

198 A vision for world evangelism?

Since I wrote my last article, I've begun to doubt. What am I doing? Am I wasting my time? What am I, what are we, doing to reach the 95% of people around us who don't go to church?

But then I was encouraged by reading that, writing in OUP's *World Christian Encyclopedia*, David Barrett estimates that, from a motley crew of eleven disciples, there were about one million Christians by AD100 and 44 million by AD500. How did God do that?!

I *think* God achieved it by coordinating groups of fearless individuals inspired by the realisation that Jesus, who died and was raised to life again, was King of the Universe, and that the love they saw in Jesus casts out all fear. They were a *network* (a.k.a. fishers of men) of love, loving communities, ambassadors for the King, lights to the world, the aroma of Christ, seeing the power of the Holy Spirit transforming relationships, enabling them to face suffering, even persecution.

Again how is God wanting *me* (us?) to reach the 95% now, in 2022?

Then I was affected by a secular BBC presenter, Ade Adepitan, back in his home city of Lagos, encountering the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), with a building holding 200,000 for their monthly Holy Ghost Services now building another to hold one million people. They said their vision was to plant an RCCG church within "five minutes' walk of everyone" (was that in Africa?) or "within five minutes' drive of everyone" (was it?) in Europe/USA.

Where does that leave my vision of living a life of love through a tiny medieval Anglican church in Norwich, trying to show love to everyone I meet day by day. A bit pathetic, eh?

No, I reject those negative thoughts of guilt; and I reject any thoughts of fear about my loved one going to hell unless "knowing the fear of the Lord [I] persuade [them]".

[If anyone uses that verse^{2 Cor 5:11} to tell you to (try to) persuade people into a relationship with God, check out the context (the passage behind much of my paragraph 3 above); I believe Paul was talking about persuading fellow believers to take their relationship with God seriously.]

I **do** believe that I'm at least vaguely on the right lines in saying that it was a huge mistake to shrink the gospel to 'me and my salvation', as Evangelicals have done for the past few hundred years, and I do believe that telling people the story of Jesus (= the gospel) is not half as scary as Green's^[197] 'to persuade, to warn, to teach, to cajole others into that relationship'.

God loves people so much, and he wants 'everyone to come to repentance'; he will use the RCCG, but maybe God is also willing to use li'l old me and li'l old you and God could coordinate us, along with others around the world for the likes of: 11 => a million => 44 million.

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