

ressed. 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.

I have also distinguished evangelization from *Christianization*. Christianization refers to the *process* of gradual transformation, of growth *from* faith to faith, *from* knowledge to knowledge, *from* glory to glory. It is the progressive realization in our lives of the hope whereunto we are called. It is the maturing, perfecting, and enriching process in the life of the believer. It is the processing of the vine to produce fruit, more fruit, much fruit, abiding fruit. It is the training of the citizen in the Kingdom of God to serve man and God well. It is the equipping of the Christian to play his role in the family, church, and society according to the purpose and will of God.

A distinction has also been made in the concept of evangelization and *social action*. Social action has become a vague and "hiding" concept. It may mean many different things to many different people. It must be admitted that it is our extra-biblical word. The Bible knows the word "*service*" and evangelicals would do well to return to this *word* and to search its meaning. Certainly Christ is the supreme example as servant and also in the type of service. Paul is a servant for Jesus' sake and the church must serve as its Master served.

I fully appreciate the meaning of all four concepts — evangelization, conversion, Christianization, service. They are firmly rooted in the Bible. To interrelate them, however, essentially and experimentally and fuse them conceptually, results in nebulous thinking and inconsistent action. While it may be difficult and even unwise to separate them too rigidly, to fuse them conceptually is biblically unwarranted, historically disadvantageous, and practically confusing.

With these preliminary clarifications I turn to the paper. Three main points are made:

First, contemporary practices of evangelism are presented under five main families.

Second, I present "New Testament Ideals in Evangelism" with two sub-points. (i) Criteria in evaluating evangelism. (ii) Realizing New Testament ideals in evangelism.

Third, assessing present-day evangelism.

Your response to my paper was overwhelming and gratifying. I thank you for it. There was little criticism but there were many questions. From the more than 1,600 responses, I have gleaned the following most frequently repeated, impressive, and urgent issues as they relate to my paper. I present them to you for your consideration:

One — Where can we find information and helpful material on the different patterns of evangelism?

Two — What can we do that evangelism will become once again the way of life (the life-style) of the church? How can we motivate, mobilize and train the membership to become active and effective in evangelism?

Three — Why is present-day evangelism not more effective? What hinders evangelical Christianity from becoming a marching army in evangelism? Does God bypass the established, historical churches and work mainly through special groups?

Four — How can we best discover the most appropriate methods for "our" culture? And, how do we best communicate to "our" people?

Five — Because the Holy Spirit is sovereign, can he be programmed in evangelism? Is programmed evangelism really Spirit-directed evangelism? Is not true Spirit-directed evangelism spontaneous evangelism? This is somewhat of a summary of the *burdens* expressed in the responses. To fully respond to them would require a book and a Congress in itself. The best answers will be found in smaller, local study conferences.

One — Information is not difficult to get if you read the English language. A central information center for each country, however, seems important to assist pastors and churches in this vital question.

Two — There is a remarkable moving of the Spirit and a renewal in evangelism taking place in our days. However, it seemingly touches the young people and the laymen more than the ministry, clergy, theologians, and ecclesiastical and theological institutions.

According to the divine order, however, the key to church renewal of any kind is the leadership and the pastor. Here the fire ought to begin to burn, from here it most rapidly and most progressively spreads.

There is another divine ideal. The church is God's supreme agent of evangelism. This will be presented in a paper somewhat later. Permit me to say something here with all caution and serious hesitation. Hesitation, not because I am saying a half-truth, but because I could be misunderstood. Yet it must be said. We are all deeply concerned about and committed to the evangelization of the world. This is a divine burden. How is this to be accomplished? Automatically we are thinking of mission societies and missionaries. This we ought to think. Mission societies and missionaries will be demanded for years to come. They must *send*, they must *go*!

However, it must be emphasized with equal force that the world will not be evangelized solely or mainly by mission agencies and professional missionaries. The biblical and main key is the local church mobilized and trained in evangelism. The mission agency and the missionary are the *advance guard to establish an outpost*. They are the supplement of the church in world evangelism. This is a principle that must be taught and preached until it will sink into the fibre of the life of the church.

Ideally this will be accepted with ease. Practically it is one of the most difficult truths for the present-day church to achieve. There are many theological, historical, structural, and psychological barriers that must be overcome to practice a general priesthood of all believers in the full sense of the word.

In a most concrete manner, permit me to say that a local congregation will be motivated and mobilized when the pastor is motivated by a consuming passion in evangelism, when he in action demonstrates such passion, and when he patiently and diligently by word and example will train his membership in evangelism. Let no one think that it is easy to move a congregation into evangelism and maintain it there until evangelism becomes a part of the way of life of the church. It will take toil and tears, prayer and patience, example and encouragement. But it can be done. It has been done. Sooner or later the church *becomes* what the pastor *is*. The church takes on the image and the life-style of

the pastor. If evangelism is the way of life of the pastor, the church will sooner or later and by degrees turn into the same way of life or get rid of the pastor.

Let us keep it firmly in mind, a major key to world evangelization is the mobilization of every local congregation in the task. And the major key to the local church according to the divine order is the leadership and the pastor.

Here is our awesome responsibility as leaders, teachers, and pastors.

As we mobilize the church in evangelism, we will soon discover that a three-winged pattern will evolve. In general we will find that some 10 to 15 per cent can be mobilized for active confrontation evangelism. An additional 20-30 per cent can be trained in friendship evangelism. The remainder must be trained in prayer-evangelism, prayer which undergirds the other two efforts. Thus the total church becomes involved. This is God's ideal and this must be our endeavor. Let us make it clear that evangelization is not a gift but a biblical duty.

Three — Question three relates to present-day ineffectiveness in evangelism. This is a most crucial issue. In a day when the opportunities are unprecedented and the tide of evangelism is swelling, ineffectiveness discourages many a servant of God. Certainly the fault does not lie with God. God is not willing that any should perish. Neither can it be said that the Gospel is not relevant. It is God's message to man in all his needs. It is relevant to every man and to every age. The problem must lie elsewhere.

Of course, we draw the conclusion that we are not as spiritual as we ought to be. This I readily admit. The spiritual quality of many churches is lamentable. The Holy Spirit is little recognized, little feared, and little obeyed. This is tragedy multiplied.

To correct this indispensable qualification, however, does not assure effectiveness. Beyond the spiritual qualification are at least four other road-blocks. They are theological, ideological, methodological, and structural.

Theologically evangelism may be weakened because of the nature of the message. The central message in evangelism must be two-pronged. *Objectively* we preach Jesus Christ as the God-man-crucified, risen, enthroned, and coming again. The Saviorhood of Christ must ring true and through. There must be no uncertain tone about it. It is somewhat disturbing that even in evangelical proclamation the Lordship of Christ is beginning to over-ride the emphasis of the Saviorhood of Jesus Christ. That is contrary to the divine order. While it is dangerous to separate the Lordship from the Saviorhood, it is perilous to precede the Saviorhood with the Lordship or make the latter dominant in evangelism. The demands of God must always be preceded or at least definitely preceded by the gifts of God, or else conversion becomes a reformation without spiritual regeneration.

Subjectively much evangelism fails to preach repentance and faith on the part of man. Therefore "conversion" becomes a "believiani" or a professing without possessing.

The objective and subjective must be kept in a proper balance. *Ideologically* many churches are introspective and introverted. There is a fair degree of concern and service, but such concern and service is consumed by its own constituency. There is much inreach but little outreach! There is much fellowship but little evangelism, there is much teaching but little discipleship, there is much performance but little accomplishment. There is much programming but little mission. The church is self-consuming because it is self-centered and it is not focused upon the world.

Methodologically evangelism weakens itself when it insists on a "four-square" method (ready-tailored method) that can be transported and imported from age to age, generation to generation, culture to culture. No method is universally applicable in detail and form, though there are certain methods which are more normative than others.

Without hesitation I recommend household or family evangelism anywhere in the world. The family is a universal sociological unit. However, it is more than a sociological unit. It is a divinely ordained unit. As such it must always be included in our plans and program of evangelism.

In general, however, methods are determined by three factors — the evangelist, the mood of the time, and psycho-cultural existence of the people.

Structurally evangelism can be bound very easily. I urge the readers to study carefully the message of Howard Snyder. It deserves our attention.

It is too often forgotten that two power structures pervade every institution and every movement. These are the organizational power structure or *form*, and the functional power structure or *purpose*.

Let us keep in mind that the purpose of the church and evangelism is divinely ordained. Not so is the form. Here we have freedom to change adapt, modify, and create.

It is often forgotten that the church of Jesus Christ has experienced two periods when it was uniquely formed. In the first three centuries Episcopaliamism in its Eastern and Western appearances and variations was formed. And, again in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the new forms which have characterized the modern denominations were constituted.

It must be realized that both these periods in the history of the church were times when the church was on the *defensive*. Thus the times demanded a *relevant form*. It is a form for defensive positions. Seriously we must ask: is a structure built for *defensive purposes* also the most effective and efficient structure for an *offensive warfare*? This is the crucial question about structure.

There is nothing uniquely sacred (though to us it may be) about our structures. Are they relevant? Or have we come to the time and place in history where structure dominates function, form enslaves purpose, and we are unable to move ahead aggressively?

Let us be open to God, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit liberate purpose within form and foundation within structure, organism within organization, life within the body.

Such an attitude will also answer the question whether the Holy Spirit can be programmed. No, he cannot be programmed. But as a Spirit of order he operates according to *his order* but not without an order.

Let us claim the power of God and walk and work in the power, liberty, and order of God, and world evangelization will become a reality.

RESPONSE TO: CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES OF EVANGELISM

Nene Ramientos

Dr. Ramientos, Philippines, is the Coordinating Director of Christ the Only Way Movement, a nationwide evangelistic effort.

Under the subject of *Crusade evangelism*, Dr. George Peters refers to a crusade evangelism that is going on in the Philippines which he calls a crusade to plant thousands of evangelism and Bible study cells throughout the Republic.

This is exactly what we are trying to do in the Philippines in our national program of saturation evangelism and church growth known as the Christ the Only Way Movement. The Movement started as a vision at the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin in 1966, formulated as a mission at the Asia-South Pacific Congress on Evangelism in Singapore in 1968, and finally launched as a united action of Philippine evangelical churches at the All Philippines Congress on Evangelism in 1970.

We have just concluded a six-month city-wide evangelistic campaign all over the Philippines where as many people as possible have been exposed to the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The many hundreds of inquirers in these campaigns have been organized into home Bible study groups, while others have already joined local churches. Our follow-up strategy in the Christ the Only Way Movement for our city-wide evangelistic campaigns and other mass Gospel meetings is these home Bible study groups which we call the Lay Evangelistic Group Studies. As a rule, we do not bring our inquirers into the fellowship of existing Lay Evangelistic Group Studies, or LEGS for short, where they study the Word of God at least one hour each week. And in the absence of any LEGS unit in the area, we form these inquirers into new LEGS groups.

It is obvious from this strategy that our immediate goal of crusade evangelism in the Philippines through the Christ the Only Way Movement is the establishment of new groups of believers or new congregations. We are not content with the mere expansion of membership of existing local churches. We feel that since our goal is to disciple the Filipino nation, we must have churches or groups of believers meeting regularly for worship in every conceivable cultural and homogeneous group of people throughout the Philippine archipelago.

Spain ruled the Philippines for more than three centuries, and it was when there was already a Catholic church in every town and a Catholic chapel in every barrio that Spain could lay claim that the Philippines was already Christianized. Perhaps when we shall have already established a group or groups of believers in every city, town, and barrio throughout the Philippines, we might also be able to claim that we have already disciplined the entire Filipino nation for Christ.

We feel it is not enough to set as the goal of evangelism the winning