

c. Lastly, there is the sheer joy of it. It radiates out from the New Testament. It is infectious. You could put these Christians in prison, and they sang praises. You could tell them to shut up, and they talked all the more. Persecute them, and they spread their message in the next town. Kill them, and they went to their deaths with joy, and called down blessings on their murderers. That is why I would not exchange this business of spreading the Gospel for any occupation on earth. It is an enormous privilege. It is desperately needed. And it is utterly fulfilling. It is what we were made for.

CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES OF EVANGELISM

G. W. Peters

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It is readily admitted that the evangel — the Gospel — is the central message of the New Testament. Historically, the church has believed with considerable consistency and fervor that God has dealt effectively and adequately in Christ Jesus — his life, death, resurrection and enthronement — with the sins and sin of mankind and provided an eternal salvation for all who will believe.

The Gospel is God-wrought in history. It is revelation-given for history. It is absolute, perfect, and final. Therefore the Gospel message is one and abiding. The method of the dissemination of the Gospel and the practices of proclamation are man-related and therefore are relative. They are conditioned by the messenger and the psychology and sociology of the people to whom the Gospel is being proclaimed. The methods of operation and the patterns of communication vary greatly. Methods are people-related. The Bible therefore does not lay down absolute patterns and methods in evangelism.

Because of this, a method which may be very effective at one time, at one place, among one people, may not be effective at another time, another place, another people. In fact, it may prove disadvantageous if not disastrous. Therefore, a method-bound movement cannot become an effective *world* movement. Neither can it last very long. It will soon be relegated to the outdated and the outworn. We do not need renewal of the Gospel, but we do need continuous renewal of methodology to communicate the age-old Gospel in an intelligible, meaningful, and purposeful manner.

Methodology must also be distinguished from abiding principles and ideals in evangelism. The Gospel must be orally communicated, the Gospel must be demonstrated in life and action, the Gospel appeal must be made personal, it must be made intelligible, meaningful, attractive, persuasive, and inviting. Man must be confronted. Gospel communication must be preaching and speaking for a verdict. These are principles of Gospel communication. They are qualities of communication and are biblically constant.

Whether such communication is in the *form* of private conversation, public proclamation, group teaching, or door-to-door witnessing is not the important question. There is a quality which rings out the genuineness of the Gospel, reality of experience, and depth of conviction and concern.

In contrast to this, methodology is only a quantitative vehicle to make known the Gospel relevantly, effectively, and attractively. There

is therefore no method which is universal and abiding. It must also be realized that no method is so inclusive that it becomes a sufficient method for all people. While one method may be more efficient than another method, no method is all-sufficient to communicate the Gospel to all people even in the same time and at the same place. Flexibility, variability, and openness become important virtues if evangelism is to be comprehensive and effective.

With these introductory remarks we turn to a survey of the main contemporary patterns of evangelism. Next I present New Testament ideals in evangelism, considering the criteria for evaluating evangelism and the realization of the ideals. Finally we briefly assess the present-day evangelism scene.

Crusade evangelism

Crusade evangelism is a serious and organized attempt to communicate in an intelligible and meaningful manner the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the masses of people in public gatherings. The supreme objective is to expose as many people as possible to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to persuade them to accept the gracious offer of God in Christ Jesus and thus find forgiveness of sins and eternal life in Christ as Savior and Lord; become followers of the Master and learning, fellowshiping and serving members in a local church.

It must be emphasized, however, that crusade evangelism is also God's prophetic voice to the people and the nation. Crusade evangelism does not address itself *solely* to the individual and his sins and for salvation. It must become the voice of God to the people and nation, speaking boldly about the binding, blinding, and blighting sins of the nation, society and institutions and calling all men to repentance. There is a broader scope to evangelism than only the conversion of the individual. Evangelism must penetrate society with the message of salvation and judgment.

Patterns of crusade evangelism

Crusade evangelism may take on various patterns. It may be *national in scope* and advance a program of evangelism that encompasses a whole nation. Such programs have been designed and are being sponsored by the Latin American Mission in various Latin American countries. The programs are known as in-depth evangelism. A similar program known as New Life for All originated in Jos, Nigeria. The latter is gradually and progressively spreading into a number of countries in Africa. These programs were interdenominational in complexion, design, and organization.

Denominational campaigns of national scope have been conducted mainly by the Southern Baptists. After attempts in several countries, concerted efforts were made in Japan in 1963 and Brazil in 1965. These were followed by similar crusades in other countries but not in the same dimensions, enthusiasm, or success. In recent years the Western Hemisphere Crusade put forth great efforts to present the Gospel to the people in several countries in South, Central, and North America. A special feature of the Southern Baptist campaigns have been "simultaneous city-wide crusades."

An effective national campaign was carried through in Korea by the joint Korean churches in 1965.

At present a national campaign of note is in progress in the Philippines. It is less a campaign of crusades in the ordinary sense of the word, but rather a crusade to plant thousands of evangelism and Bible study cells throughout the Republic.

United city-wide and area-wide campaigns have become a part of the heritage of the evangelical churches. In recent decades they have become a world-wide phenomenon through the efforts of such instruments as the "Billy Graham Team," the "World Vision" endeavors, the "Good News Crusades" of the Assemblies of God, and others. In more recent years evangelists of renown from the Third World have left indelible imprints upon their countries and beyond them.

Local church evangelism campaigns are growing less and less in the established churches. This includes both the public evangelistic crusade and "enlistment evangelism." This is tragic, to say the least.

Fellowship-evangelism

The report of Luke on the life and ministry of the apostolic church is very sketchy, yet most meaningful and helpful for our orientation. He tells us that "they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread *from house to house* . . ." and again "And daily in the temple, and *in every house* they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ (evangelized)" (Acts 2:46, 5:42). Somewhat later Paul reminds the Ephesians: "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you and have taught you publicly, and *from house to house*" (Acts 20:20).

Two facts stand out clearly. The early church practiced both large gatherings in public places and small assemblies in the homes of believers. Again, the house meetings or small group encounters had a threefold purpose: first, *fellowship* of the saints, second, *teaching*, and third, *evangelism* of the neighborhood or community.

Fellowship or small group evangelism is not a modern invention or an accommodation to the conveniences of the non-churchgoer. It is an apostolic pattern that is being discovered and revived in our days. It is practiced with great effectiveness in Korea by numerous Presbyterian churches and other groups, by the Pentecostals in Latin America, by the evangelical churches in Great Britain and in several cities in the U.S.A., notably Dallas, Texas.

It should be noted that we are speaking of *fellowship-evangelism* in an atmosphere of friendship and neighborliness. I purposely hyphenate the fellowship-evangelism. It is not fellowship and evangelism, not even fellowship for the purpose of evangelism, but evangelism in and through fellowship. It needs to be recognized that biblical fellowship has evangelizing effects and powers. Evangelism is implicit in fellowship as fellowship is implicit in being in Christ. Fellowship-evangelism seeks to correlate two of the most dynamic New Testament concepts. This does not just happen. It is an art that will be achieved only when the Holy Spirit is truly in control and when it becomes a fellowship *in* the Spirit. The strength of the small group meeting will depend to a great

extent upon the success in keeping the two concepts of fellowship and evangelism in proper balance, continuous tension and beautiful correlation. Fellowship must constitute the *quality* and evangelism must be the *purpose*, while friendship and neighborliness born out of spiritual concern for the welfare of others must create the *atmosphere* of the total setting.

Fellowship-evangelism, therefore, is less formal and more personal than crusade evangelism; it is less structured and more functional than public evangelism. It is not, however, as individual and confronting as personal evangelism usually is. It seems to be a happy and very effective mediation between crusade and personal evangelism if efficiently administered and properly conducted.

Levels of fellowship-evangelism

First, household evangelism. Household evangelism seldom appears in the vocabulary of books on evangelism. This seems peculiar for at least four reasons. (i) The family or household is a universally appearing social phenomenon. (ii) It is the first and most significant social institution created by God and the only institution that belongs to man in his original and sinless state. (iii) Family or household life is carefully ordered in the Bible and experiences of blessings and judgments are vividly portrayed. Again, household evangelism, household conversions, household baptisms, and household churches are quite prominent in the New Testament. (iv) The family or household is the basic and foundational social unit from which all other social units arise. The preservation and building of this unit ought to be a primary concern of Christianity and it ought to constitute the foundational unit of the Christian church.

Few examples of present-day practices in household evangelism can be cited. It is being practiced with considerable success in India by the Oriental Missionary Society and some related patterns do emerge in Japan and Zaire. It resulted in record conversions in Egypt before the wars interrupted the work. At present it is more a "concept" than a practice, program or movement. It ought to and can be fanned into a worldwide movement because the family is universal, household evangelism is a crying need, and household evangelism and household conversions have tremendous advantages. Household evangelism must be returned to its rightful place among the practices of evangelism.

Second, small group evangelism. Small group evangelism has proliferated considerably and has taken on various designations and forms. They are in part a revival of an apostolic pattern and in part a modernizing of the Methodist class meetings of the eighteenth century. It has ardent advocates and defenders. D. H. Adeney vigorously promotes "Cell Groups" through a specialized institute which he has founded in Singapore for this purpose. The institute is known as Discipleship Training Center. A pamphlet entitled "Cell Groups" explains the program. Michael Skinner of Wesley House, Cambridge, England, tells us: "For twenty-five years I have been an unashamed fanatic about house groups. This book makes no apology for such fanaticism but seeks to justify it on biblical grounds, as well as on the score of temporary needs and practical politics." His book, *House Groups*, is inspirational, instructional and provocative.

Speaking of the Methodist class meetings, Mr. Skinner comments: "The good things in the class meeting are plain. It practiced Christian fellowship of the New Testament patterns, it consolidated the gains of preaching and nurtured the spiritually awakened, it made people articulate about their faith and able witnesses to it in the world" (p. 106).

Dr. Matthew S. Prince of Knoxville, Tennessee, has founded the "New Life" movement which he introduces with the following words: "New Life is a Christian mission whose only purpose is to make Jesus Christ known by the best means available . . .

"New Life works through Christians who care for their fellow man. Four meetings for guests follow once a week . . .

"We make every effort to be sensitive to people, remain flexible, and communicate Christ in the most effective way possible. Therefore, the length of the series may vary. However, the format remains basically the same — discussion designed to answer questions about firming up a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ."

Dr. Howard Hendricks, Dallas, Texas, outlines home Bible classes according to pattern, purpose, and procedure. Under *pattern* he prescribes three characteristics if home Bible study groups are to be effective:

1. They must be community-centered.
2. They must be home-centered.
3. They must be evangelism-centered.

He continues on the *purpose*:

1. To provide the opportunity for Christians to reach the unsaved.
2. Present the Gospel to the unsaved (the main purpose).
3. To provide a feeder for the local church.

He sees the *procedure* under three headings:

1. Personnel — the host and/or the hostess and the teacher.
2. Program.
3. Promotion.

Third, specialized group evangelism. In the last decades numerous specialized group ministries have developed. *Child Evangelism Fellowship, International* (U.S.A.) and *Children's Special Service Mission*, now known as Scripture Union (Great Britain), specialize in reaching children with the Gospel.

Youth For Christ, International; Young Life Movement; Teen Evangelism, all U.S.A.-based, are penetrating youth with the message of the Gospel in an effective manner.

Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, Campus Crusade International Students, Inc., and *Navigators* are concentrating on the college and university campuses with relevant messages and relevant methods.

The impressive tri-annual "Urbana" conferences of the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship U.S., have attracted world attention and influenced thousands of young people for Christ. No less notable have been some of the gatherings under the auspices of Campus Crusade. Expo '72 will long be remembered by Dallas' people and thousands of youth.

The Christian Business Men's Committee is directing its energy towards winning business men for Christ.

The Christian Academies, a German movement of great significance, are designed to acquaint, to dialogue with and to confront professionals with the Gospel and the claims of Christ.

Among Armed Forces

Evangelism has found much emphasis in the last decades and has been very successful in Korea. *Christian Service Men's Centers* organization is doing fine work in many cities in military evangelism.

All these organizations have worthy and vigorous programs. Fellowship-evangelism has almost unlimited possibilities and opportunities.

Personal evangelism

Personal evangelism is well illustrated and its effectiveness is demonstrated in the New Testament. Christ is our foremost example, instructor and inspiration in personal evangelism.

Personal evangelism today presents itself in three particular forms.

First, direct confrontation evangelism. Here the Gospel is being offered to the individual and the claims of Christ are made known in a face to face meeting and without lengthy introductions. This type has been popularized and schematized by R.A. Torrey in his famous book "*Personal Evangelism*." Various modifications of the same direct approach have been advanced by numerous authors and organizations. The best known today perhaps are the "Four Spiritual Laws" and their usage by Campus Crusade, and Dr. D. James Kennedy's (Fort Lauderdale) "Explosion Evangelism."

Second, friendship personal evangelism. The purpose of friendship personal evangelism is as definite as that of direct confrontation evangelism. The procedure, however, differs greatly. The cultivation of genuine and concerned friendship constitutes an integral part in the presentation of the Gospel and the claims of Christ. It seems a more natural approach than the direct confrontation. However, it is beset with some difficulties. It is admitted that to gain the confidence and friendship of unsaved people is not easy as it is often imagined. To make the transition from friendship to actual personal evangelism demands a good measure of tact and divine wisdom.

Yet, friendship personal evangelism is a sound approach. The art of being a friend and a soul winner can be acquired in the school of Christ and experience. It is an effective method not only to elicit decisions but also to lead individuals on into a life of Christian discipleship.

Third, dialogue personal evangelism. Dialogue is the opposite from monologue. It is a two-way conversation rather than a one-way presentation or proclamation. The meeting of Christ and Nicodemus may be taken as a biblical pattern of dialogue personal evangelism. The purpose is evangelism, the procedure is dialogue — the friendly exchange of views and convictions, the intimate sharing of experiences, needs, aspirations, and frustrations, with a view of dissolving the difficulties, obstacles, and prejudices in the heart and mind of the unsaved person. It is a gentle attempt to persuade the individual to accept the offer of God in Christ Jesus and to commit himself to Christ for salvation and life.

Life-style evangelism

Life-style evangelism as a program is a recent phenomenon. In reality and practice it is as old as Christianity. Much of the evangelism of Christ was life-style evangelism, that is, it grew out of ordinary life situations and experiences and was conducted in a life-style manner without having been planned or being programmed.

Life-style evangelism has become institutionalized and popularized in our days. The governing concepts of life-style evangelism are informality, familiarity, belongingness, friendliness, helpfulness, non-offensiveness, life-relatedness and non-programmed behavior and conversation.

Life-style evangelism has proliferated and has taken on many forms. I mention only three patterns.

Camp evangelism. Camp life is nothing new. Camp life is known in the Bible and has been known in Europe for many years. It is a part of vacation experiences. However, camp life for evangelism purposes is not as ancient. In the sense of modern camps, it is a relatively late comer.

Today camp and campers abound and facilities have been modernized and are made commodious. Many camps are being used to a tremendous advantage in evangelism. The family-style camp is increasing in numbers, popularity, and effectiveness. The fame of camp style evangelism has spread around the world and is greatly honored by the Lord in bringing people to the knowledge of salvation and the fellowship of believers.

Dinner evangelism. Dinner evangelism is both biblical and social. It is a pleasant and open approach to introduce friends and neighbors, colleagues and business associates, servants and masters to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Its social setting allows for an atmosphere of relaxation, friendship and neighborliness. Such dinners may be held in church facilities, restaurants, or social and entertainment places. The choice of the place is important. Most people prefer a religiously neutral place.

Dinner evangelism has proven very effective in numerous places and is today a popular method of evangelism in many churches and associations in U.S.A. It is much appreciated among the ladies in Japan in several large metropolitan areas.

Coffeehouse evangelism. Coffeehouse evangelism is a late comer in the Western world. It gained fame and popularity during the tide of the "hippy" movement. It is still serving large numbers of people, particularly the university and college population. While it seems like a modified and modernized rescue mission on a college or university level, it is not that at all. It is rather an adaptation of evangelism to the mood and life-style of the times. It should not be considered a rescue mission operation in the ordinary sense of the word. It seeks to reach the hearts of youth by means of meeting their social needs rather than their physical needs, providing for them a haven of friendship in a hostile, depersonalized, and mechanized world of tensions, loneliness, pressures, competition, and chilling, individualistic society. At the same time it seeks to convince and to demonstrate to youth that the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the salvation in him are not bound to institutions and establishments. Christ can be found in the informal

setting of a coffeehouse over a "cup of coffee" with a concerned friend.

Life-style evangelism has its place in a mechanistic and institutionalized world.

Mass media evangelism

Mass media evangelism is the most difficult part to present. It has taken on the form of Bible distribution evangelism, Christian literature evangelism, radio evangelism, television evangelism, press evangelism, film evangelism, recording evangelism, cassette tape evangelism, etc. No doubt there are other forms of mass media evangelism. From this listing it is evident that mass media evangelism is a most fascinating and a most challenging aspect of the Christian ministry and Gospel outreach. Yet, to describe and evaluate it becomes most difficult. In its scope it is so vast as to encompass the whole globe; in its possibilities it is so measureless as to defy our imagination; in its claims it is so overwhelming as to make objectivity almost impossible. In its presentation of concrete evidences it must remain general and vague because of the very nature of the work.

Whatever our position on mass media evangelism may be, mass media in communication has come to stay. It is today one of the greatest social molding forces in the world of humanity and one of the most rapidly expanding industries and institutions of the world. The Christian church simply cannot ignore it.

At present millions of dollars are being spent in Christian mass communication of the Gospel message in all the different forms mentioned above. The more than fifty Christian radio stations in the non-Western world make the Gospel available to countless multitudes. At the same time they reach into areas otherwise unreachable. It is my impression that money prayerfully given and honestly spent by reputable agencies is money well invested in Gospel proclamation.

New Testament ideals in evangelism

The remarkable proliferation of evangelism patterns is evidence of the vitality and the flexibility, adaptability, and creativity of evangelical Christianity. The impulse of evangelism in the last two decades is one of the deepest renewals of the living church of Jesus Christ in this century. It is a new pulsation of the Holy Spirit; it is the swelling of a wave which could crest in our generation. By the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit it could bring spiritual renewal through the Gospel of Jesus Christ to multitudes in our century.

No less significant is the new "age of anticipation" which presents to the church of Jesus Christ an unprecedented opportunity to proclaim the good news of God's gift in Christ Jesus. Never before has the world been more impatient with the status quo; never before has the world demanded such drastic, almost revolutionary changes, never before has the world been more open to "news" about a new hope, a new way, a new life, a new future. This is a time of crusading for Christ.

In the midst of these opportunities and challenges in the world and the renewal and proliferation of evangelism patterns, it behooves the church of Jesus Christ and particularly the leadership of evangelism

endeavors and organizations to remain sober and vigilant. Two principles must govern us. *First*, no one method or pattern is sufficient to do the whole job. *Second*, enthusiasm and mighty pulsations are constructive only if they are guided by New Testament ideals. There are *qualities* in biblical evangelism which evangelical evangelism must not fail to build into its efforts.

It is therefore of utmost importance that evangelism continuously evaluate itself carefully against New Testament ideals and criteria. Here is our safe guide, our sure standard, and unfailing judge in all our activities and endeavors. Evangelism is no exception. Evaluation of evangelism, therefore must become an integral part of every evangelism endeavor.

Criteria in evaluating evangelism

This is not the place for a biblical discourse on the nature of evangelism. Here we are more interested in the effectiveness of evangelism. In the light of the New Testament what can we expect of biblically ideal evangelism? What are some of the New Testament ideals in evangelism that constitute our criteria? Every New Testament evangelism endeavor ought to face at least four basic issues.

a. The first issue is: *Has the evangelism effort and endeavor brought renewal, revitalization, a new pulsation of the Holy Spirit to the local church communities?* Has the effort reached into the lives of the people of God as well as reached out into the world? Has it kindled a new fire in the hearts and lives of God's people? Has the concern of the church deepened, broadened and been intensified over the lostness of mankind without the Gospel and over the people held in bondage of sin which is entrenched in the lives of the masses, in society, and institutions?

I am fully aware of the distinction that must be made between revival and evangelism. I can well see that the emphasis can be on the one or on the other, but I cannot see that they can exclude each other. Wherever a real revival takes place, evangelism will burst forth and where there is real evangelism revival must accompany it.

b. The second issue is: *Has the evangelism effort added new converts to the local churches?* Has the Gospel message penetrated sufficiently to actually convert and change the direction and relationships of the individual? Or has the conversion (?) stopped short in a profession or decision?

There are three elements closely related in the New Testament, in fact so closely that they often have been fused in theology into one theological concept. They are the three concepts of profession of faith, baptism, and being added to the local church of believers. According to the New Testament a true conversion holds these three concepts together in one "great New Testament experience" without sacramentally fusing these into a unit (Acts 2:41). If a breakdown occurs in this chain of events, serious consequences may follow.

Therefore, has the evangelism effort resulted in adding new converts to local congregations?

c. The third issue is: *Has the evangelism effort eventuated in a movement or has it remained one great event in the community?* It is not too difficult to bring a great and impressive event to pass. Organiza-

tion, finances, and promotion enable us to accomplish this. It is however a different matter to bring about an event that will continue to generate sufficient dynamic to transmute the event into a movement that will increase in strength and intensity, and enlarge in scope and dimension. Such an event was Pentecost. It eventuated in a movement of tremendous dynamic and proportions which progressively encompassed all of Palestine.

It was evangelism released and relayed. And so it was in Antioch, in Syria, in Thessalonica, in Rome (Acts 13:1-4; I Thess. 1:8; Rom. 1:8, 15:18, 19). By the end of the Apostolic Age Christianity had become a movement which was spreading throughout the entire Roman Empire. Evangelism had become contagious rather than programmed. It had become the life-style of the Christian churches.

d. The fourth issue evangelism must face is: *Has the evangelism effort facilitated the continued ministry of the local churches in the community?* It is possible for evangelism efforts of the right pattern to unlock the community and environs for and to facilitate the continued Gospel ministry of the local congregations. Such was the ministry of the Apostles and the church at Jerusalem and lay people were able to establish churches throughout Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. Such was the ministry of Paul in the churches in and about Lystra and Iconium (Acts 16:5), in Ephesus (Acts 19:10, 26), and in Thessalonica (I Thess. 1:8), and throughout the Near East and Greece (Rom. 15:18, 19). Somehow Paul's practices and patterns of evangelism were of such a nature that they unlocked total areas and communities for the Gospel ministry into which others were able to enter and effectively evangelize. This must be accepted as a biblical norm in evangelism strategy.

In summary then, I conclude that ideal New Testament evangelism must build into its efforts dynamic factors that will bring renewal to the churches, that will add new converts to local congregations, that will transmute the event into a movement, and that will facilitate the continued Gospel ministry of the local congregations in the communities.

This brings us to the heart of the discussion. How can the ideals of the New Testament be achieved? Three basic statements will be made. *Realizing New Testament ideals in evangelism*

First, ideal New Testament evangelism is achievable. Our best evidence is the New Testament itself. The book of Acts demonstrates and illustrates it. Here is our basic pattern. Historical evidences can be found in the churches of the second and third centuries and in present-day Korea where the ground-swell of evangelism, while it has fluctuated in intensity, has never subsided to the degree that it was endangered to be lost completely. In a somewhat different manner it is evident in the East Africa Revival. It has been progressing for some forty years, has penetrated some seventy different tribal areas, and left no church and community untouched in large sections of five or six countries and several denominations. Evangelism can become the way of life for the churches.

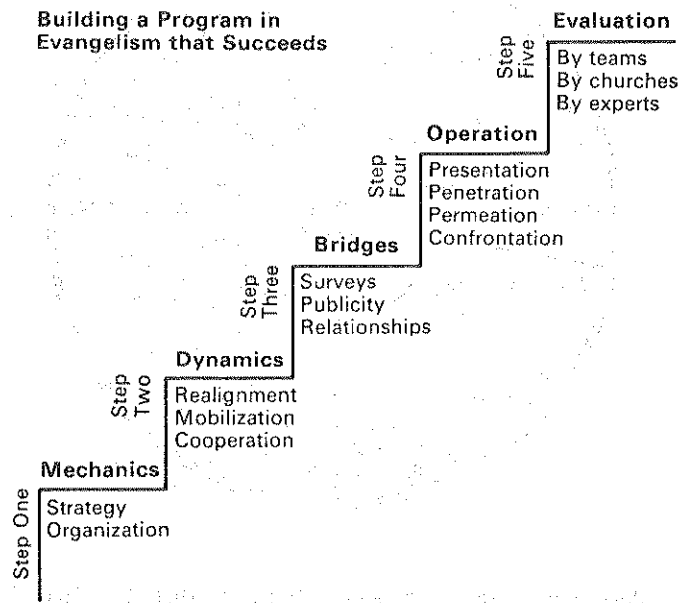
Second, ideal New Testament evangelism while flexible and adaptable is undergirded by a firm structure which rests upon definite principles. These principles can be outlined in a simple way as:

- Step one: *mechanics* — strategy, organization,
- Step two: *dynamics* — mobilization, cooperation,
- Step three: *bridges* — surveys, publicity, relationships,
- Step four: *operation* — presentation, penetration, permeation, confrontation,
- Step five: *evaluation*.

Two facts must be emphasized.

(i) *The role of preparation.* From the above outline it is evident that preparation takes a great deal of time and energy. If we fail here, we fail. A German student of revivals and evangelism (Dr. W. Dilger) makes the observation that from the historical perspective every major religious event and movement of significance has had at least thirty years of preparation. This is not too difficult to document. Therefore I conclude that every great and effective evangelism endeavor demands much time and energy to prepare. In fact, it can be and has been established that the retention power of the churches is practically proportionate to the time and energy expended in preparation.

(ii) *The significance of the chain of steps.* It should be noted that in building an evangelism program which is to evaluate in a dynamic evangelistic movement no "step" can be neglected. The effectiveness of the program can be weakened considerably on any one of these levels. No chain is stronger than its weakest link. Careful ministry must go into each one of the steps.

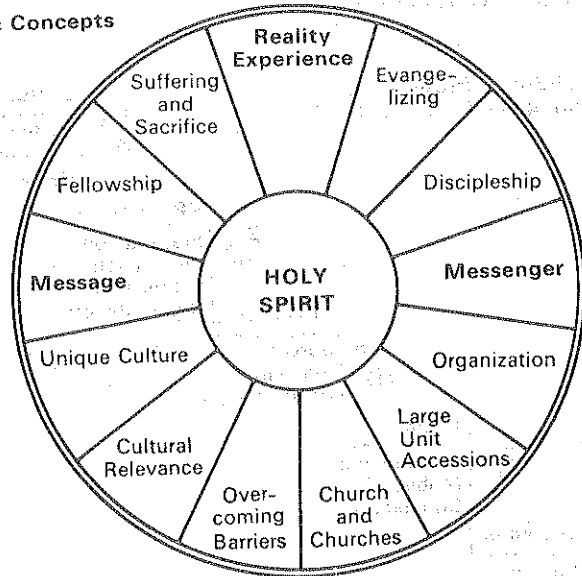


Third, ideal New Testament evangelism revolves around clusters and constellations of dynamic factors which the Holy Spirit uses to energize evangelism. There is no single factor and no simple explanation of any dynamic program of evangelism. It is a combination, coordination, and integration of series of factors. Such factors must be discovered, defined, released, channeled and directed towards desirable goals and purposes. They can be built into a program of evangelism.

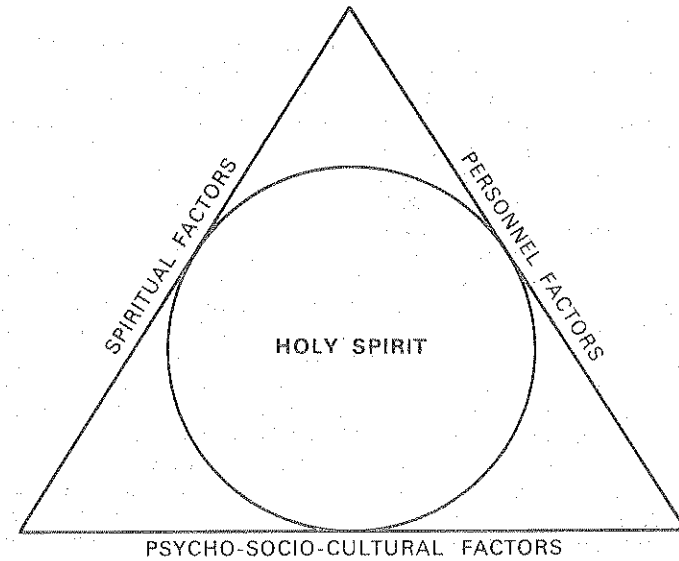
All Christians would agree that ultimately all Christian ministries of the Gospel in their effectiveness are dependent upon the Holy Spirit. He alone is the efficient, sufficient and effective cause. Dynamic movements and programs ultimately are the result of the gracious and sovereign operations of the Holy Spirit. It is, however, a fact of revelation and experience that the Holy Spirit does not operate in a vacuum. He involves men and means. Therefore measurable and definable factors become discernable which the Holy Spirit utilizes to make his power operative.

Let me illustrate this from the book of Acts and from modern field research. A diagrammatical presentation of the book of Acts would appear somewhat as portrayed on this page.

Dynamic Concepts in Acts



Modern field research has substantiated all that the book of Acts says and crystalized the dynamic factors in three categories.



This three-dimensional diagram of spiritual, personnel, and psycho-socio-cultural factors, may be filled in as follows.

Spiritual factors:

- Victorious prayer
- Triumphant faith
- Dynamic fellowship
- Reality experience
- Fervor of evangelism
- Relevant message
- Attitude of expectation
- Membership involvement

Personnel factors:

- Men of God (with all its biblical implications)
- Men of the world
- Men of the people
- Men of the church
- Men of evangelism passion

Psycho-socio-cultural factors:

It is too often forgotten that man is mercilessly molded by his culture and that his personality make-up reflects his culture at least in three ways:

- In his mentality
- In his society
- In his structures

A few comments on the above outline are apropos.

Spiritual factors

All spiritual factors are of extreme importance. Spiritual conquests can be accomplished only by spiritual forces. We need to read Paul's presentation of the Christian's armor (Eph. 6:10-20) more frequently in our days of technology and methodology. Spiritual exploits demand spiritual equipment and dynamics.

Somewhat hesitatingly, I single out one of these spiritual factors for special emphasis. It is the concept of a *relevant message*. Both words must be emphasized in our days. In a conversation with a prominent churchman and missiologist in Great Britain, the gentleman remarked that at a time when the world is more eager to hear the Gospel than ever before, the church is debating what the nature of the Gospel may be and what the message is that the world needs. This is tragedy beyond measure. Peter did not experience that predicament on the day of Pentecost nor in the years following. Neither was Paul ever at a loss about his message whether he was in the synagogue with the Jews, in the marketplace of a city or on Mars Hill with the philosophers of Athens. The message was the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ — his incarnation, his sinless, perfect life, his gracious deeds of benevolence, his death on the Cross for the sins of the world, his victorious resurrection over the bondage of death and Satan, his glorious enthronement at the right hand of God as the Paraclete of his own. Thus the Saviorhood of Christ in his substitutionary work for mankind and his present Lordship in the universe were boldly and joyfully declared. The apostles confronted men with a divine offer of forgiveness of sin and the gift of eternal life and called upon men everywhere to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation.

There is a theological framework without which proclamation ceases to be evangelism and evangelical preaching. Evangelistic preaching cannot be divorced from a specific content which constitutes the nature of the Christian Gospel.

There is, however, a peculiar note of emphasis in the various messages of the apostles in the book of Acts, an emphasis that relates that message uniquely to that particular people and that situation. *It is a relevant message that did not miss the mark.* It won a hearing and it hit the target because it met man in his struggle with sin, his thirst for salvation, and brought assurance for eternity.

There is an emphasis of the Gospel that is peculiarly relevant to the different generations, the different peoples, the different cultural molds, the different situations. *It is a fact that the effectiveness of evangelism depends to a great extent upon our ability to make the Gospel message relevant to the religious needs and hopes, the aspirations and anticipations, the yearnings and strivings, the fears and frustrations of the people.* Only so will we win a hearing. Here is our initial and effective point of contact and departure to the deeper and full needs of the spiritual nature of man in his sin and guilt, bondage and lostness. Man will hear when he can expect that a need will be met, a hope will be fulfilled, an anticipation will be realized. The Gospel must earn its own hearing and receiving.

Personnel factor

God's supreme method is man, man regenerated, sanctified, committed, mobilized, trained, and equipped. God's chief instrument is the church, the church as a body of dedicated people. Spiritual leadership and a mobilized, trained membership are God's demand for the advancement of his cause. *Evangelism will be perennial and effective to the degree that it will succeed to mobilize, train and actively involve the total "priesthood" of God, the total "body" of Christ.* This is an axiom of the Scriptures that can be neglected only at the peril of the church.

Psycho-socio-cultural factors

While all men think and have an equal capacity to think, not all men think alike. There is a difference in the *mentality* of the people of the world. East and West, North and South are equal, but they are not alike. They are equally endowed by God but they are not molded alike by their cultures in their way of thinking. They are equally created in the image of God, but they are not sculptured alike in the "image of mentality, society and structure." There are differences. Culture has cast the mind into a certain mold of thinking. Some cultures are more rational-logical, others meditative-intuitive, still others imaginative-mythological. Our generation is rapidly becoming existential. *And it is this cultural mold of mentality that determines principles and practices of communication.* Communication does not take place in the same way everywhere. It differs considerably. *It is a fact, however, that the effectiveness of evangelism depends upon our ability to communicate the content of the Gospel in an intelligible, attractive, meaningful, persuasive and consistent manner and demonstrate its value and workability in a manner and way of life.*

Again, culture molds man *socially*. Socialization is a life-long process and shapes man in all his relationships and roles, values and priorities, behavior and vocation. Man lives in a social web of relationships from which he cannot remove himself without serious harm to his personality. Therefore, there are different types of society in this world — individuals, family, tribe, community, etc.

It must be kept in mind that *man's social mold and pattern determine the methods of operations* which are most effective in reaching him with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus in many areas of Indonesia people will respond best in families and communities, in India by castes and sections of villages, in other areas as tribes and in Mexico students are most open to the Gospel in groups of five to eight. If the Muslim world is ever to be reached with the Gospel we will need to devise methods of penetrating total communities.

Thus methods of evangelism ought to vary as we enter and encounter the different societies. Therefore, one method which may work well at one time and with one people may not be appropriate and effective at another time and with other people. *Consequently, the effectiveness of evangelism depends upon our ability to design and apply methods of evangelism that will integrate and utilize the social web of relationships of people as natural "bridges to God" between individuals, families, tribes, and communities. Such relationships serve most effectively*

as channels for the flow of dynamics in evangelism and Gospel expansion. Such evangelism may be less conspicuous but it will be more effective. We need new patterns of household and community evangelism that will garner in total areas in communities as well as individuals into the kingdom of God.

Similarly we must think about *structures*. Though there is no totally unstructured society, people differ greatly in their social and cultural structuring. An effective evangelism program and organization must take the structure of the people into consideration.

It must be stated that American aggressive activism in organization and promotion often overwhelms and frustrates the people of other lands and cultures and paralyzes the flow of dynamics which would generate and flow freely if the organization and structure of the program were to take the "local" structure and organization more into consideration. Latin American Pentecostalism, in Africa New Life for All and "indigenous" evangelism movements in India are our best evidence of the workability of "local" structuring of dynamic movements. The Holy Spirit uses all kinds of structures. *Therefore, the effectiveness of evangelism depends on the degree to which the Holy Spirit is permitted to operate freely and unshackled by traditional or idealized structuralism and allowed to develop a relevant, native and dynamic functionalism with an appropriate but subordinate structure.*

The psycho-socio-cultural factors call for much wisdom, grace, humility, patience, adaptability, flexibility, and creativity. It simply is a fact of history that cultural accommodation or adaptability is a tremendously dynamic factor in man's way of life and ministry. *The dynamics of an evangelism program will depend to a considerable degree upon our ability to discover, harness, and utilize the psychological, social, and cultural forces and patterns of the people and environment in the communication and propagation of the Gospel and building up the saints into an effective evangelizing congregation in their own community.*

Assessing the present-day evangelism scene

Permit me to assess the present-day evangelism scene very briefly.

We are living in a time of greatest resurgence in evangelism. There is a marvelous renewal of evangelism on deep levels within certain strata of the church of Jesus Christ. Great evangelistic efforts are being witnessed on various levels and in various patterns. Evangelism is coming into its own. Evangelistic movements are seen around the world. This is a great day for those who have been praying for and laboring in behalf of evangelism. We must not permit the present mood and momentum to suffer for want of support and action. We humbly attribute the renewal in evangelism to the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit and are grateful for this experience.

We are in the midst of unprecedented opportunities and challenges in a world open to the "good news" and with overwhelming response to the Gospel in many areas of the world. Indeed, the world seems more eager to hear and to respond than the Christian church is prepared to tell and to accommodate. In many places churches are overcrowded with new converts who need a spiritual home, spiritual nurture, and

biblical instruction. This is a time of unparalleled harvest for the kingdom of God. We may well apply the angelic call to ourselves and our time: "Thrust in thy sickle and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe" (Rev. 14:16). The call for reapers is more urgent today than ever before. More souls are being born into the kingdom of God than ever before and bewildered, depressed, eager, and searching multitudes are pressing at the gates of the church. This is the day of evangelism.

We are experiencing a never-before-witnessed proliferation of patterns of evangelism. Novel and original ways are being designed and practiced which for the moment attract and appeal to varied people. Some, no doubt, will soon fall by the wayside and new ones will take their place. There is flexibility and creativity evident at least on a superficial level.

It must be confessed, however, that a great segment of the church of Jesus Christ remains relatively neutral and some even critical towards the great evangelism pulsation that is being experienced today and which we believe to have originated with the Holy Spirit. With others evangelism in the biblical sense is not central. It is an almost unknown factor to them. A renewal of greater dimensions is needed.

It must also be admitted that much of evangelism today seemingly lacks the real dynamic of the Holy Spirit because the dynamic spiritual factors have not been built into the program and efforts. We are in a great haste to get moving. As a result the ideals of New Testament evangelism are only slightly in evidence in spite of tremendous efforts, great organizations, and strong promotions. The churches are not truly renewed, comparatively few members are added to local congregations of believers, relatively few dynamic movements of evangelism are in evidence, and the local congregations are sagging in their relations to the communities. They are not potent and transforming factors in life, culture, and society.

It must also be conceded that evangelism as a way of life in the churches has practically disappeared. To an overwhelming degree evangelism has become the effort of "teams of specialists" and less the initiative and activity of the churches and the membership. This has made much of evangelism a grandstand experience with a few mighty giants of God facing the world and Satan in the arena and the multitude of Christians as the spectators in the comfortable and walled-off grandstand. It remains a fact that the main resources in manpower for evangelism have thus far not been tapped. The great assets of the church are frozen in beautiful cathedrals and churches. Mobilization of all Christians for evangelism is heard as an occasional slogan but is not seen in general practice. The priesthood of all believers has remained a dogma few take seriously, a church of "we the people" is little believed and experienced. Evangelism as a ground-swell and "people movement" is little known since the close of the third century.

It must also be acknowledged that much of evangelism is relatively ineffective because it has become westernized and stereotyped in program, procedures, and methodology. It has remained unrelated in communication to the psychology of the people to whom it was ad-

dressed. It has often violated in its methodology the basic principles of indigenous sociology and ruthlessly cut across social ties and the web of relationships thus blocking the natural channels of the free flow of dynamics. It has set up structures that were strange to the people and "David was unable to go to war in the armor of Saul." Therefore evangelism remained relatively impotent, often became offensive, not necessarily because of the "Cross" or the "Crucified One" but because of the impositions of strange elements upon the psychology, sociology, and structures of the people.

God is the God of all mankind. He wants all men to come to the knowledge of his dear Son and our blessed Savior. Therefore evangelism must always remain supremely a message and not a method. Methodology and structure must always remain subordinate and subservient. They must not be permitted to become master.

I therefore conclude that:

Evangelism is a message

Evangelism must be central

Evangelism must be governed by New Testament ideals

Evangelism can be dynamic

Evangelism must become perennial

Evangelism must become the way of life of the church of Jesus Christ.

World evangelism can become a reality in our generation if . . .

CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES OF EVANGELISM

G. W. Peters

Honored chairman, participants, observers and guests, I consider it a privilege to have had the opportunity to address you through my paper on "Contemporary Practices of Evangelism."

I realize that the paper is quite incomplete and that is so for a number of reasons.

First, because of the vast amount of material that had to be crowded into a few pages. The proliferation of patterns of evangelism in our days demonstrates the vitality of evangelical Christianity and the incarnation of the Gospel message in the "new man" that is emerging in our age. It ought to bring rejoicing into our hearts and courage into our work.

Second, the paper is incomplete because it limited itself almost exclusively in the selection of material for the first part to the North American scene. This was done on purpose. There is no thought in me to present North America as an example of innovation. The idea was more to present North America as a "case study." I am quite well acquainted with the evangelistic movements around the world, but it is practically impossible to mention all of them. New patterns are emerging almost daily somewhere in the world. Why each one must "brand" his by a unique name and form an organization around it remains a human riddle.

Third, the paper will seem very incomplete to some because in it I have held to my understanding of the biblical meaning of the concept of evangelism.

I have deliberately and consciously held to a somewhat narrow interpretation of evangelization. I have distinguished the concept from *conversion*. I fully agree that all evangelism aims at conversion. We make no secret of our deliberate intention of turning people to the living God from their idols whether such idols are images, nationalism, secularism or even "Kultur-Christentum" (culture-Christianity). We preach for a verdict and confront people everywhere with Jesus Christ — God incarnated, crucified, risen, enthroned, and coming again. We do not believe that Jesus Christ may be a good substitute for other saviors or an addition to them. We believe that he is the *only* Savior of the world and that men everywhere must make a deliberate choice to accept Christ, enter the Kingdom of God through the new birth and by divine adoption become members of the household of God. Having received such from God, man is to become a disciple of Christ and a servant of mankind.

The above is the conscious *purpose* of evangelization. However, evangelization may take place without such radical moral and spiritual conversion. Man may refuse to repent of his sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. He thus remains under the wrath of God. Therefore evangelization and conversion are not synonymous. The concepts must not be fused or confused.