

possible, i.e., Scripture translation, the development of literacy or educational materials, and the training of indigenous leadership. Even for immigrant minorities there will often be a need for someone to study the life of the minority community, and produce specialized materials or services through which the Gospel can be communicated. There is a real and continuing need for full-time specialist workers, supported by the Christian fellowships that have set them apart for such work and adequately trained in the skills that the task demands. This will generally include the study of linguistics, social anthropology, and literacy, in addition to basics like theology, and the principles of evangelism and church planting. Such training is currently provided by Bible colleges, and by such courses as those of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, but it tends to be less accessible to nationals of non-English speaking, or less developed, countries. Strategy therefore calls for specialized training to be more widely available.

A more fundamental problem, however, is the lack of vision and drive on the part of the church to fulfill this aspect of its mission. This may spring from ignorance of the need, or from a false assumption concerning priorities, i.e., that because minority groups contain few persons (compared to majority groups or the growing urban centers) their evangelization is not very imperative — a rather low priority at best. In view of the clear teaching of the Scriptures that God is concerned for every man regardless of the size of the community to which he belongs, and that he is calling to himself a people “from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues” (Rev. 7:9), it is urgent that this assumption be replaced by truth. The task of evangelizing minority racial groups is an essential part of the church’s responsibility, not less important or urgent than other forms of work, but of equal importance and urgency, and therefore to be carried forward at the same time. We cannot shrink back from the task because of its extent, as if our resources were adequate for only a part of what the Master has given us to do. Rather we must press forward, trusting in him who has called us to be with us, as he promised.

EVANGELISM OF MINORITY RACIAL GROUPS REPORT

We believe that Christians in all parts of the world should take the following steps toward the evangelization of these groups:

a. Repent of our unbiblical attitudes in regarding them as inferior, and of our failure to show as much concern for them as for groups more numerous or more easily reached.

b. Ascertain the facts about such groups, both in our own countries and in other parts of the world, so as to prayerfully determine our responsibility toward them.

c. Set aside specialist (E-3) personnel to study the language and culture of each group, and by close identification with them communicate the Gospel to them in a way that is relevant to their culture and situation. Personnel sent to cross-cultural situations should, if possible, receive suitable training — including social anthropology and social psychology, with emphasis on the culture of the target group. (The above applies particularly to indigenous minority groups.)

d. Engage in local (E-2) contacts with individuals from such groups, where possible. This could include sharing with and concern for individuals within the home, choice of housing location so as to facilitate contact and involvement, and the provision of evangelistic and worship activities geared to the minority culture as part of the local church program, possibly with specialist staff.

The resources required for the evangelization of all such groups cannot be computed without fuller information. It seems certain however that the number of immigrant groups must be many hundreds, while the number of indigenous groups still needing specialist workers is probably well in excess of two thousand. (The W.B.T. Ethnologue, 1974 edition, lists 568 languages definitely needing Bible translation, plus 3,438 others which may need this.)

Resources currently available include specialist training for workers among indigenous minorities offered by the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Australia, England, Germany, and the U.S.A., with shorter practical courses in a number of other countries.

We recommend that such training and in-service help be made available on a wider basis, to facilitate personnel from many countries engaging in work among these groups. We also call for continued research into the number and circumstances of minority racial groups throughout the world, as a means of stimulating action by the church on their behalf.