

LAITY GROUP REPORT

J.H. Court

We start from a biblical view of the laity as the people of God with no distinction of status before God between ordained and lay people. Nonetheless, clergy and laity can fulfill different functions both in expressing community within the church and in witness to the world. Without being anti-clerical we emphasize that the laity must play a strategic part in effective evangelism.

Insofar as a distinction may be made, we see the pastor training the congregation to fulfill its responsibilities, more than the congregation supporting the pastor in evangelism.

It is important to train lay people to think and act evangelistically through home and family.

The training and skills of lay people must be harnessed at all levels to complement those of the pastor so that each is free to do that for which he is equipped.

The talents of women are all too often confined by convention and tradition; their personal worth must be respected and fostered. We remember that in most places women represent more than half of the evangelistic force.

Christian witness is not completed in faithful church attendance and preservation of existing organizational structures of the church. There must be an encouragement to become involved in the social structures of the community — in secular organizations and political bodies at all levels so that opportunities to create a specifically Christian life-style will be taken. Young people should be encouraged to explore their Christian calling in terms of involvement in the media, in politics, in the world of the arts and culture. A call to E-1 evangelism is no less a call than one to E-3 evangelism.

Lay people can challenge the *life-style* of the world by living in fellowship with one another, proclaiming God's love by both word and deed; a self-critical humility in relation to wealth, race, and personal morality are necessary prerequisites to chattering the Gospel.

The *thought-forms* of the world must also be challenged. The expertise of lay people can be harnessed to insure an informed witness in controversial areas of personal and social ethics. We reiterate the call of C.S. Lewis for more books by Christians as well as more Christian books. Ideally these should not only be distributed through Christian bookshops.

Three more detailed recommendations are made —

(i) That minority groups be reached through bi-lingual or bi-cultural Christians, e.g., the second generation migrant in such places as Britain or Australia who becomes a Christian. He should be encouraged to witness to the migrant group rather than withdraw from it.

(ii) That the ways in which lay people are witnessing effectively around the world be made known through literature for the purpose.

(iii) That regional conferences across denominations bring lay people together for training in evangelism.

MASS COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Phil Butler

An unusually high number of Congress participants indicated an interest in the field of mass communications as it relates to evangelism. Over 300 participants took part in six days of strategy sessions and demonstrations. From these meetings came the following priorities.

First, we feel there is a need for a genuinely biblical, theological basis for our use of the mass communications media. Writing on the subject is needed as well as teaching in Christian schools and training centers throughout the world.

Then, there is a need for truly professional training and experience in Christian use of the media. Fewer than ten per cent of those attending the mass communications sessions here at the Congress had ever worked for five years outside the parochial field. Regional training centers must be established to provide this badly needed emphasis.

Christian use of all media is essential — secular as well as church-related. This will require our realization of the strategic role of Christians in commercial and state media. It necessitates our bringing these men and women into fellowship and planning for evangelism through all levels of media.

There must be a local-church centeredness to our use of the media. Coordinated integration of the media is a priority. And the local church must be seen as a part of that integrated plan — playing its unique and vital role in the total task of evangelism and discipleship.

We must encourage the proliferation of Christian publishing, broadcasting, and film production units throughout the world.

Cooperative communications entities must be developed in each country. These fellowships of communicators can provide encouragement and practical assistance for evangelism through the media.

Evangelicals must make an energetic effort to find what media are already available in their countries — many opportunities are often lost due to lack of awareness and action on our part.

An international communications resource center is needed which will provide for the exchange of information, ideas, and provide directories of people and materials available in the field.

The church must grasp *new media*. Satellites, computer networks, data transmission, and other remarkable media forms are already reshaping world commerce and political structures. They must be considered and used for evangelism.

Communications conferences are needed in each country as early as possible, allowing Christians to explore methods, share ideas, and provide focus for media, fellowship and strategy.

An international congress needs to be convened within two years. This congress would provide full display of current hardware; exhibition of Christian communications output from around the world — including the field of films, audio-visuals, literature, television, radio, and other media.