

EVANGELIZATION AMONG COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS REPORT

Catalyst

The paper given by Michael Cassidy raised seven basic questions which were discussed in small groups the following day. These comments are not necessarily the consensus of the whole group, but rather represent the report given by each study group. It should be noted that some comments will only be appropriate in certain cultural or geographical situations.

1. What is the nature of the modern university as receiver of our message and how should its nature affect us in our approach and presentation?

Modern universities continue to be in the process of questioning their goals, and priorities to achieve these goals. These questions are answered in different ways and at different times in various parts of the world.

- a. *North American and parts of Western Europe:*
 - 1) Faculty have a different emphasis than the students, *primarily* adding to the knowledge of their academic discipline through research; *secondarily* teaching; *thirdly* service to the university as a whole, a society.
 - 2) Concern to help students find meaning in life and come to know and understand themselves would be considered important only by a minority. Many faculty members outside the area of their specialized work have no sense of overriding purpose either for their university as a whole, or for the society in which they live.
 - 3) In contrast, such concerns would be of vital importance to most students. But other than knowledge in one or more academic disciplines, students are often not sure what they want from the university. Many feel lost and rootless in an impersonal technological society that has no concern for human needs. Their concern is primarily with their own future. The needs of society, though not ignored, are secondary.
- b. *Universities where Marxism is dominant* — Less emphasis is placed on the preferences of the traditional student and more concern for him to find a place in which to serve society within the framework and presuppositions of that philosophy.
- c. *Universities in the Third World* — There is often a sense of nationalism and of nation building among both faculty and students which gives purpose to much of student and faculty activities.

In our approach to university students, faculty, and staff, in all three of these situations, we can appeal to their concern for a sense of coherent meaning in their lives. Also, from a Christian perspective we can ques-

tion the priorities given at universities in the selection of topics for research and the content of curricula.

2. Chaplaincy: Should evangelicals participate or opt out?

- a. Evangelicals should not opt out of university chaplaincies. Rather they should seek for openings where possible.
- b. Chaplains should be always available for staff and students.
- c. Encourage interdenominational chaplains (seems to be working well in Africa).
- d. Chaplains could give leadership and unity to the smaller Christian groups on campus.

3. How can we prepare high school students for university?

- a. Referral and follow up from Christian organizations working in high schools.
- b. Special effort to contact first year students immediately on their arrival on campus.
- c. Camps, conferences, seminars, etc., especially designed to prepare high school students for the university experience and to interact with Christian faculty and students.
- d. Books that can help students anticipate the intellectual and moral problems they may face; to be read and discussed with more mature Christians.
- e. Important equipment for the new student is an ability to discern and analyze the anti-Christian presuppositions of many systems and professors. The student should have a maturing apologetic and doctrinal understanding.
- f. The Christian home and home church can be a vital source of support, stability and encouragement.
- g. Concern to show high school students the relevance of Scripture to hard twentieth century questions.
- h. Training in personal discipline in terms of Bible study, prayer, etc.

4. University evangelism is a hostile situation

- a. In some geographic areas (i.e., Moslem and Hindu societies) the university students are the most responsive group to the Gospel.
- b. *Problems:*
 - 1) government restrictions on Christians;
 - 2) university policies against Christian meetings;
 - 3) student political organizations put pressure on Christian students.
- c. *Christian responsibility to:*
 - 1) make clear to the individual the costly implications of becoming a Christian;
 - 2) to minister to all the difficulties which a new Christian will face as a result of conversion; to provide family care and support for the new believer.

- d. *Principle:* No rigid strategy for evangelism can be superimposed by persons or agencies outside the situation. Strategy must arise indigenously to be sensitive to the particular problems in each situation and the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
- e. *Method:* primarily cell groups and friendship evangelism.

5. How best can the fellowship of student believers be deepened and strengthened?

- a. The quality of our fellowship with one another is a reflection of the quality of our individual relationships with God.
- b. Need to clarify meaning of "koinonia" and to differentiate between fellowship and friendship. Fellowship is a sharing of the common life in Christ, which may be experienced in a variety of situations and activities.
- c. *Some practical suggestions:*
 - 1) strategic prayer groups as a specific evangelistic arm
 - 2) action groups — cell group principle with a variety of emphasis, i.e., service, or special project, etc.
 - 3) social activities to get to know one another, see others' gifts, enjoy one another in the Christian "open home"
 - 4) evangelistic teams — medical/social/etc., for example, Philippines and Indonesia

6. Marxism, Social Revolution and Student Evangelism

- a. The Marxist opposes faith in Christ, because he thinks he is dealing with "Christianity" which he may:
 - 1) identify with capitalism;
 - 2) recognize as a Western missionary, and therefore Western capitalist import;
 - 3) misunderstand as an offer of words, but not an offer of social justice and social change;
 - 4) identify as conservatism.
- b. The solution to evangelism is associated with three factors:
 - 1) Evangelism is to be carried out in the context of a demonstration of meaningful life for individuals who know Christ;
 - 2) Evangelism ought to involve debate, but to be conducted in a context of demonstrating the unifying power of Christ among believers;
 - 3) Evangelism should show that Christianity is not tied to any political system.

7. How to motivate students for evangelism

- a. The starting point is the quality of the spiritual life of individuals and the group. Motivation is primarily internal and spiritual and is not a product of a program.
- b. Therefore, encourage personal discipleship of believers and have mature Christians who give leadership in these qualities, as well as evangelism.

- c. From Zaire was a concerted effort to contact "less dedicated" Christians:
 - 1) ask the committed Christians to pray specifically for the indifferent Christians.
 - 2) ask the committed Christians to visit the indifferent Christians.
 - 3) make sure the core group live what they believe.
- d. Training in apologetics, biblical content, etc.
- e. Immersion-principle

"Take them, don't send them." Link Christians up with non-Christians; expose them to non-Christian ideas, etc., so they can understand the emptiness experienced by those who do not know God, and also see in a fresh perspective the strength and beauty of the Christian alternative.

 - 1) *Germany* — Navigators take a disciple to learn by observing a one-to-one conversation. *Canada* — take several students to a rap session, etc., for them to see more mature Christians in action and also to gain confidence in the biblical answers.

It only takes a few converts to begin to inspire confidence. Involve new converts in witnessing.

Recommended book: *Starting As A Christian Student* by David Jackman, InterVarsity Fellowship.

- I. *Goals and objectives of campus evangelism in the next decade*
 1. Reach every student, faculty and staff with the Gospel.
 2. Responsibly disciple the students — win, build, train.
 3. Aim at penetrating campuses which have no existing groups.
 4. University missions for every student generation, but there is a danger of students living for missions or counting on them to do the evangelizing.
 5. Aim at building up a mature, alive, consistent fellowship on our campuses which will genuinely reflect the Body of Christ.
 6. Need to help students see God's call to ministry *within* the academic structure.
 7. Aim to have a strong evangelical church with an expository teaching ministry near to each university campus.
 8. To encourage students who come to Jesus Christ to prove his Lordship in their thinking, their studies, their campus involvement — in fact in all of life!
- II. *Obstacles and hindrances*
 1. The apathetic attitude in Christians
 2. Lack of serious, persistent prayer
 3. Lack of responsibly involved and committed faculty
 4. An unclear understanding of the Gospel
 5. Pressure of school work and other commitments
 6. Lack of consistent leadership in student groups
 7. Train students in a variety of evangelistic methods, i.e., ties

8. Antagonistic attitudes of some churches
9. Failure of Christians to be truly involved in life of the campus
10. Pressure from non-Christian families
11. Often if a student has become a Christian on campus, when he leaves, if he has no church tie he has a very difficult time.

III. Resources necessary

1. Holy Spirit — his guidance, leadership, and strategy is vital
2. Faculty, staff, and pastors who love, care, and have time for students
3. Local church with a strong, expository ministry
3. Use of Christian homes near campus
5. Christians who are obedient to God, effective witnesses and/or trainers of others
6. Meaningfully involved graduates
7. Literature
8. Trained teachers to build up the groups in solid biblical content

IV. Steps in implementation

1. Encourage communication among various Christian groups and plan concerted strategy.
2. Strategically place Christians in university residences and other places of influence.
3. Provide framework and opportunities for students to get to know other Christian students and faculty.
4. Encourage bright Christian students to think of university teaching, and train them now for student involvement.
5. Plan a variety of evangelistic approaches to meet the various groups that make up the university.
6. Hold special evangelistic camps and conferences, lecture series, etc.
7. Train students in a variety of evangelistic methods, i.e., evangelistic Bible studies, etc.
8. Develop and strengthen graduate fellowships.
9. Keep an eye open for students who would mature to be traveling secretaries, etc.

Specialized comments

Africa — organize writers' course and workshops.

EVANGELIZATION AMONG WOMEN

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Dr. Subbamma, East Godavara, South India, is a member of the Lutheran Church and has developed a unique ashram program in India. She has authored New Patterns for Discipling Hindus.

In this issue strategy paper I would mention the tremendous task of evangelizing women in the world, but I concentrate on evangelization among Hindu women in India. While dealing with Hindu women, it becomes necessary to include Hindu community at various points.

To fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord in this generation, we need new strategies for helping to accomplish that goal in every country of the world. As you know, about half of the world's population are women. It is evident that in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, he gave equal importance to women. In the life of the church, women play a very important part. In the great task of evangelizing the nations, Christian women have equal responsibility with men to bear witness to the redeeming love of our Lord. In countries like India where women are more responsive to the Gospel, special effort should be made to disciple such groups of women, using the patterns that are practical in their situation. I am involved in the Ashram Evangelism among Hindus in India. In general, the Hindu community is more receptive to the Gospel than ever before, but Hindu women are even more responsive to the Good News. In this paper, I would present the tremendous opportunities that we have to proclaim Christ to Hindu women. I also would like to bring to your notice the various problems that one has to face in discipling Hindus and especially Hindu women from caste background.

Social structure

Before we take up the issue of evangelizing Hindu women as well as the Hindu community, it is necessary to understand the social structure of the Hindu community. Indian society has been divided into four big groups or castes. The Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and the Sudras. In addition to the above are the untouchables or schedule classes, who are now being called Harijans. The division of the village into a number of castes constitutes one of the most fundamental features of its social structure. The individual's position in the caste structure is fixed by birth. The caste system gives to Hindu society a segmentary character. In such a community Christianity has taken roots among the two communities of the Harijans, (Malas and Madigas) in South India and other lowest-stratum people in other areas. In most cases the church is located in the palem which lies some distance away from the village proper.

The Rev. S.W. Schmitthenner, president of our Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church, made a survey of evangelism among Hindus and presented a paper in 1968 on "The Structure and Outreach of the A.E.L. Church in Rural Andhra." He pointed out three reasons for the lack of