

INDUSTRIAL EVANGELISM

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At the conclusion of a conference held in Britain some years ago entitled "The Church and Industry," the following statement was issued:

"In the light of the failure of evangelical Christians in this century in the industrial sphere — a failure in which we acknowledge our part — this group of Christians engaged in industry urgently calls upon Christian people and churches to:

1. Adopt a radically different attitude to industry, seeing it as the means whereby God meets our material and social needs today, and an area where God is at work.

2. Become involved in matters of social justice in the industrial sphere, speaking out against unfair practices, exploitation and dishonesty wherever and however they occur, from a knowledge of the facts, and taking action where they have the power to do so.

3. Support in every possible way personal and group evangelism in industry.

4. Support financially the research work of the Christian Teamwork Institute of Education and the evangelistic and teaching work of the Worker's Christian Fellowship and Outreach to Industry.

5. Ask ministers and clergy and other church leaders to consider ways in which their church programs, evangelism and training of young people can forward the cause of Christ in our industrial society.

6. Play their part responsibly in increasing productivity, according to God's purpose."

Now this statement raises a number of important questions. Some concern merely the simple mechanics — the *modus operandi* — of evangelism, but others raise biblical and doctrinal issues — for example, that we as Christians are put "into" the world, but that we are not to be "part of" the world. Social involvement issues were dealt with at the 1971 Amsterdam Conference, at which one of the resolutions was "The Church must earn the right to be heard." Social involvement, as I see it, must not be looked upon as a nettle to grasp but as an inescapable responsibility to be acknowledged, accepted, and used to God's glory.

"Am I my brother's keeper?"

To the above question the resounding answer comes back from heaven, "The blood of your brother cries out to me from the ground." A similar cry is heard again recorded in Jas. 5:4, "Behold the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields which is, of you, kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth."

If I eat, wear clothes, live in a house, use the postal services, drive a car — then whether I like it or not I am thereby involved in society. I cannot escape this. Sir Frederick Catherwood in his book *The Christian Citizen* makes the following comments:

"It is no part of my message to minimize the Christian's care for the salvation of men's souls. That is as important as ever. The duty of care for our neighbor is undivided. If we care for his body, we will also find that we care for his soul. If we really care for his soul, we should find that we also care for his body. It is not true Christianity, but false pietism, which divides one from the other.

"Many who accept the full Christian Gospel fail to balance the doctrines of separation, prayer and evangelism, from the very clear statements of our Lord that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. This commandment is not only just as binding as other doctrines, but is ranked by our Lord second only to the commandment which tells us to love the Lord our God with all our heart.

"The Christian is to be the salt of the earth, he is to be a light to lighten the world, and no one is going to be of any influence or any enlightenment if he seems already to have removed himself from this world to the next."

Enemy-held territory

To have and to hold any true assessment of Christian responsibility, one must recognize God's relationship to the world in which we live. This is God's creation and God has not abdicated — he still rules in the kingdoms of men. His silence is not due to indifference, indolence, or ignorance; he is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish. An enemy has occupied the land, and God's D-Day began nearly 2,000 years ago by the stepping into human history of his Son, Jesus Christ. The Church has ever since been waging war to liberate the people. The command is to go in "to possess the land," or as our great Commander put it, "Go into all the world and make disciples."

In his book *The Christian Persuader*, Dr. Leighton Ford says, "Jesus didn't merely mean the world as the geographical world, i.e., the frontiers of Brazil and the Congo, etc., but he also meant the world of government, education, domestic life, industry and commerce. The world where people live their lives."

Defining industrial evangelism

Industrial evangelism is the whole plan-strategy of carrying the Christian evangel into the workaday world of our nation — an exercise that will of necessity involve "life" as well as "lip." It will have in mind, in the main, a society of people known as the "workers" or "working people" — a term which is easily stated but not as easily defined.

In the Western world the "working class" people could at one time be said to live in certain areas, do certain jobs, and be confined to a certain level of economic existence. This is not so today. Many workers in the Western world earn a larger salary than many at middle and top management; they own their own houses and indeed have a standard of living equal to their supposedly better-off colleagues in the higher executive echelons. Possibly the only area in which they differ is in the sphere of education.

Methods of industrial evangelism

Methods practiced today include:

(i) *Infiltration evangelism*, implemented by groups or cells of Christian workers within an industrial establishment. It appears to be a program aimed at providing Christian fellowship, rather than one of supplying a platform for evangelism. The worker priest is a professional theologian taking up employment in industry.

(ii) *Presence evangelism* — This is initiated by industrial chaplains — men ordained by a denomination, who free-lance among a group of industries. They are not usually in charge of a church. The term "presence evangelism" derives from the fact that industrial chaplains normally do not conduct meetings within industry — they just "presence" themselves.

(iii) *Direct evangelism* — This is programmed by "Outreach to Industry," an organization actually conducting evangelistic meetings within industry.

(iv) *Personal evangelism* — This is implemented by individuals. Outreach to Industry invites individual Christians to attend a course of lectures on witnessing in industry.

The remainder of this paper will be given to discussing direct and personal evangelism.

1. Direct evangelism

a. *The industrial evangelist* — The gift of the evangelist is God's gift through the Holy Spirit to the Church. This was never more true than when it applies to an evangelist to industry, for the whole task of industrial evangelism is extremely delicate and even dangerous. It is a mine-field. Much damage can be done by the wrong person "having a go." Someone who is not called of God or equipped will do more harm than good.

Industrial evangelists, therefore, must be men of faith — miracle-working faith — demonstrating its power through their lives. Such faith will remove the mountains of practical and psychological difficulties which are peculiar to industry. Every time Outreach to Industry conducts a meeting in industry, it is a miracle.

Industrial evangelists must also be men of perseverance. Paul wrote in II Cor. 4:9, "We are knocked down, but we get up again and keep going." The industrial evangelist must have an attitude of mind and spirit that refuses to take "No" for an answer. Acts 16 relates the account of Paul's journey into Macedonia; please note that before this event Paul attempted to go into Asia and Bithynia.

Another essential qualification is wisdom. We are instructed to be "as wise as serpents." We are also instructed to receive wisdom. "He is always ready to give a bountiful supply of wisdom to all who ask Him" (Jas. 1:5). In every phase of industrial evangelism, whether it be in the early days of investigating, or the delicate stages of negotiations with management and unions, or the difficult days of organization, or the thrilling days of implementation, we will be in much need of heaven-sent wisdom.

Finally there must be sincerity — the love of Christ just breaking through us. It is this love that constrains us. Such love is completely dis-

arming; it will always win through. It will never fail (I Cor. 13:8). There is, quite simply, no substitute for love.

b. *Industrial outreach* — This undoubtedly presents a unique opportunity to reach people who do not attend a church and would not be drawn into a major crusade meeting. A qualitative survey would reveal a far higher incidence of unconverted people in an industrial audience than in the audience of a central crusade meeting. The very process of going "out" with the Gospel meets the criticism of "cosy insiderness" which is often leveled at the church and which must be regarded with some degree of seriousness. This cosy insiderness is a real stumbling block to some non-churchgoers, while the very environment of an industrial meeting, when used by the speaker, lends credence to our claim that the Gospel is relevant to the modern industrial situation. Industrial Outreach, when it is carried out on an informal basis, provides unique facilities for real personal contact and the opportunity to relate the Gospel to personal needs expressed in question and answer sessions.

This function of industrial outreach is important enough in itself to merit mature consideration. It could be called *reaching out*. However, when industrial outreach is done within the context of a central crusade, it has another important function: that of *feeding in*. It has been found by Outreach to Industry that invariably an approach to industry results in a willingness to attend the central crusade meetings. The challenge, "We have been your guests, now come and be ours," has produced a response where an ordinary invitation via posters, personal invitations at home, etc., have failed. During the Billy Graham Crusade in the north of England and in London, workers were asked to "name the night," and were then given the appropriate tickets guaranteeing them seats for their families and friends. In many cases these were accepted as a direct result of the initial impact of the Gospel at the factory visit. Thus a properly implemented industrial outreach is not only valid for its own sake of "reaching out" — it is a useful means of "feeding in" unconverted men and women to the main crusade meetings.

(i) *Industry defined* — The term "industry" is a general one covering any establishment where any number of people are employed. The small industries which employ maybe two dozen people are just as important, if not more so, as the larger establishments. In my time I have spoken in banking houses, insurance offices with staffs of twenty to thirty, in department stores — some small, some large — as well as the general run-of-the-mill industries. There are innumerable small industries in town and city, and these afford a wonderful opportunity to reach people with the Gospel. Do not forget the men who stand guard in their district waiting to answer the call to put out a fire, the men who drive the buses, and the policemen.

So great is the scope that the difficulty lies in knowing where to draw the line. We have been invited to speak at social clubs attached to industries, at industrial conferences, management committees and industrial apprentice schools, and we have found it essential to include school-leavers in our program.

(ii) *Size of target* — How much industry can be taken in will be entirely dependent on the availability of speakers capable of handling in-

dustrial meetings, and on the number of days scheduled for the industrial outreach. There is no method of determining in advance the likely percentage of "refusals." Outreach to Industry has found that the situation differs so vastly from area to area that it is not possible to say, "Send out X more invitations than you expect to be able to handle." However, as will be shown later, there is good reason to aim at the widest possible field in making the initial invitation.

(iii) *Research* — It is worthwhile spending considerable time in the initial stages in researching information on the companies to be covered. Necessary information would include: correct name and address of company; subsidiary companies, or companies under same control; correct name, title, and position of best contact (normally the managing director); approximate size of company; working hours, "natural breaks," whether shift-work or uninterrupted work-flow; whether Worker's Christian Fellowship operates, and its strength; trades union affiliations.

None of this information is superfluous. Armed with all the facts set out above, you would avoid the possibility of any breach of courtesy, avoid duplication, have a clear picture of how an industrial visit could be "slotted in" with minimum disorganization, and have some idea of what you were "up against" before making any contact. At the same time it would be advisable to discover if there is any Christian influence within the factory, particularly at management or union level.

(iv) *Invitation* — By far the most successful method of getting goodwill, and paving the way towards factory visitation, is to invite selected Top Management to a luncheon as the guest of a Christian who may be a "big name" in the business world, or some local respected person. The name of the host lends stature to the event at a critical time before any persuading can be done. It is vital at this stage that the approach be as "well shod" and as professional as possible; that the luncheon be worthy of the occasion.

(v) *Luncheon* — The purpose here is threefold: to introduce, to inform, and to invite. Working within the goodwill created, and the informal atmosphere of the luncheon, the host should be briefed to introduce and outline the plan to visit industry. He should make use of the fact that many well-known companies have had industrial visits and in many cases requested the evangelist's return. Almost without exception, even where return visits have not been requested, Outreach to Industry has had no difficulty in arranging a second visit on their return to an area, even in those cases where the initial visit was only negotiated with considerable difficulty. Properly handled, industrial outreach is self-perpetuating among those factories which have experienced it.

The host should be briefed to ask for questions from the management present. He should press for company time to be allowed for the factory meetings — and expect to get it! An explanatory booklet should be prepared, outlining the industrial outreach plan, and given to each luncheon guest, and those present should be told that a personal follow-up will be made during the course of the next week or two. The time, energy, and care put into this stage of the approach to industry will pay dividends during the weeks to follow.

(vi) *Follow-up* — Those management who were invited but did not attend the luncheon should be followed up immediately with a letter, a copy of the explanatory booklet, and a request for an interview. If the latter is not acknowledged it should be followed up by telephone. Within a week or two of the luncheon, while the memory of it survives, an approach should be made to the luncheon guests, either by letter or telephone, requesting a personal interview. The purpose of the interview at the factory is to obtain outline approval for a factory meeting and to discover whether "factory time" is likely to be given. If conditions appear favorable, it is usual to discuss facilities and to request an interview with the union leaders or workers' representatives.

(vii) *Meeting the unions* — The purpose of this is to allay suspicion. Outreach to Industry has discovered that if the men suspect that the industrial outreach meeting is management-inspired gimmickry intended to "boost production," etc., few will attend the actual meeting. It is therefore worthwhile to insure that the men's representatives are fully in the picture. If the situation demands it, it could be advantageous to hold a reception for union leaders similar to that for management. It is likely, however, that it will be enough to meet these leaders in their factories.

(viii) *Analyzing the results* — At this stage, the pattern of the industrial visit becomes clear, and the results can be "graded." This involves suiting the factories to the evangelists available. For example, it is by no means true that a capable evangelist is automatically "at home" in the atmosphere of a typical factory meeting. On the other hand, in certain circumstances, where for example management has considerable Christian influence, it is perfectly possible to deliver a normal, three-point sermon. The other reason for grading results is that of giving priority to those factories offering the most advantageous facilities.

(ix) *Organization* — No evangelistic project is greater than its organization. We speak, of course, on a human level. We know that the Holy Spirit will elevate everything on to a new level, but faith in him is no excuse for insufficient organization. If a meeting in industry is to be successful it will require thorough and painstaking attention to detail. We must plan so that the least and lowest in the factory know all about the meeting — its exact time, date, length, and venue. If we are to gain the cooperation and support of the Personnel Management department, we must keep them fully informed of all our plans. We have found, moreover, that publicity can never be overdone, and we need to pray for Holy Spirit initiative in this area.

(x) *Final arrangements* — Only when management and unions have given the green light, and the committee has had an opportunity to make an outline schedule of visits geared to the time available, should dates and times be confirmed with the industries concerned.

(xi) *Implementation* — The great day has arrived, and it is good to remind ourselves that we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers. Anything can go wrong. Arrive in good time at the factory to allow for snags, and also to tie up any last-minute arrangements. Always honor the time allotted. If the company gives forty-five minutes, then conclude the meeting in forty-three minutes. If questions are asked, keep a strict eye on the time so as not to transgress. Should the

meeting be held in the workers' lunch-time, then make a brief announcement as people are concluding the meal, and explain what is to happen. Stand down for a few minutes before beginning the actual meeting. At the conclusion of the meeting, have your literature ready. By far the best method, we find, is to ask men to come forward as an open declaration and take the literature from us.

2. Personal evangelism —

Someone has said that the Church has become a "pleasure cruiser," whereas it used to be a "lifeboat." Men were trained to go out on to the stormy seas of life and rescue people. Now we wrap our Christians up in cotton wool, and teach them the fine art of defense. We are even called "defenders of the faith." This was not the way the early church reached the then-known world. We Christians are not interested in survival, we are out to establish a kingdom. Our orders are "ALL the world ... EVERY creature."

We have the potential manpower in the church to impact the world. We need to mobilize the total Church for total involvement and total commitment to communicate the faith. If we can inspire and instruct every Christian to communicate at the point of contact — home, social circle, employment — then it is possible to reach this generation for Christ. Since we spend one-third of our lives at our employment this surely is a major mission-field for most Christians.

Wherever Outreach to Industry carries out its industrial program, it always seeks to set up what is now known as "Workers' Workshops." This is an attempt to inspire and instruct Christians to communicate their faith. Among the many things that are being taught, some are outlined as follows.

a. *Be sure of knowing God's will.* See life as a vocation. Paul has made it clear in his epistles, especially in his epistle to the Colossians, that to be filled with the knowledge of God's will is God's intended pattern for every life — whether that life be on some remote mission field or in a factory. This can only be achieved as we read and thoroughly digest Romans 12:1-2. The ramifications of doing God's will will mean (i) working for "THE" Boss, rather than "a" boss. (ii) Read Ezra 7:23, " whatsoever is commanded by the God of Heaven, let it be *diligently* done ..." If this is God's will for my life, then it demands one hundred per cent obedience and diligence. (iii) "Be ye holy as I am holy." If by standing for truth and justice I lose my job, then this is God's will. I must be prepared for this. My times are in his hands, and if he allows one door to close, he will open another.

b. *Be committed.* Romans 8:14, "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." Read Acts 8:26-40. Because Philip was led by the Spirit of God, he made the right decision, met the right person in the right place, and said the right things. Absolute control by the Holy Spirit will mean just this.

c. *Be positive.* Holy ambition is a very desirable Christian attribute, especially if we are seeking God's glory. We need Christian men and women in positions of responsibility at all levels in industry — in man-

agement, middle management, unions, etc. Very dangerous, I know, but then as Christians we are called upon to live dangerously. If atheism flourishes in industry today who is to blame — the vocal power-grabbing atheist, or the silent and passive Christian?

d. *Be brave.* "The fear of man bringeth a snare" (Prov. 29:25). One of Satan's greatest weapons is the weapon of fear. We are to triumph over this. There is no sin in fear. It becomes sin when we allow it to paralyze us. We must claim the victory over fear. We are bidden not to fear him who can destroy the body, but to fear him who can destroy both body and soul. Fear must be recognized, challenged, and triumphed over.

e. *Be believing.* If the individual Christian really believes what he professes to believe, we would be moving heaven and earth to make sure that everyone else had the opportunity to believe it also. Are we in danger of giving a mere mental assent to the great truths of the Bible? I think we need to ask ourselves, "Am I living as though I am someone who really believes in life beyond the grave?" General Booth of the Salvation Army is reputed to have said once to his workers that if he could have his way he would send every one of them to hell for five minutes. The man outside our church does not believe that we believe what we profess to believe. Do we give him grounds to think otherwise?

f. *Be prepared.* The *Living Bible* translates II Tim. 2:15 thus, "Work hard so God can say to you, 'Well done.' Be a good workman, one who does not need to be ashamed when God examines your work." I am aware of the dangers of being mechanical in learning the art of soul-winning from books and literature; however, many from experience have proved what a blessing it is to have guidelines. Why should we not learn from men who have great experience as well as being men of God? The Christian is likened to a soldier, an athlete. If he is to be a good soldier and a successful athlete, he must train. This we all recognize. I would urge my colleagues and pastors of flocks to include a regular Workers' Workshop in their church program. Help your people to be effective communicators of the faith.

g. *Be confident.* Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, "If thou knewest the gift of God ..." More than ever before we live in a world which wants truth to be backed home by experience. It is no use saying we have a mighty God and yet living as if he were no bigger than the span of a man's hand. The time must come when we must speak from the stimulus of personal experience. The Christian message is nothing if it is not relevant.

Conclusion

There is no Christian work more thrilling, more gratifying, than that of taking the Gospel to men and women "where they are" in industry. There is no experience more soul-satisfying than that of standing before an audience such as industry presents, where more than eighty or ninety per cent will never have heard the clear presentation of the Christian Gospel.

Industrial evangelism is, in addition, being realistic. Never before in the history of the Church was the need to "go where they are" greater than it is today. It is not my brief to say anything about the cause that has created the great "No-Man's Land" between Church and unconverted.

Sufficient to say that it exists, and few there are from either side who dare go over the top. In the multitude of conferences there wanteth no sin, but he that "doeth" is wiser than he that only "discusseth."

No one would be naive enough to deny the wisdom to learn basic principles, to discuss, and pick brains, but a man will often learn more in one hour of "doing" than in a month of learning "how to do." Therefore, *I appeal to my brethren around the world to launch out into the deeps of evangelism in industry. See how God will open doors for you, and in opening the doors will also give you the definite enabling to go through them.*

*May we ... "go in to possess the land ..."
"go into all the world ..."
"to every creature ..."*

STUDY GUIDE

1. Where does evangelism begin and where does it end? Realizing, of course, that it does begin and end with the Holy Spirit.
2. Are zeal and knowledge sufficient qualifications to implement the office of industrial evangelist?
3. What part does the Holy Spirit play in communicating the Gospel?
4. Is the Church able to reach the worker with its message? Has it ever reached and is it ever likely to reach the worker?
5. Is the Church adequately training its membership to witness effectively for Christ?
6. Is there precedence for believing that many successful social and industrial reforms have been motivated by the Christian message?

INDUSTRIAL EVANGELIZATION STRATEGY REPORT

For the purposes of our discussion and recommendation we have defined the term "industry" in a general way as follows: any establishment where people are employed.

With this as our guide we record that almost all peoples of the world spend approximately one-third of their lives in the environment of industry.

We believe that a major proportion of these people have not been evangelized and a vision has been given to us and a burden placed upon us for these people. We recognize the task as predominantly a "pioneering ministry" as little appears to our knowledge to have been done with it, except the fine ministry of Mr. Martin Higginbottom through the organization named "Industrial Outreach" and some spasmodic and isolated efforts in a few countries.

We recognize the differing nations and cultures covered within this vast mission field and the consequential varying emphasis and approaches required. Particularly do we mention the differences between an almost wholly Protestant country from those in which other religions predominate and where evangelical Christians are a very small proportion of the population.

There is no doubt in our thinking that the task of industrial evangelization is a huge one, but one that can and must be done. Marx has said, "Workers of the world unite." We believe the time has come for us to say, "Workers of the world — Christ can unite."

We recommend that:

1. An interim international Working Committee be formed to function initially through correspondence:
 - A. To prepare, collate, and coordinate literature of an informative and motivating nature for distribution to Christian ministers, leaders, and lay Christians for the purpose of industrial evangelization in every area of the world.
 - B. To organize and coordinate such other activities as are desirable and practical.
2. National Committees to be formed in each country:
 - A. Where possible, use present participants at this Congress strategy meeting. Where no such delegate for a country is available, then such a national committee be formed on the initiative of interim international council.

For this purpose, names, addresses and present ministries of those persons here present who are prepared to take the initiative in their own country should be recorded for setting up such a national committee.

The interim international council should engage in research and study hindrances to Christian witness in industry, e.g., fear, losing job, other religions, hostility of employers, unions, and how they can be overcome.

A training program should be prepared to assist pastors and lay Christians. Strong efforts should be made to obtain "the acceptance and co-operation of trade union leadership in our approach to their member-