

GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH ENQUIRERS

There have been one or two occasions when people who came on OAM Team Events were operating in a way that we did not feel comfortable with as a Mission. With this in mind, I have been asked by the Committee to write to everyone who applies to join a Team Event and set out in a helpful way, how the Mission handles serious enquirers in open-air situations. It is our desire to always honour the Lord in our outreach and therefore our principles and practice need to accord with God's Word as closely as possible. Please note the following points very carefully:

- 1) We need to acknowledge that ultimately it is the Holy Spirit's work to bring a person to the point of true repentance and faith. Remember that a doctor knows the seriousness of dealing with body or mind, but we have the privilege of being involved with something far more serious – the soul. What great care we need to take!
- 2) We DO NOT use gimmicks or gadgets to try and explain the gospel, as though we had at our disposal a sure-fire way of bringing enquirers to the point of salvation. Our trust must be in the message of the gospel, not in any techniques.
- 3) It is very occasionally the case that the Lord will so work in a person's heart that they will be converted there and then in the open-air. How wonderful when this happens! But when we counsel such people we need great wisdom to discern what point an enquirer may have reached in their search for the Lord. Bringing in another believer into the discussion can be extremely helpful. *"Two are better than one"* (Eccles 4:9).
- 4) We DO NOT put pressure on enquirers to profess faith in the Lord on the spot. It is far wiser to encourage a person to go home and seek the Lord. A cooling off period can be helpful.
- 5) It is not our role to put words in a person's mouth. Prayer is something that must come from the heart of the seeker. We therefore DO NOT use a set prayer which we encourage people to pray. Neither do we pray a prayer and just ask them to say 'amen' at the end.
- 6) If an individual expresses a desire to trust the Lord immediately, then, if one is available, call an evangelist over to help. Together, go through the gospel message again with the enquirer to ensure that they really do grasp it. Along with that, ask them questions about what they understand about who God is, how serious their sin is and what the Lord Jesus has done to save sinners. Ask them why they need to call on the Lord and why now.
- 7) Always look for a sense of brokenness in the enquirer concerning their sin - what we sometimes call 'conviction'. That conviction will be more intense in some than in others. However, true repentance can only follow on from some level of conviction.
- 8) If you have doubts about an enquirer's understanding of the gospel, offer a John's gospel or CD and urge them to go away and read it carefully and prayerfully.
- 9) If an enquirer wants to turn to the Lord there and then, encourage them to pray; asking the Lord for forgiveness of their sins through His sacrificial death on the cross. Explain that they need to commit their whole lives to Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord.
- 10) When an enquirer has prayed, ask them if they understand what they have done and how they feel about it. If they say they don't feel any different point them to Scripture promises, e.g. Romans 10:9,13.
- 11) Make sure the person who has prayed has been given literature, the Mission's details and most importantly, details of a good local church.
- 12) Make sure you get the person's name and email address (if they wish to give it) and make sure you and the rest of the team pray earnestly for them.

I trust that the above approach commends itself to you. If you would not be happy to accept this approach, it would be better for you not to proceed with your application to join an OAM event. I sincerely hope that is not the case, but if it is, I would urge you to search the Scriptures, particularly the Gospels and the book of Acts. There you will see how the Lord Jesus and the Apostles dealt with souls. We need to remember that neither employing our own methods, nor setting our own standards, will ever be sufficient to guard and guide us in handling precious souls in a way that will most please the Lord and best help the enquirer.

Andy Banton (General Secretary)