

Note to the Reader

In this book, I address believers – those who have a living trust in Christ as Lord and Saviour. I will not point this out every time I speak of ‘we’ and ‘us’, but it must always be understood.

This book is my response to the recently-published (2014) volume by Ray Evans: *Ready, Steady, Grow: Equipping Today's Gospel Churches*.¹

Since I will have some very strong things to say about Ray's book – indeed, against his thesis – I want you to know that, at my request, he agreed to meet me, and I told him what I intended to do and offered him a sight of my manuscript before publication so that he could have his say. I wanted to speak the truth, but do it in love (Eph. 4:15). I gladly record the gracious way in which Ray received me and my (what must have been for him) unpalatable news: he willingly agreed to read my manuscript before publication. The next day (25th July 2014),² I sent him this email:

Ray,

Let me say again that I admire the gracious, warm way you met me yesterday and received me. Thank you.

The conversation further clarified things for me – I see that under your system, in order to reach people (many of whom will never be reached by usual outreach methods), you have to devise ministries *etc.* that can target, help and so make relationships with them, merit and win their confidence, and then reach them. And this has to be managed in order to avoid waste of time, money and effort. You do not want merely to help people. You don't want simply to provide food or entertainment for them. You want their salvation.

¹ Ray Evans: *Ready, Steady, Grow: Equipping Today's Gospel Churches*, Inter-Varsity Press, Nottingham, 2014.

² As you can see, I have not rushed into print.

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And you see this mission as our responsibility. So much so, it has to be devised, planned, organised and evaluated. And it needs a large pool of resource – hence the need for a largish church. And in all this, it seems to me, you are simply brilliant. You have got this sussed and down to a fine art. Your book is a first class manual on all this.

I do not say this to flatter you or patronise you. I mean it.

My ‘grouse’ is at a fundamental point very early in this process, and it is this that I am concentrating on. The mistake – as I see it – having been made, all sorts of troubles follow.

Sorry to be vague, but I need to get this sorted and clear in my mind and on paper before bringing it to you – but I am relieved that you will have my manuscript – that gives me assurance that if I have got the fundamental point wrong, and my case falls, then you will expose it. Does this make sense to you – as far as it goes?

Rest assured that I will not prolong this correspondence – I have to get this sorted and then I will come to you again.

Meanwhile, what’s the favour? In the middle of the night, it dawned on me: Would you be willing to let me have your manuscript file? It would save me scouring the book by hand if a thought crossed my mind – I could digitally search for a word or idea. I quite understand if this is a step too far, but if your warmth does extend this far it would be a bonus to me.³

I am really glad that we met. It helped me. I know we differ, but I know and acknowledge that you want to see sinners saved. I am glad you raised (having remembered) my *Offer* book – I have written other anti-hyperism books. I say this so that you may know that though we have our differences, we both want sinners saved. I felt the power of your quotation in prayer of the apostle’s anguish over his fellow-Jews. I have

³ I am delighted to record that Ray generously sent me the file. I have used cut and paste from it to enable me to give extracts. Unfortunately, there are some differences between that file and the published book, and I have no doubt that I have not always spotted them and adjusted the text. This accounts for any discrepancies there might be in the extracts, none of which, as far as I have unearthed them, are serious.

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no inhibitions (quite the reverse) about offering Christ promiscuously. For evidence see my books and hear my discourses.⁴

Meanwhile, may God bless us both as we seek in our various ways to serve him in the gospel of his Son.

David.

As you read on, please bear this friendly exchange in mind.

Since writing the above, I have completed my manuscript and sent it to Ray. To avoid all misunderstanding, I made it clear that I was not doing this to start a private conversation between us. We have both gone public on what we both feel is a vital topic. The debate between us, therefore, has been conducted in that domain, and, for my part, I wish it to remain that way. But I wanted Ray to be able to challenge what he saw as factual errors in my work so that I, if convinced, could make corrections before publication.

⁴ They can be found at davidhjgay.com