

Preaching Refreshed

As in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Rome, we must acknowledge in New Zealand that a divine initiative lies behind this human speech. The challenge is a theological one before it is a methodological one. God still chooses to use preaching as a vehicle for the advance of his unstoppable word.

As in Jerusalem, Samaria, Caesarea, Pisidian Antioch, and Corinth, we must focus in New Zealand upon Jesus Christ - ensuring that the proclaimer in the Gospels becomes the proclaimed in the church as we build on the gospel events (the death and resurrection of Jesus), witnesses (the Scriptures), promises (the offer of salvation) and companions (repentance, faith, baptism, and Spirit-filling).

As in Pisidian Antioch, Thessalonica, Corinth, and Ephesus, we must persist in New Zealand with opening and explaining the text of Scripture - in its fullness and depth and do so over a lengthy period of time - so that the revealed and sufficient word of God can mature the people of God.

As in Jerusalem, Pisidian Antioch, Thessalonica, Ephesus, and Rome, we must expect in New Zealand a divided response to faithful preaching as we encounter both acceptance and rejection of the message. We must recoil from the cultural forces which would have us 'accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative' in an effort to market the gospel to consumers.

As in Thessalonica - and in comparing what happened in Athens with Pisidian Antioch - we must be flexible and fulsome in New Zealand, ensuring that preachers and preaching teams include 'information, declaration, exhortation, persuasion, and conversation' (Peter Adam) in their preaching.

As in Jerusalem, Pisidian Antioch, Philippi, Athens, and Ephesus, we must identify the spaces in New Zealand with an equivalency to the temple courts, the synagogues, the riversides, the marketplaces, the lecture halls, and the homes and occupy those spaces with an appropriate communication of the gospel.

As in Caesarea, Antioch, Pisidian Antioch, and Philippi, we must free the gospel in New Zealand to cross boundaries, thereby enabling the 'turn to the Gentiles' to be ongoing as it seeks out the lost and the last and the least and maybe even discovers some of them to be part of a God-fearing fringe in society.

As in Lystra and Athens we must be prepared in New Zealand to commence a gospel presentation from a point of contact with our audience that is outside the Bible - such as those provided by the contemporary philosophers expressed in the billboards and lyrics, the advertising and cartoons of our world.

As in Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, and Ephesus, we must loosen preaching in New Zealand from its monological stereotype and welcome the interactivity which comes with dialogue and debate.

As in Jerusalem, Damascus, and Caesarea we must in New Zealand be well-acquainted with both the biblical story and our own personal story - and be able to testify boldly to the significance of both as we bear witness to Jesus.