

Free Presbyterian Youth Council



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

REPORT ON EVANGELISM TRAINING WEEKEND 2009

By Stephen McAreavey

On Friday 27th March 2009 a group of young people from across the province gathered in the Mill Rest Youth Hostel, Bushmills, for the annual Youth Council Evangelism Training Weekend. The weekend is organized each year by the Youth Council with the aim of helping to equip the young people of the denomination to be more effective witnesses for Christ and to be '*be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you*' (1 Peter 3:15).

It was encouraging for those with the responsibility of organizing the weekend, not only to see familiar faces in attendance, but to have several newcomers present. Many of those who were there for the first time had come as a direct result of personal recommendation from previous years participants.

This year the new Youth Council President, Rev Ian Harris, had arranged a varied and packed programme for those present. At the commencement of the weekend, and at the start of each new day, the group gathered together to seek the face of the Lord in prayer. It was the desire of the young people that they, and those who took part throughout the weekend, would know the Lord's presence with them and that Christ would be gloried in all things.

The training sessions commenced on the Saturday morning with the Rev Harris giving an overall view from God's Word of the Doctrine of Salvation. Miss Joyce Walsh then spoke on 'How to do Street Evangelism with Children' before Rev David Park dealt with 'How to Answer Objections on the Doors. Rev Park emphasized that those who were involved in door-to-door ministry should - NEVER go without prayer; NEVER be abrupt in their approach; NEVER argue or lose their temper; NEVER forget who they represent and NEVER lose sight of the purpose. When answering objections he stressed that the Christian should be as '*wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*' (Matt 10:16). They should ALWAYS be reliant upon the Spirit and should ALWAYS bring the hearer to the Word of God. The morning session concluded with the Rev Roger Higginson speaking on the history and doctrinal teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses and giving guidance on how to witness to them.

On Saturday afternoon Rev Harris brought two further messages on 'The Challenge of Islam' and 'How to Lead a Soul to Christ.' The training element of the weekend finished with Mr James McAllister, a full-time Christian worker in Ballymena FPC, speaking on 'Communication Skills on the Doors and Open-Air Ministry.

After a busy day in the classroom and a hearty dinner the group gathered together in the evening for a time of fellowship. Miss Andrea McIlroy, from Moneyslane FPC, gave a short report on the Youth Council Summer Outreach she attended last year to Loughor in Wales. She told those gathered of how the Lord had really blessed the outreach team and how He had honoured their evangelistic efforts by bringing a few people from the local area into the services at Pigsaw FPC. She recounted how in the Welsh Revival of 1904, not only were individual lives changed by the power of the Holy Spirit, but whole communities were

changed indeed society itself was changed. She was saddened to see first hand that Wales was no longer a God fearing nation and how the Welsh people had rejected their Godly heritage. We were exhorted to pray for the Free Presbyterian works in Wales and that once again the Lord would pour out His Spirit upon this dry and thirsty land.

Over the weekend the young people were given guidance on how to plan and deliver a personal word of testimony. It was acknowledged that a personal testimony is one of the most powerful tools a Christian has at their disposal for sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. On the Lord's Day, when the group attended Bushmills FPC for morning worship, four persons availed of the opportunity to testify of God's saving grace in their lives and the whole group ministered to the congregation in song.

A blessed time was had by all on the weekend. It was the earnest prayer of many that the young people went away from the weekend with a greater burden for lost souls and the desire to give of their free time in the summer to participate in the Youth Council outreach programme to the works on the mainland. The challenge was put to each one in attendance:

"If sinners will be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies. And if they will perish, let them perish with our arms around their knees, imploring them to stay. If hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for." - C.H. Spurgeon.