The Resurrection and Evangelism

“Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.” - 1 Cor. 15:12-18

While the resurrection of Jesus Christ is foundational to the Christian faith, and therefore an essential part of the gospel (c.f., 1 Cor. 15:1-6), sometimes we Christians can treat it as a mere footnote when actually preaching that gospel. I know I (Bill) have been guilty of this. But why is the resurrection so crucial when it comes to sharing our faith?

First, the resurrection witnesses to the immense power of God Himself. To believe in the resurrection is to believe in God. If an omnipotent Creator exists, then it follows that He has power to raise the dead, because only He who created life can resurrect it, removing the sting of death and the victory of the grave (1 Cor. 15:54-55). In resurrecting Jesus from the grave God reminds people of both His existence and His absolute sovereignty over life and death. In other words, even a so-called “atheist” must grapple with the implications of the resurrection, making its historical proof a powerful evangelistic tool.

Second, the resurrection is essentially God the Father’s stamp of approval on His Son’s death in the place of repentant sinners. If Jesus’ death on the cross had not “paid in full” the debt each of us owes, He would still be paying for it in death. As Adrian Warnock puts it in his book *Raised with Christ*, “Jesus is declared to still be righteous by His resurrection (Rom. 4:25), just as He was declared to have become sin by His death. God’s wrath has been satisfied.” This is why this truth complements and completes so perfectly the cross and is, therefore, so important in evangelism.

Last but not least, our resurrection is tied to Christ’s (1 Cor. 15:12), meaning we must not ultimately fear death. They may even decapitate us, but we will LIVE again! This is the blessed hope that the Church in China has as it sends 100,000 missionaries to the Muslim world! And what about the Brazilian Church? How about the American Church? The South Korean Church? What are we afraid of anyway? As Paul said in Phil. 1:21, “To die is gain.”

Needless-to-say, this transition motivated those students to take the test by taking their real need for God’s mercy, grace and forgiveness and turning it into a felt need. Nobody likes to hear they aren’t headed for heaven when they die, right?

As we gear up to run this outreach again at Fluminense Federal University (i.e., UFF) the week leading up to Easter, would you join us and the M8-32 students in prayer for genuine conversions among the 150 to 200 students who will hopefully stop to hear (and read) the gospel (i.e., from the banner presentation and Good Person Test)? Thanks!

Resurrection on Campus!

“So what’s this all about?” a student asked me after studying my banner (covered with large yellow Post It Notes in strategic places). The top of the banner had the following question: “Did Jesus really die?”

“Let me explain it to you,” I responded, proceeding to explain to this Electrical Engineering student and several other students nearby four of the most prominent natural theories on what happened to Jesus’ body after his death, poking holes in each as I went along. I ended my explanation detailing why the theory of the resurrection does the most justice to the historical facts surrounding Jesus’ death and burial. I then applied my presentation by explaining that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ would only benefit them based on a certain result of taking the Good Person Test. This was my way of motivating them to see if they were good according to God’s standards of goodness (i.e., perfection) and good enough to get into heaven.
I am immensely thankful to my God who has given me the opportunity to participate in a campus Christian group that, above all, LOVES the message of the cross and hasn’t kept quiet in spite of the spiritual darkness on campus... a group that has preached in season and out of season SALVATION!

I have learned much from Bill and Aïda, especially to not get intimidated and to position myself as a defender of the gospel. Even after I graduate I want to continue being a part of M8-32 and, together, trying to transform the world with the TRUTH!

In M8-32 we build one another up and debate topics that are completely inserted into the reality of the university. We exchange valuable information regarding the kingdom of God, as well as evangelistic strategies.

Together we are better... better at preaching the gospel, at encouraging one another, at prayer, at growing, at learning... we’re just BETTER because of M8-32!

I thank God for Bill and Aïda who, with such dedication and energy, lead M8-32, for the glory of God!

M8-32, through this blessed couple, Bill & Aïda, has invested in my life and ministry in a very special way. I am grateful to God for our meetings, conversations and bible studies. Bill & Aïda have opened their home and their hearts to all of us in M8-32. Their lives are an incentive to us, an excellent example to be followed.

I never thought much about missions until now; my life has changed since the arrival of this loving missionary couple, because I never have loved lost souls as I do today. We students involved with M8-32 LOVE Bill & Aïda Hamilton!

When I came to First Baptist Church of Itaipu (FBCI) I noticed Bill & Aïda’s dedication to and total involvement in missions. Before I knew it I was going on campus and hitting the streets with them!

To speak of this couple is to speak of genuine friends who are godly and committed to the expansion of the kingdom of God via evangelism! May God continue to bless all of you who invest in Bill & Aïda, and may He raise up other missionaries for our nation and the world who have the character and commitment of this couple! The youth group of FBCI loves Bill & Aïda!

Knowing M8-32 has, without a doubt, impacted my life. In each weekly meeting I’ve observed the dedication of Bill and Aïda to the Lord’s work and to our lives as students, which has awakened in me the importance of being concerned about the eternal salvation of all those with whom I come in contact.

M8-32 has given me opportunities to put my faith into practice which had been, honestly, somewhat “silent.” Today I want to express my gratefulness for M8-32 by putting into practice what I’ve learned vs. wasting my youth, by loving what God loves. Thank you!