

THE APOSTOLIC GOSPEL

Michael Green



Confidence
in the Gospel

As part of the Evangelical Alliance's *Confidence in the Gospel* initiative we are hosting a series of five national consultations to wrestle with significant and timely issues relating to the gospel.

To ensure that as many people as possible can engage with this programme, the talks are being filmed and made available online.

Why not watch some of the videos, and use the questions provided, to explore these vital subjects with your small group or leadership team?

For more information, videos and resources visit eauk.org/confidence

Michael Green

is respected around the world as an outstanding evangelist, apologist and theologian. He has authored more than 50 books, including *Evangelism in the Early Church*.

Synopsis

There are three word roots in the New Testament for spreading the Christian message, (1) *euangelizō*, meaning "to tell good news", (2) *kēryssō*, meaning "to proclaim", and (3) *martyreō* meaning "to witness".

To tell good news: This was no ordinary news; it was the long-awaited messianic salvation. Therefore, it's not surprising that it became known as *the* good news. Initially the word was used to describe the events themselves and the act of announcing them. Luke traces it all the way back to Jesus' opening sermon (Luke 4:16-21). His death initially seemed like Jesus was a failure, his resurrection however vindicated his claims. It's not surprising that after Jesus' resurrection the good news spread like wildfire.

To proclaim: We have plenty of examples of proclamation in Acts, and they all embody a five-fold shape. (1) They emphasise 'the word' - the Old Testament predications were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. (2) They spoke to the needs of those around them, therefore their approach often differed. (3) They proclaimed a person, Jesus who was the Christ. (4) They offered a gift, not a programme like most religions. Theirs wasn't a religion of do; it was a religion of done. (5) They called for a response. In the Acts sermons it's expressed in terms of repentance, faith and baptism.

To witness: The word '*martyreō*' is used in Greek to mean 'witnessing to facts' and 'vouching of the truth'. John is convinced that the word has become flesh. He can only know this by witness. John the Baptist bears witness to this, but human witness cannot establish the divine claim. Jesus constantly bears witness, but that claim needs to be substantiated. So he calls on two supporting witnesses – one is God the Father, the second is God the Holy Spirit. The point is, only God can adequately bear witness to God. But what could the eye witness generation do for future generations? They could bear their witness. They could say they had come to believe the witness and record the evidence for their belief.

Questions

for small groups

- 1) When we communicate the gospel, is it heard as good news? What can we do to ensure people see that the good news of Jesus is good news for them?
- 2) How can we make sure we are staying faithful to the whole of the apostolic gospel, not just the parts that suit us?
- 3) 2000 years later, how can we be part of the process of 'bearing witness to the facts' of the good news of Jesus?

for leadership teams

- 1) How does the gospel we present compare to the gospel presented by the early Church? What is missing from our presentation of the gospel?
- 2) In terms of how we communicate the gospel, what can we learn from Michael's overview of the early Church's approach?
- 3) The apostles placed great importance on connecting the gospel to the Old Testament. How should we do this, when our audience has a limited understanding of the scriptures?