

Evangelism

EVANGELIST

(e-van'-jel-ist): This is a form of the word ordinarily translated "gospel" (euaggelion), except that here it designates one who announces that gospel to others (euaggelistes, "a bringer of good tidings"), literally, God Himself is an evangelist, for He "preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham" (Gal 3:8); Jesus Christ was an evangelist, for He also "preached the gospel" (Luke 20:1); Paul was an evangelist as well as an apostle (Rom 1:15); Philip the deacon was an evangelist (Acts 21:8); and Timothy, the pastor (2 Tim 4:5); and indeed all the early disciples who, on being driven out of Jerusalem, "went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4 the King James Version).

But Eph 4:11 teaches that one particular order of the ministry, distinguished from every other, is singled out by the Head of the church for this work in a distinctive sense. All may possess the gift of an evangelist in a measure, and be obligated to exercise its privilege and duty, but some are specially endued with it. "He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."

It will be seen that as an order in the ministry, the evangelist precedes that of the pastor and teacher, a fact which harmonizes with the character of the work each is still recognized as doing. The evangelist has no fixed place of residence, but moves about in different localities, preaching the gospel to those ignorant of it before. As these are converted and united to Jesus Christ by faith, the work of the pastor and teacher begins, to instruct them further in the things of Christ and build them up in the faith.

At a later time, the name of "evangelist" was given the writers of the four Gospels because they tell the story of the gospel and because the effect of their promulgation at the beginning was very much like the work of the preaching evangelist. In character, the Gospels bear something of the same relation to the Epistles as evangelists bear to pastors and teachers.

JAMES M. GRAY

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