

Acts for today**'The Growing Church in the Acts of the Apostles'**

No. 5: Caesarea

The events at Caesarea are recorded in two chapters (10 & 11) to make the point that something significant happened here! For the first time Gentiles became Christians, when Peter shared the gospel with Cornelius.

What about our 'cross-cultural' mission? Nationally 40% of the population have never been to church, except for weddings or funerals, and only 4% of children attend church on a Sunday. Our mission must involve reaching out to different cultures e.g. young people, 18-30's, ethnic groups etc. So what lessons can we learn from Caesarea?

Prayer & Vision

It needed two men at prayer and two separate visions to bring the gospel to a totally new constituency. Cornelius was told to fetch Peter from Joppa, while Peter's vision prepared him to go into the house of a Gentile. Effective mission begins with prayer and God's vision for the way ahead.

Expect the Unexpected

God used a Jewish fisherman to instruct a Roman officer about himself and even before Peter had finished speaking the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius! Are we expectant, and ready for the Spirit to lead us in unfamiliar paths in sharing the gospel?

Go to Where People Are

Peter shared the good news in Cornelius' home. It reminds us that we cannot expect people to come to us; we have to go to where they are.

Refuse to be Prejudiced

God addressed Peter's prejudices before he could use him. What are our prejudices? Are we embarrassed when certain people come to church e.g. the poor, those of another colour or gay etc? Don't be surprised to find that God is already at work in their lives!

'I now realise how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.' (Acts 10:34,5)

*The Rev Paul Hardingham
continues his series on the early Church.*

**The more you think about Christ,
the more you think of him.**

H C Trumbell