

EVANGELISM AMONG WOMEN REPORT

Chairman: Mrs. Gien Karssen

Summary three sessions:

Dr. Subbamma shared Ashram evangelism as an example of how women can be reached with the Gospel in her country, but how the same basic and biblical principle can be used in other cultures. The last session was set apart for interaction with each other and sharing of ideas, problems, and possible solutions.

After these discussions we all closed in prayer, knowing we as women need God's guidance and wisdom to do the work he gave us to do in our sphere of influence.

Session 1 and 2:

Background — Dr. Subbamma is from a Hindu background. When she became a Christian she received from God a burden to evangelize Hindus. However, she saw that Hindus want to become Christian in their own culture and worship, and in their own localities. She has written two books about this subject.

New patterns for discipling Hindus and Christ confront India

Ashrams — This is a community of people belonging to various castes and religions, living together for a short or long period of time. There is time to hear and study the Word of God, to meditate, to share, to sing and clap hands, all in a very relaxed and informal way. The Gospel is presented in various ways, among them the use of narrative stories, all designed to help the people understand how they can identify with the biblical truth being presented. They start where the people are.

Where was the first ashram started? From June, 1968, to June, 1974, the ashram movement started twelve ashrams for women and families on an interdenominational basis in Andhra. These ashrams are Christ-centered and people-oriented. The use of indigenous methods attracts large crowds of Hindus to the ashrams to hear the Gospel of Christ. After they become Christians they are trained how to pass on the Gospel to others in the places where they live and work. Through Mobile Ashram Evangelism the Gospel is taken to the people in villages and towns.

What is the relation to the churches? The ashrams want to be a cultural bridge between the people and the churches. Pastors are invited to come in order that they might see what the program is all about. Between most churches and the ashrams there is good communication.

Why are women important? Through the ashrams many Hindu women are reached. Because of them whole families and Hindu communities can be reached and are being reached. In India every woman may go to a man and talk to him. This is not possible the other way around.

Session 3:

Discussion questions:

How can we learn from each other and use the biblical principle in our situation? What individuals and organizations are active in your part of the world? What can we do to improve situations?

Input was gathered from Laos, Spain, Norway, Zaire, the Netherlands, and the U.S.A.

Problems:

- 1) Churches in most cases have no outreach programs;
- 2) Lack of motivated, faithful people;
- 3) Lack of disciplined people who in turn can train other faithful people (II Tim. 2:2);
- 4) Lack of training, both spiritually as well as practically.

Steps to undertake and possibilities to evangelize

1) Reach people where they are. Try to identify with them, which involves our total commitment to God and our fellowman.

2) Look for programs that will help people discover how practical the Christian life is, and how it influences our total life.

3) Look for a place where people can meet together, to learn to understand Christianity in a new way. This can be a step-by-step development (as in the Ashrams).

4) The program must be oriented to the audience and its needs (as is done in the Ashrams).

5) A loving atmosphere, and a place where people will experience peace, joy and love, the fruit of the Spirit of God. This will attract people, through the work of the Holy Spirit.

6) Training:

a) How women daily can experience the Christian life and can live in the power of God's Holy Spirit.

b) How they can study the Word of God and have an effective prayer life.

c) Why they should evangelize and how they can share Christ with others.

d) How they can train other women and disciple people who also will know how to share Christ in life and words with others.

e) Practical outreach programs.

f) The role of a woman and how the Lord can use her in her sphere of influence.

Offered possibilities by such organizations as Navigators and Campus Crusade:

- 1) Training in how to start Bible study groups.
- 2) How to start prayer groups.
- 3) How to share Christ with others.
- 4) Conferences and literature.