

Advent 2, 9/12/2012, Holy Trinity

Luke 3:1-6

We can rarely pick up anything these days without being confronted with an advertising blurb of some description.

Great bargains are available on Wednesday and Saturday.

You can see the very latest release at cinemas on Thursday.

You can buy a 2012 plate model in a great package deal with zero interest.

Yes! Advertising is a costly affair.

God sent John the Baptist to advertise that Jesus was coming.

The advertising cost was zero.

God sent a man and paid him nothing.

The advertising plan was a long term one.

It extended back in the Old Testament for hundreds of years.

Then God sent an advertising executive who was a bit strange.

He wore camel hair clothes and ate locusts and wild honey.

John was no suave, smooth talking executive who could sell ice to the Eskimos.

He was no diplomat either.

He called the religious leaders and the crowd a "brood of vipers" and challenged them to live righteously.

John's message to the people was to repent, to turn from what was wrong and to turn to follow Jesus.

He wasn't concerned about creature comforts, people's opinion of him, status or even life.

He simply got on with the job that God had given him, to tell people to be ready for Jesus.

We now are in the same business: we are to be partners in the gospel, along with John, Luke, the apostle Paul from history and the rest of us who are here this morning.

We are to point people to Jesus.

But before we look at how we are to point people to Jesus I direct your thought to a personal question.

First, think of the people who pointed you to Jesus.

How did they do it?

What made you listen?

The odds are that they were not people who considered themselves as having the gift of evangelism or that they were evangelists.

Nor do you have to consider yourself an evangelist in order to point others to Jesus.

But you and every other Christian are called to put Jesus first in their lives and this should lead to it being apparent to others.

This is a life that is overflowing with our trust, our joy, our hope, our love, our peace in Jesus.

It will also contain that element of repentance, that continual turning to Jesus who then strengthens us with the Holy Spirit, with Holy Communion and through the other sources through which we receive God's grace.

We, then, are in partnership with God because ultimately it is God who brings about a person's conversion.

We can do this by praying for people who do not know Jesus: by praying for ourselves, that we may have the opportunity, strength and words to speak to others: by praying for the love and knowledge we need to share Jesus.

We should not worry about what other people think of us because we are Christians.

We trust God to lead us through as we point others to Jesus.

And we need to be authentic, to be genuine in our lives, to live with faith, hope and love.

If every Christian heeded the call to repentance, constantly renewing their desire to see Jesus and being prepared to point others to Jesus, then "all mankind will see God's salvation".

Are you prepared to "give it a go", to have the vision "that all mankind will see God's salvation"?

It really is a matter of choice: your choice and mine to heed John's call to repentance and to point others to Jesus.