

## THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN OF EVANGELISM — NEW LIFE FOR ALL IN CAMEROON

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*Introduction:* In the fifties and the early sixties most of the churches in Cameroon became independent from missionary influence. Few local leaders had been prepared to cope with the administrative pattern inherited from the foreign missions. As a result, some of the best preachers were put into administrative posts. As a matter of fact, in the first decade of "independence" the young churches spent most of their energy for administrative purposes.

### *Why a National Campaign of Evangelism in Cameroon?*

From 5.8 million people in 1970 it is estimated that the total population of Cameroon will reach 6.4 million in 1975, at an annual growth rate of 2.1 per cent. There is a huge number of people who have not accepted Christ crowded in Cameroonian cities. There are still villages in rural areas which are isolated and far removed from all economic and technical development. There are groups and whole tribes who have barely been touched by the Gospel. An expanding Muslim community in North Cameroon represents a challenge to the Christian church.

In September, 1969, representatives from most of the Protestant churches and missions in Cameroon met, and unanimously decided to launch what would be known as the National Campaign of Evangelism — new life for all. It was decided that the material and methods that had proved successful in Nigeria should be used in the initial phase.

The National Campaign of Evangelism was launched under the auspices of the Federation of Evangelical Churches and Missions in Cameroon (Federation des Eglises et Missions Evangeliques du Cameroun, FEMEC). Apart from one denomination, all major churches in the country have been supporting the movement.

### *Mobilization by Retreats*

It became evident that a total evangelization of the country could be achieved only by a total mobilization of all born-again Christians, not leaving the responsibility to pastors and paid church workers only.

### *Interdenominational Retreats*

At the forefront of the planning were the following objectives: a) Mobilization of all Christians to become witnesses. b) The involvement of the *local churches*, because only an evangelization which starts with the renewal of the local church has any hope for success. c) *The unity of the body of Christ*. All denominations in Cameroon were invited to join the movement if they could agree to its aims. They were asked not to hunt for converts for their own church, but to proclaim Christ's rule over all the earth. d) *Systematic matching of needs and resources*. The National

Campaign in Cameroon systematically wanted to reach all people in Cameroon by a coordinated program. The Campaign incorporated social aspects of witnessing through preaching, teaching, and medical care. God is opening the way not only into homes but into hearts. Thousands are hungry for the Good News and only changed men and women who fill the churches can bring it to them.

### *Outreach*

A team is composed as follows: a) a preacher — pastor or evangelist. b) a medical worker — doctor or nurse. c) an agent for rural development — teacher or agriculturalist.

All team workers are supposed to participate in personal witnessing. Service is given to people in all aspects of life.

This has been a thrilling and blessed ministry. The population in vast rural areas has been confronted with the claims of Christ, in areas where evangelists rarely or never reach by foot.

### *Campus Crusade For Christ International*

In 1972 cooperation was established with Campus Crusade for Christ International, and CCC staff held the first Lay Institute for Evangelism in Cameroon in October, 1972. Other efforts are going forward in literature and mass media. The periodical, "Onward" has the largest circulation of any Protestant paper in Cameroon.

### *What about statistics?*

In general we have not stressed the importance of statistics. When over-emphasizing statistics of new converts, the Christians may be interested in getting a great number of "converts" and forget to follow through with the new Christians, leading them into a Christian community and helping them grow in their faith.

Furthermore, the National Campaign of Evangelism is not a "campaign" in the traditional meaning of the word. It is not a specific effort for harvesting in a limited period. Rather it is an evangelistic movement helping the churches to keep up the flame of evangelism. Thus the central office for NCE does not keep any records of statistical results. The fruits are registered in the local congregations.

The national secretary for evangelism reported, "We have just finished a week of NLFA meetings here in Poli. I was astonished to see the crowds of people. During my twenty-three years of missionary service I have not seen anything like it.

"During the visit of the Gospel teams at the Tikar plain many people were touched by the Word of God and threw away their fetishes and left their witchcraft practices demonstrating that they would trust their lives entirely to Jesus Christ."

God has set an open door for the churches in Cameroon. Political stability and peace leave a golden opportunity to preach the Gospel in every corner of the country. The National Campaign of Evangelism is not bound to follow only one specific type of evangelistic program. The national center for evangelism will be a continuing resource, and a strategy center for the mobilization of churches and missions in Cameroon. Other world evangelistic programs will be studied. We are open for the

use of any material and methods that can be adapted and effectively used in our country. Above all we rely upon the power of the Holy Spirit as the only force to change men and empower persons and churches for effective evangelism.

Let the earth hear his voice. Amen!

## IN-DEPTH EVANGELISM IN LATIN AMERICA

*Orlando E. Costas*

After a decade of Evangelism-In-Depth programs, Latin America has witnessed in the last three years a theoretical and practical expansion of the In-Depth Evangelism strategy. Firmly grounded on the concept of the mobilization of the church for the evangelization of the world, In-Depth Evangelism has moved away from the traditional one year program to a more comprehensive and multiphase approach to the church's fulfillment of the Great Commission. Let us briefly consider some of the main traits of In-Depth Evangelism as it is currently being carried out in Latin America.

First of all, In-Depth Evangelism in Latin America is attempting to awaken the church to the complicated nature of the world and the imperative of reaching every inch of it with the Gospel. This means pointing to the different dimensions of the world which together form the stage of human life: the geographic, the cultural, the structural, to mention just three. It implies calling attention to the fact that the church must take seriously the totality of the world and thus be concerned not only about the geographical penetration of the Gospel, but also about its cultural and sociological impact. Above all, this means helping the church to develop a matching comprehensiveness in resources, methods and strategic action in order to effectively meet the challenge of a world rightly characterized as a complicated conglomerate of peoples, places and relationships.

Secondly, In-Depth Evangelism in Latin America is attempting to recover the fullness of the evangelistic message by calling attention to the comprehensive reality which it announces. *If* the Kingdom of God, which the Gospel proclaims, is a new order of life characterized by the sovereign rule of God in Christ and his reconciling action in behalf of mankind, *if* this reality affects, as Scripture says, the personal present and future of the peoples of the earth as well as their collective present and future; *if* God's Kingdom manifests itself both in the personal life of those who enter therein, through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, as well as in the structures of society and the dynamics of culture, through the leavening function of the Gospel; *and if* in calling men and women to submit their lives to Christ, the King, it also addresses itself to their cultural ties and structural realities and calls them to repentance and obedience — *then* the communication of this message demands integrity. We need to recover in evangelism the biblical and dynamic fullness of the Gospel so that those who are invited to come into the Kingdom may have a clear perspective of what it is all about. And *this* is precisely one of the things that In-Depth Evangelism is trying to do in Latin America in this decade.

Beyond this, it is trying to call the church to the imperative of the mobilization of its *entire* constituency in order that she might experience *integral* growth. Such growth must involve the experience of the ingathering of new believers, the development of the church's internal structures,