

# Free Presbyterian Youth Council



'Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth' - Ecclesiastes 12:1

## REPORT ON EVANGELISM TRAINING WEEKEND 2010

By Stephen McAreavey

The Evangelism Training Weekend is a fixture in the Youth Council event calendar that many young people from our churches look forward to each year. Over the years the weekend has proved to be a tremendous blessing to young Christians who seek to obey the great commission, and who want to see the Gospel of redeeming love noised about their community and their land.

This year the weekend was held in The Faith Mission Centre, Portadown, from Friday 26<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March. Forty-one young people from twenty-two of our churches enjoyed instruction from God's precious Word on how to witness to lost souls. As in previous years, we were once again encouraged to see many newcomers in attendance.

Before the training sessions began in earnest on the Saturday morning, there were a number of opportunities for the young people to lay hold of God in the devotional and dorm prayer meetings. Little encouragement was needed for the young people to ask the Lord to prepare their hearts, to grant wisdom, to bless with ability and to open doors for evangelism. Much prayer was also offered for the forthcoming summer outreaches to Merthyr Tydfil and the Isle of Man.

The training sessions commenced with Rev David McMillan speaking on 'Preparation for Evangelism' and the need to examine our spiritual condition. Scripture encourages and emphasises throughout for a person to "...examine himself" (1 Cor 11:28) and "Consider your ways" (Haggai 1:5 & 7). Rev McMillan said that just as a doctor asks a patient questions to ascertain their physical health the Christian needs to ask themselves the following questions to ascertain their spiritual health:

- *Are you committing any known sin?* – If we regard iniquity our heart, the Lord will not hear us (Psalm 66:18)
- *Are you in the will of God?* – We waste our days upon this earth if we do anything other than God's will. There is no such thing as living in God's second best. We are either in God's good, acceptable and perfect will or we are living outside it, going our own way.
- *Are you spending time each day in prayer?* Robert Murray M'Cheyne said "A man is what he is on his knees before God, and nothing more."
- *Are you spending time reading your Bible?* The evangelist and philanthropist, George Mueller, after having read the Bible through one hundred times with increasing delight, made this statement: "I look upon it as a lost day when I have not had a good time over the Word of God." By the time the American Bible teacher Harry Ironside was 14 years old he had read the Bible through 14 times.
- *Do you confess Christ publically?* We are commanded to be witnesses for Christ but very often we have more difficulty speaking to the unsaved about the Lord than we have gossiping.

After this challenging word to each of our hearts Rev Peter McIntyre spoke on “How to counter Mormonism.” This session was particularly pertinent to those going on the outreach to Merthyr Tydfil. It was noted that on the Lord’s Day there were more people in regular attendance at the Mormon temple in Merthyr Tydfil than in all the evangelical churches put together.

In his session, Rev Ralph Hall presented ways in which the Gospel could be conveyed to the ‘average man on the street’ in a language they could understand. When sharing the Gospel with others there is a need to present it in a clear, distilled and concise manner, but very often Christians can be guilty of over simplifying or over complicating the message. In communicating with non-believers we should seek to avoid Christian jargon and assume that those we contact know nothing about Christianity.

Other topics that were covered over the weekend were: “Problems people raise in personal witnessing” and “Leading a soul to Christ” by Rev Ian Harris, and “Street Evangelism & Open Air Ministry” and “Door to Door Evangelism” by Mr Colin Maxwell. Practical role-play sessions were used to reinforce what was being taught and to improve the ability of the young people.

Once again, this year, young people were given guidance on how to plan and deliver a personal word of testimony. At the start of the weekend every young person was assigned a random number and asked to prepare a short five minute testimony. Before the commencement of a meeting or training session a number was called and the person with the corresponding number gave their testimony. These brief times of testimony were of great blessing to our souls. We were greatly encouraged to see the evident hand of the Lord still working in the hearts of the young people of the Free Presbyterian Church.

On the Saturday evening, after dinner, the young people were given the opportunity to put into practice some of what they learnt that day. Older ones were able to participate in street evangelism in Portadown town centre while younger ones assisted in Bethany FPC Reach Ministry. On the Lord’s Day, the young people attended Tandragee FPC for morning worship where they sang and testified.

We are thankful once again to the Youth Council President, Rev Ian Harris, for the considerable time and effort he put into organising the weekend. Many of the young people came away feeling challenged and blessed. A great time of fellowship was had one with the other but especially with the Lord.