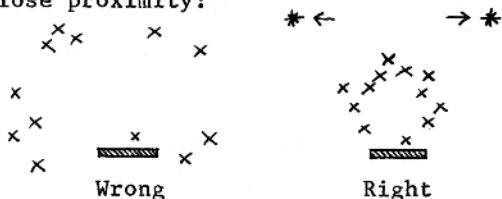
The team should be aware of the presence of the Lord Jesus in this special way and an attitude of prayer should be cultivated, with no fellowship and/or joking from the moment that the sketchboard is set up. This is not to say that everyone should look miserable, but rather be rejoicing in the truth. Varied forms of dress are recommended, such as will be compatible with passers-by, but certain colour hairstyles, earrings and immodesty are not encouraged.

Use great care when choosing a site so as not to offend the shopkeeper, who often has a strange idea that what you will be doing will keep away custom. Why not go in and ask if he minds? Try not to block his window and door and tell him how long you will be. An ideal place to set up is outside a bank, especially if it is closed at the time. A vacant shop also provides space for a little booklet table. If in a tourist area remember to take Gospels in a number of languages.

Be aware of the obstruction law. You must obviously be where a lot of people are, but be careful to ensure that adequate room is left on the pavement for people to pass by. It is better to close down the meeting and move quickly than to give the Police the idea that

you do not know or care. Do not fear the Police, they may listen for a few moments to see if what you are saying could incite violence. Remember, you are not shouting, you are simply speaking in a friendly and caring way. If you shout, people will stay at a distance and not come close and your team will start moving back - that is if they stay.

The team should gather around the board at close proximity:



If your team is strong enough, two may be appointed to give leaflets some distance from the board - just before eye contact with the board and after people have passed the board area.

No attempt should be made to engage in conversation during the presentation which should average 5 minutes. When, and if, a booklet (preferably "Love is the Bridge") is offered to those who wish to know further how Christ can save them, wait... When this offer has been made then speak to those who have listened but not responded. If you find a



Christian, and others have not been spoken to, then ask to be excused until contacts have been made before returning to them.

If the presenter has the ability to deal with hecklers, then leave it to him. At the time he may well suggest that one of the team takes him to one side for conversation. Such an occurrence may well help to raise the level of interest, providing that you relate everything to the Gospel. We have known people to be converted when an irate heckler has brought difficulties, but has been lovingly handled and Christ preached.

No attempt should be made to engage in long conversations unless strongly guided by the Lord. Be ready to see them again, perhaps arrange to go for coffee afterwards, exchange names, addresses, phone no's etc (wisdom needed here). As a general rule, conversations should be fellow to fellow and girl to girl in order to avoid any complications and possible misunderstandings. If this works out differently for whatever reason, then the opposite sex should be brought in at some time, particularly if the person is desirous of receiving Christ.

The importance of there being a sense of need in the enquirer, and of the scriptural directions such a person should be given, are to be found in Manual 2.

The whole purpose of the outreach is to preach the Word. We should not use any form of entertainment or gimmick, so music and singing form no part of a presentation. If done well, however, and they have a form of testimony to the Lord Jesus, then they can lead into the presentation.

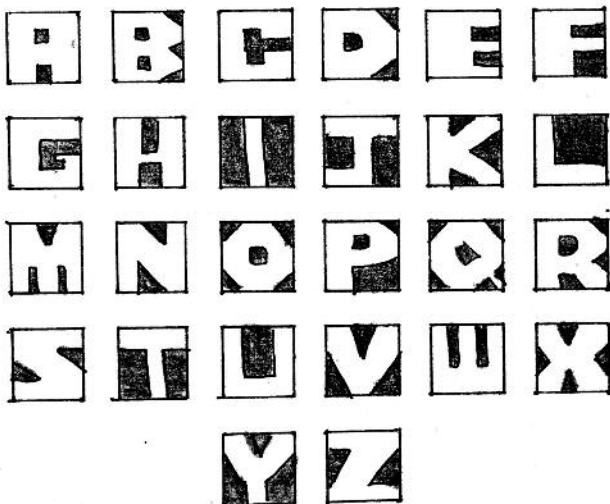
### PREPARATION OF THE SKETCHBOARD

Board - it is possible to make your own board, providing it is stable and portable, but for general use an artist's easle (metal) which will fold up easily for carrying is suitable. These may be purchased for approximately £30. Unless you anticipate working with a large crowd the board size should not be less than 40"x24".

Paper - a light wallpaper can be used, but by far the best paper to use is newsprint which is obtainable from newspaper printing offices - ask for an "end of roll". This can then be cut to the size of your board, allowing for overlapping on 2 sides, and held in place by message pad clips.

Paint - poster paint is readily available at any artist's supply shop, preferably in liquid form which may be diluted for use. Paint can be carried, ready to use, in small glass screw top jars. These may be attached to the sketchboard in a container. Use bright colours such as yellow, red, blue and green, with black as the main colour.

"Ladder letter" writing should be practised well beforehand, but do not let the fear of making a mistake deter you. A dab of the brush in certain areas of each square will make the words visible, see the examples below:



## PREPARATION OF THE MESSAGE

The task given to you by the Lord Jesus is to preach the Gospel. I believe it is more honourable to present the Truth right from the start rather than to entertain your audience whilst hoping to lead into the Gospel, as this often means too much time has been lost, and people may well feel that they have been "conned".

By all means introduce the message in a topical way using an up-to-the-minute talking point. This should only take seconds, then come to the Truth that reveals the need of man - sin - judgement - forgiveness - power to live etc. Make your statements short, perhaps 2 or 3 words and use only 3 or 4 statements, making them as bold as possible. This will occupy the left-hand side of the board, with the cross placed prominently on the right hand side.



Use a background of yellow, with the crosses in black, the hill in green and bordered in black, and a blue line to represent cloud. Underneath there may be the fact of his being alive pictured as a heart with the word "NEW" inside

it. The Gospel has to be received (see 1 Cor 15:1-3) in order for people to be saved. Seriously proclaim his death for sin - joyously proclaim his rising again.

Face the crowd whenever you speak and maintain eye contact. Remember that the Holy Spirit will be using the preaching whilst the visual aid serves only to underline and fix the Truth in the mind and stimulate interest and feeling.

Attempt to move easily from each statement and be brief so that people will not get the impression that you will be speaking for an hour! For example, if people see you move from your heading and then on again in under one minute, they may be more likely to wait and see where you are going. You may like to leave an empty box at the end as if you were going to write something else - this encourages people to stay so that those who are interested get your closing invitation.

Examples:

God wants you to know

You are a sinner  
You cannot save yourself  
Only Jesus Christ can.

Best news ever

God hates sin  
BUT Loves the sinner  
Trust Jesus

For better for worse

Selfishness  
Forgiveness  
New life

Biggest fool in town

Forgets death  
Says no  
Rejects Christ

Putting the world right

Education Politics

Religion Jesus Christ

PRESENTATION OF THE TRUTH

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes - Romans 1:16. But what is the Gospel?

There has been widespread confusion linked up with certain repetitive "directions" given to the lost - "Repent of your sins" "Believe in Jesus" "Receive Christ" "Take Him as your Saviour" "Trust Him to save you" "Let Him come

into your heart". Whilst these statements have their value, they do not adequately explain the Gospel.

The scriptures clearly set out what should be presented as "the Gospel" - 1 Cor15:1-4. It is "declared - preached - received - wherein ye stand - by which you are saved - delivered to you that which I also received - CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS - WAS BURIED - ROSE AGAIN - according to the scriptures. This is what God has done. The sinner is saved by the grace of God. In the thrill of this the apostle talks of the grace of God as a divine attitude, a dynamic stimulus and a daily enabling - 1 Cor15:10. On the backcloth of a holy, sin-hating God we present Christ crucified and risen again.

A true understanding of repentance is necessary in order to present truth in a God-glorifying way. C.H.Spurgeon says "Repentance and faith are twins". We may argue as to which comes first, but we must agree that they must both be born. The glib statement that "Repentance means a change of mind" will not do unless made clear. There is something permanent about the initial work of the Spirit convicting of sin and need and opening the eyes of the heart to see Christ crucified on their behalf and alive now to be their Lord.

Repentance must mean a change of

Attitude - sin becomes exceeding sinful, see Rom 7:13. Christ is loved because of Calvary, see 1 John 4:9,10,19.

Allegiance - Christ died and rose again that He might be Lord, see Rom 14:9. Believers should live unto Him who died for them and rose again, see 2 Cor 5:15.

Action - Prayer, love of scripture, fellowship with believers, service in devotion and witness to the lost. Read carefully Rom 12:9-18 and Eph 6:10-20.

Look into the faces of those around the sketchboard. Remember that many are full of cares and feel guilty about sin. Some may feel like giving up on life. Others may need a word of warning or comfort.

In faith, speak out to those situations. Here are some statements of truth that may illustrate the guidelines:

Someone listening to me right now, your heart is heavy and the memory of past sins keeps coming back, and in spite of all attempts to be a better person you are still a failure. I have news for you - God cares about you. He loves you so much and He proved it by coming in the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ and on a cross took into Him all the judgement due to you for those sins of yours. This is how a person is forgiven here on earth. What you could never do, God has done for you. In



your heart count upon this as true and the One who died for you will by His Spirit enter your life and change it. He is alive today and can save you.

Scripture may be quoted, but in an easily understandable way. Look into the faces, be tender, gentle and kind. Speak to them in the same way that you would like to be spoken to - John 7:12.

### Ambassadors for Christ

The attitude of the preacher should be one of meekness, not argumentative, although there are occasions of contending for the truth. Read carefully and perhaps learn 2 Tim 2:24-6. Avoid generalisation - you are trusting that you preach with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven, 1 Peter 1:13. It is the Word of God that you are handling, His message to the individual. In a kindly and loving way the word YOU should be used and never "I think this or that" or "I suggest". As you tell them of Christ, believe that the Holy Spirit, in and through you, is convicting of "sin, righteousness and judgement" because they don't believe in the Lord Jesus, John 16:7-11 (for further help see Manual 2).

Ask those who would believe in Christ today to make themselves known to you in order to help them further. In the same way, offer a booklet or Gospel of John, but only to those who wish

to know further of God's way of salvation. This is not to depreciate the broadcasting of literature, but it is felt that God is in no way glorified when it is seen scattered and torn on the streets.

In the midst of all the fears and opposition rejoice that this is God's appointed way of reaching the lost. The One who calls and sends you says "If any man serve ME him will my Father honour" John 17:18-20, John 12:26.

#### PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

You may depend upon it, if the Lord is doing a work and His Gospel is being preached, the enemy of souls will be on hand to interfere and stop it. Drunks, false cults, religionists and, of course, atheists may seek to interrupt or engage the workers in conversation. In this way, the enemy may use them as decoys and hinder the work of reaching many who may be seeking. Treat them kindly, and in spite of their belligerence point them to the Christ of the Bible. If they persist in argument give them the testimony of your assurance of forgiveness and eternal life through the Lord Jesus and move away.

If interruption occurs during the sketchboard presentation, call upon an experienced worker to take them to one side to answer their questions - if you are on your own ask them to please allow you to finish what you came to say

and that you will be glad to speak with them afterwards. If they still persist, claim the right of free speech, yours and theirs, and say that if they have the answer to life and what can change men's hearts, they should proclaim it some 30 yards away from where you are. Talk about the benefits that have come to the world through caring organisations brought into being by people changed by Christ - schools, hospitals, orphanages etc. Ask where those founded by atheists are.

Watch carefully for workers (Christians or otherwise) not known to you and possibly not believing the same Gospel or adding to it in some way, particularly if literature is being distributed quite near to where you are.

Do not crowd those who are interested, or those in conversation, try to keep it one to one, or if there are two, then two to be in conversation separately. Do not encourage workers to engage in conversation during the presentation. However, if someone has stood for a while interested and then moves on before the appeal is made, a worker could tactfully move away with them - a kindly enquiry may be most profitable, and if their time is limited, an appointment for coffee at a later time or date could be well worth while.

Try to keep records of names and addresses, if possible. Wisdom is needed in passing on your

own telephone number as this could lead to problems. Much prayer required! up letters

### FOLLOW UP 1770-1800-1810-1820-1830-1840-1850-1860-1870-1880-1890-1900-1910-1920-1930-1940-1950-1960-1970-1980-1990-2000

As a rule, personal follow up is vital. Without undue delay send a letter of encouragement (see Manual 2). Literature which is to the point of need should be sent, preferably something that can be read through easily and quickly! It is assumed that a person who is genuinely interested will have received a Gospel of St John from you with its Gospel direction (Love is the Bridge). There is a list of helpful booklets at the end of the Manual.

It is better to introduce those who confess faith to someone who cares enough to give some time and can lead them on. Sadly, it is not enough to send names and addresses to the minister or elders of a church, hoping that contact will be made. It is always better to take a person with you to a Bible study or worship service, rather than just give an invitation to come, as the thought of entering a room full of strangers and not knowing where to sit and when to stand etc can be very off-putting for a newcomer. It can be particularly foreboding to receive a look from others present which seems to say "What's he doing here?". Unfortunately, friendly smiles are not always given and no-one may approach your contact in welcome.

Do not give up if no reply is received - as a general rule, people are not good letter writers, so after 2 or 3 weeks, write again. Don't write long letters or they will feel that you expect the same.

The best follow-up is for those who confess their faith to join the open air witness team, where they will learn fast and feel the urgency and reality of service. Your witness should then be regular - weekly is ideal - where the people are. The reward for this is that people who have been briefly touched in past outreaches, who come under conviction, can seek you out if they know where you will be on a particular day and at a particular time.

#### BOOKS THAT HAVE HELPED ME

The Soul Winner - CH SPURGEON  
Lectures To My Students (1&2) - CH SPURGEON  
How To Work For Christ - Dr RA TORREY  
Talks To Men - Dr RA TORREY  
Hand Gathered Fruit - E LAST  
The Divine Art Of Soul Winning - OSWALD SANDERS  
The Fisherman's Basket - NOEL GIBSON  
(Sketchboard work)

## LITERATURE

Gospel Visual Leaflets (12 different)

Gospel Cartoon Style

What it means to be a Christian

all available from "Take Heed Ministries"

God's Way to Peace, Truth, Love

Love is the Bridge

from Pocket Testament League,

Clarence Court (D)

Rushmore Hill

Orpington

Kent BR6 7LZ

The Reason Why

from Fisher's Fellowship, Harvester House

96 Plaistow Road

Bromley BR1 3AS

Scores of various leaflets with varied appeal

eg. "Daily Strength", much used of the Lord,

and "4 Things God Wants You To Know",

from Scripture Gift Mission

### Young People

Bible study on Matthew

Meditation on Psalms

from World Missionary Press Inc

PO Box 120, New Paris

Indiana 46553

USA

Further copies of this manual can be obtained  
from:-