

THE

EVANGELICAL TIMES

NEWSPAPER

A new journal is to be launched in the new year for independent evangelicals. As independents we have a great need for news about each other, an independent voice for our principles, and a popular medium for printed ministry.

There are several newspapers and journals which serve evangelical people, and some of them exercise a very valuable ministry. The Evangelical Times is not intended to duplicate or compete with other journals. It is intended to provide a vital service to independents which is outside the aim and scope of existing papers.

NEWS

Existing evangelical journals have a very restricted news service because they are strictly interdenominational. But full reporting of local independent affairs is very important to us. We know far too little about each other and far too little about ourselves as a whole. It is not surprising that we find ourselves without any cohesion; lacking the ability for extensive co-operation and unable to take an intelligent, prayerful interest in each other. We have tried to honour the doctrine of the church and have left the cities of compromise and error, only to find ourselves scattered about in a wilderness where there is no means of spreading the information which is vital for inter-church fellowship.

Rare and elevated events like assemblies and conferences mask the true poverty of our normal relationships, and pastors often fail to notice because they have the benefit of exclusive channels of information and fellowship. Nevertheless, for most of our Church members there is little fellowship beyond the immediate locality—only righteous isolation.

Amongst independents doctrinal unity (on fundamentals) prevails, and the chances for true fellowship are ideal. But the spasmodic flutter of rallies etc., is no substitute for real unity and prayerful interest between the Churches. Who knows about who? Can an intelligent response be made to the command of Ephesians 6:18—prayer for all saints? It is impossible, despite the smallness of our island and the advantages of our modern communications. Visible unity is our duty and we are commanded in Ephesians 4:3 (see also v 16) to 'keep the unity of the Spirit'. This means Christians knowing and caring about one another, praying for each other; serving together; the strong supporting the weak; and all of us taking encouragement from one another. Just how much news meant to the early church is seen in snatches of Paul's letters.

- Eph. 6:21 " . . . the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts."
- Phil. 2:19 "I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you."
- Col. 1:9 " . . . and so from the day we heard of it we have not ceased to pray for you."
- Col. 4:7 "Tychicus will tell you all about my affairs . . . I have sent him to you for this very purpose."
- Col. 4:16 "And when this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans and see that you read also the letter from Laodicea."

The Evangelical Times could be a major step towards achieving a better degree of unity without compromising our principles as independent evangelicals. We could not follow a powerful personality (even if a suitable genius existed). Nor could we renounce New Testament independence to construct an elaborate system of organised unity. We must allow the unity which is inherent in us to express itself, and do whatever we can to know more about each other.

It is significant that where a denominational body has an effective newspaper, its virility has been maintained even though most of the churches have forsaken the Gospel. How much greater (and more real) strength would be derived from a newspaper in the service of a living body of Christ's people.

There are independent evangelicals wearing different labels and professing attachment to different fellowships and movements. It is strongly felt that a newspaper which embraced all independent life and witness could greatly assist a drawing together in the unity of the Spirit. We badly need to be closer together in knowledge of one another and in service.

These are the reasons for the news service to be provided by the Evangelical Times.

A VOICE FOR INDEPENDENTS

All the existing popular journals maintain an attitude to ecumenicity which is either approving, or benevolent, or at best—strictly neutral. They mostly cater for the "in it to win it" attitude of the denominationalists. There is no popular journal which takes seriously the warnings of the Scriptures about believers being yoked with unbelievers and about tolerating Nicolaitans in our midst. They would all have us drawn (as a tiny compromising fraction) into a large, united body of liberals, with possible ultimate

submission to Rome. Where are the wholly evangelical, self governed, local churches of the New Testament? No popular journal really defends them. Most prefer to pay homage to the ecumenical cause.

As evangelicals, believing in the purity of the Scriptural pattern, we not only fail in speaking to other evangelicals, but we fail to strengthen and encourage our own people in this matter. We leave them to the mercy of what the denominations say and teach. In the crucial years which lie ahead, while the pressure upon evangelicals is increasing, will it be partly our responsibility if even some of the elect are deceived? Our own people are neglected, and although we pretend otherwise, the majority of Christians in the denominations have never heard of the independent position. We must have a voice.

MINISTRY

There is a pressing need for popular written ministry. So many independent churches, missions and assemblies lack regular ministry and this applies to urban as well as rural areas. There is a general dearth of pastors and teachers. Christians who hold to lay system of ministry are finding the same dearth of brethren in their sphere.

The devil is attacking the believing church in a powerful way, and we see worldliness and compromise coming even into our spiritual service, and a decline of faith in the power of God's Word. How important the written ministry has now become.

A newspaper can probably help the situation more than any other medium of reading. Reading is mentally formidable to most people who have spent the best hours of the day in secular work. The non-reading class includes the working man and the most educated professional man alike. But in newspaper form ministry can utilize the most acceptable modern form of reading. While the Evangelical Times will aim at strong meat as well as milk, an all out attempt will be made to frame everything in a thoroughly clear and 'popular' style.

The Character of the Evangelical Times

The Evangelical Times will be a tabloid newspaper (Daily Mirror size) of twenty pages and will be issued monthly. It will be printed by modern offset lithography, and will cost 9d.

Every month the Evangelical Times will bring before readers pages of detailed and illustrated news gathered from all over the British Isles. For the first time there will be news from all evangelical Churches, Missions and Assemblies, with special reports on all new projects and plans. Church members will be able to take a close and prayerful interest in the work of the Gospel throughout the land.

Every issue will give news of area activities organised between the Churches, and news of young peoples activities. A page will be devoted to news from the universities and other college Christian Unions.

The paper will report the trials and triumphs of the foreign missions, giving a bird's-eye-view of missionary service, as well as reports of individual missions.

Every issue will include a special article by a leading Christian writer which will come to grips with the great problems of the spiritual life.

Each issue will have an illustrated feature article dealing with an important topic, such as—revival, Church unity, scientific stumbling blocks, Church life and witness, the Church of Rome, or historical topics.

And every copy of Evangelical Times will include a pull-out Evangelistic Supplement with a direct evangelistic article and an illustrated account of the conversion and life of a great Christian.

Other items to be included in the paper are:—a new style of book review; notices of forthcoming events for independents; Editorial comment and reader's correspondence.

The Control of the Evangelical Times

The compiling of the Evangelical Times is directed by the Evangelical Times Council, which is constituted as a rigidly conservative evangelical body of twelve independents representing all sections of the independent sphere.