JOURNAL OF THE ACADEMY FOR EVANGELISM IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Volume Thirteen
1997-1998

The Journal (ISSN 0894-9034) is published annually, and is supplied free of charge to members of the Academy. Copies may be purchasd at a cost of $10.00 per single issue, or $30.00 per subscription for four issues, and ordered from the Managing Editor.

JOURNAL OF THE ACADEMY FOR EVANGELISM IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Volume Thirteen 1997-1998

In This Issue

I begin my term as the new editor of the AETE Journal with gratitude for the pioneering work of my two predecessors, David Lowes Watson and Richard Stoll Armstrong. Always striving for excellence, they have made the *Journal* a unique vehicle of theological and practical reflection on evangelism and a valuable resource for teachers of evangelism. Their accomplishments provide a solid foundation for the future.

Evangelism has for much of two centuries been largely understood as a call to make a decision for Christ, often as the result of proclamation or verbal witnessing. Recent decades have seen this definition challenged by others of a more holistic, participatory, and processive nature. Our first two articles manifest this change, though in different ways.

Don E. Saliers understands conversion to involve the incorporation of persons into a community whose life and practices form Christian affections which orient believers to Christ and the Kingdom of God. He calls for a recovery of the catechetical-baptismal practices of the early church and an understanding of conversion as essentially social.

Reflecting on his own conversion, George G. Hunter III also believes conversion most often occurs through participation in Christian fellowship, conversation, and activities. Challenging the common way evangelism has been portrayed, he urges us to attend to Wesleyan and ancient Celtic modes of evangelism in which belief and commitment are the result of rather than the precondition for Christian community.

Why would someone participate in a Christian community at all? The answer would likely be that they were invited to do so by a friend, relative, or co-worker. Yet churches can attract persons through serving the needs of and developing caring with others. This is the burden of Malan Nel's article on service evangelism, an approach first developed by Richard Armstrong. Nel envisions each congregation as serving God through serving others, and sharing faith out of an incarnational and relational life. As Hunter does with Celtic evangelism, Nel sees service evangelism as an alternative to more propositional and confrontational methods.

While the first three articles focus on evangelism in local congregations, Norman E. Thomas shifts our focus to the place of evangelism in the World Council of Churches. After tracing the often misunderstood legacy of the WCC in evangelism, Thomas details the global challenges currently facing world evangelism as we enter a new century. He then shows how the WCC, by beginning to address these challenges, provides a useful contribution to the understanding of evangelism in the church universal.

The next set of articles all have to do with that vast set of intellectual and cultural changes which have been called postmodern or post-Christendom. Keith Davy provides an inside look at how para-

church organizations engaged in evangelism are adjusting to these new trends. Here again we encounter themes of communal participation, relational evangelism, and faith sharing, in this case in the context of campus ministry. One conclusion is that parachurch ministries today are working much more in partnership with local churches, "coming alongside" as the Greek word "para" suggests.

Harry L. Poe's article is a brief summary of the issues discussed in his workshop on apologetics at the C.S. Lewis Institute at Oxford and Cambridge in the Summer of 1998. Serving as a synopsis for a forthcoming book, the article alerts us to the implications for evangelism of nine characteristics of the emerging postmodern world.

One perceptive and provocative observer of trends in church and society is Lyle Schaller, whose *Tattered Trust* examines the impact of recent cultural changes upon denominations. Convinced at one and the same time that old ways will not suffice in the twenty-first century yet denominations remain essential to the life of the church, Schaller raises questions and suggests models of how denominations can be more supportive of new and existing local churches.

We invited Lyle Schaller to the last meeting of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education, where he heard and discussed four responses to his book, each representing a different denominational tradition. We have included these responses in this issue of the *Journal*. They illustrate not only four perspectives, but four different ways of engaging the argument of a text.

Kent Hunter chose to reflect on the condition of the various Lutheran denominations in light of a number of central themes in the book. Richard Stoll Armstrong raises his own critical questions in response to some of Schaller's specific claims as well as offering some reflections on the Presbyterian church and denominationalism in general. Ronald W. Johnson provides a critical assessment of the Southern Baptist Convention in light of Schaller's overall concern. Finally, Woody L. Davis shares conclusions from his study of Oklahoma United Methodist attitudes and practices concerning social change, evangelism, leadership and renewal, offered as a complement to Schaller's broader analysis.

J. David Hester has written a quite different article as part of our "How I See It" series. By way of telling his own story he notes those evangelistic practices that so deeply formed his life, and shares some of the lessons learned as a pastor and teacher of evangelism.

Included in this issue are a number of book reviews and the minutes of the annual meeting of the Academy in October, 1997, at Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City. Also in this issue are indexes to the first twelve volumes of the Journal, whose contents underscore not only appreciation expressed for our previous editors but also for the contributions of so many scholars to the understanding and teaching of evangelism.

Henry H. Knight III

Editorial: Evangelism and Church Renewal

The last twenty years have been marked by a concern for church renewal. This has been manifested in a wide variety of new movements, including Cursillo and Emmaus, the charismatic movement, liturgical reform, and the like.

Church renewal has encompassed a diversity of elements. There has been a new emphasis on small groups and changes in church structure, spawned by such books as Howard Snyder's classic *The Problem With Wineskins* and examples such as that of the Korean church. Spiritual gifts inventories were developed, and the idea that every Christian is gifted for ministry has become increasingly accepted. The best of liturgical renewal showed worship could be both deeply traditional and contemporary, and the best of contemporary worship showed it could be culturally relevant and authentic. The proliferation and popularity of bible studies, including some involving long-term commitment like United Methodism's Disciple Bible Study, is especially welcome, as are the various prayer and fasting movements throughout the church. Much of this is integrated and deepened in the growing interest in spiritual disciplines, promoted by such writers as Richard Foster and Dallas Willard.

This abundance of prescriptions implies an illness, of course, and in this case the sickness seems clear. Renewalists see the church suffering from a severe case of nominal Christianity, and seek to cure it through introducing church members to the real thing. The problem is severe because so many elements of Christianity have atrophied or disappeared. But the prognosis after two decades of treatment is quite good.

While advocates of renewal are generally agreed on a range of specific approaches, they nonetheless tend to have differing analyses of the deeper causes of the church's illness, as well as contrasting long-term solutions. Some see the problem as a kind of amnesia, wherein the church has become detached from its roots, ignorant of its history, and forgetful of its identity and purpose. Their solution is a recovery of traditional narratives, teachings and practices in order once again to nourish the life of the church and give it direction. In the emerging postmodern world they believe it is essential for the church to be a distinctive people and to faithfully live out that identity, sometimes in ways that are countercultural.

Others see the problem as a fixation on certain traditional ways of thinking and doing, such that the dead hand of the past prevents the church from speaking a relevant word to a diverse and rapidly changing world. Their solution is to contextualize the language and practices of the church into that of the culture and younger generations. In the emerging postmodern and post-Christendom world they believe it is essential for the church to effectively communicate

with persons who no longer understand traditional Christian language nor share a Christian world view.

While this tension is most evident in discussions around styles and patterns of worship, it actually permeates most aspects of church renewal. Of course, these two tendencies are not always irreconcilable--tradition and contextualization should not be seen as necessarily mutually exclusive. At the same time, we should not be eager to prematurely resolve this tension between identity and relevance. Both are vital to the church's life and mission, and an easy resolution is often at the expense of one or the other. It is better for the most part to keep the tension alive and at work in our thinking and practice.

The pull toward identity and relevance is certainly felt in thinking about evangelism. This is reflected even in our definitions. If we understand evangelism primarily as faith sharing or as having a congregation which welcomes and is sensitive to seekers, then there will be a natural pull toward relevance and contextualization. The focus is on communicating and relating to persons outside the faith community. On the other hand, if we broaden the definition of evangelism to encompass making disciples or initiating persons into the Kingdom of God, then the ultimate pull is toward identity. The focus is on persons actually becoming faithful, practicing Christians who have an ongoing relationship with God and neighbor. Whatever our definition of evangelism itself, it is clear that to neglect either element in the tension would fatally undermine the hope that through evangelism persons will be able to receive and live the new life in Jesus Christ.

Evangelism has an enormous stake in church renewal. Renewed congregations are centers of vital worship, loving fellowship, and compassionate outreach. While composed of people who have many of the same struggles, joys and pains of their neighbors, renewed churches manifest faith, love, and hope in ways that authenticate the promise of the gospel.

Walter Brueggemann in *Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism* argues that nominal Christians are themselves a primary constituency in need of hearing good news. This was recognized two centuries ago by John Wesley, who sought to proclaim the gospel to persons living in an allegedly Christian nation. Wesley believed that the failure of Christians to actually live according to their faith was the principle reason those outside the church turn a deaf ear to the gospel.

In his sermon, "The General Spread of the Gospel" Wesley offers a vision of a renewed global Christianity in which holiness of heart and life is its reigning characteristic. For Wesley, this above all meant the church would reflect in its own life and outreach the love which it received from God in Jesus Christ. Then, with that "grand stumbling-block being thus happily out of the way, namely, the lives of Christians," Wesley predicts the entire world will listen with new interest to the good news and receive the new life it promises.

Renewed churches thus not only aid evangelism because they are anxious to share their faith and welcome visitors, but because their lives and values authenticate the claims of the gospel. At the same time, evangelism is essential to renewal, because it continually adds new members to the community whose excitement about Jesus Christ and the new life they bring is contagious. They remind us that we indeed have good news to share, news meant not just for some but for all.

Henry H. Knight III

EVANGELISM, CONVERSION, AND BECOMING CHRISTIAN REVISITED

Don E. Saliers

At the heart of Christianity is the gracious invitation of Jesus Christ to "Come, follow me." This is a call to accept the grace of God and to receive the mystery of life restored and renewed. To become Christian is to be "made, not born." So from the beginning, the Christian movement called people into community--into the Body of Christ, to use Paul's root metaphor. The conversion to Christ was indelibly social, for the holiness to which the Gospel proclamation pointed was, in John Wesley's phrase, "social holiness." The kind and quality of Christian life in the world pointed toward the reality of the Kingdom of God. Whatever else we must say about conversion to Christ this must be said: it involves formation of those affections which are oriented toward the divine life of God made flesh in Christ.

This point is seen everywhere in the New Testament which witnesses to the struggles of the early churches to be faithful to this fact. In the account of Luke-Acts, following Peter's proclamation of the resurrection of Christ and his call for conversion, we encounter the Jerusalem community's pattern of disciplined formation. Those who came to believe practiced the fellowship of the community, continued in the teaching and practicing of the apostles, participated in the prayers, and in the common meals. Acts 2:42 ff. presents a vivid portrait of the communal formation of those early Christians, emphasizing the on-going character of the practices and the extraordinary character of their common life. Their baptism was itself a sign of initiation into the very rule and reign of God, and the powerful manifestations of love and healing and unprecedented self-giving to God and neighbor were results of the formation in Christ.

Christianity, in short, is a set of formative and expressive practices. The Christian faith can be described as a patterning in ever-deepening affections: love of God and neighbor, faith and trust in the grace of Christ, hope in the promises of God, kindness and patience and forbearance. The various "fruits of the Spirit" mentioned in New Testament writings are but extensions of the converted life. They are simultaneously "gifts" and "demands," both "graces" and "practices" requiring discipline and communal formation.

Don E. Saliers is Francis Nutting Parker Professor of Theology and Worship at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

As the Christian churches were planted by the ever-expanding missionary efforts of the early leaders, we can say that various cultures were evangelized into patterns of Christian formation. This is strikingly clear by the time we have the first extensive writings which describe the rites of Christian initiation in the fourth century. In the remainder of this essay I will draw upon several of those accounts to shed light on the reality of Christian conversion. I am convinced that we have much to learn from the patterns of Christian initiation which can lead us out of some of the dichotomies and impasses we presently face. All too often I hear church leaders, both pastors and laity, speak as though the work of evangelism to "convert" people to Christ has little to do with the "becoming" faithful in Christ. Or, to put it another way, our inherited theology of conversion is too preoccupied with individual experiences, and often unaware of the interrelationship of the call to "be" a Christian and the life-long invitation to "become" Christian.

We can ask the practical questions in light of contemporary culture which point to a weakness in our thought and practice of Christian soteriology: of how we conceive and experience "salvation" itself. The following pages imply that it is not enough merely to "bring souls to Christ." The more faithful point is to form human persons in faithfulness together in the Body of Christ so that life itself becomes an on-going journey of ever-deepening conversion. This is especially clear in the way in which the early church came to practice the "awe-inspiring" rites of Christian initiation. I refer here to the fully developed patterns of catechetical formation found in the fourth century in key Christian centers of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Milan. My argument is that Christian conversion requires detailed attention beyond initial evangelism if it is to be faithful to the soteriological claims of the Gospel. Much can be learned about the weaknesses of our present practices and theological discussions about baptism, experienced conversion and "becoming Christian" by paying attention to certain features of early church practice.

While I cannot give a comprehensive picture of how the early church's catechetical-baptismal practices relate to conversion here, certain features of those practices may shed light on our current re-assessment of how baptism is related to Christian conversion. Before moving to three basic soteriological focal points, let me clarify two basic assumptions. First, I regard "conversion" to refer *both* to significant experienced events in human lives which occur at *specific times,* and to the complex changes at various levels of our lives *over time*. This means that we can take into account the need for "converting experiences" as episodes of a dramatic shifting of one or more dimensions of the self, while at the same time understanding the complexity of human "turning to God." This

complexity is not about divine grace, it is about our complexity as human beings in community. For one may certainly experience a "converting point" emotionally but lack a full turning of mind or will in this new direction. Likewise, as C.S. Lewis has told us, we can be "converted" intellectually to Christianity or even to the figure of Christ, but not have all our affections reoriented. Similarly, we may well make a sincere "decision" for Christ, but have not yet made more complex reorientations of the will and intellect and affections.

The second assumption is that conversion to Jesus Christ is necessarily social, and not simply one's private "interior" reception of God's love. In fact, the New Testament points significantly toward the problem of having "confessed" Jesus as Lord with the tongue, but not having the form of life that manifests that confession. So Jesus: "Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the Kingdom of heaven." And the letter of John: "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother (or sister) is a liar; for whoever does not have brother (or sister) whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen."[1] There is a recognition in Scripture that conversion to Christ is more complex than having had a single experience. In fact, much of the New Testament itself witnesses to the continual struggle of whole communities with the issues of how adequate their "converted life" is. This applies to the early churches, such as at Corinth, as well as to individuals such as Annaias and Saphira.

These two assumptions apply today as much as they did to the New Testament churches and to the larger, more structured urban churches of the fourth century.

Thomas Finn, reflecting on the developing practices surrounding the formation of Christians, remarks that the act of renunciation in the rite of Christian initiation and the affirmation of faith (Apostolic Creed), together with the formative catechesis, "formed the pivot around which the ritual process of conversion turned.[2] When the person to be baptized was asked to renounce Satan and all the works of evil, it was an event with profound consequences--for this repentance was not simply admitting that one had done wrong; it was a physical and spiritual "turning away" in a speech-act witnessed by the community of faith. This dimension of conversion joined the person in solidarity with the forces for good nurtured by the church. The water bath and the "sealing" with oil and invocation of the Holy Spirit was more than a ceremony--it was a moment of "no return"--a passing over into the domain of God's grace and strengthening. But unless these acts were surrounded by deeper training in the Way of Christ, deeper teaching in the scriptures, the bodily practices, and the symbolic world given by the work of the Holy Spirit, then the act of renunciation and reciting the baptismal creed could be quite "thin," if not "hollow."

Three features of the early churches' way of "making new Christians" through evangelizing and forming persons to be baptized are: 1) Scriptural formation, 2) formation in symbols and images of "life in Christ," and 3) ritual practices that nurture what I shall call the *bodily memory* of being a member of Christ's Body. These are prominent in the pattern of formative discipline and liturgical experience in the baptismal journey of seekers enrolled in the "catechumenate"--a lengthy (up to three years) period of conversion. We know considerable detail about the catechumenate from the pre- and post-baptismal sermons and instructions of Ambrose of Milan (St. Augustine's evangelist/teacher), Cyril of Jerusalem, St. John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia. These are found in the study called *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: Baptismal Homilies of the Fourth Century.*[3]

Once a person declared their interest in seeking to become Christian, they were enrolled in an often lengthy process in which they were under the care of teachers, sponsors, and, indeed, the whole local church community. The goal of the process was Christian baptism; clearly the practice of "adult baptism" was the norm in the fourth century, but infant baptism was also practiced (a complex issue we cannot discuss here). At the heart of this process was formation in the Word of God and in those practices of understanding Scripture such as fasting, praying, and meditating on a range of biblical teachings. Coming to Christ was thus understood to be a process of becoming more and more oriented to how the Scriptures were to guide them in the Christian way of life. We have evidence that, in addition to what we know as "Bible study," the main process of formation was in learning how to pray, to love, to do acts of mercy precisely by referring with increasing depth to biblical stories, both in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the New Testament. There was an intimate relationship between "listening" for the Word of God, "learning Christ" through his teachings and the accounts of his life, and learning how to "read" one's own life experiences through the lens of those Scriptures. Thus conversion was to an ever-deepening entrance into the narratives, the images and the ritual actions (both liturgical and devotional) which were congruent with the central meanings of what it is to follow Christ.

A vivid picture of the catechetical teaching done nearly every morning for the candidates in the Jerusalem church is given by the fourth century diary-keeper, Egeria, who describes the morning sessions: "...they place a chair...for the Bishop, and all those who are to be baptized sit in a circle around him...men and women, and their (sponsors), and also all those who wish to hear, provided they are Christians. During these forty days, the Bishop goes through all the Scriptures, beginning with Genesis, explaining first the literal and then the spiritual sense: this is what is called catechesis. At the

end of five weeks of instruction, they receive the Symbol (Creed), and its teaching is explained to them phrase by phrase, as was that of all the Scriptures...."[4]

More significantly, however, is that fact that Scripture is used *after* the actual baptismal rites are completed. So the formation in Scripture actually depends, in part, upon having undergone the ritual actions of exorcism, anointing, the confession of faith, the water-bath, the laying on of hands, and the participation in the Easter celebration of the eucharist. This means that formation in Scripture requires more than "reading." The practices of "belonging to Christ" must accompany and permeate the understanding of Scripture. Thus, understanding what it means for Christ to have suffered, be buried, and to be raised from the dead (the Gospel narratives) requires having come into the ritual and moral practices that are congruent with that life. So the early church often referred to the post-baptismal teaching as *mystagogia*, the explaining of what the new Christians had actually experienced in the ritual actions of initiation. At every step, these mystagogical teachings were themselves permeated with Scriptural references to images from both Testaments. So learning about Noah and the flood was understood from the standpoint of having gone "under the flood" in Christ, to be raised into the promises of God for the whole creation. Entering the promised "land of milk and honey" with the Israelites was understood as having shared the great feast with Christ who fulfills the biblical prophets. Thus, "conversion" required, for them, a profound way of becoming Scriptural. This points in the direction of what Wesley termed "scriptural holiness": a way of life that continues the process of coming to know God in Christ over time.

I have already referred to the second element, namely, formation in images and symbols of being created in the image of God, and redeemed in the image of Christ. Nowhere is that more dramatically found than in the relation of baptism itself to the image of the death of Christ. St. Basil the Great asks, "How, then, do we enter into the likeness of His death? By being buried with Him by Baptism. There is only one death for the world, and one resurrection of the dead, of which Baptism is the figure."[5] Throughout the period of formation in the catechumenate images and symbolic representations of Christ and the whole range of biblical types and figures are utilized. Again, the "understanding" of these images and symbols is not merely rational or cognitive; it is deeply affectional. This is because the images and symbols are part of the ritual process of conversion itself: practices such as prayer over the candidates to remove evil and various captivities are themselves related to Jesus' practices, as well as to the narratives of God's action against spiritual forces of wickedness. Images of the gifts and fruits of the Spirit were clearly used to describe and to encourage the candidates in their seeking Christ. But following baptism, these same accounts

of the Spirit's work were continually held up as the communal way of life. Thus to "remember one's baptism" was to remember that one belonged to and was accountable to the Body of Christ with its multiple gifts and tasks. In this manner conversion to Christ required ever-deepening formation in the image of being human before God in relation to neighbor.

Finally, though not exhaustively, it should be clear that conversion was not (and is not) simply a matter of decision, or of having a single "converting experience," or a matter of "believing the right doctrines" in the abstract. No, conversion to Christ was *bodily*. All the range of ritual practices that nurture the convert's life--fasting, praying, being exorcised, the laying on of hands in blessing, eating and drinking in fellowship with Christ in community, giving the cup of cold water in Christ's name--all these and others required embodied actions. In this sense conversion must be considered as the "bodily remembrance of Jesus Christ." Christianity is, after all, an incarnate faith. We are, as Paul admonishes the church at Rome, to present our bodies "as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1, RSV). This fully human self-presentation is a mark of conversion. Insofar as we remain only cognitive or only "experiential" we may remain only partially converted. This is the true wisdom of those early church practices moving **toward** and **beyond** baptism. Such a discipline of the whole person in community, called to baptismal grace and accountability, invites us to a more profound picture of Christian conversion than most of us have inherited, much less received and practiced.

There can be no doubt that, all along the way in these fourth century rites of initiation, there were specific "experiences"--sometimes quite dramatic. The initial evangelization of a "seeker" took many forms--often the form of public preaching. But it was finally the quality of the lived faithful life of the community which attracted those who enrolled to be baptized. And, in the process of each new group of those seeking to become a member in Christ's Body, those Christians already baptized were in some sense recapitulating their own conversion.

In our present American culture of consumerist hype and the veritable carnival of images of the human in the media, perhaps it is time for us to revisit and to rethink our basic assumptions about conversion. We may indeed learn something from the early church's pattern of baptismal formation. It would be foolish to argue that fullness of salvation and even fullness of conversion is to be equated with baptism. At the same time, I have tried to illuminate how thorough-going the process of conversion was in relation to the "making of new Christians" by baptismal incorporation into the Body of Christ. I am convinced that our conception of conversion

and its relationship to evangelism and to incorporation into the church's on-going life in the Spirit is, in many cases, inadequate to the breadth, depth, and height of the Gospel of Christ. Only by recovering the Scriptural formation, and by entering into the images and symbols that reveal Christ and the whole range of God's gracious promises, can we address the questions of authentic Christian life today. Evangelism must be far more integrated into the pattern of practices that form bodily memory of *how* we are to live in Christ. Living out the baptized life by the power and guidance of the Spirit in community--the Body of Christ--is the true sign of conversion.

NOTES

[1]I John 4:20.

[2]Thomas M. Finn, "It Happened One Saturday Night: Ritual and Conversion in Augustine's North Africa," in *Journal of American Academy of Religion* vol. 58, p. 590.

[3]Yarnold, Edward S.J., *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: Baptismal Homilies of the Fourth Century* (St. Paul Publications, 1971). This collection was reprinted in 1977 and distributed by Christian Classics in the U.S.A. These texts are also available in Migne's *Patrology*.

[4]From the Diaries of Egeria, cited by Jean Danielou, in *The Bible and The Liturgy* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1956), p. 25.

[5]St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit* (cited in Danielou, op. Cit., p. 46).

THE "CELTIC" WAY FOR EVANGELIZING TODAY

George G. Hunter III

I became a conscious follower of Christ in 1955, as a teenager in Miami, Florida. I experienced, unexpectedly, the presence of God during an evening program of a Key Club convention for high school boys. An actor delivered the Sermon on the Mount. He sported a beard, and first century Galilean attire, and delivered the sermon in the original King James English! Somewhere in chapter six, I was aware that God was present. The Presence followed me back to my hotel room. I managed to find the Sermon on the Mount in the Gideon Bible next to the telephone. I read and reread Matthew 5, 6, and 7 until I drifted off to sleep--still aware of God's presence.

I became an aggressive "Seeker." Although my parents had raised me a (very) nominal Presbyterian, I started visiting the Sunday evening youth fellowship at the Fulford Methodist Church. Fulford Church was close to our home, its pastor Orville Nelson was friendly, approachable, and interested in me, and . . . the prettiest girls in town attended Fulford Church. The youth welcomed me, and included me, into their fellowship immediately. By the second or third Sunday, I was so accepted that they had added my name to the youth fellowship roll, without even asking! I became involved in their programs and projects and ministries. I started attending Sunday morning and evening worship services. I participated in many conversations with many people about Christianity's gospel and the life of faith, hope, and love. Orville Nelson had me reading the New Testament, and books by E. Stanley Jones.

In Fulford Church, I experienced a fellowship in which the people pulled for each other, and interceded for each other. I observed macho guys become real, and even vulnerable, with each other. I observed people seriously, and adventurously, living their lives as credible Christians. I perceived, usually through a rear view mirror, that God was present in several of these experiences. Within, say, three months I found myself believing what these people believed, and in a meeting where we focused on the invitation of Rev. 3:20, I prayed a prayer inviting the Spirit of Christ into my life "as Savior and Lord."

George G. Hunter III is Dean of the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, and past President of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education.

I experienced profound life change in that period. My volatile self esteem became more consistent and healthy. I perceived people, including young women, differently. My identity became clearer, and I became open to God's future for me. I even related to our pets differently, and I never went fishing again! I engaged in theological reflection, and often experienced my imagination on fire. I invited high school friends to our fellowship, and I initiated conversations with many friends who neither believed in Christ nor belonged to any church. Several friends became disciples, and so did my mom and dad.

As I became more and more interested in "Evangelism," I read books and talked with "experts" who convinced me to do evangelism the "right" way, a way that contrasted with my experience. Gradually, I internalized the prevailing paradigm of evangelism that is so very deeply entrenched in Protestant Evangelical Christianity that most people (like me) act out its script even if it is contrary to their actual experience. For years I functioned according to this paradigm, or felt like I should, whether people were responding like they should or not! I was aware that I was now reaching people less effectively when I did it the right way than when I had done it in ways more natural to me (and I noticed that some people, now, did not want to talk to me a second time!), but folks assured me that when I had mastered the right way, and become "more spiritual", I would know that the right way was the best way.

The established evangelism paradigm assumes a certain sequence of steps by which people become Christians. For example, in *Seasons of Refreshing*, Keith Hardman explains the understanding of evangelism that, he assumes, pervades the evangelical tradition from Peter at Pentecost to the work of Graham and Palau in our time. Evangelism, he reports is

> spreading the Christian message with the goal that unbelievers will convert to Christianity. Evangelism is bearing the gospel ("good news") of salvation from sin in Jesus Christ and God's free grace and love. It involves three basic steps: (1) explaining to a person his or her need of a Savior; (2) encouraging the person to make a personal declaration of trust in Christ and his atoning work on the cross; and (3) bringing the new Christian into a fellowship of believers where spiritual growth may occur.[1]

Virtually all writings on Christian evangelism assume that very sequence. Even though I had *first* been welcomed into the fellowship, and worked through the faith possibility through many (two-way) conversations, I now became socialized into the

traditional evangelical model. In that traditional model, we begin with a one time-one way presentation of the gospel to people; then we invite people to affirm it and accept Christ. If they do, and are willing to make their decision public, *then* we welcome them into the fellowship of believers. The model is so obvious, so logical. We explain the gospel, they accept Christ, we welcome them into the church! Presentation, Decision, Assimilation. (The model's advocates sometimes teach that its purest form is a "cold turkey" evangelical encounter between *strangers*; the "most real" evangelism is not preceded by fellowship, or even friendship! In extreme forms, the model embodies virtually a "hypodermic" claim, i.e., give people a verbal "gospel shot" and they will believe!) We can compare this conventional model with my experience rather simply:

Evangelical Model	Hunter's Experience
Presentation	Fellowship
Decision	Conversations
Fellowship	Belief, then Commitment

For years I did personal evangelism by the traditional evangelical model, and I preached over 150 local church missions that assumed it. Though my experience contrasted with it, it was the only conceptual model I knew. I probably assumed the nonexistence of any other model. Sometimes I did serve as a link in a person's chain of experiences that led to faith. (So I cannot deny the model's value, or that The Holy Spirit can move through it. Though even in some of those experiences, they said neither "yeah" nor "nay" to my presentation and invitation; they steered me into a series of conversations, and I flexed with them.) I was aware that the model contrasted with my own experience, but I assumed that my experience was atypical and the traditional model was the way people "ought" to become Christians. From that assumption, it made sense to ignore any potential insight from my own experience and to minister to prechristian people through the conventional paradigm.

However, I now know that this very logical evangelical sequence contrasts with the actual conversion process of many people, not just my own. Many people experience the welcome, hospitality, and inclusion of the fellowship before they believe. Many people experience the fellowship before much gospel explanation takes root. When the gospel is explained, many more seekers work through it by way of multiple two-way conversations than through single one-way presentations, and much more often within some form of Christian community rather than outside it.

British Methodism's Donald Soper is right! For many people, at least, Christianity is "more caught than taught."

I began (re)discovering this in my field research with converts out of secularity into faith. In interviews, I often ask new believers this question: "When did you feel like you really belonged, that you were welcomed and included, in the fellowship of this church?" More and more converts, including a majority of "boomer" converts and a large majority of "buster" converts, comment that they felt like that *before* they believed, and before they officially joined. Indeed, many new believers report that the experience of the fellowship *enabled* them to believe, and to commit. For many people, I discovered the faith is about three-fourths caught and one-fourth taught.

My cautious conclusions about how most people become Christians has been reinforced through a more empirical study sponsored by the United Bible Societies in Great Britain. A research team received 360 completed questionnaires from converts, and they interviewed 151 converts. These 511 converts represented the range of denominations in England, from the Anglican and Roman Catholic, to the "Free Churches" and the "New Churches." In *Finding Faith Today: How Does It Happen*?,[2] John Finney reports the team's discovery that most people experience the faith through relationships, that they encounter the gospel through a community of faith, that becoming a Christian involves a process that takes time--typically months, or even several years. In a later book (to be cited presently) Finney contends that, for most people, "Belonging comes before believing."

Lord Soper developed ways to express this reality in ministries. For example, Soper created The Order of Christian Witness in order to practice and demonstrate an approach to evangelism informed by this reality. For years, Soper would descend, with 20 to 30 members of the Order, upon a city to lead a "Campaign." The OCW Campaign began as the visiting team joined with a group of local Christians to form into a community. In community, they bonded with each other, developed a common vision, prayed for each other and for the Campaign, celebrated the Eucharist together, and rehearsed and refined the short speeches they would be giving in settings across the city. In the second phase, they scattered across the city, speaking in parks and other public areas where people gather. The speakers would briefly explain some theme of Christianity, or interface Christian insight with some human struggle or social issue. What was their "evangelistic invitation"? To come and share a meal and an evening, and experience the fellowship from which the witness comes. (I have interviewed people who became Christians in, or following, an OCW campaign to their city.)

OCW's approach reflects Donald Soper's belief that, for most people, fellowship precedes faith, and fellowship also sustains faith. One day, I asked Soper how he became so clear about the role of fellowship in awakening and sustaining faith. He replied that he observed this relationship in a distinctive way through his open air speaking at London's Tower Hill and Speakers Corner. While most of the attenders (and the "hecklers") in his open air meetings had secular backgrounds, some attenders had once believed and had been active in churches. They dropped out; years later, they discovered they no longer believed. Furthermore, Soper replied that he learned from John Wesley that "Christianity is not a solitary religion," and so Wesley had based the expansion of eighteenth century Methodism upon reaching people through Methodist fellowships. That comment served as provocation, some years later, to check out the principle's roots in early Methodism's vision and practice. I have exposed these roots at more length in *To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit.*[3]

Wesley did, indeed, observe that fellowship usually preceded faith, and he believed that the connection was *causal.* The principle became central in his understanding of the Order of Salvation, and he predicated Methodism's outreach upon it. Basically, the process of a person's salvation took place in four stages.

In the first stage, people were "*Awakened*" to the fact of their lostness, their sins, their need for grace and for God. The salient purpose of Mr. Wesley's field preaching, and of the Methodist people's ministries of witness to their peers, was to "awaken" people to their need and to help them become conscious seekers of truth, grace, God, and new life.

In the second stage, an awakened seeker was *welcomed* into the fellowship of a Methodist class meeting. In the weekly class meetings, they heard and discussed the gospel, they shared in the prayer life, they experienced people praying and pulling for them and each other. They observed the credibility of the Christians as they reported their progress, and their failures, in the quest to live as Christians by "doing good, avoiding evil, and availing of the means of grace." If seekers remained serious for three months, they were welcomed into the membership and fellowship of the larger Methodist society--whether or not they yet experienced or believed anything!

Third, the class meeting's leader taught them to expect to experience the next stage--their "*Justification,*" i.e., God's acceptance and the gifts of faith and new life. Typically, people who did not drop out did experience, at a time and in a manner of God's choosing, justification and second birth.

Then the class leader taught them to expect to experience a fourth stage in the order of salvation--their *Sanctification.* They were

to live expecting that The Holy Spirit would complete the work begun in their justification, that God's grace would free their hearts from sin's power and free them to live for God's agenda in this life. In time, many earnest Methodist Christians did experience this "second work of grace."

Notice that, in Wesley's understanding of the process, it all took place (especially) within the smaller Class Meeting fellowship and (also) within the fellowship of the larger Methodist Society. Indeed, a special version of small group called the Methodist "Bands" met weekly for people who had experienced justification and were earnestly seeking its completion. Furthermore, for believers who "backslid," the path back into active Methodist membership was through the fellowship of the "Penitent Bands." At every stage, for early Methodism, Christian *koinonia* provided the realm of redemption. Faith was discovered, maintained, strengthened, and even recovered within fellowship because "Christianity is not a solitary religion" and faith is "more caught than taught."

At a deeper level, Wesley believed that *koinonia* is the indispensable catalyst of the kind of apostolic power that distinguishes Christianity when it is contagious. In *To Spread the Power,*[4] I suggested these features of Wesley's apostolic vision:

> Wesley was an astute student of "the primitive church" as reflected in the New Testament, particularly the pastoral epistles. He was also an astute observer of the eighteenth-century Church of England. He saw the primitive church's contagious compassion, powerful faith, unswerving hope, daring apostolic courage, and vision for humanity. He did not see that kind of love, faith, hope, courage, and vision in his generation's established church. Indeed, [Howard Snyder tells us that] Wesley came to see the Church of England as a "fallen church," because for him "true apostolic succession came to mean . . . the continuity of apostolic spirit and witness in the Christian community.[5]
>
> Wesley also observed that certain normative behaviors were characteristics of life in the primitive church. They met together "to stir up one another to love and good works . . . encouraging one another" (Heb. 10:24-25). They seem to have taught, admonished, exhorted, and prayed for one another. They rejoiced with those who rejoiced, and wept with those who wept (Rom. 12:15). Their behaviors toward one another ranged from telling one's sins to another (Matt. 18:15-18) to building one another up (I Thess. 5:11). And Wesley believed the earliest churches followed the script of James (5:16): "Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed." With regret, Wesley did not see such behavior in his Anglican Church. One of the causes of this, he believed, was the lack of small groups, a deficiency not present in the early church's house churches.
>
> Wesley ventured a revolutionary hypothesis: that the occurrence of the first phenomenon (faith, hope, power, etc.) depends on the second. That is, as you gather Christians and seekers together to confess their sins, encourage one another, rejoice together, and so forth, the life, love, faith, hope, and power of the Apostolic church emerges. He sensed that if he drew people together in cells to challenge and encourage each other to live daily as Christians, that, through their protracted experiences, the contagion and power of the Apostolic church would move in human history once again. And it happened!

Where did John Wesley first learn of the roles of fellowship and conversation in helping people experience faith and power? To my knowledge, we do not know, though we can speculate. He may have reflected upon the sequence in his own experience--the fellowship experiences in the Epworth home and the Oxford Holy Club and with Moravian groups, and the conversations with people ranging from Susanna Wesley to Peter Bohler, before experiencing justification, faith, assurance, and apostolic empowerment in 1738. Again, he may have observed what was already happening "naturally" in the earliest class meetings.

Furthermore, Wesley was undoubtedly aware of an impressive precedent in the missionary practice of ancient Celtic Christianity. Celtic Christianity, like Celtic music and Celtic art and other expressions of the post-modern "Green Industry," is trendy today. Unlike many trends, this one is rooted in good reasons! Recent studies are helping us to rediscover a branch of the Christian tradition long obscured by mist and myth. The story behind it is a fascinating chapter in the history of evangelism.

One day, in the northwest part of the land that would one day be known as England, a 16 year old, nominally Christian, Briton boy named Patrick was kidnapped by marauders from the island that would one day be known as Ireland, where they took him to work as a slave herding cattle. In his years of slavery, Patrick learned (from the "underside") the language and culture of his Celtic lords. In the periods of isolation with the cattle, he learned to "pray without ceasing." He became devout. One night, after six or eight years of

enslavement, God directed him in a dream. The next morning, he must walk in a certain direction, where he would find a ship waiting to take him to freedom. The ship transported him to Gaul or to Rome. In Rome he acquired a theological education. He was sent to England, where he served as a parish priest. One night, when he was 48, several faces and voices he had known in Ireland called to him, in a dream, to bring them the gospel. The Vatican validated his "Macedonian call," ordained him a bishop and sent him to Ireland.

He faced a foreboding challenge. In the first 400 years of Christianity's expansion, the gospel had been taken only to "civilized" peoples. No one knew whether it was possible to evangelize the kinds of "barbarian" peoples known to populate Ireland. Patrick devoted the next 26 years to this apostolic task. By the time of his death in 461 A.D., perhaps 15 to 20 of Ireland's 150 Celtic tribes had been substantially evangelized. More important, he modeled and mentored the apostolic lifestyle and strategies that were to characterize the missions of Columba, Brigid, Columbanus, Aiden, and many others. Most important, "Celtic Christianity" spread to the other Celtic tribes of Ireland, then to the clans of Scotland, then to most of the peoples of England north of the Thames, then to most of the other "barbaric" peoples of Western Europe.

In its formative period, the Celtic Christian leaders lived geographically beyond the reach of Rome's control, and they were thus free to develop a distinct, indigenous, and contagious form of Christianity. The Celtic form of "being and doing church" thrived and grew for about 600 years, from the fifth to the eleventh centuries, before the Roman obsession for uniformity succeeded in smothering the Celtic form in most (but not all) places. Ten categories will serve to illustrate its distinctive shape, compared to the more Roman form of Christianity:

1. Many people today find the Celtic Christian orientation toward NATURE especially appealing, and needed. While Roman Christianity emphasized humanity's differences from, and dominion over, the earth's other creatures, the Celtic movement stressed humanity's "kinship" with animals, birds, and fish. They loved other creatures, as they believed God did, and practiced the "reverence for life" that Francis of Assisi would later be noted for. In my opinion, if the Celtic way had prevailed rather than the Roman way we would not be facing an ecological crisis today.

2. Celtic Christianity, compared to the Roman, proclaimed a distinctive doctrine of HUMAN NATURE. Roman Christianity, under the pervasive influence of Augustine, saw human nature as totally depraved, with some believing in double election and limited atonement. The Celtic Christians took sin and evil very seriously. However, Original Sin had not destroyed but only blurred or twisted the Image of God in people. Furthermore, they believed that Christ

died for everyone, and that every person and people could be reached and redeemed.

3. Whereas Roman Christianity emphasized the Transcendence of God (a view reflected, for instance, in Gothic cathedrals), Celtic Christians emphasized the Immanence of God. Indeed, their convictions about the radical PRESENCE of God extended to all three persons of the Trinity: "The Sacred Three My Fortress be Encircling me."

4. Celtic Christians believed in, and experienced, the protective guiding PROVIDENCE of the Triune God. A verse from "St. Patrick's Breastplate" dramatizes this reality:

> Christ be with me, Christ within me,
> Christ behind me, Christ before me,
> Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
> Christ to comfort and restore me.
> Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
> Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
> Christ in hearts of all that love me,
> Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

5. The Celtic Christians understood the Church to be much more CHRISTIANITY than institution, and a *movement* to be advanced and extended much more than a tradition to be preserved and protected. Celtic Christianity had parish churches, served by priests, but an alternate form of Christianity--misnamed the "Monastery"--characterized the movement. Ian Bradley explains that, for the Celts, "The monastic life was far from being one of retreat and escape. Indeed, monasteries were almost certainly the busiest institutions in Celtic society, constantly teeming with people and fulfilling the roles of school, library, hospital, guest house, arts centre and mission station."[6]

6. Celtic Christianity's pattern of ORGANIZATION followed from its character as more movement than institution. Its organization was enormously "flatter" than the Roman pattern. Gifted women were about as likely to be leaders as gifted men. The chief leaders were the abbots, or abbesses, of the monastic communities. People were addressed more by name, or as "brother" or sister", than by a title. Most of the ministry, including apostolic outreach to unreached peoples, was done in teams or bands. Celtic Christianity had "bishops", but the bishop's role was much more "apostle" than "administrator."

7. It is well known that, by the fifth century, Roman Christian leaders usually assumed that Roman CULTURE was superior to others, that the "Roman Way" was best for everyone, and therefore the Roman way of being and doing church needed to be imposed

upon all populations. In stark contrast, the Celtic Christian movement:

> adapted their methods to the social and cultural mores of the people whom they were seeking to convert. . . . Celtic Christianity spread so rapidly through the British Isles partly because its evangelists tailored it so well to the norms and needs of a rural and tribal society. In the rather inelegant jargon favoured by academics it was a particularly good example of religious inculturation with the church adapting itself to the culture in which it was operating. In part this was quite natural and unconscious--the evangelists were themselves Celts with the same pagan and tribal background of those they were seeking to convert--but there was also some more deliberate calculation.[7]

8. Celtic Christianity also took a distinct, and positive, view of the target people's RELIGION prior to their engagement with Christianity. Ian Bradley explains:

> They did not see the primal pagan religion of the people as a threat to Christianity or a dangerous heresy to be eliminated. Rather it represented, however imperfectly, a stirring of the spiritual and a reaching to the eternal. With imagination and with faith many of its central features and symbols--the standing stones, the sacred groves and springs, the power of circle, the poems, runes, and chants--could be baptized and incorporated into Christian worship and witness. . . . This approach . . . did not involve a wholesale acceptance of pagan images and practices and a blurring of all distinctions between different religions but it was naturally inclusive and synthetic in spirit, seeking always to incorporate and accommodate different perspectives within the universal embrace of Christ.[8]

The Celtic Christian leaders seem to have regarded the people's prior religion as analogous to Judaism. Through some of the people's cultural and religious experiences, the True God had been preparing the people for the Christian revelation. As Jesus came not to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfill them, so He comes not to destroy but to fulfill any people's religious aspirations, traditions, and expressions that are sufficiently congruent with, and useful to, the gospel.

9. The insights related to culture and religion have already anticipated some of the ways in which the Celtic Christian movement practiced the COMMUNICATION of the Christian faith to prechristian peoples, but their most significant departure from the communication practice of Roman Christianity needs emphasis. Whereas the Roman Church generally practiced a "left-brained", rational, propositional, didactic, doctrinal exposition model for communicating the faith, the Celtic Church generally practiced a more "right-brained" *imaginative* approach. The Romans taught the content of the faith; the Celts helped people discover the meaning of the faith--through visual images (like the Celtic Knot and the Celtic Cross), art, drama, music, story, analogy, and poetry. They worked less to prove Christianity's truth claims than to clarify the claims. An ancient apologetic poem featuring the Trinity serves as a memorable example:

> Three folds of the cloth, yet only one napkin is there,
> Three joints in the finger, but still only one finger fair;
> Three leaves of the shamrock, yet no more than one shamrock to wear,
> Frost, snow-flakes and ice, all in water their origin share,
> Three Persons in God; to one God alone we make prayer.

10. In recent studies like John Finney's *Recovering the Past*, we are rediscovering the approach to MISSION of this ancient branch of the Christian tradition. Finney contends that the "propositional" approach to communicating the faith is rooted in Roman Christianity. The culturally Celtic branch of the Church however, "was both more traditional and more adventurous than the contemporary Roman Church."[9] The Celtic Church spread Christianity throughout much of Europe through the extravagant multiplication of a Celtic version of the monastery. Celtic monasteries were colonies of lay people devoted to prayer, discipline, practical love, evangelism, and hospitality. The monks engaged in evangelistic missions in the countryside that surrounded the monastery. They befriended prechristian populations and communicated Christianity through conversation, analogies, stories, etc. They invited responsive people to spend time with their monastic community, to experience its fellowship, worship, and life of service, where they could ask questions, converse with Christians, and explore the Christian possibility.

The Celtic monasteries also sent out *peregrinate* ("wanderers") across much of the known world. "They often traveled in groups. Where they stopped they evangelized and maintained as far as possible their monastic life of prayer and contemplation. If their mission to the area bore fruit they would settle and a new monastery would be born."[10] That base then permitted widespread ministry and evangelism in the region. Finney reports that "Time and again it was

the quality of life of the monks which drew others to their community, moved the hearts of kings and opened doors for new work. . . . Monasteries multiplied at an astonishing rate."[11] Where the people's receptivity was high, the monks aimed to evangelize the whole community.

John Finney, who headed the Church of England's Decade of Evangelism for several years, contends that the Celtic Way is more effective with post-modern Western populations than the Roman Way (and its more recent version--the traditional evangelical way). Finney cites data showing that more people come to faith gradually (the Celtic model) than suddenly (the Roman model). Furthermore, the ongoing contagious common life of the congregation that permits people to discover faith for themselves, at their own pace, now appears to be much more influential than special event preaching evangelism. Finney asks:

> What is a typical modern journey of faith? The details are as diverse as the number of individuals but the research showed that a frequently used pathway is:
>
> - X is introduced into the church through a member of their family, through friendship with some Christians or through a minister;
> - they begin to ask questions;
> - they are invited to explore further and come to a knowledge and practice of the faith (often this is through a nurture group or some form of catechumenate);
> - they discover they have become a Christian, and mark it publicly through baptism or confirmation or whatever is appropriate to their denomination.
>
> Professor Robin Gill sums it up when he says, "Belonging comes before believing." . . . Evangelism is about helping people to belong so that they can believe . . . Probably the greatest change in the "New Evangelism" is the change in the typical setting of evangelism--instead of a great gathering with a speaker there is a smallish group of people seeking God together.
>
> The changes are all moving from a Roman to a Celtic model. The best modern evangelism goes where the people are and listens, binds together prayer and truth, celebrates the goodness and complexity of life as well as judging the sinfulness of evil, and sees truth as something to be done and experienced as well as to be intellectually believed.[12]

My fresh (re)discovery of this perspective has reminded me of the foundational literature of Peter Berger, which I read years ago and understood at one level, but failed to integrate into my understanding of how the world works. His *Social Construction of Reality*[13] unpacks a sophisticated case that is much too elaborate to summarize here, but three conclusions are especially important for this discussion: (1) One's view of reality is largely shaped, and maintained, within the community into which one has been *socialized.* (2) In a pluralistic society, the possibility of conversion, i.e., changing the way one perceives essential reality, is opened up through *conversations* with people who live within a contrasting view of Reality, and (3) one adopts and internalizes a new worldview through *resocialization* into a community sharing that worldview. We have many grounds, therefore, for respositioning evangelism as primarily a ministry of the Community of Faith, rather than primarily a ministry of the specialist or of people who "go in for that sort of thing."

So there are grounds for considering an alternative to the presentation-decision-fellowship model for doing Christian evangelism in which many of us are steeped. I have proposed a fellowship-conversations-belief/commitment sequence that reflects perspectives from the ancient wisdom of Celtic mission, the strategic consciousness of John Wesley and Donald Soper, contemporary sociology of knowledge, and from the experience of many converts in the post-modern West.

I must acknowledge that the model I propose, like the more traditional "hypodermic" model, is simplistic. My emphasis upon a sequence of three essential factors ignores the complexity of people's transition into faith by omitting other factors that are often, or usually, involved. For example, *friendship* often energizes new discipleship; seekers often become involved when friends (or relatives) invite them, and they stay involved through their friendships in the church. *Scripture* often plays a role in reaching people, though the approaches that enable seekers to discover scriptural truth for themselves, and the approaches that help people to memorize scripture verses and passages, seem to impact seekers more than conventional Bible studies. Again, *prayer* is often a crucial factor; typically, new believers were prayed for long before they began turning, they were prayed with at key points in their search, they themselves tried praying before they were sure there is a God to whom they matter, and one or more experiences of answered prayer often make it possible for them to believe. *Ministry* is often a factor; the church often ministers to the person before they believe, and the person sometimes even participates in some ministry before he or she believes.

Still other factors play prominent roles in making Christians. For instance, the traditional model is right that *decision*, or choice, is an important factor. Most people do not, however, "decide" to believe. Rather, they discover that they believe, and now they decide to follow Christ and commit to His Body, the Church; often this period of serious decision involves *repentance*. In churches who regard the *Sacrament* as a "converting ordinance," some seekers experience in The Lord's Supper the grace that awakens faith. The perceived *credibility* of the local church and of the members whom the seeker knows best, or observes closest, is usually a factor, and, when seekers observe *changed lives* in the church, that amplifies the church's credibility. Converts almost always report that perceived, or experienced, love, or caring, or acceptance, or affirmation helped them to believe.

Undoubtedly, other factors are often involved, but for now we oversimplify: Essentially, churches reach prechristian people in a process involving a) fellowship, b) intentional conversations, and c) the discovery of faith, followed by the decision to commit. Thousands of churches (more or less) unconsciously follow this model already; thousands more could experience new conversion growth by teaching and implementing the "Celtic" model.

Two forms of traditionalism, however, prevent this from happening in most of our churches. First, many traditional churches have not known, at least within memory, the meaning of William Temple's observation that "The Church is the only society in the world that exists for its non-members." These traditional churches exist for their members (who never feel they get enough attention), and so they do not give priority to reaching prechristian people; they do not plan to, they do not expect to, they never "get around to it", and they would be astonished if it ever happened! In time, the traditional denominations of traditional churches may even jettison their original mission and redefine their main business as passing resolutions on social issues!

These churches are living, much more than they realize, in immense spiritual peril. Emil Brunner once observed that "The Church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning. Where there is no mission there is no church; and where [there] is neither church nor mission, there is no faith." For example, in an increasing number of "mainline" (or "old-line," or "side-line") churches and denominations, Christian faith is now a "problem." Indeed, some churches and denominations now contend that faith is naive (or "intolerant," or "fascist") and that religious doubt (or affirmation of all religions) is the new virtue. They suggest that people with theological doubts are more "honest," or "courageous," or "prophetic" than people who believe the gospel. The doubters, in disproportionate numbers, are even elevated to leadership roles, including the episcopacy. An examination reveals that these

churches and denominations have had no appreciable priority mission to prechristian populations for years, or decades. "No mission, . . . no faith."

Second, some churches who hear about evangelism through fellowship quickly reply "We already do that!" When asked to describe what they do, they typically respond something like this: "We invite people to Sunday morning church. If they come, we shake their hand. After the service, we invite them to stay for coffee fellowship." Such churches remind us that not all "fellowship" is created equal! We observe, everywhere, that when "fellowship" goes no deeper than a greeting, and sharing a pew, followed by pleasantries over tea or coffee, not much happens--except for reinforcing the superficial image of "organized religion."

When, however, Christians care enough and dare enough to become vulnerable, and welcome prechristian people into their groups and their churches and their lives, and love them, and begin where they are, and pray for them, and minister to them, and converse with them many times, they discover for themselves that "Evangelism is about helping people to belong so that they can believe," and that "Faith is more caught than taught."

NOTES

[1]Keith J. Hardman, *Seasons of Refreshing: Evangelism and Revivals in America* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1994), 17.

[2]Published by the British and Foreign Bible Society, 1992.

[3]See George G. Hunter III, *To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1987), 56-59, and 118-127.

[4]Ibid., 124-125.

[5]See Howard A. Snyder, *The Radical Wesley and Patterns for Church Renewal* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 82.

[6]Ian Bradley, *Columba: Pilgrim and Penitent* (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 1996), 25.

[7]Ian Bradley, *The Celtic Way* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 1993), 20.

[8]Ibid.

[9]John Finney, *Recovering the Past: Celtic and Roman Mission* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 1996), viii.

[10]Ibid., 57.

[11]Ibid., 68-69.

[12]Ibid., 46-47.

[13]See Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1966). This same perspective is summarized in the first two chapters of Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1969). Berger elaborates the more promising aspects, and strategic implications of the theory in *A Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural*, Revised Edition (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1990).

SERVICE EVANGELISM: THE THEOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY OF A LIFESTYLE

ABSTRACT

Service evangelism is often referred to as another *method* of doing evangelism. The author with whom service evangelism has become associated has stated it over and over again that this was never his intention. Service refers to a *style* of evangelism that is appropriate for any method. It is more than a method. It is a principle, a departure point. It is a way of describing Christian witnesses---their personalities, their attitudes towards other people, their sensitivity. "Style is the way we approach a task and how we relate to others in the process" (Armstrong: 1995:28). It draws heavily on two theological principles: (1) the local church as servant of God, an entire congregation being called into servanthood, and (2) faith as ultimately a gift of God. When people really understand this, it changes the way they think and minister. When they confess that faith isn't something they can make themselves have, the expression "confession of faith" takes on a whole new meaning! And faith-sharing takes on a whole new meaning, too. It ceases to mean "faith *telling*" and changes evangelism from a propositional, confrontational method to a non-threatening, relational, and incarnational lifestyle and approach.

INTRODUCTION

My reason for writing this article is both theological and practical. As a practical theologian I am interested in both theory and praxis. Part of my ministry in South Africa is to serve as a church consultant in local churches. For many years I have been involved in evangelism training, and since 1993 I have been deeply involved in training pastors in *service evangelism*. My wife and I translated the course *Faithful Witnesses* during 1993 into Afrikaans and I am regularly training pastors to offer the course in local churches. The time in South Africa was ripe. God has prepared the country for a new approach to evangelism.

Malan Nel is Professor of Practical Theology at Vista University in Pretoria, South Africa. He is also the founder and director of Vista University's Division for Contextual Ministry. Editor's Note: I have left Professor Nel's style of internal notation unchanged rather than translating it into the endnote style which is most common for *Journal* articles.

Presently there are more then 360 trained pastors in the country and some of them have offered the course already up to four times in their local churches, some even more times. Ten thousand lay people have completed the course and are God's faithful witnesses within and as part of their local churches but also as God's people on the job, wherever they are. This is in part my practical reason for writing this article.

My second reason is more theoretical in nature. *Service Evangelism* operates on the assumption that the church is the evangelist (cf. Sweazey 1978). The church partakes in the *Missio Dei*. And this is precisely the *missio ecclesia* (Bosch 1991:10). "It is not a matter of 'doing evangelism' but of doing everything with evangelistic sensitivity" (Armstrong 1995:34). Congregational identity and the members' self-understanding have everything to do with evangelism. Evangelism cannot be contemplated or practiced with integrity apart from understanding the corporate identity of the congregation as a church. Is the church being true to its self-understanding?

This article builds on the hypothesis that when the missionary nature of the church is separated, or even too strongly distinguished, from the identity of the church, mission itself will be practiced and upheld in an authoritarian way. Mission is then distorted to convey some authoritative knowledge almost contrary to the identity of the church of God. It is only in a sincere encounter with the world around it that the church is forced to rethink its own identity and being. Building up the local church is linked closely with ecclesiology in a missiological perspective (cf. Herbst 1987).

At the root of the church's (re)discovery of its true nature (however multifaceted that nature may be) lies the insight that the church is the *servant of God*. For some reason it pleases God to disclose to his world, especially through the church, how much he loves them. *Service Evangelism* has therefore everything to do with the true nature and missionary purpose of the local church as a creation of the living God.

In South Africa many local churches must change to meet new opportunities and challenges. Some are doing it better than others. Those who are involved in *service evangelism* through *Faithful Witnesses* have taken up the challenge, in Christ's name and spirit, to bring people back to God the Father. As faithful witnesses, they seek to minister to people's needs, bearing witness in word and deed. Knowing how effective the course is where it is used in the proposed way, I want to dwell at least one more time on the theoretical basis of *Service Evangelism*. This article is an attempt to illuminate the theological departure points of this style of evangelism, and to show that the style is an honest attempt to put forward a methodology that is consistent with its theological presuppositions.

DEPARTURE POINTS OF SERVICE EVANGELISM

A Style Which Informs Method

Richard Stoll Armstrong, whose name has been associated with *service evangelism* even before 1979, when his book by that title was published, emphasizes the fact that he never intended the term to refer to just another method of doing evangelism. "This is not at all what I had in mind in choosing the term 'service evangelism.' The term refers not to a particular method but to a style that in my opinion is suitable for any method" (Armstrong 1994:110; 1995:27). To understand service evangelism it is very important to understand the difference between a method and a style. Methods have to do with strategies and procedures and are important as such. Armstrong (1995:27,28) points out that style has to do with the personality, character, commitment, and attitude of the evangelist. Methods are prescribed ways in which tasks are performed in order to reach goals. Style is the way in which one approaches tasks and in the process relates to others. Each person can choose the method best suited to him or her, but "whatever the method, one's style of relating to people should always be consistent with one's theological beliefs and faith commitment" (28).

This last remark is very important in the context of this article. Many a time *method* is made into a *style* in evangelism. One might call it *method/style* confusion. A person is approached in a way the method demands. If the method is direct-confrontational in character, the *way of approaching* (style) is often also confrontational and even intimidating, with little regard for the needs or situation of the unbeliever. The danger of this is that evangelism becomes method-dependent and as such method-driven and even method-enslaved (in that sense method-ism). The witness in effect is no longer *being* a witness, but only *using* witnessing as a method. In this regard Sjogren (1993:53-73) divides evangelization methods into four quadrants: "low risk/low grace; high risk/high grace; high risk/low grace; low risk/high grace. In defining "risk" he considers the costs in terms of emotion, spirituality, relationships, and finance. Pertaining to grace he asks: "How much of God's presence is necessary for this outreach to be a success?" (60). In terms of method, he is correct when he comments that believers often see themselves as people who bring other people to Christ by their own efforts. "I saw myself as the one delivering others to God's doorstep" (47).

When method and style are confused and/or seen as one and the same thing, then evangelism often becomes confrontational, informational, and propositional (cf. Armstrong 1987:52). The method then becomes overly important as if the believer may even rely on the method in order to be a "successful" witness. In such

cases it often seems that the method is no longer consistent with its theological departure points and its commitments in terms of the confessions of faith. I shall return to this truth later (2.3).

It is exactly the style and the attitude with which one uses a method that gives expression to the theology and confession of one's faith. In service evangelism "the word 'service' is intended to imply a style of evangelism which is caring, supportive, unselfish, sensitive, and responsive to human need. It is evangelism done by a servant church, whose people are there not to be served but to serve" (Armstrong 1979:53).

In practical theological terms this style builds on the dialogical communicative theory. Evangelism is in a special sense a communicative act (*Kommunikative Handeln*) in service of the gospel (Pieterse and Wester 1995:61). The distinction which Pieterse and Wester (1995:62) make between dialogical and authoritarian styles of dialogue and communication is applicable here. In a dialogical style, respect for the other person is very important. The other person is protected against humiliation and "destruction". The communication is dominance-free. A relationship is established in which one's own opinion is respected. The lines of communication are open, love and true caring are central, and people are being liberated by the message.

On the other hand, authoritarian dialogue and communication are marked by the perception that other people must convert themselves to your viewpoint. It is dominating and manipulative. The other person feels like an outsider. Relationships are ignored or underplayed. The style is prescriptive, denunciatory, and moralistic. (Pieterse and Wester 1995:63-72; cf. Johnson 1994:105vv.).

Service evangelism is consistent with dialogic communicative theory. In this style the highest form of respect for the other person is expected. This, of course, builds on Christian anthropology. Respect is but another way of translating the commandment for neighborly love (cf. among others Stauffer in Ettel 1964:3548; Nielsen 1971:123; Konig 1991). When the service-dimension of this style is comprehended within this frame of meaning, the how of every ministry is changed. It is therefore a style which begins with a daily conversion of the congregation as representative of God in his world. The congregation's conversion to servanthood is a prerequisite of this style.

The Congregation: Called To Serve

Service evangelism is based on and directed by the theological principle that *the congregation is called to serve God and the world.* The church confesses that God is at work in his creation. He has committed himself to the completion of that which he brought into being. Eventually God will make his creation completely new. The

congregation, by the very nature of its own creation and purpose, is intimately involved in this recreation. The church has to serve this ultimate goal of God for his creation. The church, therefore, is involved in God's purpose for the church and the world (cf. Ephesians 1:3-14;3:14vv.).

Even, and especially, with and through the church, God is on his way with creation to his ultimate goal: a new heaven and a new earth, where the Kingdom of God is a reality. "Under the control of the Holy Spirit the congregation is being led and taught to be the servant and agent of Christ. God reclaims his world, or to say it differently, God lets his kingdom come by way of service to Christ and through Christ-motivated service in and to the world (Phil 2: 5-11)" (Nel 1994:34). The Holy Spirit is busy making the church (though never in the sense of equality) what Jesus was and is: servant of God.

This theological departure point places before the congregation, on a daily basis, the question "What does it mean to be Christ's man or Christ's woman in the world today? The answer to that question defines the quality of our discipleship; and when church members take it seriously, the church will truly become a servant church" (Armstrong 1979:38). When it comes to service, Christ is more than our redeemer. He is our example (John 13: 13-15; Mark 10:45). It is John who teaches us that "love is self-sacrificial service" (Shelp & Sunderland 1981:226). We have indeed been baptized to serve (Rom. 6). To serve him is indeed to serve, *in* and *as a part of* his body, *in* the world (cf. Anderson 1979:433; Bausch 1981:105; Konig 1986: 10vv.; Konig 1995:6vv.).

In this sense service evangelism links up in a special way with liturgy. Our service to God flows over into and brings forth service to each other and to the world. The congregation is, and must be seen as, a living, serving community in the world. "The service which counts is not that which is performed at the altar but the service which reaches from altar to humankind; the true liturgy of the Christian community is its *diakonia*" (Collins 1990:11-14). "The existence of the congregation, the words and deeds of the congregation must, as we follow Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, *be service to God, service to each other (within the congregation), and service to the world (outside of the congregation)"* (Nel 1994:36).

In the world, more than anywhere else, it is very important that the congregation represents God through service. Serving is part of the dialogue. It is often the case that through serving others, the church helps them feel worthy and respected (loved). How will the world hear the word, if they do not see and experience it as well? "Free service offers a picture of the grace of God, a priceless gift which can never be repaid" (Sjogren 1993:20; cf. Armstrong 1979:40). In all places and circumstances the congregation must ex-

press the "power of kindness by demonstrating the kindness of God, by offering to do some act of humble service with no strings attached" (Sjogren 1993:17-19).

It is very important to note that service does not become a *method* of evangelism. Service by itself (i.e., without the gospel) is not evangelism. Deeds of kindness toward others are, of course, service. The point of service evangelism, however, is not just 'doing' something good to people. It is more. In service evangelism the difference is the congregation; every member is a servant. Church members are not just rendering a service by doing evangelism. They are servants by definition. Some congregations and some individual believers have yet to become what they in truth already are in Christ. Here again the indicative of the identity is first and decisive. *Servants* become involved in service evangelism. Christians are servants, and that makes all the difference,---the "gospel" difference!

Viewed this way the members of the congregation can be described as "men and women who are called to be Christians 'on-the-job'" (Armstrong 1979:43). Service is now understood not as something you do for someone else from time to time. Rather it is the way in which we are there for others, at any time and any place. Service is the way we respond to our calling to get involved, to be where the action is, "to be wherever the fires of our man made hells are burning" (Armstrong 1979 :46). The life of the believer is taken up in what Sjogren (1993: 22) calls "*servant* evangelism." The motivation for evangelism, one's attitude toward others, and the manner in which evangelism is done are closely tied. Service evangelism is motivated by honest love and interest in other people (cf. 2 Cor. 5: 11-21). Personal and institutional self-interest seldom lead to service evangelism. It leads rather to proselytization. The difference between the two is summed up by Armstrong (1979: 65) as the difference between "browbeating and faith-sharing, between coercion and free choice, between demanding and offering a possibility, between pressure and compassion, between self-serving labor and self-giving love (agape). What is needed, therefore, is a listening, caring stance. If the church wants to be understood, it must seek to understand. If the church really cares, it will give without expecting anything in return. That is the nature of service evangelism."

Practical experience in South Africa has taught me that this required change is not easy. For some or other reason churches tend to view Christianity as a luxurious hiding place for people on route to heaven. When this viewpoint pairs up with authoritarianism, being changed to servants in this world does not come easy. On the other hand, to see this happen in the lives of people who went through the *Faithful Witnesses* course is to observe God in action. In local churches where the course is offered annually more and more members change and so does the local church.

The "Givenness" of Faith

This theological departure point in service evangelism would even deserve a separate article. The issue is critically important these days. Armstrong (1995:30) calls it the second assumption which defines service evangelism. He states, and rightly so, (1987:38), "If we take seriously the givenness of faith, the implications are tremendous for the way we witness, preach, teach, evangelize - indeed, for however we share our faith. We confess that faith is not something we can make ourselves 'have'; faith is something we find ourselves with. If we can't make ourselves 'have' it, how can we make anyone else 'have' it? The expression 'confession of faith' takes on a new meaning!"

In developing this concept Armstrong uses a "leap of faith" diagram, which shows that one's assumptions about God determine how one views the so called proofs for the existence of God (Armstrong 1979:29vv; 1987(a):37; 1993:38). One's viewpoint has very important consequences for one's approach to evangelism. One consequence is that believers cannot answer the 'why' questions of unbelievers dogmatically with 'what' answers. What we believe is based on 'faith assumptions' that are not self-evident to unbelievers. Our assumptions are therefore not proof for why other people must believe what we believe. This is the unnegotiable departure point, namely, that faith is a gift of God and not a gift of the believer, that faith is not fabricated by methods. It "calls for a style that is confessional and humble, personal and vulnerable, one that is more incarnational than propositional, more dialogical than dogmatic, more relational than proclamational" (Armstrong 1993:30 and 1984: 164). In this sense the concept 'faith-sharing' is an integral part of service evangelism. This style calls for more than just 'faith-telling' (Armstrong 1995:30). The concept of faith sharing leads to two important insights. The first concerns the role of the Holy Spirit. Armstrong (1979:22; 1987:15; 1993:14; 1995:30) defines faith sharing as three-way communication in which two or more people share with each other their personal experiences of and with God. Wherever God's gift of faith is shared, there is (in service evangelism) a sincere awareness of the presence and working of the Spirit. Faith as a gift testifies to the fact that God is at work in the life of the believer. The confession "I believe" in itself is an acknowledgment that God is actively present in the life of the believer.

This departure point ---namely, that faith is ultimately a gift of God---makes the sharing of personal experiences of God in service evangelism so critical. Armstrong (1995:31) calls it the third assumption underlying service evangelism: the validity of personal experience as the convictional basis for faith sharing. In this he preceded the current accentuation of "story telling" in preaching. Faith

sharing has everything to do with the believer's personal faith story ---God's acting in and through the life of the believer. "What" truths about our faith convictions have power only for those who themselves have faith. Unbelievers do not accept our "faith convictions" as facts. They are more inspired by hearing Why we believe than by hearing What we believe. An in-depth discussion of what Armstrong calls "a rational case for an experiential faith" falls outside the intention and limited space of this article. The reader is referred to his various writings for further insights on this critical issue (cf. Armstrong 1979:21-37; 1984:61-75).

Nobody's personal experiences of and with God are normative for another person (Armstrong 1070:34w; 1995:31). The service motive should prevent the witness even from trying to do that. It is certain, however, that "if you have no experience of God, no sense of God's presence in your life, no awareness of the goodness, mercy, love, and justness of God, you cannot answer the 'why' question. You cannot bear effective witness to a God you do not know personally. Theoretical observations have no evangelistic impact" (Armstrong 1995:31). Understanding our faith sharing as a confession of faith, a confession of God's working in and through our lives, gives a whole new meaning to our saying that we witness "with a confessional attitude and genuine humility, depending upon the Holy Spirit and entrusting the outcome to God" (Armstrong 1995:32).

The second insight (viz., the confession that faith is a gift of God) places listening very high on the agenda in service evangelism. How will they ever hear if we do not listen (cf. Johnson 1994)! God uses us in the giving of faith (cf. Mark 4:26-29; Romans 10:13-17). We are in a very special way representatives of God--not in any magical sense, but as God's representatives (ambassadors). Bohren (1974:73vv) borrows a concept used by Van Ruler (1965) to illustrate this incorporation of persons in God's dealings with his world. The German concept "*Theonome Reziprosität*" is an attempt to explain the reciprocal nature of God's activity. God is in no way dependent upon us in the sense that he can do nothing without us. On the other hand, it pleases God to do whatever he wants to do in us and through us. Van Ruler (1965) wanted to give expression to our "includedness" in the work of God in a special way (cf. also Heitink 1993:83,187vv). Sweazey (1978:xii) rightly remarked that "conversion is a miracle but it is not magic. God in his mercy has given us a part in the most joyful of all accomplishments, the bringing of someone to a saving knowledge of Christ" (cf. also Osmer 1990 & 1992). Not only the fact that God elects and gives faith is revealed to us, but also the way God elects (cf. I Cor. 3; Nel 1982:45-47) is revealed in Scripture.

For all these reasons listening is called "the most important skill in interpersonal witnessing" (Armstrong 1995:30). Listening, of course, is not an end in itself; and neither is it an artificial stepping stone to saying what you want to say. Its purpose is to understand, to comprehend; it is not a well disguised introduction to one's own presentation. Neither do we listen in order to find something with which we can agree or disagree. The purpose of listening is to comprehend. Listening is a hermeneutical act on the part of the witness. The faithful witness wants to understand where the other person is coming from and wishes, therefore, to hear what is being said.

Even more, good listening communicates a sense of value and of human dignity to the other person. It communicates that we care, that we know and confess the faith we share cannot be acquired by ourselves. Witnesses, therefore, are acting on God's behalf. Their commitment flows from and is rooted in their confession and in their theological departure points. It is "not so much a listening skill as it is a frame of mind and heart. It is the proof of one's compassion and the test of one's sincerity" (Armstrong 1987:30). And the ultimate test is sincere caring. This is not a skill either, but it, too, is a gift of God. Only God can enable us to become people who care. When we *really* care, we will want to listen (Armstrong 1993:21). Within the context of the 'Theonome reciprocity' it means that listening befits us when we try to determine how we are being incorporated into what God is busy doing through and with us.

Our theological departure points determine our style. Stating it in another way, service evangelism is a style which is built on theological departure points. Armstrong's (1989:(a):53) definition is appropriate at this point: "By service evangelism I mean reaching out to others in Christian love, listening to them, identifying with them, caring for them, and sharing faith with them in such a way that they will freely respond and want to commit themselves to trust, love, and obey God as a disciple of Jesus Christ and a member of his servant community, the church". The inclusion of the words 'reaching out' in this definition adds a "methodological dimension to the stylistic description" (Armstrong 1995:32). The congregation needs to reach the person in his/her own world. This is another assumption of service evangelism.

Called to Serve: Whatever the Needs and Wherever the People

The church that follows the serving Lord is a serving church. A serving church's ministry is aimed at the needs of people inside as well as outside of their own group. To minister effectively to the needs of people, the church must be aware of what those needs are. To know what the needs are, the church must go where the people

are. To reach people where they are, the church needs a continuing visitation program (Armstrong 1993:85; 1995:32). When a church sincerely perseveres with this, it cannot bypass, ignore, or neglect the sociological, political, economical, and other issues that influence the lives of people. Social involvement is the natural consequence of service evangelism. Social action in itself is not evangelism, but evangelism without social action is seldom, if ever, holistic evangelism. The church that keeps the whole human being in mind, and for whom the healing of people is not negotiable, but is the demand of the gospel, cannot do otherwise. "Service evangelism is an inclusive ministry that is sensitive to people's physical and material as well as spiritual needs .... The oft-encountered but totally false dichotomy between social action and evangelism is dispelled by the holistic, inclusive, and incarnational nature of service evangelism" (Armstrong 1995:33).

Here service evangelism links up with current missiological theory. Bosch (1991:10 11) summarizes it thus: "God's love and attention are directed primarily at the world, and mission is 'participating in God's existence in the world.' In our times God's yes to the world reveals itself, to a large extent, in the church's missionary engagement in respect of the realities of injustice, oppression, poverty, discrimination, and violence." Of course, this involvement also includes God's "no" (Bosch 1991:11). The church needs to keep this balance in its radical identification with people in their suffering and need (cf. Aldrich 1981:62-76).

When church members see themselves as "Christians-on-the-job," this is the way it should be. The church is present everywhere through its members "as an instrument of reconciliation wherever there is conflict, an agent of reform wherever there is injustice, and a witness to God's truth wherever there is corruption. For those who are suffering the church needs to be a community of compassion, ministering to the needs of people in generous, helpful, imaginative ways. That is the role of the servant church. It is a proactive not a reactive role. Every church should be leading the way and not just following the lead" (Armstrong 1995:34). This can happen only if a church understands its identity, its nature, and its purpose, which is to represent none other than Jesus Christ in this world. *Service* gives integrity to the church's representation of the Christ who cares. Our calling also to speak about God's saving grace is by no means hereby mitigated. *How* the church earns the right to speak is, however, critically important, if the church wishes to be heard. Our deeds of service give integrity to our words. Referring to *listening* skills, one can thus declare, "What you hear determines what you say!" (Armstrong 1987:24).

CONCLUSION

Methods differ from person to person, and from church to church. It is the style with which one uses these methods that ought to be in line with faith convictions and faith confessions. To put it in another way: theology informs and determines style. Service evangelism represents an honest attempt to offer a style, at least in the Reformed tradition, that should influence any method. The theological departure points should help the church to approach people in the Spirit of Christ, inside as well as outside the church.

The calling of leaders in congregations to build a community of serving believers can hardly be over-emphasized. This cannot happen from the top down. As we follow a serving Lord, Jesus himself "becomes flesh" again in the world, through the service of his followers. God once again becomes known as he is meant to be known: God-with-the-people and God-for-the-people. Whoever knows God in this way is truly liberated and becomes whole, in spite of and in the midst of the brokenness in and around us. God's treasure is in us earthen jars, who are in service, and exposed to service (as utensils), vulnerable and fragile. This is so that it may always be clear that power comes from God and not from us (1 Cor.3; 1 Cor. 4).

Bibliography

ALDRICH, J. C. 1981. *Life-style Evangelism.* Portland: Multnomah.

ANDERSON, R.S. (Ed) 1979. *Theological Foundations for Ministry.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

ARMSTRONG, R.S. 1979. *Service Evangelism.* Philadelphia: Westminster.

ARMSTRONG, R.S. 1984. *The Pastor as Evangelist.* Philadelphia: Westminster.

ARMSTRONG, R.S. 1987. *Faithful Witnesses. Leader's Guide.* Philadelphia: Geneva.

ARMSTRONG, R.S. 1987(a) *Faithful Witnesses. Participant's Book.* Philadelphia: Geneva.

ARMSTRONG, R.S. 1993 *Getroue Getuies. Deelnemerswerkboek.* Pretoria: Etiole. Afrikaans translation by Nel, M & Nel, M.

ARMSTRONG, R.S. 1994. *How I See It: Service Evangelism.* In Vos C.J.A. (Ed) Proclaiming the Gospel. Pretoria: Makro.

ARMSTRONG R.S. 1995. How I See It: Service Evangelism. *Journal of the Academy for Evangelism 10 (1994 - 1995) 27-38.*

BAUSCH, W.J. 1981. *The Christian Parish.* (2nd printing). Mystic: Twenty Third.

BOHREN, R. 1974. *Predigtlehre*. Munchen: Kaiser.
BOSCH, D.J. 1991. *Transforming Mission*. Maryknoll: Orbis.
COLLINS, J.N. 1990. *Diakonia*. New York: Oxford University Press.
HEITINK, G. 1993. *Prakhsche Theologie*. Kampen: Kok.
HERBST, M. 1987. *Missionarische Gemeindeaufbau*. Stuttgart: Calwer's.
JOHNSON, R.W. 1994. *How Will They Hear if We Don't Listen*. Nashville: Broadman.
KITTEL, G. 1964. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. (Translated by Brommiley, G.W.).
KONIG, A. 1986. *Die doop as kinderdoop en grootdoop*. Pretoria: NGKB.
KONIG, A. 1991. *Bondgenoot en beeld*. (Rev. Ed.) Pretoria: NGKB.
KONIG, A. 1995. *Stof jou doop af*. Kaapstad: Lux Verbi.
NEL, M. 1982. *Jeug en Evangelie*. Pretoria: N G Kerk.
NEL, M. 1994. *Gemeentebou*. Halfway House: Orion.
NIELSEN, J.T. 1971. *Het Evangelie naar Mattheus*. Nijkerk: Callenbach.
OSMER, R.R. 1990. *A Teachable Spirit*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox.
OSMER, R.R. 1992. *Teaching for Faith*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox.
PIETERSE, H.J.C. & WESTER, F. 1995. Communication Style. In: Pieterse, H.J.C. (Ed) 1995. *Desmond Tutu's Message*. Kampen: Kok Pharos.
SHELP, E.E. & SUNDERLAND, R.A. (Eds.) 1981. *A Biblical Basis for Ministry*. Philadelphia: Westminster.
SJOGREN, S. 1993. *Conspiracy of Kindness*. Ann Arbor: Servant.
SWEAZEY, G.E. 1978. *The Church as Evangelist*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
VAN RULER, A.A. 1965. *Reformatorische opmerlangen in de ontmoeting met Rome*. Hilversum.

EVANGELISM TRENDS IN THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Norman E. Thomas

"Is evangelism a neglected vocation in the life and activities of the World Council [of Churches]?, Philip Potter asked. "Is evangelism at the heart of the life and work of the WCC? What does the WCC mean when it speaks of evangelism? What [should] be done to manifest more evidently the central concern of the WCC and its member churches for evangelism?"[1]

These probing questions are as relevant in 1997 as they were thirty years earlier when the then General Secretary of the WCC raised them with its Central Committee. The assemblies of the World Council, the reports of its major conferences on mission and evangelism, and of its special studies in this area provide more detailed answers to these questions than this paper can cover.[2] Instead, I shall focus first on the often-misunderstood legacy of the WCC in evangelism, next on 21st century challenges for evangelism which should frame the current debate, and finally on the trends in the WCC in responding to these challenges.

THE EVANGELISM LEGACY OF THE WCC

At its formation in 1948 the World Council of Churches' First Assembly adopted the Constitution setting forth as the WCC's seventh function "to support the churches in their task of evangelism." After surveying the situation of the world and of the church it declared: "The evident demand of God in this situation is that the whole Church set itself to the total task of winning the whole world for Christ."[3] Since that time the following six themes have been central to the legacy of the WCC in evangelism:

The Nature of Evangelism. "Evangelism: The Mission of the Church to Those Outside Her Life" was one of the six sections of the WCC's Second Assembly (Evanston 1954). "Jesus Christ is the Gospel we proclaim. He is also himself the Evangelist," the report began, and continued: "To evangelize is to participate in his life and in his ministry to the world . . . [Evangelism is] the bringing of persons to Christ as Saviour and Lord that they may share in his eternal life . . . There must be personal encounter with Christ . . . for on [the] relationship to God in Christ depends the eternal destiny of every [person]."[4]

The Authority and Urgency of Evangelism. Contrary to the assumptions of many of its critics, the WCC's authority for evangelism is rooted in scripture and Christology. "The basic urgency for evangelism," a 1958 statement read, "arises . . . from the nature and content of the Gospel itself, and its authority lies in the recognition by all believers that they have been claimed by Christ precisely for the purpose of becoming his witnesses."[5] This is consistent with the official doctrinal basis of the World Council, as adopted in 1961, which reads:

> The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.[6]

Explaining this basis to evangelicals Emilio Castro, the WCC's General Secretary, wrote: "Here is the rock of the ecumenical movement: a *trinitarian* approach, a *christological* confession, the *authority of the Bible*." He found it to be exactly the kind of confession found in the Lausanne Covenant, the basis of the World Evangelical Fellowship, and of many other evangelical organizations. The addition of many Third World churches, as well as national Orthodox bodies after 1961, gave added support for these doctrinal affirmations.[7]

The Evangelizing Church. In times in which too many Christians have emphasized evangelism as the task of specialists, the WCC consistently has promoted a church-centered evangelism in which every Christian has a part. At the Commission on Mission and Evangelism [CWME]'s Bangkok Assembly in 1973 the delegates declared: "The *local* church in action should be an expression of the impulse of the *whole* church to further the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world so that, by responding to him, persons and their situations may be saved."[8] In 1975 the WCCís Nairobi Assembly urged:

> Evangelism cannot be delegated to either gifted individuals or specialized agencies. It is entrusted to the whole church, the body of Christ. . . . Therefore, the evangelization of the world starts at the level of the congregation, in the local and ecumenical dimensions of its life: worship, sacrament, preaching, teaching and healing, fellowship and service, witnessing in life and in death.[9]

Hans Margull, while serving as Secretary for Evangelism of the WCC, expressed it well as he wrote: "Evangelism is not only--and in many cases not primarily--a matter of preaching, not even a matter of speaking only; it is a matter of living in this world." Then he went on to stress its corporate nature: "This is also to say that

evangelism is not only or primarily a matter of one or many members' living; it is a matter of Christ's whole Body living in this world. Merely to add evangelism to other church activities . . . is to prepare for failure." He recounted an incident in Asian Russia in which a visitor asked Baptists how their members were trained in evangelism. "But the question fell flat," the visitor reported. There "evangelism is the work of the whole church, not of individual members . . . there is such a strong tradition of evangelism that they are no more conscious of it than of the air that they breathe."[10]

Witness in Six Continents. This was the theme of the CWME's first mission conference (Mexico City 1963) following the World Council's integration in 1961 with the International Missionary Council. Phrases now commonplace were then new as delegates affirmed that "this missionary movement now involves Christians in all six continents and in all lands. It must be the common witness of the whole Church, bringing the whole Gospel to the whole world."[11] This was the genesis of a theme recurrent in subsequent conferences on mission and evangelism, including Lausanne II (Manila 1989): "Proclaim Christ Until He Comes: Calling the Whole Church to Take the Whole Gospel to the Whole World."[12]

Witness Amidst Cultures. "Culture shapes the human voice that answers the voice of Christ," declared the Bangkok Assembly.[13] But concern for elucidating the dynamic relation between the gospel and cultures did not begin for the WCC in 1973. Twenty-five years earlier her Constitution included the function "to facilitate the common witness of the churches in each place and in all places."

Each WCC assembly and world mission and evangelism conference has raised up this theme in some way. At the Vancouver Assembly (1983), for example, the WCC called for a deeper understanding of culture and cultural plurality, and a better understanding of the ways in which the Gospel has interacted with various cultures. Cultures were understood both in their richness and variety, and as having conflicts between life-affirming and life-denying aspects. On the one hand, Vancouver declared that "we need to be aware of the possibility of our witness to the Gospel becoming captive to any culture, recognizing the fact that all cultures are judged by the Gospel." On the other hand, it was affirmed that "the Gospel message becomes a transforming power within the life of a community when it is expressed in the cultural forms in which the community understands itself."[14]

Witness Amidst Injustices. "Very few would say that you can evangelize in the name of Jesus Christ," Emilio Castro writes, "without calling people to search for the kingdom and its justice--the justice of God that should permeate all human relations."[15] Forged in the trauma of World War II, the WCC from its inception has linked evangelism and social justice as inseparable themes. "Churches are learning afresh through the poor of the earth to overcome the old dichotomies between evangelism and social action,"

declared the World Council in its normative 1983 affirmation. It continued: "The *spiritual Gospel* and *material Gospel* were in Jesus one Gospel." Then followed this challenge:

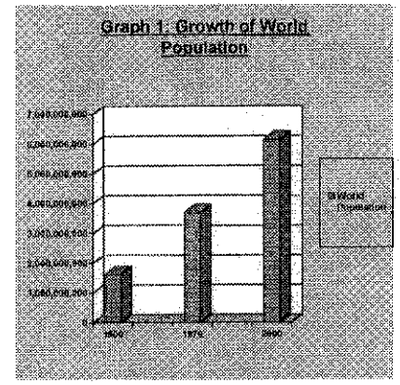
> A proclamation that does not hold forth the promises of the justice of the kingdom to the poor of the earth is a caricature of the Gospel; but Christian participation in the struggles for justice which does not point towards the promises of the kingdom also makes a caricature of a Christian understanding of justice.[16]

These six themes are the continuities of the WCC's evangelism legacy. Admittedly, the World Council does not speak with one unified voice. Recent conferences on mission and evangelism often sound more like an orchestra warming up than a disciplined performance. With no attempt made to achieve consensus, section reports may speak with parallel but divergent voices.[17] Nevertheless, the World Council has, I believe, both a legacy in evangelism worth remembering, and responses to contemporary challenges that are important for evangelism in the 21st century.

Twenty-First Century Challenges

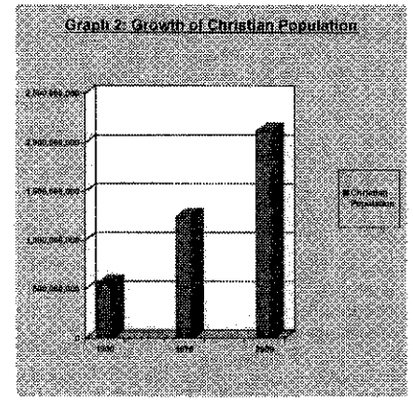
One hundred years ago young Christians in the North were inspired by the Student Volunteer Movement and its Watchword, "The evangelization of the world in this generation." Today as the millennium approaches the Watchword has been revived with more than 700 plans for world evangelization. No one has marshaled global data on this theme better than David Barrett, editor of *the World Christian Encyclopedia*, and author of the "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission." Careful readers will emerge from this statistical baptism not with rapture, but with sober judgment concerning the awesome task ahead.[18]

The world's population will grow from 1.6 billion persons in 1900 to a projected 6.1 billion in the year 2000--a 280% increase or 2.8% per year. Global Christianity, by coincidence, grew from 558 million in 1900 to a projected 2.1 billion Christians in the year 2000--also a 280% (or 2.8% per annum) increase.



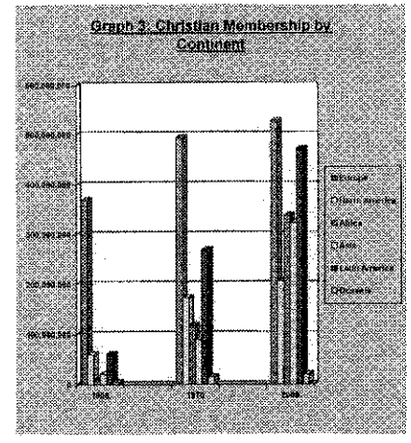
World Population

1900: 1,619,886,800 1970: 3,697,141,000 2000: 6,158,051,000



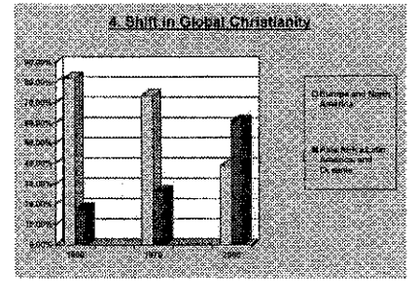
Christian Population

1900: 558,056,300 1970: 1,245,934,000 2000: 2,119,342,000



Christian Membership by Continent

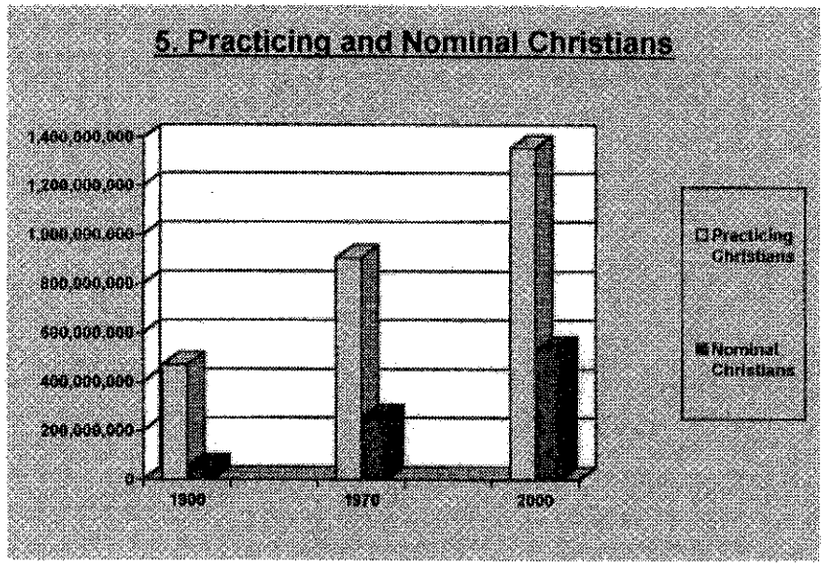
	1900	1970	2000
Europe	368,790,600	493,691,000	527,575,000
North America	59,569,700	173,331,000	207,251,000
Africa	8,756,400	118,721,000	335,285,000
Asia	29,110,000	90,093,000	323,192,000
Latin America	60,025,100	268,350,000	471,855,000
Oceania	4,311,400	15,023,000	26,111,000



Shift in Global Christianity

	1900	1970	2000
Europe and North America	82.1%	73.7%	38.9%
Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania	17.9%	26.3%	61.1%

Striking is the shift of axis of the Christian community from Europe and North America to the Two-thirds World. In 1900 Barrett estimates that 428 million Christians (or 82.1% of the total) lived in Europe and North America, and just 93 million (or 17.9%) in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania. By contrast in the year 2000 he estimates that the Christian communities of the Two-thirds World will number 1,153 million Christians (61.1%), whereas the 334.8 million in North America and Europe will be but 38.9% of the total.



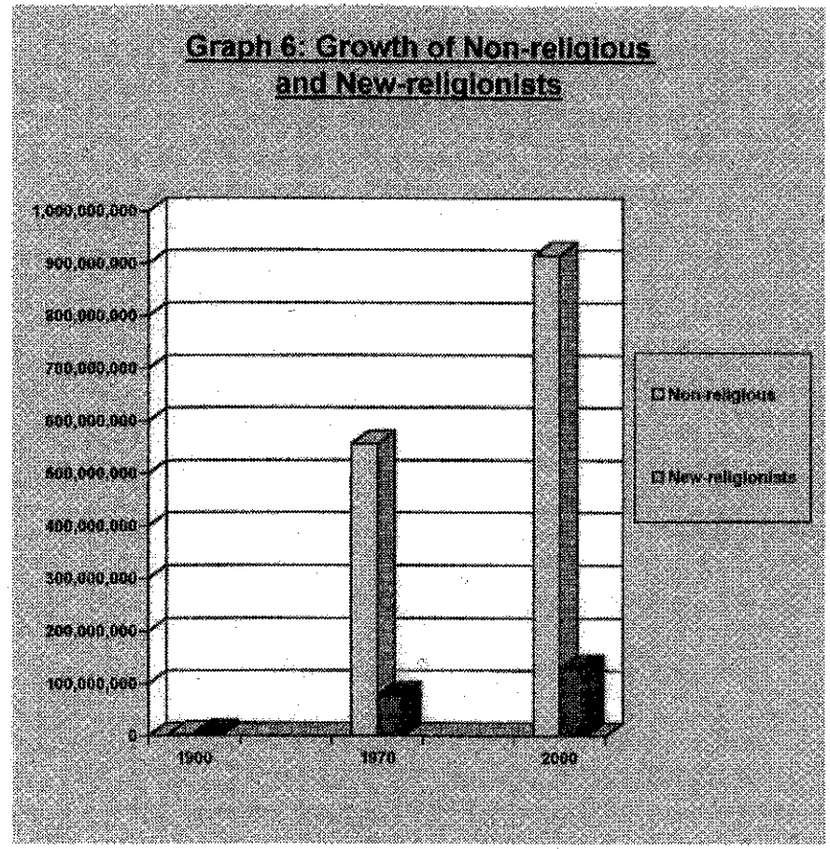
Practicing and Nominal Christianity

	1900	1970	2000
Practicing Christians	469,259,800	905,352,000	1,356,513,000
Nominal Christians	52,303,400	253,767,000	531,757,000

Further analysis discloses the following five challenges to 21st century evangelization:

Nominal Christianity. Barrett reports that practicing Christians will increase from 469 million in 1900 to a projected 1,487 million in the year 2000--a 189% increase or 1.9% per year. Meanwhile their numbers will be far outstripped by the increase in nominal (non-practicing) Christians from 88 million in 1900 to a projected 531.7 million by the year 2000. That is a 4499% increase, or 4.5% per year! How shall we witness to the growing multitudes of nominal non-practicing Christians?

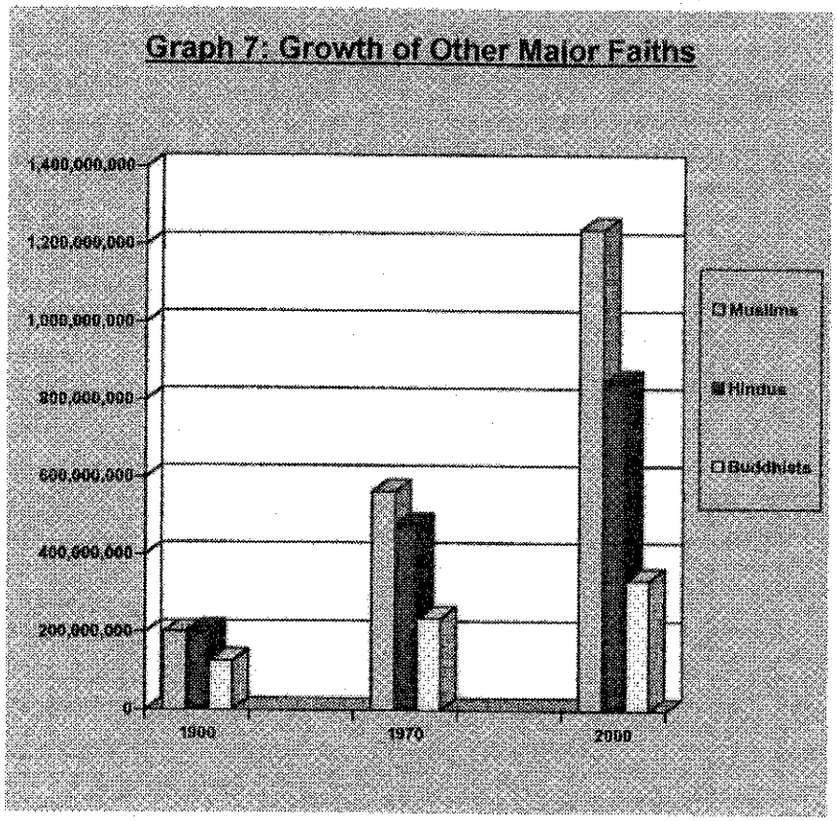
Secularism. In 1928 William Temple addressed the Jerusalem missionary conference on "The Case for Evangelization." Concerning "Christianity and Secular Civilization" he stated: "The immensely increased control over nature makes [persons] feel independent of any higher power, and the concentration on material goods and the processes of producing them and distributing them diverts attention from spiritual interests." The Council's "Statement" picked up this note and added: "On all sides doubt is expressed whether there is any absolute truth or goodness. A new relativism struggles to enthrone itself in human thought."[19]



Growth of Non-religious and New-religionists

	1900	1970	2000
Non-religious	2,923,300	556,169,000	915,714,000
New-religionists	5,910,000	78,288,000	130,352,000

Nearly seventy years later Barrett counts the numbers who identify with this worldview. The non-religious, he calculates, will grow from 29 million in 1900 to 916 million in the year 2000. Atheists numbered only .2 million worldwide in 1900, but will increase to 231.5 million by the year 2000. In percentage terms these are the fastest growing categories of religious attitudes and loyalties.



Growth of Other Major Faiths

	1900	1970	2000
Muslims	200,102,200	564,212,000	1,240,258,000
Hindus	203,033,300	477,024,000	846,467,000
Buddhists	127,159,900	237,262,000	334,852,000

Vitality of Other Faiths. Concerning believers in other faiths, Barrett's findings are sobering. In mid-1997 their numbers are an estimated 3,897 million. "Each year their number grows by 47 million, an increase of 129,000 a day," he writes. In the year 1900 they numbered 1,062 million, but by the year 2000 non-Christians will number just over four billion. Consider also the shifts in strength of various non-Christian groups. Converts to Christianity have come largely from tribal religionists seeking a universal faith. Their numbers, however, have decreased from 106 million tribal religionists in 1900 to an estimated 101 million by the year 2000. World evangelization cannot anticipate a harvest from this source in the 21st century to match that which took place in this century. Meanwhile the other major world faiths are resurgent. Muslims will increase from 200 million in 1900 to 1,240 million by the year 2000. Corresponding changes for Hindus are 203 million (1900) to 846.1 million (2000), and for Buddhists from 127 million (1900) to 335 million (2000). In addition "*two or three entirely new non-Christian religions are begun on earth every day.*"

Contextualization. Barrett, like Ralph Winter, is concerned that many non-Christian people live in *World A* in which they lack any contact with Christians and have no knowledge of anything Christian. Barrett concludes: "Until we deliberately establish direct, comprehensive, personal contact with every distinct non-Christian population across the globe, Christians will continue to be irrelevant to the lives, hopes, and fears of those 4 billion non-Christians."[20] We must make the gospel known not to humans in general, the Hieberts write in *Incarnational Ministry*, "but to real people who live in particular times and places in history, who are members of real societies and who share common languages and cultures." One challenge, they believe, is that "too often we equate Christianity with our particular understandings of it and make the gospel captive to our culture. When we see our own cultural biases, we are freed to see the radical, transforming nature of the gospel in new ways." Another challenge is to overcome the danger of overcontextualizing the gospel, leading to a Christopaganism in which it becomes captive to a local culture. True contextualization occurs when God so works in the hearts of people that the Word transforms their lives, their societies and their cultures.[21]

Social Injustices. Concerning the fifth 21st century challenge to evangelism, Barrett gives us one startling consequence--the rise in the number of Christian martyrs from an average 35,600 in 1900 to an estimated 165,000 in the year 2000. Bryant Myers of World Vision, in *The New Context of World Mission,* piles up evidence of social challenges to Christian witness and Christian mission. Consider the poor and the lost--"a very large proportion of those who have not heard the gospel are also poor; 85% of the world's poorest countries lie within the unevangelized world." Although health services in the developing world have improved, still today one in five of the world's people (1 billion persons) do not have access to the basic social services of health care, education, safe drinking water and adequate nutrition. The number of ongoing wars has risen dramatically from 10 in 1960 to over 50 in 1994, with civilians 90% of casualties, and refugees by the millions are the consequence. How shall the victims of these social injustices, the *sinned against*, be helped to be open to the Gospel?

The WCC Facing the Challenges

It is my contention in this paper that the challenges facing world evangelization in the next century will be of unprecedented magnitude. Gone is the confidence of the Edinburgh World Mission Conference of 1910 in the goal of "the evangelization of nations, the

Christianizing of empires and kingdoms."[22] Few will replace it with the hope that the "Big Mac and Coca Colaization" of the world will bring new receptivity to Christianity. Consider the many Japanese people who observe the commercialization of Christmas without openness to the Incarnation.

Does the World Council of Churches, in its wrestling with contemporary issues of mission and evangelism, have a contribution to make? Yes, I believe so. Consider briefly its responses to the five 21st century challenges introduced above:

Nominal Christianity. In its section on "Local Congregations in Pluralist Societies," the CWME's 1996 Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Salvador, Brazil, took up the challenge of church dropouts. First, the report reaffirmed the conviction "that the Holy Spirit can touch us in every culture and context." Are persons leaving church communities "because they have not been able to see the Spirit at work there?," delegates asked. Characteristically they considered both individual and social dimensions--both personal alienation and misuse of power. They asked: "How can the church both prepare people for meeting God and also remove the stumbling-blocks which any culture, but specifically dominant and colonial cultures, have placed as obstacles to the movement of the Spirit?" They concluded that the Holy Spirit must be discerned *in community*, and is discerned by how one's actions serve community, bearing fruits of love and unity, peace and justice."

A holistic approach to the challenge of nominal Christianity continued as the Conference theme, "Called to One Hope--The Gospel in Diverse Cultures" was introduced. "Both the people belonging and not belonging to a church need to hear the gospel of hope," the section declared. "Evangelization is a reaching in and a reaching out, proclaiming the gospel, with words and actions", they continued. "Through the witness of congregations and individual Christians, the gospel can penetrate society and transform culture--even secularized culture--acting as a liberating force in various contexts of hopelessness or of struggle for dignity."[23]

In *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation*, the WCC wrestled with the challenge of the many social forces which "press for conformity and passivity" and of societies in which "anonymity and marginalization seem to reduce the possibilities for personal decisions to a minimum." But the Council faced forthrightly the fact that "many of those who are attracted to Christ are put off by what they see in the life of the churches as well as in individual Christians." In humility the call to conversion "should begin with the repentance of those who do the calling, who issue the invitation." Then the call is to be offered--God's call to each of God's children. The affirmation is both biblical and Christ-centered:

> The proclamation of the Gospel includes an invitation to recognize and accept in a personal decision the saving lordship of Christ. It is the announcement of a personal encounter, mediated by the Holy Spirit, with the living Christ, receiving his forgiveness, and making a personal acceptance of the call to discipleship and a life of service.[24]

Secularism. "The encounter with secularization and dehumanization may also be a prophecy of the future so far as the Third World is concerned."[25] James Scherer was prophetic in writing these words in 1973. Today from Seoul, Korea to Harare, Zimbabwe, Christian leaders are testifying that materialism and secularism are the major challenges to vital Christianity for young people.

"Witness in a Secular Society" was an important sub-theme at the CWME's world mission conference in San Antonio in 1989. "Everywhere the churches are in missionary situations," their report began, reaffirming the 1983 Affirmation. It continued: "Even in countries where the churches have been active for centuries we see life organized today without reference to Christian values, a growth of secularism understood as the absence of any final meaning." Furthermore it stated, "The churches have lost vital contact with the workers and the youth and many others. The situation is so urgent that it demands priority attention of the ecumenical movement." (*ME* 37).

"Does secularism diminish people's desire to relate to some ultimate reality?" San Antonio answers "No". "The shrine does not remain empty," they declared, for *secular* religion "may find expression in the worship of the modern idols of consumerism, or of economic, political and military power, in which individual and collective selfishness reigns supreme." Secularism also "has infiltrated and profoundly influenced our churches," including the acquiescence to the compartmentalization of life into *public* and *private* spheres with relegation of religion to the latter.

The WCC addressed the churches in response to the challenge, calling them to "resist the temptation both to succumb to the spirit of the age and to withdraw into a ghetto existence." They proposed a holy boldness including reclaiming of cardinal elements of the ascetic tradition, and an embracing of a lifestyle in which sharing and solidarity have priority over possession and individualism.[26]

Vitality of Other Faiths. In approaching a third major challenge--that of the vitality of other faiths--the WCC's response is neither triumphalist nor submissive. For Emilio Castro, successively director of the CWME and WCC General Secretary, it is "not just a question of co-existence or pro-existence of the different religious groups." He proposes instead an attitude of dialogue "with respect for the neighbour in keeping with that shown by God in Jesus Christ." As Jesus did not hesitate to point to the Samaritan as setting the example of love for his Jewish hearers, Castro writes, "the witness we owe to the other is the witness to God's love made manifest in Jesus Christ."[27]

A major contribution of the WCC has been its work on what is called the witness/dialogue debate. Are Christian witness and dialogue antithetical approaches to persons of other faiths? The WCC answers "No". On the one hand the *Ecumenical Affirmation* upholds the evangelistic mandate that "Christians owe the message of God's salvation in Jesus Christ to every person and to every people" (*ME* 41) for "in him is our salvation" (*ME* 42). On the other hand, the assurance is given "that God is the creator of the whole universe and that he has not left himself without a witness at any time or any place." That implies that "The Spirit of God is constantly at work in ways that pass human understanding" (*ME* 43). San Antonio adds: "We cannot point to any other way of salvation than Jesus Christ; at the same time we cannot set limits to the saving power of God."

In evangelism, therefore, what should be our approach to persons of other living faiths? San Antonio claims that "it is possible to be non-aggressive and missionary at the same time--that it is, in fact, the only way of being truly missionary." "Witness does not preclude dialogue but invites it," the report declared, "and that dialogue does not preclude witness but extends and deepens it." Therefore, our ministry of witness among people of other faiths includes *presence, sensitivity, willingness* to be their servants for Christís sake, *affirmation* of what God has done and is doing among them, and love for them.[28]

Contextualization. More than any other challenge the WCC in the 1990s has focused on that of contextualization. Preparation for its four-year study on Gospel and Culture began in cooperation with Roman Catholics in the 1984 Riano Consultation. There ecumenical leaders developed "a new theological understanding of the gospel-culture relationship" which focused on creation and on the incarnate, suffering and risen Christ. Consistent with an incarnational approach, they asserted, was the hermeneutical principle that "individuals and communities of faith are called upon to discern in their own cultural context where God is at work." They asked: "If the gospel cannot be considered independent from its various cultural expressions, how can we single out universally applicable gospel criteria?" The recommended pattern is *discontinuity-in-continuity* "biblically understood." The analogy given was that of the risen Lord who "appeared to his disciples in various ways, surprisingly yet clearly, entering their daily life." The important task for the Christian community is "to discern in various situations what in Scripture belongs to continuity and what to discontinuity."[29]

In planning for its Gospel and Cultures study process, the WCC sought to explore issues such as:

- studying different types/models of relationship between evangelism and cultures in different churches;
- discerning methods of evangelism that are sensitive to people's cultural integrity, as well as those that are insensitive;
- enabling churches to identify and challenge when a practice of evangelism becomes coercive and leads to proselytism; and
- promoting active inculturation of the gospel in particular cultures.

Learning to acknowledge that the one faith can be authentically confessed in diverse cultural forms, and to recognize when particular cultural expressions of the one gospel are *un*authentic were judged to be "among the most pressing ecumenical issues in the decade ahead."[30]

The Salvador (1996) mission conference was the culmination of the four-year study process. Key issues raised included the following: Is *culture* an aspect of God's creation, or entirely made by human beings? (Sect. I,A,2). Are all cultures both life-affirming and life-denying? (I,A,3). Is *syncretism* to be understood as "merely a mixture of elements from different sources" or as "a mixture of elements that do not belong together or which are in conflict"? (IV,A,17).

The result of the "evangelism and culture debate" at Salvador, according to Jan van Butselaar of The Netherlands, was multifaceted. First, there was no rejection of evangelism nor of one or more groups engaged in it. Second, there was a loud call for authenticity, for integrity, for faithfulness. Third, there was both affirmation and celebration of signs of the presence and the power of the Spirit where the gospel was proclaimed. Finally, there was humility in seeking wisdom to understand the varied ways in which the Spirit blows in varied cultures.[31]

Social Injustices. WCC world mission conferences, formerly dominated by missiologists and church executives, increasingly are forums in which voices from the grassroots are heard. Set in the former largest slaving port of Brazil, the 1996 Salvador conference sought to listen to the experiences of the marginalized of Latin America and other continents. Their witness was summarized under the heading, "Gospel and Crushed Identities" (II,A).

A unique WCC approach to *witness* (the term preferred over evangelism) is found in the report of Section II on "Participating in Suffering and Struggle" at the 1989 San Antonio conference--"the power of resistance as a form of witness." Historically *marturia* (martyrdom) had been esteemed as the highest form of Christian witness. San Antonio begins the section with the affirmation that "*God became flesh in Jesus Christ and lived among the impoverished, participating in their suffering and struggle in order that all might have fullness of life.*" Next, the testimonies of faith amidst persecution from Hebrews 11 were recalled. Today, "people in different countries struggling and suffering under various forms of oppression are witnessing to the life-affirming mission of God by resisting the forces of oppression in many ways," the report continued. Finally, the churches were invited "to recognize the wind and fire of the presence of the Spirit wherever the suffering cry out" and to participate in their struggles "in the way of Christ, to become part of the good news for them, bearing witness that God wills for them and for all people, life in its fullness."[32]

Conclusion

In his helpful reflection on "Evangelicalism and the Ecumenical Movement," Norman Goodall traced the common lineage of both evangelicals and conciliar Protestants from the Evangelical Alliance in 1846 through Edinburgh 1910. Is there not one Spirit which gives them their meaning, and is the secret of their potency and promise?, he asked. "For the deepest reasons today it is urgent," Goodall concluded, "that we should again be able to think and speak of *one* movement, not two; one movement which is at once ecumenical and evangelical."[33]

Now a generation later there are new reasons to revive that call. The challenges which the churches will face in the next century will require new creativity, new resourcefulness, new vision, and renewed faithfulness to the Gospel. Each tradition can contribute its own strengths. In this essay only one side of the proposed partnership has been explored. The legacy in evangelism of the WCC can remind those within that stream of their own heritage which is often forgotten or not reaffirmed. It also can provide encouragement for both evangelicals and Roman Catholics of mutual convictions held with many in the ecumenical movement. Recent responses by the WCC to emerging challenges in mission and evangelism, in addition, can be a fruitful contribution as Christians face common challenges and opportunities in evangelism.

NOTES

[1]Philip Potter, "Evangelism and the World Council of Churches," *Ecumenical Review* 20 (1968), 171.

[2]See Rodger C. Bassham, *Mission Theology: 1948-1975* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1979); Priscilla Pope-Levison, "Evangelism in the WCC: Part One: From New Delhi to Vancouver," *International Review of Mission* [*IRM*] 80 (1991): 231-43; "Part Two: From Vancouver to Canberra," *IRM* 81 (1992): 119-25; and Norman E. Thomas, "Ecumenical Directions in Evangelism: Melbourne to San Antonio," *Journal of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education* 5 (1989-1990): 52-63.

[3]WCC, *The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), 198, 68.

[4]WCC, *The Evanston Report: The Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches*, 1954 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955), 98, 101.

[5] WCC, *Theological Reflection on the Work of Evangelism* (Geneva: WCC, 1958), 15.

[6] See Nicholas Lossky, et.al., eds., *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement (*Geneva: WCC Publications; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), s.v. "Basis of WCC," by T.K. Thomas, 1097.

[7] Emilio Castro, "Evangelical and Ecumenical," *The Reformed Journal* 37 (1987), 18; see also James A. Scherer, "Ecumenical Prospects for Evangelism," *Dialog* 12 (1973): 43-48.

[8] WCC, *Bangkok Assembly* 1973*: Minutes and Report of the Assembly of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches*, 31 December 1972 and 9-12 January 1973 (Geneva: WCC, 1973), 99.

[9] WCC. *Breaking Barriers*, Nairobi 1975*: The Official Report of the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Nairobi, 23 November-10 December 1975*, ed. David Paton (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), 53.

[10] Hans Jochen Margull, "Evangelism in Ecumenical Perspectives," *Ecumenical Review* 16 (1964), 137-38.

[11] WCC/Commission on World Mission and Evangelism [CWME], *Witness in Six Continents: Records of a meeting . . . held in Mexico City, December 8th to 19th, 1963*, ed. Ronald K. Orchard (Edinburgh: Edinburgh House Press for the WCC, 1964), 175.

[12] See International Congress on World Evangelization (2nd., Manila, 1989), *Proclaim Christ Until He Comes: Calling the Whole Church to Take the Whole Gospel to the Whole World*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1990), 38.

[13] WCC, *Bangkok Assembly* 1973, Report of Section II: "Culture and Identity," 73.

[14] WCC, *Gathered for Life: Official Report, VI Assembly World Council of Churches*, Vancouver, Canada, 24 July-10 August 1983, ed. David Gill (Geneva: WCC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 32-33.

[15] Castro, "Evangelical and Ecumenical," 19.

[16] WCC, *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation: A Study Guide*, comp. Jean Stromberg (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1983), Par. 34, p. 38. Hereafter cited as *ME*.

[17] Norman E. Thomas, "Salvador 1996 Called to One Hope: The Gospel in Diverse Cultures," *Missiology* 25:2 (April 1997): 189-97.

[18] See David Barrett and James W. Reapsome, *Seven Hundred Plans to Evangelize the World: The Rise of a Global Evangelization Movement* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope, 1988); Barrett, "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 1994," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* [IBMR] 18 (1994), 24 for sources and definitions; and "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 1997," *IBMR* 21 (1997), 24-25 for the latest statistics and analysis used in this paper.

[19] International Missionary Council, *The Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, March 24th-April 8th*, 1928 (New York and London: IMC, 1928), 1: 379, 401.

[20] Barrett, "Global Mission: 1997," 24.

[21] Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 369-70.

[22] *World Mission Conference 1910* (New York: Revell, 1910), 8: 32.

[23] WCC/CWME, Conference on World Mission and Evangelism (Salvador, Brazil, 24 November-3 December 1996), "Report of Section III," Par. 14, 18.

[24] Par. 10-11.

[25] "Ecumenical Prospects," 43.

[26] WCC/CWME, *The San Antonio Report: Your Will Be Done: Mission in Christís Way*, ed. Frederick J. Wilson (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990), 29-31.

[27] Lossky, ed., *Dictionary*, s.v. "Evangelism" by Emilio Castro, 399.

[28] WCC, *San Antonio*, p. 32; see Thomas, *Ecumenical Directions*, pp. 57-60 for further analysis of this statement.

[29] WCC/CWME, "Gospel and Culture: The Working Statement Developed at Riano Consultation," *IRM* 74 (1985): 265, 267.

[30] WCC, "Gospel and Cultures--An Ecumenical Agenda," *IRM* 83 (1994): 320, 318.

[31] Jan van Butselaar, "Evangelism and Culture: Natural-Born Enemies?," *International Review of Mission* 86 (1997): 64.

[32] WCC, *San Antonio*, pp. 40-41, 46.

[33] Norman Goodall, "Evangelicalism and the Ecumenical Movement," *Ecumenical Review* 15 (1963): 400.

ADVANCING SIDE BY SIDE: EVANGELISM TRENDS AMONG PARACHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

Keith Davy

The cutting edge of evangelism can always be viewed on a variety of fronts. One of those fronts is the parachurch ministries. The parachurch world is exceedingly diverse with many ministries having little or no involvement in evangelism. There are however a number of ministries for whom evangelism is a significant element of their mission and calling. There are a variety of roads one may take in exploring the trends in evangelism among these parachurch organizations. This paper will examine six general trends, identify the direction of movement within each and provide one or more concrete examples.

Two preliminary observations are important. The first is to recognize that I write from the perspective of an insider vitally involved in shaping the outreach for one of these organizations, the U. S. Campus Ministry (USCM) of Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC)[1]. This reality impacts what follows. The examples used will be drawn primarily from theUSCM. This does not imply that CCC is alone at the cutting edge in these trends. Each trend could be illustrated by examples from many other organizations. But the USCM experience will provide a unified case study of organizational adaptation.

A second preliminary observation is that there are many forces that are shaping the trends chronicled here. Socio-cultural changes certainly influence the shape of evangelism among parachurch ministries today. But they are not alone. The changes within the Christian community[2] and developments within the organizations themselves[3] also play a significant role. While it is outside the parameters of this paper to delineate each influence, it is important to recognize that these trends are the result of a combination of factors.

AN INCREASING SOCIO-CULTURAL REFLECTION

The ability to effectively reach any group of people normally requires sensitivity to that people's socio-cultural context. Insiders know that context instinctively. Outsiders must learn it. Many parachurch ministries were birthed within the cultural context to which they continued to minister. This resulted in early strategies and approaches that tended to be culturally effective even when there was little conscious contextualization.

Keith Davy serves as Associate Director for Research and Development for U.S. Campus Ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ.

The end of the twentieth century has witnessed a time of rapid cultural change. Methods and strategies born in previous decades have rapidly decreased in effectiveness. Maturing ministries, which initially enjoyed the luxury of being cultural insiders, have found themselves becoming cultural outsiders. For them socio-cultural reflection is no longer aluxury neglected for more pragmatic pursuits, but a necessity vitally linked to their effectiveness.

An increasing number of initiatives have arisen both within and between parachurch organizations. The conference "Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns" held May 13-15, 1998 in Deerfield, IL provides one example. Campus Crusade for Christ, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, Navigators, the Billy Graham Center Institute for Evangelism, and Bannockburn Institute for Christianity and Contemporary Culture all joined as cosponsors with Trinity Evangelical Divinity School to explore the implications which "the systematic relativism commonly dubbed 'postmodern'" has on evangelism today.

One product of this type of serious reflection is a movement from an individual orientation toward a communal context. For example, in the fall of 1994 the USCM initiated a project to address the assimilation of new believers into the body of Christ. Since the early 1980s the USCM had utilized a series of four Bible studies for one-on-one follow-up of new believers. Changes in the nature of print media alone over the previous fifteen-year period necessitated an update of these materials. But a deeper issue than "media" lies beneath the surface. New packaging might look and feel better to students, but would not significantly impact the rates of involvement by new believers in the body of Christ. The result was the development of a new family of materials (LC2). The LC2 materials seek to impart to the new believer essential "Life-Concepts" needed to experience the Christian life and assist the new believer in making essential "Life-Connections" to the body of Christ.[4] These connections will include an introduction to the local church for an unchurched student.

A Maturing Evangelistic Understanding

Increasing understanding and abilities marks a child's development. The maturing of organizations has its parallels. Leadership in evangelism has reflected this maturing process. As a result there has been a movement from a narrow focus to a more broad emphasis. A survey of evangelistic organizations through the past decades could illustrate that many have been guided by a narrow methodological or strategic focus. To recognize this is not to imply that such a narrow focus has been either wrong or inappropriate. In many cases, it proved very effective.

As leadership today seeks to help their ministries fulfill their evangelistic potential, whether in breadth of scope or depth of impact, there is movement toward more comprehensive thinking. Within the USCM, an evangelism leadership model has been developed to help national and local leaders rethink evangelism. Currently known as EvangeLEAD, the attempt has been to translate a thoroughly biblical theology of evangelism into a practical framework that enables leaders to identify and communicate critical issues in outreach and to guide in the strategic planning of evangelism efforts.[5]

An Adapting of Organizational Structure

Rapid changes have occurred not only in our cultural context, but also within the Christian organizations themselves. Among the many observable adaptations, two general movements should be noted.

First, there has been a movement from direct ministry to catalytic influence. There are approximately 3,600 colleges and universities with 14 million students in the U.S. (numbers vary depending on types of institutions included). In 1992, it was estimated that the major collegiate ministries[6] had a combined presence on approximately 1000 of those schools. If accurate, 70% of the U.S. student population attended schools that remained untouched by these organizations. On the 1000 schools with a ministry presence, only a percentage of students were being touched.

The USCM itself had experienced a decade long plateau in ministry. Campuses with full-time staff teams numbered 165. In a bold move, USCM underwent a major restructuring in 1991-92. Control was decentralized and provision was made for increased leadership and experimentation in evangelism at the local level. Three new fronts of ministry were organized beside the traditional Staffed Campuses. The Catalytic Ministries focused on developing new campus ministries and outreach at schools where there were no full-time staff teams. The Intercultural Resources began to coordinate ministry to the ethnic populations of African-Americans, Latin Americans and Asian Americans. The Worldwide Student Network facilitated the efforts of US staff and students in helping start ministries on 200 unreached priority campuses overseas. In five years (from 1992-93 to 1996-97) the number of USCM campus ministries grew from 244 to 745. In the same period the students involved in small groups mushroomed from 9,990 to 23,627. Much of the growth has been fueled by changes away from staff dependent leadership models toward staff assisted, student led models.

With these organizational adaptations came a second movement. There has been a movement from autonomy in ministry to

partnerships. The Catalytic ministries of the USCM embraced the conviction that within five miles of every campus in the U.S., God had the resources in the body of Christ to reach that campus. The challenge was to be a catalyst helping to initiate or accelerate ministry of the believing body to the students on those campuses. A major component in these efforts has been the formation of formal partnerships with local churches and existing ministries where the resources and experience of CCC is wedded to the presence and manpower of the local church or ministry. In some places the resulting ministry bears the CCC name. At others it continues under the church's or other ministry's name. This trend in partnerships isn't unique to the Catalytic Ministries of USCM. There are new winds of cooperation blowing and many parachurch ministries are working together with local churches in evangelism.

Adjusting Ministry Strategies and Methodology

As ministries continue to reflect on the changes in society, mature in their understanding of evangelism and adapt their organizational structures to today's challenges and opportunities, there is also a correspondent adjustment of ministry strategies and methodology. The movement appears to be away from expecting simple faithfulness in traditional methodology to seeking effectiveness in all ministry strategies. Exploration, experimentation and innovation is not only permitted but increasingly encouraged.

Traditionally, small groups have provided the growth context in which students would be equipped for and involved in outreach. Throughout the 60's, 70's and 80's, the small group systems and content throughout the USCM reflected a similar strategy and structure. The 90's have brought an adjustment to small groups. InterACTA Bible Studies represented a significant departure in content, as the value of biblical accuracy was wedded to the need for relevance to contemporary student needs and interest. Not only has the handling of content changed, but also small group structures have diversified. For example, cell group strategies have been increasingly applied within the Catalytic Ministry context, enabling students who lack direct discipleship relationships with full-time staff to grow within a community environment provided by the small group. While the groups appear quite different from traditional CCC, they are proving effective in creating a growth context beyond the boundaries of full-time staff influence.

Another of the many shifts in ministry strategy can be seen in large group evangelism. Bread and butter methodology of the past included seasoned speakers with well-crafted messages addressing issues of truth and relationships. Often the topics were apologetically geared. But the crowds of interested students seemed to grow smaller and smaller. In 1994, a new speaker appeared. Steve Sawyer was a student from Boston diagnosed with AIDS. Having come to Christ through the Catalytic Ministries of USCM, Steve began to share his story of hope in the face of his physical death sentence. The crowds have returned. This time it is not to hear polished presentations of the gospel defended as truth or to discover how to have better relationships. They have come to hear one of their own - a survivor facing one of the greatest fears of their generation. As God has continued to give Steve strength, he has become the most listened to CCC speaker on the university campuses in the 1990's, drawing crowds of hundreds wherever he goes[7].

Developing a New Generation of Resources

Examining the toolboxes used by ministries in outreach can also reveal trends. Two directions are worth noting.

First there is movement from didactic tools to dialogical resources. While there remains a teaching element to evangelistic tools, new tools have increasingly been designed to facilitate discussion and dialogue. *LifeSkills* represents one family of dialogical materials. Designed to be used in small group settings, *LifeSkills* guides a group interaction that enables students to discover the wisdom and relevance of the Bible. The initial series of ten *LifeSkills* discussions focused on relationship issues for students. Interaction topics like the anger in relationships ("Mad About You"), communication between the sexes ("When Worlds Collide") and romance ("From U2 to Shakespeare: How to Know You're in Love"), guide group discussions sprinkled with biblical wisdom. Based upon the assumption that the Bible seems irrelevant to the average unbelieving college student, each discussion was designed to reinforce the impression that life works when lived by biblical principles. The final interaction focused on gospel truth ("Are We Having Fun Yet? Finding Satisfaction in Life's Key Relationship").[8]

A second direction in resources is a movement from primarily harvest tools to tools focusing on increased cultivation. There is a growing recognition of the need to help individuals move closer to the gospel through the process of evangelism. While there remains a significant number who God has prepared to receive Christ through harvest oriented approaches, ministries have been paying increased attention to those who will need more time and influence. Broad sowing tools are being developed with the purpose of stimulating thought and planting seeds of truth. Every Student's Choice (ESC) is a media campaign of this genre. Utilizing advertising in student newspapers and personally delivered follow-up articles, ESC provides local ministries timely, well-researched answers from a Christian perspective to many of the issues that students struggle with. today[9]. These campaigns are designed to prepare people for the gos-

pel by softening the effects of secularism, and raising the visibility and attractiveness of Christianity. As a result people are given multiple opportunities to consider a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Freshmen Survival Kits represent another example. An attractive assortment of thought-provoking materials, including a Bible, is provided as a gift to incoming freshmen[10]. Recognizing that freshmen will be confronted with a broad array of messages and pressures, FSK attempts to put into the hand of each student a number of attractive gospel messages, to spur thinking and open the door for further evangelistic encounters. In the first year, Campus Crusade staff members and students distributed 75,000 kits in more than 200 locations.

The greatest benefit sought by strategies like ESC and FSK, is not initially reaping decisions for Christ. Each strategy is designed to provide another exposure of relevant gospel truth, helping individuals in the process of coming to Christ. Both of these approaches reflect broad sowing strategies. Efforts in personal evangelism have also reflected a similar sensitivity to the process dimension of evangelism.

An Increasingly Optimistic Outlook

As leadership from many organizations reflects on the current trends in evangelism, there appears to be a growing optimism. The direction of this movement could be characterized as moving from a wall of frustration toward a window of opportunity. New understandings of our cultural context, new initiatives in evangelistic resources and approaches, and early evidences of increasing fruitfulness[11] are bringing about a growing expectancy in evangelism. While early evidence for progress is in reality slight, it is a step in a positive direction.

It is possible that the current cultural shifts may be opening hearts to the gospel rather than hardening of the soul of America. It may also be possible that the increased fruitfulness reflects the changes among believers as Christians become more sensitive to the needs, interests and spiritual process of others.

In light of the six trends suggested here, what could be expected in the future for parachurch evangelism? Will the parachurches be leading the body of Christ in evangelism or following the local church's lead? Given the new spirit of partnership and recent developments in thinking, strategies and resources, the future may be truly "para".[12] It may be a season in which the parachurch and local church will be advancing side by side.

NOTES

1. It is important to note the US Campus Ministry is just one of the over 35 ministries under the Campus Crusade for Christ umbrella. The cutting edge of the US Campus Ministry may or may not be similar to other CCC ministries depending on the segment of society seeking to be reached. Thus is would be unfair to assume these same trends are equally observable throughout the family of CCC ministries.

2. The emergence of mega-churches and the training networks that have resulted is one of many examples.

3. The Campus Ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ underwent a major restructuring in 1991-92 that among other things decentralized control and provided for increased leadership in evangelism at the local level.

4. The LC2 materials are currently in a test package format with full publication expected for the fall of 1998.

5. The evangelism leadership model was used to provide the framework for the "Foundations of Evangelism" class at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School during the summer of 1997. A family of resources is being developed related to this model, though most are currently in a field testing process.

6. This represented the estimated number of campuses on which an intentional evangelistic outreach was being conducted by one of the following organizations: Baptist Student Union, Campus Crusade for Christ, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship and Navigators.

7. During 1997-98, Steve Sawyer spoke on 34 campuses with 16,595 in attendance. In the winter of 1995, Steve expected to live only a few months. Steve's health and strength has since maintained, to the surprise of many but delight of the Campus Crusade for Christ staff family who prayed for him at the staff conferences of 1995 and 1997.

8. A second series of *LifeSkills* interactions has been developed concerning issues of success and personal topics like "Overcoming Obstacles: Barriers to Success" and Dealing With Setbacks: Detours on the Road to Success".

9. Every Student Choice campaigns available during the spring, 1998 addressed: Meaning in Life; Alcohol Use; Homosexuality; Comparative Religions; Racism; Safe Sex; and Easter.

10. The Spring, 1998 Freshmen Survival Kit contained a Bible, an evangelistic video concerning AIDS, a CD of Christian music by cutting-edge artists, a cassette regarding study skills, a pen and notepad promoting a web-site of additional resources, Josh McDowell's book *More than a Carpenter*, questionnaires requesting

more information, and coupons from national companies for soft-drinks, fast-food, etc.

11. Indicated decisions for Christ have increased by 270% in Campus Crusade's USCM from 1992-93 (approximately 3350) to 1996-97 (approximately 9113).

12. "Para" is a transliteration of the Greek word for "beside".

MAKING THE MOST OF POSTMODERNITY

Harry L. Poe

Modernity posed one of the greatest threats to Christianity that any culture has mounted. It achieved in Europe what it took the armies of Islam centuries to accomplish in the old Byzantine Empire. Always a hated enemy of Christian faith, Modernity became the world view in the West. Oddly enough, with the passing of Modernity, many Christians grieve as though the Faith itself were passing away. To an incredible extent, the western church appropriated the modern world view to such an extent that it cannot distinguish between Modern thinking and Christian thinking. Instead of lamenting the passing of Modernity and calling the troops to defend what remains of that godless ideology, Christians need to see what a gift God has given the church in the collapse of Modernity.

Postmodernity presents fewer barriers than Modernity for evangelism, but they are different barriers. Postmodernity threatens many evangelical scholars because it is new. Evangelicals have spent several centuries developing an arsenal of weapons to use against Modernity. To change the playing field now seems unfair. Like the generals of World War I who had spent a lifetime studying warfare, the evangelical theologian screams frantically, "I am ready for a cavalry charge, so don't introduce trench warfare. It's not fair. I don't know how to fight that way."

People also have a tendency to speak of Postmodernity as a completed age and world view. They even tend to give a date for its beginning; such as the fall of the Berlin Wall. Postmodernity did not begin with the fall of the Berlin Wall any more than the ancient world ended with the sack of Rome by Aleric. It takes time for one age to end and another to begin. The transition takes hundreds of years. We might say that Augustine laid the intellectual foundation for the medieval world with *The City of God*, yet it took five hundred years for that age to take full shape. In the same manner Thomas Aquinas laid the intellectual foundation for the modern world with the *Summa Theologica*. Again, it took five hundred years for the modern world to take shape.

Baby Boomers have always demanded total attention, so it is fitting that they believe they have ushered in a complete new age and defined the next millennium. No doubt the world is in the midst of a

Harry L. Poe is Associate Professor of Christian Studies at Union University, Jackson, Tennessee and Secretary of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education.

major transition in thought, politics, economics, art, technology, and religion. What will appear, however, is yet to be seen. Its boundaries will not be established in the life time of anyone living today. Though Postmodernity remains to be defined, it is now possible to give the post mortem of what it will replace. Whatever it becomes, it will no longer be the many things that defined Modernity.

The philosophers have not created Postmodernity. It has been slowly incubating as a reaction against and rejection of the flaws of Modernity. Not Derrida but George Lucas, Bill Gates, and Stephen Spielberg are the prophets of Postmodernity. The Academy no longer directs the intellectual currents of culture so much as it lags behind or reflects the tone of culture. The philosophers are merely trying to articulate a rationale for the direction of Postmodernity. What it shall be has yet to be seen and others may join the dialog of articulating life and thought in the Postmodern Age.

The Christian Faith has a marvelous opportunity during this pivotal period because Christianity has articulated the critique of Modernity in the past. Christians need not make the case for the existence of God or transcendent reality because Postmodernity has rejected empiricism as the only way of knowing. In this early stage, Postmodernity does not so much present a completed world view as it presents a plea for something more than the Modern Age had to offer. The faith that can answer the questions of the Postmodern mind will win that mind. The Christian faith has these answers because the gospel addresses the ultimate issues with which Postmodernity struggles.

THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

Modernists could not separate their opinion, system or ideology from "truth; therefore the Postmodernist has concluded there is no truth. Modernity was an age of ideological "isms" and scientific hubris. Eastern thought has always operated from a different system of logic while the West confused a logical system with the truth. Postmodernists are usually characterized as not believing in ultimate truth when in fact, they are more likely searching for the ultimate truth. For Christians, this search opens unparalleled opportunities for presenting the gospel. The challenge for Christians, however, lies in their own capacity to distinguish between their theological system and the ultimate truth of the gospel. All theology is wrong, though some is more wrong than others. Theology is meditation about God, though during the Modern Age the church has made theology a science.

THE DEATH OF EMPIRICISM

Reliance upon the senses and the scientific method created a world of absolute certainty during the Modern Age. Truth consisted in what could be proven empirically. Oddly enough, the Modern world made statements about the transcendent that it could not observe, verify, or falsify; such as the psychological view that the idea of God is a projection onto the universe. Modernity could not recognize realities that lay outside its frame of reference. The philosophers described this situation by calling religious categories "nonsense" and by dismissing them with the aphorism, "Whereof we cannot speak, thereof we must be silent."

In the complexity of life created by modernity and in the failure of science to answer the profoundest questions, people turned toward a search for the transcendent with the opposite assumption from Modernity: there is something out there that we cannot know through our senses. In this sense, Postmodernity has much in common with Pre-Modernity. Virtually any metaphysic is open to consideration. Christianity offers a way to know the transcendent world, and as such the Postmodern person will give it a fair hearing.

THE DEATH OF RATIONALISM

Rationalism was the twin sister of empiricism in the Modern Age. Christianity embraced rationalism with wanton abandon as it constructed highly rationalistic theological systems on the right and on the left. By buying into rationalism, Christianity accepted Modernity's loathing of paradox. How can you have A equals A and A does not equal A at the same time? Modernity would also ask how Christ could be both human and divine. The central truths of Christianity fall within the category of paradox, and they do not create the problem for the postmodern mind that they held for the modern mind. Scripture does not present faith in the kind of logical system that appeals to the rationalism of Modernity, but it does present truth in the patterns that appeal to Postmodernity.

THE DEATH OF IDEOLOGY

The Modern world had no binding ideological interpretation of reality, but it had many which claimed to be the truth: Fascism, Communism, Capitalism. During the Modern Age Christianity has had its share of ideologies that glorified an aspect of the truth to the exclusion of other dimensions of truth: Calvinism, Arminianism, Pietism, Pentecostalism, Puritanism, Dispensationalism, Fundamentalism, Modernism, Evangelicalism, Higher Criticism. The failure of ideology opens a door for the gospel, because the gospel has filled the void before in times of major cultural upheaval. The danger

for the church in this time of upheaval is in its preference to preach the old culture rather than the old, old story.

The Rejection of Authority

The death of ideology has its counterpart in the rejection of authority. No cause seems worthy. No leader seems worthy. People do not owe allegiance to institutions or employers. Traditional values have no claim on people that grasps their imagination. And why should people feel an obligation to follow the ruler of this present darkness? The church has an incredible opportunity to present Christ as the one worthy to follow. In those churches that have made great strides in reaching Baby Boomers and Busters, they find that this group which has rejected authority most loves to sing about the exalted Christ who holds all dominion as Lord. Postmodernity has not rejected the authority of Christ because most of those growing up in this New Age have never heard of him. They have rejected what they have seen, but they are actually on a quest to find a worthy authority.

Pluralism

Christianity has no special status in the Postmodern Age, but it is as valid as any other world view and worthy of exploring. Pluralism finally frees Christianity from cultural domination to an extent it has not enjoyed in the West since the great persecution under the Emperor Diocletian. In a "Christian culture" everyone is a "Christian"; therefore, nothing is expected other than assent. No sense of urgency pervades the church. The concerns tend to be parochial and sectarian in nature. After the success of the Counter Culture, Christianity lost its respectability in the major cultural centers of the United States. As this trend increases Christianity must return to the gospel in order to gain adherents. Christianity can offer no other advantages in Postmodernity than Christ himself. While pluralism offers a great opportunity for Christians to return to the gospel as their primary point of orientation, the danger remains that Christians will attempt to hold on to an idealized past in response to pluralism and withdraw to themselves in order to preserve a peculiar cultural orientation to their faith.

Relationship

In a highly mobile society accompanied by the breakdown of the extended family as well as the traditional family unit, relationship has become an increasingly valuable commodity because it is so difficult to obtain and maintain. The Postmodern Age is an anonymous age with a yearning for relationship. Existential isolation has come

to full flower as people seek relationship through joining formal small groups and develop anonymous relationships over the Internet. People will talk about emotions, feelings, failures, dreads, aspirations, and inadequacies before perfect strangers in a plea for attention and caring relationship. In this climate, the central Christian teaching of a God who made himself manifest in human form in order to seek relationship with people stands in stark contrast to the kind of impersonal deity of eastern religion or the judgmental and condemning God of Islam. The Incarnation was an embarrassment to the Modern Age, but it makes good sense to an age dying for meaningful relationship.

Spirituality

Modern liberal and evangelical theology became respectable by intellectualizing the spiritual domain out of theology. The spiritual was left to Pentecostals and Catholics who had the common decency to "do it" according to a tradition which could be rationalized in the modern world as aesthetic. People with a postmodern orientation have no difficulty with the supernatural in the Bible, but unlike most contemporary Christians, they also have no difficulty with the supernatural occurring today, A plethora of explanations and speculations about the spirit world are currently available. The church has an opportunity to interpret this reality to a pagan world in a way it has not had since Patrick landed on the shores of Ireland fifteen hundred years ago. People are now prepared to accept spiritual reality. The question remains whether or not the church will be prepared to talk about such things.

Integration

Postmodernity has rejected the segmentation of knowledge and the segmentation of experience. Integration and holistic thinking have become hallmarks of the emerging postmodern mind. The church in the West adopted Modernity's segmentation and specialization wholeheartedly in the organization of theological education and the administration of denominational bureaucracy. The Academy has the tendency to regard the way it does things as the way to do things. Christianity has the opportunity to show people in the Postmodern Age what it means to experience peace, shalom, not as the world gives, but as only God can give. This wholeness that affects every aspect of life has not been particularly visible in the Christianity of Modernity, but those closets of Christianity that are wed to Modernity will die out.

CONCLUSION

No country, culture, society, or civilization has ever lasted. God has judged them all and found them lacking. The prophets of Israel described this process in detail, yet God's people continue to cling to the romantic notion that their country or culture or society or civilization is just what God had in mind. At the ascension the disciples were still asking if the kingdom was about to be restored to first century Israel, but that Israel's time was past.

The Book of Revelation describes the final judgment of nations and cultures and individual hearts. The success of the gospel does not depend upon the continuation of Modernity any more than the success of God depended on the continuation of first century Israel. In each age and place, however, God opens a door through which the gospel can pass. It keeps the church from growing lazy. And it reminds us that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels."

A RESPONSE TO LYLE SCHALLER'S *TATTERED TRUST*

FROM A LUTHERAN PERSPECTIVE

Kent R. Hunter

It is somewhat presumptuous to talk about the perspective of Lutherans. There is no one Lutheran church in the United States today, but many different branches of Lutheranism. The largest is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, followed by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. There is also the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, American Association of Lutheran Churches, Apostolic Lutheran Church of America, Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America, Church of the Lutheran Confession, Evangelical Lutheran Synod, The Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations, and Lutheran Churches of the Reformation. While most of these Lutheran churches have a common theological heritage, they would reflect a wide divergence of polity and represent a variety of locations on the relatively conservative Lutheran theological scale.

When reflecting on Schaller's book *Tattered Trust* from the Lutheran perspective, I first looked at some of the premises, or assumptions, on which this book is written. I looked at these not only from my own perspective, but from those of several denominational leaders of various Lutheran bodies whom I interviewed by phone in September 1997.

Schaller's first premise is "...the need for initiating responsible leadership." Leighton Ford has identified a distinction between empire builders and Kingdom builders. Another way of talking about this is the difference between transformational leadership and transactional leadership. This is clearly a challenge among Lutherans in the United States.

Further, from my own observation as a church consultant, there is a dynamic at work in local congregations today that is especially helpful for understanding the tendency toward a post denominational structure. The Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, are beginning to take over the power centers of local churches. This is a generation noted for being task-oriented.

Kent R. Hunter is President of the Church Growth Center in Corunna, Indiana.

They are inspired by a vision, and they have a different view of money than their predecessors. Boomers are consumer-oriented, challenge authority, and reflect low institutional loyalty. The Builder Generation, born before 1946, is presently losing congregational control. Sometimes they are reactionary and threatened.

There is a unique struggle within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, since this body was previously merged from the former LCA (Lutheran Church in America) and the ALC (American Lutheran Church). The LCA has come from a polity that reflects a top, hierarchical view of structure, while the ALC came from a more congregational polity. The merged denomination is still struggling with the combination of these two styles of government. In the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, one noted denominational leader indicated that approximately 15 % of those in leadership at this time follow a strongly hierarchical model which is patterned after a Roman Catholic view of church polity, reflecting a strong priority for correctness, control, and conformity. Unfortunately, the majority of the denomination, particularly the Baby Boomers, have little or no respect for that leadership - not even the style.

Schaller's second premise is "...the normal...tendency for aging institutions to become self-centered...." Some attempts have been made within Lutheranism for a decentralization with deployed staff and listening posts. There are some champions within the denominational bureaucracies who are trying to reinvent the denomination to become more of a networking process. In my interviews with them, they admitted that they are by far the minority group in the bureaucracy and there is some significant question about whether they could succeed.

In most of the Lutheran traditions, denominational leadership pursues with passion certain agendas for which local congregations have little interest or involvement. This further strains the sense of ownership which is already eroding quickly among constituent congregations and their members. Among the two largest Lutheran bodies, the ELCA leadership is pursuing headlong into issues like interdenominational cooperative structures and inclusiveness, while in the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, the leadership has provided a definition of Lutheranism that is culturally and stylistically traditionalism. I have dealt with these various issues -- and how the church must renew (reform) itself -- in my book, *Confessions of a Church Growth Enthusiast: An Evangelical, Confessional Lutheran Takes a Hard Look at the Church Growth Movement.*

The third premise of Schaller's book is " about living with the consequences of earlier decisions." This is the issue of former mergers and prior activities which have brought together people of divergent backgrounds, a factor particularly significant for the ELCA. Surprisingly, this denomination, in August 1997, declared full communion with the Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church, and the United Church of Christ. The church-wide assembly only narrowly defeated a motion to establish full communion with the Episcopal Church. Interestingly, these decisions were made on what appears to be a priority for polity, rather than doctrinal issues - which is somewhat of a departure from the history of Lutheranism. It may be a reflection of a new ecumenism, which will be discussed below.

A fourth contributing factor is hinted at by Dr. Schaller at the very beginning of the book when he provides a statement about new wineskins, and at the very end of the book, when he speaks of spiritual renewal. New wine and the problem of old wineskins is a significant issue in the new structures that God is raising up today. In Acts 7, Stephen, the Evangelist, is stoned to death because he elevates the mission above customs and temples. In Acts 15, the first Jerusalem council is about refocusing on the essence of the faith and separating it from the externals of culture and habits. Jesus was constantly at odds with the Pharisees who were focused, to a great degree, on traditions -something Jesus called "straining at gnats." In Matthew 15:2-3, Jesus reserved severe words for these rigid religious traditionalists. The Pharisees were challenging Jesus saying, "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders?" "Why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?" In John 15, Jesus talks about the vine and the branches and reflects that branches that don't produce fruit are cut off.

It is my perception that there are whole branches of Christendom, including some denominations, in which many have lost sight of their primary driving purpose and, in the providence of God, are being either pruned or cut off because of their unfruitfulness. From a management perspective, it would be, as Peter Drucker reflects: *if you forget what business you're in, you start to go out of business.* Among some Lutherans, the mission to make disciples has been sidetracked by the missions of merger and inclusiveness. Among other Lutherans, the mission is confused with the priority to protect the truth, or a mission of intentionally trying to revert back to the 1950's or before - sort of a Lutheran/Amish approach, thinly disguised as being "faithful to the truth." The net result is a lack of focus on the mission, which results in ineffectiveness.

In his book, Lyle Schaller has focused significantly on the trust issue. I believe there is another dynamic at work as well, reflective of the fact that we live in an age of networking. Today people socialize differently, having fewer friends more carefully chosen. In other words, people experience *affinity by shared values.* This happens among Lutherans within their denominations, as well as Lutherans between Lutheran denominations. It also happens among Lutherans who are involved in Promise Keepers, Bible Study Fellowship, the Gideons, etc. This, in my perception, is a

new form of ecumenism where *the organizing principle is shared values without superstructure*. This is especially true among those who recognize that America has become a mission field. On the mission field, one cannot do ministry alone. Isolationism in ministry to a pre-Christian culture is ecclesiastical suicide.

Trust is fostered by shared values. Denominational bureaucrats who stand for values tend to foster trust in their constituents. However, the majority of denominational leaders are more characterized as politicians interested in institutional survival, which among constituents, fosters distrust. Furthermore, leadership is in crisis simply by definition. If as Ken Blanchard has said, "The key to leadership today is influence, not authority," to what degree do denominational hierarchies influence congregations or pastors? The answer is: Much less than they used to.

Another key issue from Schaller's book is the challenge that churches face in the power shift from professionals to laity. Both hierarchical thinking and control orientation make the shift very difficult. Yet the rank and file church members are getting more involved in ministry, which the mission field nature of a post-Christian society requires.

Schaller also notes that as America has become a mission field, effective churches must become indigenous to reach people who have no Christian memory. This is a significant point of tension among Lutherans in the United States which usually surfaces as contemporary worship services are started. While denominational leaders frequently see this as the problem, new worship styles are actually a consequence of a new paradigm of the church which is mission driven, rather than motivated by traditionalism or the perpetuation of a certain corporate culture. The real issue is a redefinition of the primary purpose of the church from seeing the church as perpetuating a certain style, or defending the truth, to having its primary purpose as sharing that truth.

Whenever old structures begin to crumble, one of the sure signs that change is occurring is the development of new vehicles of connectedness. Among Lutherans, this would include the Lutheran Charismatic Movement and Renewal in Missouri (the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod), the Great Commission Network, the Lutheran Awakening Movement, the Association of Courageous Churches, the Association of Great Commission Churches, and several others. These movements, associations, and other alternatives are in their infancy stage. But they probably reflect the need for an alternative to what is increasingly perceived to be a dysfunctional, irrelevant way of doing church as we approach the 21st Century.

A RESPONSE TO LYLE SCHALLER'S *TATTERED TRUST*

FROM A PRESBYTERIAN PERSPECTIVE

Richard Stoll Armstrong

This is a difficult book to summarize. Lyle Schaller raises many questions, some of which he answers, but most of which are posed for the reader's serious contemplation.

The subtitle of the book is itself a question: *Is There Hope for Your Denomination?* Not much, one would have to conclude after reading the book. Yet Schaller identifies himself as a denominationalist, and he lists several reasons why one should care about the future of his or her denomination. Responding to his invitation to add to that list, let me suggest the following thoughts, as one who belongs to a so-called "connectional" church:

1. Denominations can mass produce curriculum materials that are reflective of the denomination's theology, traditions, and trends, and do so more economically and efficiently than local churches can do for themselves.

2. Denominations have political clout. They can speak to national issues from a greater position of strength than can individual congregations

3. Denominations can facilitate and encourage ecumenical dialogue and cooperation, as representatives of denominational structures speak to their counterparts at various judicatory levels.

4. Denominational representatives can engage in and encourage inter-faith dialogue with other religious hierarchies.

5. From a Presbyterian point of view, our denominational polity provides for an ordered system of discipline, with rights of trial and appeal, fair representation, horizontally and vertically shared mission and stewardship planning and implementation, and so forth. We are a constitutional church. Our polity is reflective of basic principles to which we are held accountable at all levels. It is our polity that uniquely defines us, and in my view it is worth preserving.

6. Denominations can encourage their constituents to rise above their local prejudices and to take higher stands than they might otherwise be willing to take--on difficult social issues, for example. Our representative General Assembly under the guidance of the

Richard Stoll Armstrong is Ashen Felter Professor of Mission and Evangelism Emeritus, Princeton Theological Seminary, and former Editor of the *Journal of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education.*

Holy Spirit speaks to though not necessarily for our whole denomination. Two of our basic principles are that "God alone is Lord of the conscience" and "people of good characters and principles may differ."

Some cynics might add still another reason for denominations: The bureaucracy provides job opportunities for a lot of folks!

Reasons for caring about the future of denominations and the hope of their survival are quite different, however. The hope of survival lies in their willingness to change, and Schaller seems less sanguine about that. Since he is fond of raising questions, there are some questions I should like to raise for our continued discussion of his book.

1. In Chapter 2 is there a tacit acceptance or even blessing of the assumption of congregational competition? Like the homogeneous unit principle, it may be a demonstrable fact, but is it universally the case, and should it be a motivating principle for mission strategy?

2. Is there in Chapter 3 and indeed throughout the book an underlying assumption that bigger is always better? How much bigger? In what ways better?

3. When Schaller points out that churches which are effectively reaching those born after 1955 are spending more resources on "transforming believers into disciples and challenging and training disciples to be engaged in doing ministry than are devoted to persuading nonbelievers to become believers," is this not an inappropriate contrast? Disciples exist to make disciples! What member of the AETE would not agree that evangelism *includes* but is not limited to "persuading nonbelievers to become believers"?

4. Does Schaller believe that one of the reasons the independent churches are growing is that they lay more stress on maintenance than on mission? It sounds that way at times, though there are notable exceptions.

5. Is Schaller consistent in his treatment of the crisis of trust? He seems to vary in his use of the word and its opposite (distrust). Sometimes, for example, it applies to trusting the leadership of the laity; sometimes it applies to trusting the truthfulness or the intentions of church bureaucrats.

6. Where does Schaller get his figures? "20 percent of all pastors, given the appropriate appointment and a tenure of at least fifteen years, are equipped to lead a successful relocation effort" (p.71). "Currently no more than 10 percent of all American Protestant congregations possess the discretionary resources required to implement this strategy" (p. 76). His sweeping generalizations need documentation!

7. When Schaller raises the issue of "confessionalism" vs. "Theological pluralism," is it not legitimate to ask, Cannot a confessional church be theologically pluralistic? How does he define theological pluralism in order to justify such an exclusive contrast?

To the list in Chapter 3 of the disadvantages of being an independent congregation I would add the following two: (a) there are no higher judicatories or ecclesiastical courts to settle church fights, exercise discipline, or rule on matters of heresy (witness the infamous case of Jim Jones and the People's Temple); and (b) independent churches are not immune to the inevitable tendency to become institutionalized and to begin to act like denominations (witness the Southern Baptist Convention).

Schaller is quite right when he declares "This book is largely about polity." When he raises the question of "vertical bonds" vs. "horizontal bonds," I am moved to comment that Presbyterian polity calls for both. In fact, after reading Chapter 4 I must say that Schaller either misunderstands or misrepresents the Presbyterian system, which is based on the principles (among others) of servant leadership, the parity of the clergy, the equal participation of the laity in the governance of the church, representative government, and the affirmation that all power is shared power. Of his seventeen examples of systemic distrust in the United Methodist Church, only two are fully applicable to our denomination, four are partially applicable, and eleven do not apply at all.

Yet much of what Schaller has to say does apply to us Presbyterians, as well as to other mainliners. Our denomination in recent years has certainly been guilty of "majoring in minors," some would even say to the point of having a death wish! Strong leadership is as crucial to our denomination and our churches as it is to all other denominations. I would argue, however, that the reasons for the membership decline of the Presbyterian Church (USA) has far less to do with its polity than with its failure to do the work of evangelism.

The reader of *Tattered Trust* is often forced to make choices between valid alternatives. To be sure, this is both characteristic of Schaller and often his way of being deliberately provocative. But are his dichotomies always appropriate? Does he not present some either/or choices to which one wants to reply, "Not this *or* that, but both this *and* that!" For example, he asks, "Is the Christian faith a revealed religion that was disclosed by God in the birth, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the Holy Scriptures for all generations to come? Or is Christianity a religion that both expects and obligates each generation to reinterpret and redefine the faith?" Isn't it both? Other either/or choices in Chapter 9 are either not parallel or inappropriate. When he asks, for example, "Should a guiding assumption [for denominations] be that the laity and congregational leaders cannot be trusted? Or that they can be trusted?

Will the new structure be built on trust or distrust? My response is that it is not a matter of trust; it has to do with understanding human nature!

Notwithstanding the above questions and comments, I found this to be a most interesting and helpful book, with plenty of food for thought and discussion. Certainly there is no one more highly qualified to write such a book than Lyle Schaller, and for the fact that he has done so we can all be grateful.

A RESPONSE TO LYLE SCHALLER'S *TATTERED TRUST*

FROM A SOUTHERN BAPTIST PERSPECTIVE

Ronald W. Johnson

The Southern Baptist Convention was founded by leaders who were said to have possessed, "kingdom vision." This vision established very early in its history a priority for mission and evangelism. In fact, evangelism was at the heart of the development of the convention's programs and agencies in the formative years. Rhetoric surrounding the priority of evangelism and mission remains high to the present day. However, the rhetoric around the mission and evangelism program of Southern Baptists outpaces praxis. The problem is complex.

In the last 20 years, Southern Baptists have undergone debilitating controversy that has broken the heart of its Bold Mission commitment. Conflict over Scripture, church polity, women in ministry, the seminaries, the agencies and state conventions have added fuel to the destructive fires that have raged against the evangelistic passion that founded the Convention. Fundamentalists who had long felt themselves ignored or excluded from leadership positions within the Convention organized in the early 80s to capture the Convention and to move it to a commitment to Biblical inerrancy. Moderates who fought to keep the Convention committed to historic Baptist principles, as they interpreted them, found themselves suddenly ousted from leadership positions and influence. The moderates, while struggling to win the political battles, increasingly withdrew, finally accepted defeat and most became allied to a body called the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a group that affirmed the principles moderates cherished.

As hurtful as the fundamentalist/moderate controversy has been to Baptist evangelism and mission a larger problem challenges the Convention. Southern Baptists are locked in modernity and have embraced the corporate model of mission for so long that the Convention is finding it increasingly difficult to interface with the changing postmodern worldview. The SBC has depended on institutional loyalty for its mission and evangelism programs throughout its most productive growth. The World War II generation has pro-

Ronald W. Johnson is Arnall Mann Thompson Professor of Christian Mission and Evangelism at Mercer University School of Theology and Treasurer of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education.

vided that loyalty and funded its growth. The assumptive growth is not likely to occur with subsequent generations who are less loyal to institutions.

The shifts of postmodernism have also fed the autonomous spirits within the states, associations and local churches. Controversy and institutional suspicion have increased to the point where many state convention bodies and local churches are, "thinking more locally." Increasingly, many Baptists are moving away from corporate "cooperation" as a model to more of an individual or "kingdom" model of mission and evangelism.

The image of Southern Baptists and their mission and evangelism programs has been portrayed somewhat optimistically by authors in the past, especially when they compare Southern Baptist records in evangelism with those of many mainline churches. However, reality is that Southern Baptists have not done evangelism as effectively as they have reported. A report published by Southern Baptists indicated as many as 60% of the reported baptisms in churches during the year are re-baptisms and that less than 1/2 of 1 of their membership actually bothers to share their faith in the larger society. While membership increases in Southern Baptist churches, few of them notice the losses. Nearly every program in Southern Baptist life reported losses last year. Baptisms are lower today than they were in the 1970s with nearly twice the membership. The emergence of the mega-churches in Southern Baptist life has drained the life out of smaller churches that surround them. Today in Georgia, the second largest state convention, nearly 1400 churches are at risk and face uncertain futures given their present state of health and direction.

To further cite the problem that the SBC faces, there are cultural controversies that are dividing the churches with regard to styles of worship. While some churches are dumbing down worship others are clinging to traditions that are killing them. The average age of a typical Southern Baptist is now 53. Many are full of white hair. Some churches are trying to blend worship but most are struggling to find the right mix.

Many churches in the SBC are looking to more inductive models for evangelism and ministry because they have recognized the deductive programs offered by the convention's publishing houses do not work in their locales. Each of the key agencies in the SBC have been forced to re-structure and to lay off workers due to the lack of sales of products or participation in their programming. While some will point to the controversy as the problem in SBC life the larger issues related to the cultural shifts going on in the world are the greater concern. At the present time, while the rhetoric of leaders celebrates a return to Biblical roots for the SBC, challenges related to the larger cultural problem are largely ignored. Southern Baptists, unless they meet the challenge of a changing culture head

on, are going to become a victim of the changes in spite of their optimism.

Challenges for the Future

Southern Baptists will survive in the culture if they re-capture one of their greatest strengths, the planting of churches. The greatest successes from within the culture have historically come to Southern Baptists on the heels of new churches. But the new churches must be very contextualized within the culture. Southern Baptists will have to learn to listen to the culture more intently and to plant churches in locales that are open and fully able to dialogue with the culture around them.

Ethnically diverse churches must be encouraged. Language groups must be supported and allowed to develop into churches that serve ethnic populations in the cities. More ethnic leadership needs to be encouraged at the national level in the agencies of the SBC to reflect the needs of new ethnic churches and blended churches.

Entrepreneurialism must be fostered in the seminaries. The six traditional SBC seminaries and the new regional seminaries that have emerged within the last decade must teach postmodern seminary students how to create new ministries in a variety of new opportunities within the culture. If Southern Baptists believe they will be able to place all their seminary students in traditional roles of ministry they are not looking at the demographic realities. Secondly, they are not grappling with the increased population of women in the regional seminaries who are largely banned from pastoring within the traditional churches of the SBC. Creative ministries will need to be researched and explored if students are to have broad opportunities for the future in ministry.

Southern Baptist churches will need to invest in small groups as the primary method of doing evangelism and discipleship. This is especially true among those who are seekers and those who do not know the protocol of church life. Small groups offer the best opportunity to truly penetrate the culture around a church.

Ministry-based evangelism must be the order of the day. Southern Baptists have had a running debate about social ministry and evangelism for decades. But all the evidence shows that the churches that invest in ministry-based approaches are the ones doing the best job of evangelism and discipleship. The model must be multiplied throughout the SBC.

Lastly, Southern Baptists must learn to listen to the culture. It must become more involved in social science to the extent that churches can understand trends in the culture and the search for meaning that is present in every generation.

A RESPONSE TO LYLE SCHALLER'S TATTERED TRUST FROM A UNITED METHODIST'S PERSPECTIVE

Woody Davis

It is quite an honor, and a bit intimidating, to be asked to respond as a United Methodist to Dr. Lyle Schaller's *Tattered Trust*. Dr. Schaller is the foremost church consultant of our day and a fellow United Methodist. Much of *Tattered Trust* was originally written as a book for United Methodists about United Methodists. Therefore, this author's contribution will be one of providing shading and nuances to the more substantive work of Dr. Schaller. It is based on the author's experience of serving for four years as the Oklahoma Conference Teacher of Evangelism. This position allowed for both long term and in-depth study of the churches in a single judicatory. It provides the basis for the following response to Schaller's work in three main areas: the unfelt (to the church) earthquake, the problem of leadership, and the question of renewal.

The Unfelt Earthquake

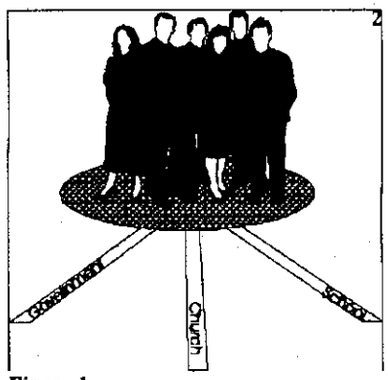


Figure 1

In chapter 1, Schaller describes the earthquake that has shaken American society in the last half of the twentieth century. The earthquake opened a fissure between the church and society at large in the United States. Prior to the earthquake the church was considered one leg of the three-legged stool which supported society (See Figure 1).

Woody L. Davis is Director of Evangelism and Congregational Development for the East Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The church, the government and the schools were perceived as public institutions that worked in unspoken relationship with one another. Some signs of that relationship include the "blue laws" which reserved Sunday for church activity, and the unofficial reservation of Wednesday evening as "church night;" and, most significantly, the daily public school ritual of reciting in tandem the Pledge of Allegiance and the Lord's Prayer. The Supreme Court's O'Hare decision marked a watershed in American cultural history. Indeed, it was part of the earthquake, because it marked the movement of the church and the Christian faith from the public sphere to the private. Since the O'Hare decision the church has been increasingly perceived by those outside the church as a private organization. As a result, the church has become a ghetto which is relationally and culturally distant from the rest of society.

Much has been written about the church's cultural distance and the need to become more seeker sensitive. But one of the learnings in the author's work with the United Methodist Churches of the Oklahoma Conference was the extent to which people within the church have isolated and insulated themselves from the rest of the community. In case after case, he observed a great divide in the Sunday morning community gathering place--the local restaurant. The unchurched people arrive before the church people and sit on one side of the cafe, McDonalds, or other restaurant. Frequently when someone new comes in, they are greeted by those already seated and the person will move from table to table talking with the people there. When Sunday School lets out, and again when worship lets out, the church crowd arrives. They are dressed differently and they act differently. Rarely do they speak to those who are already there. Nor do they sit in the same area. Often there is an almost visible wall down the middle of the restaurant separating the two, and it has nothing to do with smoking preference!

That is a picture of churched/unchurched relations in that community, and it is equally true in the small town and the city. The author has observed the same behavior in a McDonalds in a city of 100,000 and in Alice's Cafe in a town of 700. And that picture is confirmed by another frequent experience. Upon arriving in a community to begin a consultation, he would stop at various businesses to ask directions to the church. Most often people who were not active in a church had only a vague notion of where the churches were located. In contrast, active church folks could give the of several churches and the reason is clear: they could generally name friend who attend those churches. The church ghetto is not a geographic one. It is one defined by relationships.

Those relationships become increasingly limited to churched people the longer a person is active in a church. Participants in Grow Your Faith and Give It Away, a 13 week faith-sharing training course offered in churches throughout the state, were asked to complete a FRAN Plan (Friends, Relatives, Acquaintances, and Neighbors who are unchurched). In church after church long-term members echoed the statement of one participant: "I hate the FRAN Plan! It shows me I don't know anybody outside the church." In a survey of 1303 worship attenders in Oklahoma United Methodist churches, the average length of membership was 16 years! Over 65% (n=847) had been members of their respective churches 5 years or longer. Among those 847, only 33 indicated they had even one unchurched person among their five closest friends. The remaining 814 had no unchurched close friends. In contrast, among those who had been members of the church less than five years, the mean score for unchurched friends was 2.89. Long-term Methodists cannot say with John Wesley, "The world is my parish." They would have to say, "My parish is my world."

People are not likely to share the gospel with others if they won't even greet them in the restaurant, as the unchurched people do.[1] The study noted above gave clear evidence of the impact of relational distance on personal evangelism. Participants were asked how likely the would be to invite someone to church, or to visit, telephone, or host someone after they had attended, or how likely the were to share their faith. They responded to each of these with regard to a friend or relative, an acquaintance, or someone they had just met. Scores ranged from a high of 6.33 (on a 7 point scale) for inviting a friend or relative, to a low of 4.24 for visiting a church visitor whom the participant did not know, with the participant leading the visit.[2] In all cases, as relational distance increased, likelihood of engaging in the action decreased, as illustrated in Figure 2.

[1]It should be recognized that the unchurched people in the cafe or restaurant have formed their own Sunday morning community there. The church people do not speak to them (or other church folk who are there) because they have already experienced their community at church. One effective means of evangelism is to enter into the unchurched Sunday morning community and develop a seekers' group from within it.

[2]The visitation questions distinguish between visits led by the participants and visits led by another person.

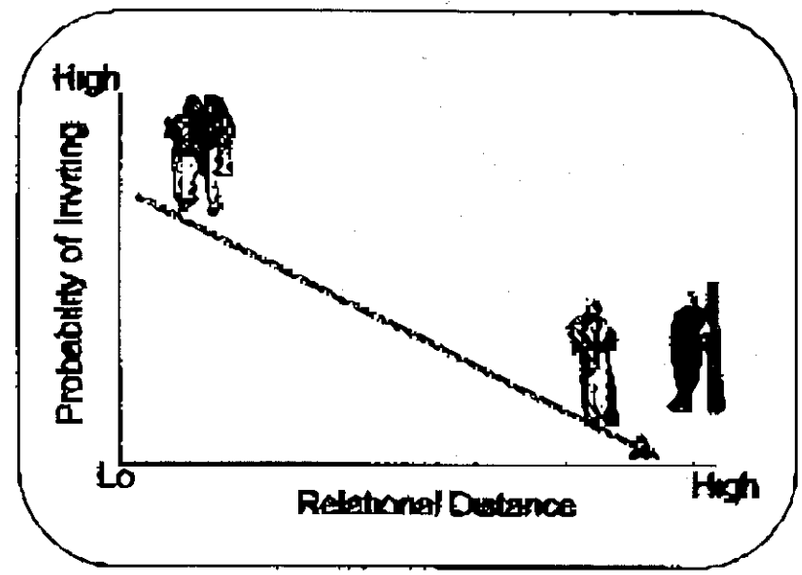


Figure 2

The participants feelings about engaging in such activities was confirmed by their reports of the extent to which they had actually done so in the preceding month. Seventy-two percent had not invited anyone to church, and 76% had not shared their faith. Correlation between these behaviors and number of unchurched friends was .88 and .87, respectively. That is, as the number of unchurched friends increased, the likelihood of inviting and sharing increased. Correlation with length of membership was -.85 and -.82. That is, as the length of membership increased, the likelihood of inviting and sharing decreased.

The relational ghetto has at least two implications for evangelism. First, in the great number of churches that are filled with long-term members, two strategies are paramount: 1) Make intentional use of every new person's web of relationships during the first 18-24 months they are in the church, especially if they are new Christians or people who have been inactive for an extended period of time. Too often churches assume or hope that new people will bring their unchurched friends, but do not work strategically to assist them in that ministry. 2) Help the long term members become aware of unchurched persons in their daily routine, teach them steps for building new friendships with them, and provide a support system for them during the process. Many church members, especially in town/rural settings where many of our churches are, have not initiated a new relationship since junior or

senior high! In the urban setting they are often fearful of strangers. In either case, they don't know how to proceed and are intimidated by the prospect. They fear it would take a major investment of time which they don't feel they have to give.

The church must help its people get over that hurdle. For example, Sue, a participant in Grow Your Faith and Give It Away, built a relationship with a WalMart associate who had a sour look on her face every time she saw her at the store. Sue began by catching her eye and smiling at her on her weekly trip to WalMart. Then she began to say "Hi" to her. Then she began initiating a series of brief conversations about work. After a few weeks she began to talk with the woman a little longer about family. Sue continued in a similar vein until she built enough of a relationship to invite the woman to a Bible study in a neighbor's home. Several months later the woman made a faith commitment. That is a process any of our church folks could do, if we would but help them.

A second implication of the relational ghetto is the wisdom of Schaller's suggested strategy of starting new congregations. New congregations typically show 65%-80% profession of faith growth. The North Carolina United Methodist Church Conference started 75 viable churches between 1953 and 1998. That amounts to 9% of the churches in the conference, yet that 9% accounts for 65% of the professions of faith in that period.[3] Even in new churches where the majority of growth does not show on paper as professions of faith, the transfer growth they experience comes largely from people who had given up on the church. In a 10.5 year period from 1987 to 1998 the North Georgia Conference started 50 new churches. Those churches received 21,000 new members--1/3 by profession of faith, 1/3 by transfer from other Methodist churches, 1/3 by transfer from other denominations. But of those 14,000 transfers, 85% had not been active in any church for 5 or more years.[4]

Why do we see these two effects? First, because interested seekers know that they will have to climb over fewer barriers in a new church. As one man said in an interview, "I knew everybody would be new and I wouldn't have to 'break in.'" Second, and similarly, inactive church folks know they will have a chance for involvement. Another woman said, "I just got frustrated at the church I was at about 8 years ago, because the same people made all

[3]Seminar notes: Stephen Compton, "Developing a Conference-Wide Strategy," School of New Congregational Development (Fort Lauderdale, FL) 20 March 1998.

[4]Seminar notes: Charles Barnes, "Funding New Congregational Development in Your Annual Conference," School of New Congregational Development (Fort Lauderdale, FL) 20 March 1998.

the decisions all the time. I figured I'd get a chance to do something since this was a new church." Both these kinds of people have their primary relationships among unchurched people. There is a rich pool of unchurched people from which the new church can draw because of its attractiveness to these two kinds of people. Simply put, the new congregation is uniquely positioned to bridge the relational chasm created by the earthquake.

The Problem of Leadership

In the introduction to chapter 6, "What Are The Best Strategies," Schaller says, "Why not focus solely on planting new missions? Or on revitalizing long-established churches? One reason is the shortage of pastors with the skills, gifts, and experience required to implement any one of these twelve components of a larger strategy."[5] He then estimates that 10-15% have the skills and temperament to start new churches, 5-10% have the skills and temperament to transform old churches and up to 20%[6] have the skills and temperament to relocate churches. There is some over-lap of the skills and temperament required for each of these. This is especially true of the personality characteristics associated with those who successfully lead organizations through positive change. Such "leadership" characteristics include but are not limited to independence, determination, courage, vision, imaginativeness, and ambition.

In 1992 the Office of Research of the General Council on Ministries of the United Methodist Church conducted a free-response survey of 596 laity[7] who were demographically representative of the membership of the denomination to determine the values laity seek in pastors. The research team's content analysis of the responses yielded twenty-one characteristics. Interestingly, this set of characteristics breaks down neatly along the relational to instrumental continuum which gender research over the past 30

[5]Lyle E. Schaller, *Tattered Trust: Is There Hope for Your Denomination?* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 69.

[6]The author would contend that 20% is quite high for an estimate of potential relocation pastors. The relocation pastor has to have all the skills of the transformation pastor, plus has the added burden of helping a congregation let go of their sacred place where memories of parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren reside.

[7]L.H. Weems, Jr., M.L. Griffith, and J.C. Ashcroft, "Pastoral Leadership: Admired Values and Essential Skills Identified by United Methodist Laity" (Dayton: United Methodist General Council on Ministries, 1993).

years has indicated underlies North American culture's definition of masculinity and femininity.[8] Another way of viewing these characteristics would be to see the connection between the relational dimension and the "chaplaincy" pastoral model, and the connection between the instrumental dimension and the leadership pastoral model. (See Table 1.)

VALUES SOUGHT IN PASTORS BY LAITY
(with percentage of respondents naming each characteristic)

Culturally "Feminine" (Chaplaincy Model) RELATIONAL		NEUTRAL		Culturally "Masculine" (Leadership Model) INSTRUMENTAL	
Caring	43.5%	Honest	41.5%	Independent	3.3%
Cooperative	41.5%	Broad-minded	19.2%	Determined	3.2%
Spiritual	23.9%	Inspiring	16.4%	Courageous	3.2%
Self-controlled	12.0%	Intelligent	10.4%	Straight-forward	1.9%
Loyal	11.1%	Mature	3.3%	Forward-looking	1.6%
Supportive	8.8%	Dependable	2.8%	Imaginative	0.9%
Fair-minded	2.6%	Competent	1.8%	Ambitious	0.5%

Table 1

Clearly those instrumental characteristics that work together with a mix of the relational and neutral characteristics to produce a leader are not valued by those who participated in this study. In other words, United Methodists in the pews are not looking for leaders in the pulpit. The result: what the church wants, the church gets. Those who are attracted into the Methodist ministry tend to identify more with the relational end of the continuum than the instrumental. The author conducted a study involving a sample of 100 unchurched male graduate students at a large midwestern university and 100 male graduate students at a Methodist-related seminary. Using the Bem Sex Role Inventory, the author found that 63.6% of the unchurched university students were masculine sex-typed (i.e. they identified primarily with the instrumental dimension), compared

[8]cf. D. Bakan, *The Duality of Human Existence* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966); S. Bem, "The Measurement of Psychological Androgyny," *Journal of Personality* 40 (1974): 17-46; A.B. Heilbrun Jr., "Measurement of Masculine and Feminine Sex Role Identities as Independent Dimensions," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 44 (1976): 183-190; J.T. Spence, "Gender Identity and its Implications for the Concepts of Masculinity and Femininity," *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation* 14 (1984): 59-95.

with only 37% of the seminary students.[9] This is one of the reasons no more than 15% of our pastors who have the temperament to lead churches through change or to establish new churches.

It is also one of the reasons that the United Methodist Church is losing a number of its few leadership model young pastors to other dimensions. Visionary change in an organization that does not value change inevitably leads to conflict. In the United Methodist system of distrust, that conflict often leads to the church pressuring the bishop and the cabinet to move the pastor. The church turns up the heat by withholding payment of their apportionments. Frequently the cabinet caves in, choosing to avoid the short-term loss, rather than live through it for the long term gain.[10] The pastor is defined as the problem, moved, and told that he or she needs to "be more pastoral." For example, one pastor was a victim of the revolt that often comes in the fourth or fifth year, when the power begins to shift to the pastor. He was told by his district superintendent, "You have to understand that this is a family systems church" The implication was that he should have worked *with* that dysfunctional system, rather than work to change it. This author's interviews with pastors who were leaving the denomination indicates that his experience is not the exception. And because most of these pastors were born after the earthquake, they do not have the institutional loyalty that caused their predecessors to simply put up with the system. When they are recruited by one of the made-in-America denominations who value the leadership model of pastoral ministry they seize the opportunity and go. In the past five years this author has witnessed what, on a percentage basis, is an alarming exodus of some of the best young pastors who could offer hope to the system. This would suggest that unless there is a change in how the bishops and cabinets respond, there will be a shrinking pool of pastors with the temperament to plan new United Methodist missions and lead the transformation and/or relocation of existing churches. At the same time, the church has ordained and retained a number of ineffective pastors because of the inability of district committees and conference boards of ordained ministry to tell

[9]W.L. Davis, Beyond the Personal Pronoun: Gender Schema's and Men's Responses to Christians and Their Message. Unpublished dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1991.

[10]In this way the United Methodist Church is in much the same position in which American business found itself in the 1980s. Japanese business was out-competing American business because they had been willing to plan long-term and pay the short-term costs, whereas American business focused on the immediate bottom line.

persons they do not have the gifts and graces needed for pastoral ministry in this day.

What does the United Methodist Church need, given this set of circumstances? First it needs a firm commitment from the denominational leadership to pay the short-term price necessary for long-term gain. Conferences must be willing to accept a reduction in apportionment dollars from individual churches for, say 1-3 years, while the church works through the transition in power and dynamics of moving from a low expectation, high control church to a high expectation, low control church.

Second, there must be a commitment by the bishop and cabinet to a newly appointed pastor for a minimum tenure of 7 years and an anticipated tenure of 10-12 years. Such a commitment should be put in writing, along with a commitment to bring in outside resources, such as consultants and conflict resolution facilitators whenever needed, rather than take the easy road and simply move the pastor.[11] Each pastor needs to know that he or she is not going to be penalized when they get into trouble. To lead the church into a new day pastors and churches need the freedom to fail. Otherwise there will be no creative approaches that are different from "what we've always done."

Third, the guaranteed appointment should be eliminated, and performance based criteria established for evaluating pastoral effectiveness. A procedure for working with less than effective pastors to improve their skills should be designed and implemented. Part of the strategy would require a process for helping ineffective pastors find other forms of employment and ministry. In allowing them come into the system, rather than being honest about their gifts and graces early in the process, the conference has accepted responsibility for them. But the answer is not to keep them within the appointment system and move them from church to church every 1-2 years. The answer is to help them move out of the system with grace, find gainful employment and discover a more effective arena for ministry.

Fourth, the church needs to recruit new potential pastors with the temperament for a leadership model of ministry. To do so it will have to look outside its own house, as it has tended not to retain persons with the more instrumental orientation. One fertile ground in which to look is the parachurch student ministries such as InterVarsity, Navigators, and Campus Crusade for Christ. Because

[11]District superintendents have traditionally been the ones to intervene in situations of extreme conflict, and some have done so effectively. However, the power relationships involved in a system founded on distrust makes this generally an inappropriate role for the superintendent. Superintendents could function quite effectively in a consultive role, if trained to do so.

of their emphasis on impacting the world for Christ, these organizations have a higher percentage of persons with an instrumental orientation than do local churches. Because they own no buildings, requiring them; to adapt to their surroundings and because they work with an ever-changing population, they are accustomed to flexibility in ministry. And because they are sodalities focused on helping people to make personal commitments to Christ and discipleship, rather than modalities where people's membership and belief are assumed as a birthright, they are already prepared to lead the church in focusing its ministry on the unchurched.

This suggestion may be a pipe dream. Openness to parachurch groups has not been a hallmark of the United Methodist Church. The response by Methodist denominational and seminary representatives to the Promise Keepers movement, which can be described as suspicious at best, is a case in point. Part of that suspicion is that it is a movement specifically for men, which in a feminine oriented denomination, raises fears of male-domination.[12]

Another part of the suspicion, however, is the movement's (and the parachurch groups') more conservative theology. This touches on a related leadership issue which Schaller raises: theological pluralism and the pulpit-pew gap. In this and other writings Dr. Schaller has pointed out that the declining denominations have a centralized polity and a liberal clergy, while the growing denominations have a more congregational polity and conservative clergy. Growth in the latter matches the North American cultural context. For some time we have been experiencing a societal move toward decentralization and conservatism. Yet while the laity in United Methodist churches are more middle of the road to conservative (see Table 2[13]), the leadership on annual conference (regional) and general conference (national) boards and agencies continues to be more middle of the road to liberal. In other words, the pulpit-pew gap is replicated in the conference-congregation relationship. Why? It is this author's observation that the evangelical clergy are more given to working exclusively at the local church level. Part of that dynamic has been the conscious decision by the evangelical clergy to eschew "church politics." in so doing they have surrendered the opportunity to

[12]Some of the statements made by early participants in the movement unfortunately tended to confirm that fear and some of the current participant's language tends to keep that fear alive.

[13]In order to determine the best labels for theological categories for use in the survey, laity in focus groups were asked to name the words that best identified their own theological positions. The labels in Table 2 reflect the results of this focus group research.

influence the direction of the church at the regional and national levels. At the same time, the more liberal clergy have gravitated to conference level involvement, perhaps because they find greater opportunity to be with like-minded people than in the local church.[14] This has positioned them to structure the regional and national church around their concerns.

Why is this important? Because one's theological orientation does influence one's attitudes and behaviors. In the study of the 1303 Oklahoma United Methodist worship participants cited above, the author found that only those participants who identified themselves as evangelical differed significantly from the others in their attitudes and behaviors related to evangelism.[15] Those who said, "I am an evangelical" were significantly more willing to invite, visit, telephone, host, and share their faith with unchurched people (see Table 3). And they were significantly more likely to have done so (See Table 4). Interestingly, there was no significant difference between those who identified themselves as liberal or fundamental.

While this is a sample of laity, the author has observed that the clergy who participated in evangelism and church growth events in the Oklahoma conference during his tenure there tended to be those who claimed the name "evangelical." Neither liberals nor fundamentalists participated with any regularity (unless pushed by their district superintendent). Consideration must be given to supplying clergy for the future of the church. Note the size of the available evangelical pool in the church (see Table 2), from which to draw future clergy who would lead their churches, conference, and denomination into a greater ministry of evangelism and church growth. Realizing that neither fundamental nor liberal, and especially not "middle of the road" persons are given to participation in evangelistic efforts (see Tables 3 and 4), the United Methodist church must work to expand its circle of evangelical pastors if it is to move forward in the future. This, again, argues for recruiting new pastors from the parachurch ministries mentioned above. They are consciously evangelical, and perceive their mission to be reaching pre-Christian people and making them disciples.

[14]At conference level gatherings, the author has observed numerous conversations which centered around the concerns common to liberal clergy. In the course of these conversations, participants frequently commiserate with one another's frustration with their local church members' "fundamentalist attitudes" about their concerns.

[15]This study has important implications for evangelsim, guest response ministries, and church growth. It is too large for full treatment in this paper, but will be the subject of a future paper.

OKLAHOMA UNITED METHODISTS' ATTITUDES RELATING TO EVANGELISM
(Mean Scores by Theological Position, Significant Differences in Bold)
(Scores are on a 7 point scale. i.e. 4 = "Not sure")

"I would invite a person I just met."

Middle of road	Unitarian	Liberal	Fundamental	Evangelical
4.7395	4.8462	4.9416	5.1229	**5.5985**

F Ratio for significant difference 7.895
Probability of F (level of significance) .000

"I would visit a church guest I didn't know, if someone else leads the visit."

Middle of road	Unitarian	Liberal	Fundamental	Evangelical
4.4729	4.2308	4.6708	4.8475	**5.6045**

F Ratio for significant difference 9.798
Probability of F (level of significance) .000

"I would telephone a church guest I didn't know."

Middle of road	Unitarian	Liberal	Fundamental	Evangelical
4.4502	5.2308	4.8105	4.8208	**5.6148**

F Ratio for significant difference 10.825
Probability of F (level of significance) .000

"I would host a church guest I didn't know."

Middle of road	Unitarian	Liberal	Fundamental	Evangelical
3.9121	4.0000	4.2434	4.2428	**4.8741**

F Ratio for significant difference 6.894
Probability of F (level of significance) .000

"I would share my faith with a person I know if the opportunity presented itself."

Middle of road	Unitarian	Liberal	Fundamental	Evangelical
5.5285	5.5385	5.5752	5.8333	**6.2920**

F Ratio for significant difference 6.303
Probability of F (level of significance) .000

Table 3

OKLAHOMA UNITED METHODISTS' BEHAVIORS RELATING TO EVANGELISM
(Mean Scores by Theological Position, Significant Differences in Bold)

"In the past month, how many people outside the church have you invited to church?"

Middle of road	Unitarian	Liberal	Fundamental	Evangelical
1.0982	0.7000	1.3933	1.6190	**2.1606**

F Ratio for significant difference 3.324
Probability of F (level of significance) .006

"In the past month, how many persons who have visited church have you afterwards visited?"

Middle of road	Unitarian	Liberal	Fundamental	Evangelical
0.3167	0.4545	0.5056	0.4016	**0.9072**

F Ratio for significant difference 2.359
Probability of F (level of significance) .038

"In the past month, how many persons who have visited church have you phoned to welcome?"

Middle of road	Unitarian	Liberal	Fundamental	Evangelical
0.1674	0.1818	0.2151	0.1280	**0.6344**

F Ratio for significant difference 3.635
Probability of F (level of significance) .003

"In the past month, with how many persons who don't attend church have you verbally shared your faith?"

Middle of road	Unitarian	Liberal	Fundamental	Evangelical
1.1100	0.8000	1.2356	1.3333	**2.4441**

F Ratio for significant difference 3.654
Probability of F (level of significance) .003

Table 4

The Question of Renewal

The preceding paragraph raises the question of how renewal could happen in United Methodism. In chapter 10 of *Tattered Trust*, Dr. Schaller outlines alternative scenarios and

It also argues for requiring that every seminary student take at least one evangelism and one church growth course. Like most evangelism teachers, the author has seen students from across the theological spectrum become excited about evangelism because of their hands-on involvement with it in his classes. These students finished the class as conscious evangelicals, though much of their base theology remained unchanged, whether fundamental or liberal.

United Methodist seminaries are unlikely to have such a requirement, however, given the low status currently afforded evangelism as a discipline within the academy. Such a likelihood would increase if conference boards or ordained ministry began communicating a desire for graduates trained in evangelism and church growth (or congregational development--a phrase that seems more palatable to mainline sensibilities). This is beginning to happen in some conferences, but the process is slow. A quicker alternative or supplemental approach is for the conferences to provide systematic training experiences utilizing both seminary professors and effective practitioners from bellwether churches. This is happening more and more, as conferences add staff persons with a full-time focus on evangelism and/or congregational development.

The Question of Renewal

The preceding paragraph raises the question of how renewal could happen in United Methodist. In chapter 10 of *Tattered Trust*, Dr. Schaller outlines alternative scenarios and concludes with the possibility of revival sweeping through the college of bishops. This author would like to propose an eighth scenario, which could contribute to the latter. It is one that is consistent with how God seems to have worked most often throughout the history of the church. It is also consistent with the way change works through human systems, Jesus used the image of leaven in bread dough. John Wesley taught the concept of prevenient grace. Everett Rogers talked about diffusion of innovations. All of these speak of change occurring in small increments, unseen, on the fringes of awareness or among those who hold no power or influence in the system. Only when the new idea has challenged enough of the individual's assumptions, or won enough insiders in the system, does it reach critical mass for the "top down" kind of change Schaller envisions through the college of bishops. Even Pentecost was preceded by three years of personal infiltration by the God of the universe, for example. Even Saul's conversion on the Damascus road, so thought of as a sudden night to day experience, was preceded by prevenient grace. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It hurts you to *kick against the goads*." The Holy Spirit had been goading Saul for some time, probably through the repeated witness of Christians who died like Stephen. Even Constantine's conversion and adoption of the Christian faith for the empire he was about to rule, has to be seen in light of the movement gaining critical mass.

Within United Methodism the movement toward renewal has been growing. Increasingly, isolated instances, individual churches are acting more like made in America churches. It is happening in

small churches, as documented by Ronald Crandall's work in *Turn Around Strategies for Small Churches.*[16] It is happening in large churches, as described in Michael Slaughter's *Spiritual Entrepreneurs.*[17] Enough churches, of sufficient size, led by respected pastors have been doing it long enough that some denominational insiders are beginning to take notice. More and more conferences are adding staff persons with responsibility for evangelism and congregational development. In some cases they are even being made part of the cabinet. The question is, how can those within the system, but without the power, cooperate with what the Holy Spirit is doing and so encourage the development of critical mass?

This author believes that pastors who serve on conference boards or committees of evangelism and/or congregational development, and staff persons who have responsibility for those areas, can serve as catalysts for systemic change. Currently, such persons are serving as resource developers and brokers. They are working to provide training opportunities for those who did not get it in seminary. This is important. But in addition, in order to be catalysts it is vital that they serve in two other roles as well: story-teller and match maker. As story-teller, they must collect stories of churches of all types which have experienced a turn-around, and new churches that have had visible impacts on individuals and communities. They must tell these stories at every opportunity, especially to key opinion leaders in the conference. And they must make sure the stories get into the channels of mass communication in the conference. As match maker, they must bring the power brokers of the conference together with experts in the field (i.e. researchers, consultants, and professors) and with peers (i.e. bishops, district superintendents, and key pastors) from other conferences and churches which are already involved in effective congregational development. They must create a relaxed environment for input and dialogue. They must provide an experience of sufficient duration to allow barriers to come down, and questions to be asked of and answered by several peers in different personal conversations.

Why is this important? To answer that question we must turn to Rogers' work on the diffusion of innovations. Rogers found that within any organization there are people who respond to the introduction of an innovation in predictable ways. He categorized them from most to least openness to innovation as innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, laggars, and antagonists. He

[16]Ronald Crandall, *Turn Around Strategies for Small Churches* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994).

[17]Slaughter, *Spiritual Entrepreneurs.*

found that, as with most characteristics, these differing types of responders broke out into a normal distribution in the population (see Figure 3).

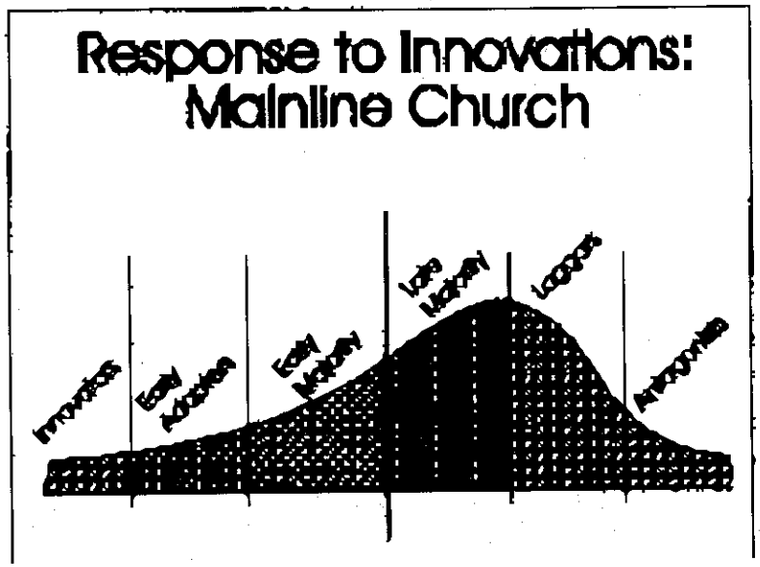


Figure 3

However, any given sample may differ from that normal distribution. This author's experience in working with churches and conferences, leads him to the conclusion the church's innovation response distribution is skewed toward late adoption (see Figure 4).

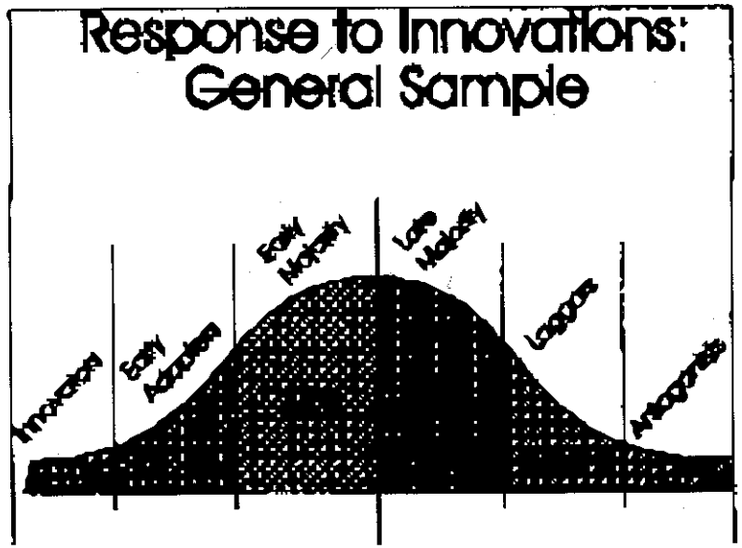


Figure 4

Why? In part because the church has always been a bastion of the status quo. But even more because of the dynamic that is the theme of Schaller's book: the climate of distrust. In such a climate, every new suggestion is suspect. And if it comes from outside the system, as most innovation does, it is doubly suspect. Add to that the heightened fear of failure inherent in a system with steadily dwindling resources, and the resistance to innovation multiplies.

Every persuasive attempt is carefully scrutinized. Every piece of evidence carefully weighed. How? Persuasion research indicates that the greatest factor in the success of a persuasive attempt is the credibility of the sources. The credibility of the source is influenced by the hearing about what the Holy Spirit is already doing in their midst, the people called Methodist will become increasingly open what the Spirit will do in the future.

HOW I SEE IT: BEAUTIFUL FEET - REFLECTIONS ON A HALF CENTURY OF EVANGELISM

J. David Hester

It was the prophet Isaiah who first expressed the feeling that people have *Beautiful Feet:* "How beautiful upon the mountain are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'your God reigns'." (52:7 NRSV).

The Apostle Paul was later to pick up the prophet's words as he wrote to the Romans: "How are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'" (10:15 NRSV).

Beautiful Feet belong to those who take the message of salvation to those who do not have that message. For over 50 years I have attempted to have those *Beautiful Feet.* Of course I have failed many times. But as a follower of Jesus and a minister of the gospel, I have worked hard at spreading the good news throughout my life.

When the editor of this *Journal* contacted me and asked me to reflect on evangelism and its changes during my lifetime, I re-read the *Journal* articles by Lewis Drummond (v. 11, 95-96, pp. 8 ff) and Jack Stanton (v. 12, 96-97, pp. 77 ff). Their beautiful lives of service shamed my poor attempts to do evangelism and led me to wonder if I had really done what I could have done to spread the good news. Nevertheless, I will set forth some thoughts with the hope that some reader will be challenged and blessed.

Evangelism as I Remember It When a Boy

In the 30's and 40's, my acquaintance with evangelism was strictly from the relation I had with my home church (Margaret Hank Memorial Cumberland Presbyterian, Paducah, KY). My dad was an elder. led the choir, and taught the large Men's Bible Class. My mother sang in the choir. We were a poor family, a product of the depression.

J. David Hester is President Emeritus of Memphis Theological Seminary of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Memphis, Tennessee, and a past President of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education. He is currently Associate for Development in Planned Giving for Memphis Theological Seminary and Stated Clerk and Pastor of the Presbytery of East Tennessee.

The preaching I heard was evangelistic preaching, always culminating in an invitation to come forward and give your life to Jesus. And, it was not an uncommon occurrence for such a move to be made by someone in the congregation. The only other "method" of evangelism that I recall was the annual Revival. We always had a famous preacher as our guest, along with a talented musician. We had large crowds, long services. and significant results.

I am sure this heritage moved me to respond to the call to the ministry at the age of 12. My church prayed for me, upheld me, and supported me—even though I left them at the age of 18 and went off to college and seminary. I was always rooted in this home church where evangelism was the top priority in all that we did. It was from that church over 20 people answered the call to the ministry over three decades.

Evangelism: My Training

Once I had committed my life to ministry, the local church found places for me to work (and learn). I led a youth choir while my father led the adult choir, I participated in a male quartet, I helped teach Sunday school classes and led youth groups.

As a teenager I joined adults (all men) to go visiting in the community. I would be teamed up with a leading layman and we would go into homes and talk with people about Jesus and the church. Obviously I listened more than I talked but the experience of witnessing and sharing the gospel was thrilling and invigorating for me.

A part of my early training came through those revival experiences as well. Not only did I hear good, Bible-based sermons, I was deeply moved by the crowds and the responses to the preacher's invitation at the close of the service. And the musicians—the thrill of hearing J. Howard Scott of Milan, TN, draw his violin bow across the carpenter's saw and produce beautiful music was certainly something I never forgot.

As a young boy and teenager I was always a part of Vacation Bible School and camps. My brother and I would attend every VBS in the community, several each summer. At each one the teacher would usually talk to us about the importance of being a Christian. We tolerated her 'sermons" so that we could get on with the games and crafts.

Camping in those years was a strong program in our church. Following World War II we secured tents and cots from army surplus and set up camps on church grounds in those days before permanent camps sites were built. One has not had a thrill until one has stood under a barrel with holes punched in the bottom while adults

poured water from the spring over you in the shower. It cleaned the body, purged the soul, and you learned to move swiftly!

At these camps we not only had recreation and classes; we had vesper worship services each night. There we would sing, hear good sermons, and respond to invitations to give our lives to Jesus. Many a youth in my era found Jesus the first time at the dirt altar of a summer camp. And many more dedicated their life to full-time Christian service while participating in summer camp.

All of this was training me to move forward with my ministry of leading people to Jesus and making disciples of them (as we had been taught by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20). My feet were being taught to be *Beautiful Feet.*

EVANGELISM: MY EXPERIENCE

My life changed dramatically when my father died of a heart attack at the age of 43. I had been in college two weeks. As the eldest, I assumed I should stay home and help see my younger brother and sister through school. Three very strong-willed women changed y mind. My mother, my grandmother (dad's mother) and my aunt (dad's sister) would not hear to my staying home. Because of my call to ministry, they insisted that I return to college. I did.

My life changed again when I married my sweetheart whom I had dated for five years. Barbara Anne Connor was a great musician and a wonderful companion. She supported me in every way all through those years. Her own talents and plans were laid aside in deference to my career and call. We were, in every way, a team. We were blessed with four beautiful children.

After finishing college and moving on through seminary (driving 105 miles daily for 3 years from our pastorate), I accepted larger churches. Colonial Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Memphis was a four-year old mission when we went there in 1958. In that 12-year pastorate we averaged one new member a Sunday for all those years. From there in 1970 we took on old First Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Knoxville, TN,--90 years old, downtown, and dying. We re-located and built an entirely new complex and began to grow. We pastored there 14 years.

While in Knoxville I heard of Donald McGavran and the church growth people. I ultimately entered the Doctor of Ministry program at Fuller, commuting to Pasadena from East Tennessee for over three years to complete this degree. I studied evangelism under Paul Cedar and Church Growth under Peter Wagner. It was a life-changing experience for me. I began lecturing on church growth and evangelism at our church and was even invited by other churches to share with them.

During this time of study I was pastor of a large and growing church. I was a practitioner—a preacher who departed from the

norm of the day and always gave an invitation to discipleship at the conclusion of the message. And I always expected someone to respond!

After 34 years in the pastorate, my denomination asked me to become President of our 135-year old Memphis Theological Seminary. That was a very hard decision; but in 1984 my wife and I left our children and grandchildren in Knoxville and went back to Memphis. There I served for 13 years until my retirement in 1997.

Even though teaching was not a part of my job description, we found ourselves without a teacher for the required course on "Christian Evangelism". The dean and I decided that I would tackle this challenge, since I was the only faculty member on staff who had special training in evangelism. So it was that I developed a three-hour course on evangelism. My first semester found me with 66 students, a challenge for any seminary professor. However, I found myself thrilled and invigorated by that class and those students. I taught the course once a year until the curriculum was revised, putting that course and a mission course into one course "The Mission of the Church". I co-taught that course until we eventually hired a full-time professor of evangelism and mission.

It was during this time that I became aware of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education. The venerable George E. Sweazey, Bob Coleman and others had begun the Academy in 1973. It was Richard Stoll Armstrong who found me and encouraged me to attend, which I began to do in 1985. It was later my honor to serve as president of the organization during 1993-1995.

EVANGELISM: SOME LESSONS LEARNED

1. One must customize evangelistic methods.

There are many methods used in successful evangelism. But, what is successful in one community/church may not prove successful in another community/church. One must customize whatever evangelistic method is used, making it fit the needs of the people for whom it is intended. Sometimes this is done by trial and error. But one should not hesitate to move away from a method that is not working, in order to try something else that will work. The object is soul-winning. One cannot let pride in a particular method prevent the winning of souls.

2. Every person we meet is not ready for the gospel.

It would be great if we knew that every person with whom we come into contact is ready and willing to hear the gospel. Then we would be guaranteed that our sharing the gospel would produce converts and new disciples. Alas, this is not true. People react to the gospel message in different ways, depending on their heritage, their environment, their reading/study, their friendships, etc. Some peo-

ple who have never been around Christians or who have never read the Bible or who have never heard the gospel preached are just not ready to make a commitment to Christ.

The disciples of Jesus found this out also. Jesus sent them forth to spread the gospel. A part of his instruction to them was: you are going to encounter some people who are not interested in hearing what you have to say. When you deliver the message and they shun you, "shake the dust from your feet" (Matt. 10:14)--leave them! Those are strange words, coming from the Savior of the world, the one who later said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. . . " (Matt. 28: 19). But Jesus did not intend for his disciples to spend their time attempting to witness to people who were unready and unwilling to hear the gospel. Instead, we are to go on to others who are ready, who are hungry for the gospel and long for words to guide them into eternity.

3. People of different ages must be approached differently.

You cannot share the gospel with children, young adults, and senior adults in the same way. The message is the same, but it must be packaged in such a way that the different age groups can hear and understand. That is why contemporary Christian music speaks so well to youth, but not to older adults. That is why the simple gospel appeals to children, but deep theological thinking will likely go over their heads.

4. All Christian clergy do not believe in or practice evangelism.

That startled me when I first realized it many years ago. I had just assumed every preacher practiced evangelism to the best of his or her ability. Not so! There are those clergy out there who will be great church administrators, have good church programs, even preach great sermons. But they do not believe in or practice the art of leading people to Jesus.

5. Denominational hierarchy, as a whole, are more interested in institutional maintenance than in evangelism.

This pains me to say but I believe it is true. To be sure, there are denominational leaders scattered here and there who are very concerned with spreading the gospel. But, on the whole, I have found most denominational leaders—in all churches—are more concerned with keeping the machinery oiled and moving than in winning people to Jesus.

6. Evangelism is the imperative of all Christians.

Whereas there are those—clergy and laity alike—who back away from evangelism because of many reasons (uncomfortable, disagree in its imperative, demands too much work), the fact is: Jesus *told* us to "go and make disciples." Over these years I have learned that evangelism is an imperative of *all* Christians! It is not an option one can take or leave at will. It is a part of the demands

placed upon all who would follow Jesus. And *Beautiful Feet* belong to those who take the gospel message to those who do not have the gospel.

EVANGELISM: TODAY AND FUTURE

While it is true that evangelism is "more caught than taught", we must do a better job showing our clergy and laity how to share the good news of Jesus. Many clergy as well as laity feel very uneasy when confronted with a situation where they must share the gospel and attempt to show someone the way to salvation through Jesus. We can begin by urging more of our seminaries to teach courses in evangelism.

Ways of doing evangelism have changed over my lifetime. Whereas revivals were great instruments in yesteryear, they are, for the most part, impractical and non-productive today. Whereas visitation may have been an effective evangelism tool in times passed, there are too many families where both parents work (thus providing little time for visits from the church) and too many people who live in gated communities that forbid people like clergy to enter—for any reason.

So, some of these tools/methods of evangelism of yesteryear must be replaced by newer methods today and into the next century. Some of those methods are being tried (contemporary music, for example); some have not been thought of as yet, but our task is to find new ways of leading people to Jesus and get on with the challenge at hand!

Beautiful Feet. First it was Isaiah, then Paul who talked of carrying the good news to the people who needed to hear it.

Beautiful Feet are still needed today. Until all the world has heard the good news of Jesus, those of us who claim to be Christians are under obligation to use our feet to carry the gospel to them.

While evangelism has changed over these 50 years, the message remains the same. The challenge is how to get the message to people of today. We have been changing the way of doing evangelism through these centuries. We must rise to the challenge again as we enter the new millennium. Do you have *Beautiful Feet*??

BOOK REVIEWS

Worship Evangelism.
By Sally Morgenthaler. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995. Pp. 9 + 320.

Sally Morgenthaler received her formal education at St. Olaf College, and over the years she has developed her interest in worship planning with specific emphasis upon the relationship between evangelism and worship. The central thesis of this book is that "real worship" can and does have an evangelistic impact on believers and unbelievers alike. In the Preface she concludes that "... our worship either affirms or contradicts our message about God." She makes the point that unbelievers will draw lasting impressions about God based on what they see or don't see happening in our worship services.

The book is divided into three sections: One deals with the "why" of worship; the second presents a paradigm for worship evangelism; and the third is a presentation of a variety worship design models that may be utilized with different populations. The appendix contains a cross cultural music resource listing that should be helpful in worship planning with culturally diverse congregations. The author relies heavily on selected scripture passages and the contemporary writings of researchers such as George Gallup and George Barna and contemporary church analysts such as Wade Clark Roof, William Hendricks, and Martin Marty in describing the current confusion regarding worship and evangelism in the churches. She also makes significant use of the writings of Gerrit Gustafson and Robert Webber on worship. Gustafson was, perhaps, one of the first to use the term "worship evangelism."

It is my opinion that she is correct in her assumptions that there is a need for a systematic understanding of the role of worship in evangelism. Church leaders spend thousands of dollars each year to find just the right paradigm for worship that will contribute to the evangelization of various populations within our society. We seem to be looking for a "magic" formula that will bring back those who have drifted away from our churches and attract those who may be "seeking" to our churches.

My own position is consistent with the theme of this book. I believe that a holistic approach to evangelism should include an appropriate theological understanding of the why and how of worship. From a biblical perspective, evangelism is a primary function of the church. I can't conceive of an effective church based evangelism program that does not understand the place of vital, vibrant, public worship programs in energizing the missional efforts of the church

membership to reach out to an unbelieving community with the Gospel.

This book makes a valuable contribution to the literature on evangelism. Morgenthaler has obviously engaged in extensive research on evangelism and worship and she writes out of years of experience as a worship leader. Her insights demonstrate a wisdom that has grown out of the knowledge she has gained in reading the literature in the fields of evangelism and worship, and her experience in testing her convictions in the development of evangelistic worship programs in the local church.

Seminary classes on evangelism would benefit from the use of this book as either required or recommended reading. It is well organized and easy to read. The book does a good job of integrating theory with practical application. Although it contains a significant amount of theological discussion, the thrust of this book is toward the practical. For that reason, I feel that this book would be useful as a resource for the clergy and lay leaders who are responsible for worship planning, especially those who are committed to evangelism and church renewal. It is written from an evangelical theological perspective, but persons who embrace other theological viewpoints should find helpful information and suggestions in it as well.

Derrel R. Watkins is Oubri A. Poppele Professor of Health and Welfare Ministries at Saint Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, Missouri

Charles G. Finney and the Spirit of American Evangelicalism.
by Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996. Pp.317

In this engaging biography Hambrick-Stowe offers a fresh interpretation of one of America's greatest revivalists. Instead of the usual portrayal of Finney as a rebel against Calvinism, Hambrick-Stowe argues persuasively that Finney understood himself to be heir to a tradition running from Jonathan Edwards to Nathaniel William Taylor. As a contextualizer of "New Divinity" Calvinism in an America increasingly Methodist and democratic, he both expresses and shapes the ethos of evangelicalism.

The centerpiece of Finney's revivalism was his preaching for an immediate response. In this he was putting into evangelistic practice the theological anthropology of the "New Divinity" as it had developed under Taylor. Finney denied his theology relativized God. Instead, he believed God issued the call of salvation through the preached word, and the hearer was free to respond. While this

was enormously disturbing to Calvinists of the Old School, it made sense to most Americans in the nineteenth century.

Hambrick-Stowe discusses Finney's theology and revival methods with care, showing more nuance than some have implied. It is well known that in his methods, Finney was a creative borrower and adapter: the "anxious seat," for example, was functionally a Methodist altar call adapted for a more urban and educated audience. What is not so well known is that Finney saw his "New Measures" not as a repudiation of the past but as an updating of the means of grace as understood by Edwards. Of course, his famous insistence that a revival is "not a miracle" still remains in tension with Edwards "surprising work of God," but the difference, at least in Finney's mind, was not as great as many of his critics averred.

Finney was more than a theologian and practitioner of revival. Hambrick-Stowe's narrative interweaves Finney's concern for holiness and social reform with his revivalism. His appropriation of Wesley's teaching on Christian perfection as well as the use of "baptism of the Holy Ghost" language is discussed, as well as Finney's integration of these elements within his own larger "moral government" theology. What is seen in all this is a theologian who is not afraid to rethink his ideas and who is capable of creatively adapting theological ideas with the same skill as he did method.

Finney's abolitionism is likewise given nuanced treatment. His prophetic stance against the "national sins" of slavery and the treatment of native Americans is documented, as is his determination not to let social issues eclipse the central message of salvation. His elevation of the role of women in his revivals, as well as his insistence that Oberlin College be coeducational, is balanced by the disdain toward Finney by more radical supporters of women's rights. What we see in Hambrick-Stowe's portrayal is a man who has progressive ideas but is also very much a man of his time.

We also see the humanity of Charles Finney. His open-minded intellect and progressive commitments won him admiration. He was the recipient of the affection of many in the Oberlin community, yet he was also feared by some students due to his confrontational and sometimes harsh manner in the classroom. He was happily married three times; Lydia, Elizabeth, and Rebecca each proved to be intelligent and capable women who readily initiated ministries of their own as well as supporting his.

It will surprise some to know Finney had a strong doctrine of the church and "called evangelicals to repent of the great sin of individualism." (218) This is certainly a contrast to the way Finney is usually portrayed, and may be why Horace Bushnell was one of his admirers. Bushnell's *Christian Nurture* has often been seen as the opposite of revivalism, yet Finney advised his daughters to read it.

We are indebted to Hambrick-Stowe for this lively portrait of Finney. It is a welcome resource for college and seminary courses, especially when the history of evangelism or evangelicalism is concerned. While not focused on evangelistic theory and practice, much nonetheless can be learned from this account of one of history's greatest practitioners.

Henry H. Knight III is Assistant Professor of Evangelism at Saint Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, Missouri

Jesus for a New Generation: Putting the Gospel in the Language of Xers.
By Kevin Graham Ford. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995. Pp. 259.

Ford addresses the daunting challenge of how the church can effectively reach today's young adults (those born in the decades of the 1960s and 1970s) with the gospel of Jesus Christ. As a young adult myself, working in a large membership church as a pastor of evangelism, I found his work not only *informative*, but also experientially *forming* - many of the insights gleaned have given me new insight into my own generation, and have already been put to practical use in my local church. While Ford is well aware and obviously makes use of sociological studies on this generation, much of what he presents is drawn from his own personal experience as one actively engaged in ministry with and among young adults. Thus, his insights bring a certain "insider" authenticity which add authority often lacking in more "objective" sociological studies.

Ford, himself a member of this young adult generation, begins by richly describing the culture and worldview of his peers. He reminds readers that, while given many labels ("Baby Busters, Generation X, 13th Generation," etc.), "in order to reach [this] generation with the story of Jesus Christ, we need to move past labels and stereotypes and get down to their social, attitudinal, and behavioral realities" (p. 19). He consequently spends much of the rest of the book unpacking these realities. For example, he reminds readers that today's young adults tend to be: highly suspicious of authority systems; less gender-specific than previous generations; highly emotional; fearful and angry; "scheduled to death"; obsessed with leisure; possessed of a short attention span; and without any set, overarching values, other than a sense of universal despair and depression about the future. He notes that many of these are reflected in the church as well. Yet, far from merely creating a sense of despair, these realities instead provide "windows of opportunity for communicating God's story to young pre-Christians" (p. 92).

To support this claim, he argues that the "deeply entrenched" Postmodern mindset of Xers (generally *opposite* of many previous

generations) presents not only challenges, but also substantial opportunities: (1) existence of the supernatural is now readily accepted; (2) modernity's autonomous self has given way to... (3) an emphasis upon communal reality (as found in the Bible); and (4) feelings and relationships now supersede logic (making rational Christian apologetics unnecessary). Towards the end of the book, Ford identifies three ways to reach this generation—through: (1) *A Faith That Works*, or what he terms an "embodied apologetic"; (2) *Process Evangelism*, with its four "cornerstones" of authenticity, caring, trust, and transparency; and (3) *Narrative Evangelism*, in which "the very storylessness of this generation is our opportunity! Because not only do we have the story - the gospel itself - but we also offer an alternative community, a narratable world [the church] in which human meaning can be discovered and lived out" (p. 233).

Instead of delving directly into data as do many resources on generational sociology and evangelism, Ford intersperses narrative stories between his description of Xer culture and worldview. This format pervades the entire book, so that the reader is constantly shifting between *data* descriptions of Xer culture and narrative *examples* of how that culture would look in relational practice. Readers who are used to, or who prefer, linear argument may find this format disruptive. However, one must remember that even the format is a product of Ford's own Xer generational culture.

Jesus for a New Generation will be most helpful to anyone who ministers with and among young adults, such as youth pastors and workers, and leaders of college and/or young single adult ministries. However, others will benefit from this helpful resource, as well: Xers who desire a better understanding of why they themselves act or view life in certain ways; any pastor or church leader interested in reaching young adults in their community; parents who wish to understand the "unusual/different ways" of their teenage or college-aged children; middle-aged bosses who wish to better understand the working styles and habits of their Xer employees. It would be a valuable resource for college and seminary courses on generational change or evangelism. Overall, I found Ford's book to be one of the best Christian overviews of the Xer culture and lifestyle available, with practical evangelism tips on how to effectively reach this generation with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Brian E. Germano is Pastor of Community and Congregational Care at Trinity-on-the-Hill United Methodist Church in Augusta, Georgia, and a D.Min. candidate at Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Missouri.

Spirit, Word, and Story.
By Calvin Miller. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996. Pp. 7 + 239.

Miller subtitled this book "A Philosophy of Marketplace Preaching." He describes his own preaching and worship style as comparable to that of many of the most rapidly growing churches, i.e., relational and casual. The primary thesis of this book is that marketplace preaching may vary in style, but it should emphasize biblical truths in the context of the Holy Spirit's leadership and make use of story - the use of illustration, parable, and the development of a narrative style. The author encourages preachers to use story throughout the sermon in a diversity of ways. He states that the sermon should engage the listener in a dialogue with the message and lead to some sort of private or public decision.

The book is organized into four parts. The first part contains four chapters on the role of the Holy Spirit as teacher, counselor, and power to deal with the mystery of preaching. In the second section Miller writes four chapters dealing with the Word in preaching. He states that we must have a private affair with Scripture that enables us to get in touch with the center of ourselves where we know God. Art and zeal are inseparable and needed in the sermon. Each sermon should reflect the counsel of God and be crafted in conjunction with an understanding of what is going on in the world around us. The third section emphasizes the use of story as an effective tool in preaching. Part four provides practical help for the preparation and delivery of the sermon.

The books on homiletics I studied in both college and graduate schools were steeped in Modernity. Precept preaching was the style. I am convinced, however, that Miller is correct in his emphasis upon the role of story as an effective vehicle for carrying the message. Many sermons, as he points out, have lost the sense of awe and mystery because they have strayed from Scripture and are not engaged by the Holy Spirit. It is this sense of mystery that seems to draw those who are seeking for relevance in the contemporary church. A narrative style enables this type of sermon delivery and carries the message in a very effective manner.

The book is replete with emphasis upon evangelistic preaching. It is a valuable tool for encouraging and enabling ministers to be effective evangelists in the pulpit. The theoretical underpinnings of the book are also useful in understanding the way in which the very architecture of the worship center aids in local church based evangelism.

Calvin Miller has written a practical book on preaching, with a focus on evangelism and discipleship. It is an easy book to read and filled with helpful illustrations. He actually uses the style he advocates. It could be useful as required reading alongside a basic text on

homiletics. It would also be useful as required outside reading in a preaching laboratory. Evangelism courses could use the book as a related reading text on evangelistic preaching. There are ample references to the evangelistic impact of the sermons.

Experienced preachers would probably find the book interesting and helpful as a mirror for examining their preaching style(s) in light of pressures to adapt to the demands of a changing society. Most would find it inspirational as well as informative.

Derrel R. Watkins

No Other Name: An Investigation Into the Destiny of the Unevangelized.
By John Sanders. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1992. Pp. 315.

It is commonly assumed that a commitment to the importance of evangelism entails a corresponding insistence that those who do not hear the gospel message are condemned eternally. To believe otherwise is seen to undercut evangelistic urgency.

John Sanders shows in this clear and readable volume that this common assumption is oversimplified. Both historically and presently there are in fact a range of positions, most of which seek to make sense of central scriptural affirmations. Indeed, it is the dual New Testament claim that God wants to save everyone and that no one is saved except through Jesus Christ that generates this spectrum of views.

Following a helpful introduction, Sanders organizes his book typologically. Under each position he follows a similar pattern: key biblical texts, theological considerations, leading proponents (usually three, combining historical and contemporary), and an evaluation. He concludes each section with an extensive historical bibliography. While Sanders is open about his own preferences, he presents each position in a fair and careful manner.

His bias perhaps is most evident in the way he organizes his discussion: first, the "two extremes," then three versions of "the wider hope." The extremes are restrictivism, in which all the unevangelized are damned; and universalism in which they are all (eventually) saved. As restrictivist theologians he includes Augustine, Calvin, and Sproul; for universalism he discusses Origen, Charles Chauncey, and John A. T. Robinson. It is in this section that he provides an excursus on radical pluralism, discussing John Hick and Paul Knitter. Because pluralists deny that salvation is through Christ alone, Sanders places them outside the bounds of his typology. Also (a bit lost in his bibliography) is a note about the "hopeful universalism" of Barth, Brunner, Kung, and others, who

refuse to set limits on God's grace—a more modest and less liberal view than "classic" universalism.

More interesting is the diversity of views he lists under the wider hope, all of which understand salvation to be in some way universally available. The three positions he identifies are universal evangelization before death, which has three subcategories and includes Aqulinas and "middle knowledge" proponents; eschatological evangelization (that is, occurring after death), including Joseph Leckie, Gabriel Fackre, and George Lindbeck; and inclusivism, including John Wesley, C. S. Lewis, and Clark Pinnock. The inclusivist view insists salvation is only through Christ, but that Christ makes salvation universally available by way of general revelation and/or prevenient grace. Sanders concludes with an appendix comparing differing positions on the fate of those who die in infancy.

Sanders not only introduces college and seminary students to a broad range of positions, he does so by way of helping them see the underlying issues and the systematic linkages of various theological claims. One important issue be raises for students is what we mean by "salvation"—is it only eternal destiny or does it also refer to receiving new life in the present?

This book has the depth needed for the college and seminary classroom, yet is accessible enough for local church study.

Henry H. Knight III

Out on the Edge.
By Michael Slaughter. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998. Pp. 136, plus interactive CD ROM.

As its subtitle explicitly declares, *Out on the Edge* issues "a wake up call for church leaders on the edge of the media reformation." Its straight-forward style accomplishes this task through a creative, interactive format in which readers not only read about Slaughter's premise—that the "[electronic] Media Reformation is a life or death issue for the Church" (p. 18) -- but also experience it through a multi-media CD-ROM included with the book at purchase.

The book is laid out in three major sections: Part One examines the nature and development of the North American electronic culture, and why the church's response to it is so vitally important to its future effectiveness. Slaughter notes that Americans now live in a "post-modern, post-Christian, post-literate" age (p. 18), but unfortunately, "we [in the church] are speaking a different language. We are still using the language of a literate culture" (p. 24), and consequently, "church just doesn't make sense" anymore to the vast majority of people in our predominantly unchurched culture. In-

stead, "the sight and sound generation calls for a multi-sensory experience" (p. 36).

In response, Part Two presents a workable, experiential, and biblically faithful model to accomplish this task through the tri-fold "life-rhythm" of Celebration, Cell, and Call. Celebration is that component/principle which enables people to celebrate God's grace in the midst of life (e.g., worship) through its relevance and connection with at least six "basic felt needs": belonging; love; identity; "possibilization"; freedom; and authenticity. Cell is that element in which persons find community through authentic relationships in small groups. Call is that component/element in which people discover and engage the needs of others in the world through relevant service and mission.

Part Three examines the creation, building, and sustaining of effective ministry teams (of laity *and* clergy) which enable Slaughter's ministry model to take place. He proposes a dramatic reformulation of the "teamwork" paradigm of ministry leadership through five "mindsets that must change": the lone-ranger mentality giving way to self-directed teams; clearly defined job descriptions giving way to flexible ones; emphasis upon long-range planning giving way to "day by day" response; seminary-trained leaders are not necessary for effective ministry teams; and learning that committee and staff groups are not the same as teams.

A final word must be said about the final chapter in Part Three, which, consisting entirely of a multi-media CD-ROM, is by far the most practical and helpful part in the entire book, and can function as a stand-alone application, if needed. In it, four interactive modules allow guests to experience for themselves what multi-sensory worship and team leadership looks like. In one of these, six typical worship scenarios at Slaughter's own Ginghamsburg United Methodist Church (Tipp City, Ohio) illustrate the graphic and audio content of post-literate Celebrations, complete with example scripts and "orders of worship."

In other modules, Ginghamsburg team members describe and offer practical advice about team process, and a portfolio of multi-media samples give a sense of how publicity and communication can be accomplished in a post-literate mode. A final module allows guests to browse and search the entire text of the book. One word of caution: the interactive CD-ROM requires the QuarkImmedia Viewer (included on the CD-ROM) to function properly (minimum Windows 3.x or better, Macintosh, and Power Mac), and in my own experience, will work best with a high-speed, multi-media computer.

As a pastor of evangelism at a large-membership church which already employs many of the multi-media elements in a contemporary seeker-style service, I can attest to the accuracy and value of many of Slaughter's proposals. However, I will also be the first to admit that these strategies may not work in every congregation. For, even though he believes that "any congregation can, and every viable congregation eventually will, form celebration experiences based in relevant and emerging types of multi-sensory ministry" (p. 19), the fact remains that some will make this transition more easily than others. Some, quite honestly, may choose not to make it at all. Nonetheless, *On the Edge* accomplishes well its stated purpose as a "wake up call" for today's church, and provides an excellent resource for education and training of pastors, leaders, and teachers who desire to lead their congregations into the media reformation of the 21st-century church.

Brian E. Germano

Catch The Age Wave.
by Win Arn and Charles Arn. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993. Pp. 7 + 167.

Win and Charles Arn are well known for their research on church growth. The thesis of this book is that the graying of America and the coming tidal wave of older persons in our society could spark a great period of growth of the church. In the introduction they state that the Great Commission—to go and make disciples—is a primary responsibility of the church which includes senior adults.

My primary area of expertise and the focus of my teaching are in the field of gerontology. I find that this book resonates with my own heart concern regarding the work of the church. This is especially true in light of the fact that most mainline and mainstream churches are graying faster than the general population. I agree with the Arns that there are large numbers of senior adults who are bereft of the knowledge of Jesus Christ and the caring community of a local church.

Fewer than ten percent of seminary students receive any significant training in ministry with senior adults. This book could provide some vital assistance to seminary classes on ministry and especially those in evangelism. It attempts to provide a foundational understanding of the aging population, using demographic information like that found in Ken Dychtwald's book, *Age Wave*. The authors suggest some important issues that face the church in section one of the book. They also present a practical paradigm titled "Target Group Evangelism" that they adapt to the evangelization of older adults.

In part two, the Arns discuss the practice of *Oikos* evangelism with older persons. This model of evangelism is based upon social/family systems theory. It utilizes a marketing strategy to iden-

tify the informal network of persons within the body of believers to discover others who may need the Gospel. An evangelistic strategy is then developed to reach out to these people and invite them to believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. In addition, they discuss the incorporation of newcomers and the use of small groups along with ways to stimulate spiritual growth in the lives of senior adults.

The book is primarily a manual for developing an evangelistic ministry to and with senior adults. While it contains theological and theoretical discussion, it is primarily focused on the practical application of assumed evangelical theological understandings. It could be used for related or recommended readings in evangelism courses in seminaries and colleges. Courses in the field of practical theology such as ministries with the aging could also make use of the book as required reading. Church leaders and planners will find the book very helpful in preparation for the missional work of lay workers who are engaged in outreach activities to, by, and with adults, and especially senior adults. The book will be easy reading for both clergy and laity.

Although the book was published in 1993, the principles and ministry ideas are still relevant in 1998. Some the projected demographic data will need to be updated if the Arns should decide to publish a revised edition.

Derrel R. Watkins

ACADEMY FOR EVANGELISM IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Twenty-fifth Annual Meeting
Saint Paul School of Theology
Kansas City, Missouri
October 9-11 , 1997

MINUTES

Thursday, October 9

7:00 p.m. Registration
7:30 p.m. Welcome by Academy President, George Hunter
Announcements by host, Hal Knight
7:45 p.m. Opening Worship: led by Academy Vice-President, Sam Wilson
8:00 p.m. Forum on Lyle Schaller's book *Tattered Trust: Is There Hope for Your Denomination?*. The panel included
1. Woody Davis, "Responding from a Methodist Perspective"
2. Ron Johnson, "Responding from a Southern Baptist Perspective"
3. Dick Armstrong, "Responding from a Presbyterian Perspective"
4. Kent Hunter, "Responding from a Lutheran Perspective"
9:15 p.m. Break
9:30 p.m. Lyle Schaller spoke on the topic, "If I Was Writing Tattered Trust Now"
10:00 p.m. Questions and Discussion
10:30 p.m. Adjournment

Friday, October 10

8:30 a.m. Opening Worship - Led by Ron Johnson (McAfee School of Theology), text Luke 5:1-11

Announcements
-John Nyquist announced a major conference at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School on "Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns", May 13-15, 1998
-American Academy of Church Growth in Orlando in November
-North Park Seminary has established a D.Min. in Church Planting Leadership
-Asbury has graduated its first PhD in Inter Cultural Studies

9:00 a.m. Lyle Schaller's first presentation: "Surprises I Have Encountered"
Schaller discussed a variety of issue that have arisen as a result of the success of the ecumenical movement which began to blossom in the 60's. In the 1950's Christians identified themselves by who they were not . In the 1960's Christians began to identify themselves by what they have in common.
1. People now find it easier to pass from one religious tradition to another. Of the 64 million baptized Catholics, about 9 million are active in Protestant churches. The question of whether a denominational label is an asset or a liability is in flux.
2. Competition for church members has become more intense . The large migration from infant baptism churches to believer's baptism churches has raised the issue of baptism again. Baptism has become an issue in growing churches that reach people from other traditions.
3. Polity has moved ahead of doctrine and survival has moved ahead of polity. Lutherans have now agreed to cooperate with three Reformed groups. Professionals used to define "what we believe" but now the lay people are defining "what we believe" by the congregations they chose to affiliate with. The congregations place stress on articulating faith by practicing how to talk about faith in terms of a theological agenda. The theological agenda includes:
(1) historicity of the birth, life, death, resurrection of Jesus (rarely mention virgin birth)
(2) Scripture is the sole source of authority
(3) John 14:6 view of relation of Christ to salvation 40 years ago the pastors emphasized knowledge, but today people are looking for certainty.
4. The Great Commission is the central organizing principle of the congregation.
5. Christianity is a revealed religion once and for all, not a cultural religion that each generation can redefine.
6. Greater emphasis on grace than law in theologically conservative groups.

Evangelism is not the issue and is not a very helpful word. The real issue is "What is the church about?" Congregational life is about the transformation of people.

As people look for certainty, the place and view of authority has become a national debate. Especially those raising childen are looking for a re-establishment of authority in education. The "search for common ground" suggests an absence of a true authority. The source of authority is a major question in the church as well as broader society. The aspect of the ecumenical movement which looks to things in common, but glosses over differences, breeds uncertainty and a lack of authority. Uncertainty is fostered by:
(1) lack of continuity

(2) so much of what people studied turned out not to be true (in the sciences)
(3) children turned out different from parents
(4) extraordinary, well informed and educated population, but knowledge is alienating

10:15 a.m. Break

10:45 a.m. Lyle Schaller's second presentation: "Conversations with Teenagers" Schaller identified a number of trends he sees among the present generation of teenagers:.
1. Teenagers increasingly see school as the job they do.
2. Many work a part-time job, but see their pay check as a better basis of evaluation than a report card from school.
3. Boys and girls identify "quality" in different ways. Emphasis on quality for boys is seen in terms of work, cars, and TV ads. For girls it is clothes. Quality at school is seen in terms of sports and some extracurricular activities. Rarely is quality seen in terms of homes, never in terms of church.
4. Teenagers continue to identify sub-groups or tribes within their youth culture. Schaller identified several of these; such as Jocks, Preppies, Druggies, and Parallel Parkers (girls who sleep around).
5. Teenagers now save money to buy a second car or to rent an apartment to avoid sexual abuse.
6. Since the early 90's Schaller has found that future plans for teenagers now include seminary.
Schaller observed that high school students look to peers and do not like the overly mature teenager who acts, thinks, and talks like an adult. The percentage of pre-mature teenagers has been rising from its current 2-3.

In conversation with the Academy, Schaller explored several questions. What are people looking for in church? People are looking for community/relationships. Community was once defined geographically and by family. Now community is defined in terms of the market place (work, hobbies, volunteer club). Mega church or regional church has replaced the neighborhood church the way the large building supply store has replaced the local hardware store. No one seems to know how to rebuild neighborhoods.

Schaller contrasted how churches were classified in the past and how they are classified now. The basis for classifying churches in past included:
1. denomination
2. location
3. theological spectrum
4. social class

Today churches are classified according to:

1. language, race, ethnicity
2. size
3. person of trinity around which church focuses (growing churches and denominations tend to focus on second and third person of trinity) (seminaries that focus on second and third person of trinity prepare people for congregational ministries, while those that focus on first person prepare people for teaching)
4. primary focus - taking care of our people, Great Commission Geographical location and denominational affiliation may be somewhat descriptive, but they would be at the bottom of the list. Denominational label may tell what used to be, but it does not say much about now.

12:00 noon Lunch

2:00 Introduction of Luis Palau by Roberto Escamilla
Message by Luis Palau

Palau began with the exhortation that members of the Academy write extensively about evangelism for two markets. Theologians need to be addressed because they have such broad influence in the theological academic community. The pastors and the ministers of the local church also need to be addressed. Palau finds the greatest obstacles to his work coming from the local church, and primarily from the pastors.

Second, Palau stressed that the battle for truth has begun. Palau laments the number of evangelicals who have begun to question whether Jesus really is the only way to salvation. Here referred to *Post-Evangelicalism* as an example of the relativising of the Christian faith. Evangelical faith is being influenced by the popular culture at this level; therefore, truth must be emphasized. He considers Psalm 138:2 an important verse that stresses the importance of the name of God and the word of God.

Third, Palau stressed the need for Christians to take pride in Jesus Christ. Society pressures Christians to be ashamed. He particularly urged that we not feel ashamed to pray in the name of Jesus in public.

Fourth, Palau argued for the need to preach conversion as clearly and plainly as possible. Confusion abounds about the message of evangelism. The gospel message has become confused with other important issues not essential to salvation. Many church members have lost a sense of urgency for conversion as well.

Fifth, many Christians have lost a sense of loyalty which must be regained. Congregational and denominational loyalty are important, but we need to gain a sense of loyalty to the whole body of Christ that leads to cooperative service to Christ. Evangelism can bring Christians together like nothing else.

Sixth, students need to learn how to form coalitions to reach communities. Many people are looking for Christian renewal and revival. People are crying for a return to the essential faith of the creeds. People are longing for a spiritual revival, but there seems to be a reluctance within the church to take the nation for Christ.

Seventh, Palau warned against seeing evangelism as just another fad. The show and the gimmicks mean nothing without the power of Christ. Even spiritual warfare can be empty without the proclamation of Christ. Real warfare involves sharing the gospel.

Palau urged that the professors of evangelism teach their students that good things are no substitute for preaching the gospel. Without the preaching of the gospel there will be no conversions. Without conversions there will be no change.

Finally, Palau stressed that the ordinary Christian needs to understand that evangelism is not an option but a responsibility for every Christian.

3:00 Palau engaged the Academy in a period of questions and answers.

3:30 Break

BUSINESS SESSION

3:45 Call to Order - George Hunter

1. Approval of the minutes of the 1996 meeting as printed in the 1996-1997 volume of the Journal of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education

2. Presentation of the treasurer's report by Ron Johnson. Out of the balance of $5772.47 must come the cost of publication of the Journal. Johnson urged members to pay personal and institutional dues. Johnson also distributed a data base showing all members and subscribers to the Journal.

Treasurer's report approved as presented.

3.Presentation of the Journal report by Richard Armstrong. Richard Armstrong completes his service as editor after six years. A great part of the growing circulation of the Journal comes from overseas subscriptions. New measures introduced by Ron Johnson have made the business division of the Journal run more smoothly. Armstrong acknowledged the support of those who have served to read articles as a screening committee. The Journal has ads in the present issue for the first time.

The president suggested that we may want some relationship with a publishing house that would absorb some of the costs of the Journal.

OLD BUSINESS

4. A proposal for the establishment of an annual award for academic leadership in evangelism was presented by the executive committee.

Proposed Policies regarding an annual presentation of the
Charles Grandison Finney Award
by the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education

Rationale:

The 1995-97 officers of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education are proposing that the Academy present an annual award for academic leadership in evangelism. The officers responded to the perception that evangelism professors in the colleges and seminaries, like evangelism leaders in most denominations, do not receive much recognition for their contribution to the advancement of apostolic ministry. Professors who teach the theological academy's traditional academic disciplines, and professors who teach the ministries for the gathered churches, receive most of the accolades.

If recognition greatly mattered to professors of evangelism, a group of Academy for Evangelism officers would have addressed the discrepancy before now! Nevertheless, most academic fields do, and should, find appropriate ways to say "Thank you" to the exceptional leaders who model a field's values and blaze its trails. Compared to other academic societies, it is almost incredible that the Academy for Evangelism has existed for a quarter century without presenting awards to leaders in, or beyond, its ranks.

Proposed Policies

So the 1995-97 executive committee proposes, for the full membership's deliberation, the following policies for consideration:

1. The Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education may present an annual award, expressed on a plaque and (normally) presented at the annual banquet, for leadership in Christian evangelism. Cost of the plaque will normally be funded from the Academy's treasury.
2. The award shall be called the Charles Grandison Finney award -- in remembrance of American Christianity's greatest "reflective practitioner" in Christian evangelism. Normally, the honoree will be present at the banquet, but the award may be presented in absentia or posthumously.
3. The current president, or any Academy member, may nominate a name (or names) for the executive committee members to consider. (Nominations, with rationale, should normally be in writing.) The executive committee, by clear majority, will name a person for the award.
4. The primary criterion for choosing a recipient of the award shall be the intellectual advancement of the understanding and practice of the ministry of Christian evangelism. The executive committee may also use secondary criteria, such a the potential recipient's contribution to the Academy for Evangelism. Normally, no person will be considered for the award while he or she is serving on the executive committee. The focus of the selection process should not, however, be strictly limited to members (past or present) of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education.

Motion to approve the proposal with the addition of a paragraph describing the contribution of Finney - motion by Woody Davis, second by Chic Shaver.

Passed.

ABOUT CHARLES G. FINNEY (1792-1875)

Charles G. Finney was perhaps the most significant evangelist of the last two centuries. Through the utilization of "New Measures" in his revivals and preaching in the everyday language of his hearers Finney was a pioneer in contextualizing the gospel. He insisted that revivals are the result of careful analysis and planning as well as prayer. As a result, Finney is the founder of modern revivalism, definitively shaping the evangelistic crusades of all his successors from D. L. Moody to Billy Graham. Finney's integration of passionate evangelism, personal holiness, and radical social reform is a model for Christians who seek to live and share the gospel in both word and deed. Not only a practitioner, Finney was also a teacher who thought deeply about the theology and practice of evangelism, providing a body of writings and influencing generations of students at Oberlin College. Charles Finney is therefore an inspiration for all who teach evangelism and engage in academic research and reflection upon its practice.

NEW BUSINESS

5. Hal Poe presented the names of new members of the Academy who were elected to membership during the year by the executive committee:

Keith Davy
Gary Davis
Wes Griffin
John Tyson
R. Philip Hart
John Bowen
Roberto Escamilla
Robert Stevens
Brenda Halliburton

6. Location for future meetings:

October 8-10,1998 - Trinity Episcopal School of Ministry in Pittsburgh, PA

October 7-9, 1999 - McAfee School of Theology in Atlanta, GA

7. The members considered suggestions for locations for the meetings in 2000 and 2001:

Mexico City
Wycliffe College, Toronto
New England
The Cove or Ridgecrest
A Megachurch/teaching church
(1st United Methodist Church, Tulsa)
Ginghamsburg Church near Dayton
Saddleback Valley Church
Princeton

8. Election of officers. The executive committee serving as the nominating committee presented the following slate of officers:

President - Sam Wilson
Vice President - John Nyquist
Secretary - Hal Poe
Treasurer - Ron Johnson
Journal Editor - Hal Knight

All nominees were elected without opposition.
The editor named Ron Johnson to continue as managing editor.

9. Adjournment
4:50 p.m. Closing prayer for afternoon session

6:00 p.m. Homily by Hal Knight based on Luke 15.
Knight examined the charge that Jesus ate with sinners and tax collectors. Why would Jesus eat with them, and why would they want to eat with him? People do not normally relate this way to the church that represents Jesus. It was not that Jesus was soft on sin, but that Jesus accepted and desired them.
Song by Darrell Watkins
Blessing - Hal Knight
Dinner
Special Music - Korean Vocal Trio

Charles Grandison Finney Award Presentation to Richard Stoll Armstrong - remarks by George Hunter
"Our recipient for the first annual Charles Grandison Finney Award for intellectual leadership in Christian evangelism has probably advanced the cause of evangelistic ministry from as many vantage points as anyone in our lifetime. He served as the senior pastor of two bellwether Presbyterian churches -- Oak Lane Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia and Second Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis -- in which he and his people pioneered, demonstrated, and reflected upon many ways forward in urban evangelization.

"Our honoree taught several generations of divinity students in the chair of evangelism at Princeton Theological Seminary. He has worked tirelessly as an encourager, model, advocate, and seminar leader for evangelism -- throughout and far beyond his own denominational tradition. He is a long time member of, and contributor to, The Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education, and has served as the Academy's Vice-President, President, and Journal editor. The earthy realism he has brought to every expression of his academic leadership in evangelism is undoubtedly rooted in two experiences in bureaucracies -- one in an executive role with the Baltimore Orioles baseball team, the other as a vice-president of Princeton Seminary!

"His publishing in the cause of Evangelism has been both prolific and substantial. As I write this, I see six of his books on one shelf in my office. *The Oak Lane Story* demonstrated that a local church can engage in effective ministry and witness to multiple ethnic populations in a large city. *Service Evangelism* took the place of the book we never had before, as it delineated ways for the serving church to share its faith through ministries of service, conversation and visitation evangelism.

"Our honoree's trilogy -- *The Pastor as Evangelist, The Pastor-Evangelist in Worship*, and *The Pastor-Evangelist in the Parish* -- has advanced the lore of parish oriented evangelism immeasurably. His course in evangelism for Presbyterian laity, *Faithful Witnesses,* is as faithful and useful as any approach ever published for a denominational tradition. (The fact that its enduring impact in Presbyterian circles has been less than the course deserves stands as a stark demonstration that the malaise and pathology now hounding most mainline denominations is much too deep and pervasive for any print resource short of the Scriptures to rescue.)

"So it is our Academy's privilege to honor Richard Stoll Armstrong as the first recipient of the Charles Grandison Finney award. Dick Armstrong's closing words in the "Leaders Guide" for his *Faithful Witnesses* course remind all of us of the common privilege, and limitations, that all of us experience in the challenge of teaching evangelism, preparing apostles, and resourcing the Churches: 'The

harvest is still plentiful; let's rejoice that there are now a few more laborers!'

"Dick Armstrong, you honor all of your colleagues in The Academy for Evangelism by accepting this award. It is our modest way of saying "Thank You" for your contagious spirit, for your lifetime contribution, for your persistence in a Holy Cause, for the imagination and relevance you have brought to that Cause, and for your encouraging love to all of your colleagues."

President's Message - George Hunter

Hunter began his message by describing his conversion experience as a high school student and the difficulty of becoming a seeker without someone who could explain the gospel to him. He described the change in his life that came when he finally became a believer. His process involved credible Christians, conversations and questions. As a first step, he was welcomed into the fellowship where he experienced more conversations. In time he discovered that he believed and was being asked to commit. His parents saw a change in his life and in time came to faith as well. Others became Christians as they came under his influence. Hunter contrasted his experience with the official evangelism approach advocated in the United States which involved a presentation, and a decision before people were invited into fellowship. Hunter's research has drawn him back to his initial experience as the better model. Acceptance and fellowship became the basis of conversions of people he was observing.

Hunter discovered John Finney's *Coming to Faith Today* about conversions in England. This study reinforced the idea that fellowship precedes conversion. This had been the pattern followed by John Wesley who invited people to join a Class Meeting. Lord Sopor pointed Hunter back to Celtic Christianity as the source of Wesley's approach. John Finney has since *written Recovering the Past: The Ancient Celtic Mission* which suggests that the Celtic approach was more relational and the Roman approach more presentational. Hunter retold the story of Patrick's mission to Ireland. As a slave, he drew close to God in prayer, escaped from slavery, became a priest and eventually returned to Ireland as a missionary.

This mission became the first venture into "uncivilized pagan culture." Ireland became substantially Christian in two generations. (Saturation Evangelism) Protégés of these Christians evangelized Scotland, England, and the Celtic areas of northern Europe. These peoples developed distinctive themes compared to the Romans:

nature - reverence for life
human nature - mixture of good and evil
presence of God - over against transcendence
providence - God protects us

community - versus institutions
organization - not hierarchical like Rome
Celtic knot - symbolizes the unending process of life
the Christian life - to live in this life
the people's culture - built upon culture
the people's religion - built upon druid religion
the communication of Christianity - emphasized right brain aspect of imagination: drama, story, symbols, analogy, poetry

12. Process of evangelism - establish credibility and conversation in order to invite people to the monastery community where they eventually came to believe. Hunter took note of John Finney's comment, "Evangelism is helping people belong so they could believe."

Saturday, October 11

Morning Session - Sam Wilson presiding

8:30 Morning worship lead by John Nyquist.
Text: Colossians 4:2-6

The ministry depends upon a lifestyle of prayer. Others may share in the ministry through prayer. Participatory prayer needs a specific goal; not just general prayer for ministry but for the proclamation of the gospel. This ministry comes at a cost. It cost Paul his freedom. Paul asked that the Colossians pray that he would proclaim the gospel with clarity.

9:00 Norman Thomas, report: "Evangelism Trends in the World Council of Churches" [Thomas has attended all of the meetings of the world evangelization group of the WCC since 1980 and has written about them in mission journals. For this report he chose to do something which had not been written about.]

Is evangelism at the heart of the work of the WCC? Philip Potter asked questions like this thirty years ago and they continue to be crucial questions. At its founding in 1948, the WCC said that it had set itself to the task of winning the whole world to faith in Christ. At its second meeting in Evanston in 1954, the WCC stressed that there must be personal participation with Christ, because the eternal destiny of each person depends upon it. The 1958 statement stressed the urgency of evangelism in that each Christian was called to be a witness. The 1962 meeting reaffirmed the common calling to evangelism. Costas found the doctrinal affirmations to be consistent with evangelical concerns expressed at Lausanne. At the 1973 Bangkok meeting the WCC reaffirmed the role of the local church in evangelism. All WCC assemblies have raised this issue of evangelism in

some way. In 1980, however, 80% of the attendees had never been to a previous meeting and had no awareness of the legacy of evangelism. Thomas went on to explore the World Council of Churches tradition of evangelism.

10:00 Break

10:15 Keith Davy, report: "Advancing - Side by Side: Evangelism Trends in Para-church Organizations" [Keith Davy serves as Associate Director of Research and Development for U. S. Campus Ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ.] Within the evangelism trends in para-church organizations, several shaping forces are at work: the cultural context, the Christian community, and the organizational developments.

Davy identified six major trends.
Trend #1: An Increasing Socio-Cultural Reflection

Organizations like Campus Crusade pay more attention to the defining contexts in which they minister. This situation has led to a shift away from an individual orientation to a more communal or group orientation. Everything now revolves around relationships. This trend has led to the development of several initiatives in Campus Crusade. The new follow up materials have taken this approach. The new LC2 materials will emphasize both the personal dimension of being a Christian and the communal dimension of connecting with a local church. Telling the Truth represents an approach to evangelizing postmodern people.

Trend #2: Maturing Evangelistic Understanding

Methodology is moving from a narrow focus to a broader or a more comprehensive approach. An example of this approach would be EvangeLEAD, which is a comprehensive evangelism leadership model. This approach illustrates the dynamic of the witness and their various relationships: body of Christ relationships, natural relationships in their lifestyles, ministry relationships.

Trend #3: An Adapting of Organizations

In Campus Crusade a movement has taken place from direct ministry only to a catalytic influence and from autonomy to partnerships. Student LINC represents an effort to resource people involved in campus ministry around the country. The World Wide Web has been utilized for on-line evangelism and resources. Addresses include:
The Campus Ministry (http://www.thecampusministry.com/),
The Godsquad (http://www.godsquad.com/), and
Real Life, Real Connections (http://www.realconnections.com/).
Church partnerships have become an increasingly important aspect

of the ministry as Campus Crusade's resources plateau, but the resources of local congregations make it possible to reach every campus in the country.

Trend #4: Adjusting Ministry Strategies and Methods

The changes in organizations leads to a movement from faithfulness in traditional methodology to effectiveness in ministry strategies. The catalytic ministries have moved toward a cell group approach which provides a growth environment to the believer, but also a witness to the non-believer. The use of HIVpositive Steve Sawyer giving his testimony represents a departure from the more rationalistic apologetic approach which is called "embodied apologetic."

Trend #5: Developing a New Generation of Resources

Resources are moving from didactic tools to dialogical resources. Examples of these resources include Quest: Building Bridges through Personal Interviews, Lifeskills: Building Bridges to the Word of God, and Making Sense of it All: The Gospel Metanarrative. This trend also involves a movement from a harvest focus to increased cultivation. These resources include Focus Groups: Cultivation through Meaningful Dialogue, Every Student's Choice: A Conversation with a Campus, and Freshman Survival Kits: A Return to Coverage.

Trend #6: An Increasingly Optimistic Outlook

From the 80's to the 90's there has been a movement from a wall of frustration to a window of opportunity.
The Future
Parachurches will neither lead nor follow in the future, but truly walk side by side with the churches in the future.

11:15 Break

11:25 The Cross-Fertilization of Teaching and Scholarship in Evangelism

What is new and important in books?
In the Steps of Jesus by Michael Wilkins - relation of evangelism and discipleship
The Harvest - a 14 minute video that emphasizes the need for partnership evangelism. Available from Campus Crusade.
Evangelism Through the Local Church by Michael Green
Ee-taow - video and sequel which describe how an entire tribe was converted through teaching the Bible. Available from New Tribes.

Letters from a Sceptic (Victor Press) by Gregory and Victor Boyd - letters between a Christian and his unbelieving father in the efforts of the son to bring the father to faith. It addresses major issues.
Church for the Unchurched by George Hunter
Spiritual Entrepreneurs by Michael Slaughter (Abingdon) - The story of Ginghamsburg United Methodist Church
The Recovery of Mission by Vinoth Ramachandra (Eerdmans)
Apologetics in a Postmodern World by Timothy Philips and Dennis Okholm
What's So Amazing About Grace? by Philip Yancey
Future Faith Churches by Don Posterski and Gary Nelson (Wood Lake, 1997)

What topics should future meetings address?

service evangelism, paradigm shifts in culture and how they affect paradigm shifts in evangelism, evangelism and the aging population, evangelistic preaching, evangelism and social justice, spiritual awareness among third world Christians and the lack thereof in the U.S., reaching people influenced by the New Age Movement, reaching different generations, communications changes in the media creative uses of the Internet and evangelism, new churches and evangelism, what people of other religions think of Christians, dialog between missiologists and evangelism professors on North America, apologetics in a postmodern world

What speakers should address the Academy in future years?
Fred Craddock
Kevin Ford on Generation X
a pastor who has been in a church for a long time - Rick Warren
John Ed Mathison
Stu Bemick - Orchard Hill Church
John Guest
Erwin McManus
Timothy Beal
successful multi-cultural churches
Steve Gunter
Leighton Ford
Bill McCartney

Adjournment

INDEX OF VOLUMES 1-12 (1985-1997)

ARTICLES

AUTHORS

BOOK REVIEWS

BOOK NOTES

BOOR REVIEWERS

JAETE Journal of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education

REMITTANCE and RENEWAL Form

Date: ______________

_____ I have already paid my AETE membership dues ($35) and am therefore entitled to receive the copy of Vol. 13 of the *JOURNAL*, which I received in the mail.

_____ I am not a member of the AETE but I have already remitted the amount due for Vol. 13, which I received in the mail.

_____ I have not paid for Vol. 13, which I received in the mail, and am enclosing the following amount:

Current and Future Issues Requested:	Price		Amount Enclosed
___ for the current issue (Vol. 13)	$10	=	______________
___ for the next issue (Vol. 14)	$10	=	______________
___ for the next 2 issues (Vols. 14 & 15)	$18	=	______________
___ for the next 3 issues (Vols. 14 -16)	$26	=	______________
___ for the next 4 issues (Vols. 14 -18)	$30	=	______________

Back issues requested:

Volumes	Number of Copies	Price	Amount Enclosed
__________	__________	@ $10 per book =	______________
__________	__________	@ $10 per book =	______________
		Total Amount Enc.	______________

Please print your name and preferred mailing address clearly:

Name: ______________________ Tel. No. ( ) ______________

Address: ____

____

- -

Make check or international money order (U.S.A. currency only, please) payable to JAETE. Detach this portion for your records. Send top portion with your payment to: **Dr. Ronald W. Johnson, Managing Ed., Jaete, Mercer School of Theology, 3001 Mercer University Drive, Atlanta, GA 30341-4415**

JAETE Volumes ordered: ______________________________

Amount Paid: ______________ Date: ________ Check No. ________

INFORMATION FOR SUBSCRIBERS AND AUTHORS

The Journal of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education (ISSN 0894–9034) is published annually in October and distributed free of charge to all paid-up members and associate members of the Academy, and to supporting institutions. Copies may be purchased at a cost of $10.00 per single issue, or $30.00 per subscription for four issues. Subscriptions, renewals, orders, and change-of-address notifications should be sent to Dr. Ronald W. Johnson, Managing Editor, AETE Journal, Mercer Univ. School of Theology, 3001 Mercer Univ. Drive, Atlanta, GA 30341-4415 (tel. 770-986-3477; FAX 770-986-3478; E-mail address: johnson_rw@mercer.edu.). Remittances should be made payable to "The Journal of the AETE."

Journal of the AETE was established to provide a medium for the responsible sharing of ideas among those engaged in the teaching of evangelism, primarily at the seminary level, as well as those whose ministries involve them in serious research and writing in the field. In addition to scholarly articles and book reviews, the Journal includes the Minutes of the annual meetings of the Academy and occasional items of interest to AETE members.

The Editorial Advisory Committee of the Journal is seeking well-written, high-quality articles relating to any aspect of evangelism, and issues relevant to the theology and practice of evangelism, including biblical, doctrinal, pedagogical, and methodological concerns, and matters relevant to evangelism and the cognate disciplines. Responses to articles in previous issues of the Journal will also be considered. Manuscripts should be submitted both on paper and on a floppy disk (WordPerfect format preferred, however, ascii text can also be processed) Henry H. Knight III, Editor, Saint Paul School of Theology, 5123 Truman Rd., Kansas City, MO 64127 (tel. 816-483-9600; FAX 816-483-9605; E-Mail address: HALSPST@aol.com). Book reviews should be sent to Dr. C. Thomas Wright, Book Review Editor, AETE Journal, 4200 North Point Pkwy., Alpharetta, GA 30202-4174 (tel. 404-898-7708; FAX 404-898-7782; E-mail address: cserve 71173,2126).

Manuscripts (including book reviews) should be double spaced (including endnotes, tables, and appendices), using only one side of a page (8 1/2 x 11 inches). Articles should be carefully documented, with notes appearing at the end. For style, including the citation of sources, authors should be guided by the University of Chicago Press' *Manual of Style* or K. L. Turabian's *Manual for Writers*. For spelling punctuation, capitalization, etc., use an up-to-date style manual, such as *The Gregg Reference Manual*, published by McGraw-Hill. For example, pronouns for Jesus and terms like gospel (except when it refers to a book of the Bible), eternal life, kingdom of God, body of Christ, are not capitalized. A good rule is, "When in doubt, don't capitalize!" The use of gender inclusive language is expected.

Manuscripts need to be submitted by May 15 in order to appear in the following October issue. The desired length of articles is normally 3000 to 5000 words, with preference on the shorter side. Book reviews are usually in the 600 to 750 range. Authors and reviewers are requested to indicate their present place of employment, complete title, and full name. They may include a brief explanatory statement about their article, if such is needed. Contributors receive no compensation except for five complimentary copies of the issue in which their article appears.

The contents of The Journal of the AETE reflect the ideas and opinions of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the editorial advisory committee or the officers and other members of the AETE.