

Marcus Honeysett (ed. Richard Collins)

# The Leader's Heart

(Part One)

*The following is an edited version of Marcus Honeysett's address to the All Souls Langham Place School of Evangelists in November 2011. Part One. The main audience was evangelists but the talk is equally applicable to other leaders in local churches.*

## So, what's the goal of your ministry?

I take it from Ephesians 4 that the goal of *all* ministry is to make disciple-making disciples. That, basically, is the whole show.

It's challenging, isn't it? For two generations, the messages of our culture have tended to favour the individual over the group. So much so, that many don't feel like the story of their lives has any greater significance within a wider, more meaningful narrative. We're not much for meta-narratives – the big story – we're more interested in our individual story. We prefer self above all things. We are our own idols.

Along with this has come the dawning realisation that we have lost our moorings. Post-modern relativism has left us suspended in amorality while finding the world a very immoral place. I recommend you read Douglas Coupland's novel "Generation A" if you want a fascinating view on people who are adrift, desperately trying to create new meaning, new identity and a new sense of family. It's a bleak and insightful read.

So you're an evangelist crafting ways to reach a world like this. There is no worse mistake as an evangelist than to get the world wrong. Answering questions nobody's asking.

Failing to connect with how people think. What's worse is that many have written off the evangelical church. Surely that's no place to find guidance for a world like this. Why?

Because many view evangelical churches as the last kind of place to give them the answers they're asking.

What are people looking for? Perhaps the loudest heart cry is for authenticity. Be real! That cry should give all leaders and evangelists pause for thought. Is a church a place where authenticity can be found? In addition, is it a place which seems to cater only to the faithful? Or are we a community which is equipped to speak out the truth of God's grace while also growing in our knowledge of that grace at the same time?

People certainly won't listen unless they've connected with us and seen that we practice what

we preach. In terms of sharing the gospel, the days of inviting not-yet Christians to step out of their comfort zones and into ours seems to be on the wane. It's harder and harder to reach a generation which doesn't think we have anything worthwhile to say.

I'd like to offer three reflections which are focused on us 'as disciples.' Who also happen to be evangelists. They are less to do with evangelism and more to do with who we are as evangelists. Our hearts, homes and church life are key apologetics for the gospel, but only if they match up with the message we proclaim. Oh for sure, God is able to work through flawed people – just read the Bible – but that is no excuse for not giving attention to our lives.

Watch your life as well as your doctrine closely, Paul told Timothy, setting an example in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity. We are disciples who make more and more disciples to the glory of God. Therefore, it is critical that we don't neglect our own discipleship, lest the true things we say with our mouths are refuted by the poor state of our hearts and lives. What marked out the early believers? See

how these people love each other. Visible love, authentic community, marriages of a different kind, whose strength and power came from being true worshippers of God and followers of his Son.

Leading a team of evangelists in London universities was one of the most thrilling and satisfying experiences of my life. People who were sold out for Jesus. However, I have also met evangelists who were so driven by activism that they were in great danger of neglecting their hearts, homes and church life, in order to do more of what they thought was fruitful evangelism. The itinerant ones, most of all, were in danger. They were people who could repeat the same material while living an unexamined and unaccountable life.

Sadly, I believe that some of these were attracted

to their calling precisely because of the isolation. The patterns of life we choose should satisfy our souls and lead us to fruitful witness that is deep rather than brittle. The way we live should deepen our effectiveness in nurturing disciple-making disciples. It is to the state of our souls that I wish to address myself.

How are you doing in your heart? How is your worship life going? Are you gripped and thrilled by the Lord? Are you enjoying opening his Book? Are you still discovering things which amaze and delight you, drive you to your knees in wonder?

Our strength comes from the joy of the Lord. It also powers our evangelism. Effective ministry is directly tied to the joy of the Lord. Being encouraged in the Lord. No joy, no good witness. If you take a look in the Psalms, there is a direct link between worship and proclamation. Sing praises

to the Lord enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done (9:11). Or Ps. 96:2, Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day.

Vertical first, then the horizontal flowing from that vertical connection. In other places the work of mission is done and

the result is God being worshipped by the nations: I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples. For great is your love, reaching to the Heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies (57:9-10)

There is a very close connection between worshipping, proclamation and the task of evangelism. Evangelism arises out of worshipping hearts that are delighting in the Lord. It occurs when we praise God in plain view of the world, in order that people would see, then come and join us in worship. It starts with worship, ends with worship and is fuelled by worship all the way through.

Worship is the motivation, the goal, the means and the power.

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**Marcus Honeysett** is founding director of Living Leadership. He has extensive experience as a speaker and writer and as a church elder for training and discipleship. His books include *Finding Joy* (IVP, 2005) and *Fruitful Leaders* (IVP, 2011). Marcus is married to Ros and they have one son.