

not of past allegiances but of biblical faith that is as concerned for scriptural integrity as it is for the universal salvation of mankind—beginning with food and clothing. But such a change, if it comes, will come not as we will it but as God makes it possible.

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7. URBAN EVANGELISM

✠ AS PASTOR of a downtown church in what our Chamber of Commerce calls "the thirteenth largest city in the United States," I pondered the piece of denominational mail on my desk. It was a questionnaire from denominational headquarters, stating that "since your church was one of the leaders of the Convention in the number of baptisms last year" please answer the following questions.

I thought of what had been happening in our fellowship during that year and searched for honest answers for the soon-to-be-computerized information. I thought of the many signs along last year's highway which said, "Drive carefully, God's at work." I tried to figure how you distill the spirit of compassion and prayerful concern into words on a questionnaire. My mind stepped back to view the scene of a pastor laboring over a questionnaire, and suddenly it struck me what I was viewing: a parable of the plight of evangelism in our cities.

Empty church buildings dotting the urban landscape have panicked denominational leaders into crash studies of church growth trends. Obvious decline in growth of churches has caused a rash of doleful predictions about the last days of the church in an increasingly secular society. Like a man periodically checking his pulse to see if he is alive, churchmen wait with bated breath for the next statistical report. Exultation is expressed when churches in suburbia produce enough growth to overshadow the decline in the heart of the city. Frenzied efforts to redouble promotional schemes and produce enthusiasm for churchmanship have marked the past decade. At the other end of the spectrum some churchmen have yawned and said disparaging things about the "numbers game," as if a sign of effective work of God were a shrinkage of the size of churches.

It is a paradox that the gospel of Jesus Christ should be in trouble in the cities. It was nurtured in cities of the first-century world. New Testament pages are dotted with the names of cities—Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, Corinth. Jesus commanded the disciples to start their witness in the sullen powder keg city of Jerusalem. Paul's strategy of mission witness centered in the cities of his day. Cities were the original laboratories in which the implications of the Good News were hammered out and joyously shared.

The cities of the New Testament day, however, were vastly different from the urban areas of our day. The new urban situation has no parallel in history. Most cities of the ancient world were like tiny villages compared with the metropolis of today. Few could rival modern cities. The vast "strip cities" of millions of people are new phenomena. They involve a change in pattern or style of life, attitudes, values, and behavior.

A whole new outlook emerges in which man realizes rootlessness.¹ Social support of a group to which one belongs has a less pivotal role in man's decision making. Schedules are altered. Pressures and tensions unimagined in a less furiously paced world become daily experiences for the urban dweller. The gospel must be communicated to persons in this atmosphere in ways which make its message meaningful.

Another factor making the crisis of gospel communication acute is the style of church life which has evolved in the last two centuries. The American experience was shaped in a frontier and rural surrounding. The gospel flourished in the atmosphere of rural America. Churches fashioned their approach and programs in tune with people of that cultural experience. While such methodology still may be useful while dealing with first-generation city dwellers, it ultimately must adjust or fail according to the present urbanization. Christians in an emerging urban culture must reexamine credentials for, methods of, and motives for evangelism in order to produce the greatest possible impact for Christ.

CREDENTIALS FOR EVANGELISM

An examination of credentials for evangelism should begin with scrutiny of what the term "evangelism" means. The word is used in

1. David S. Schuller, *The Christian Encounters the New Urban Society* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), pp. 16-17.

many different ways. For some Christians the term means a generalized or vague announcement that God is in the world. As used here, however, it describes specific sharing of the truth of God revealed in Jesus Christ with the hope that men will gladly respond to him as Master of their lives. Evangelism is the heartbeat of urgency, saying, "Ye must be born again."

Despite the lip service given the idea of evangelism in the preachments of religious convention speakers, a basic issue confronted by urban Christians is whether evangelism is a priority mission for churches. Few persons question the importance of evangelism as it relates to growing church memberships. There is a vague uneasiness, however, in a pluralistic society about making such exclusive demands for allegiance. Such demands sounded logical in small communities where one religious point of view was predominant. But the urban dweller is confronted with so many religious perspectives that he feels uncomfortable about stating his as the only way. Harvey Cox has described the process of secularization which is stripping evangelism of its priority saying:

The forces of secularization have no serious interest in persecuting religion. Secularization simply bypasses and undercuts religion and goes on to other things. It has revitalized religious world views and thus rendered them innocuous. Religion has been privatized. It has been accepted as the peculiar prerogative and point of view of a particular person or group. Secularization has accomplished what fire and chain could not: It has convinced the believer that he *could* be wrong, and persuaded the devotee that there are more important things than dying for the faith. The gods of traditional religions live on as private fetishes or the patrons of congenial groups, but they play no role whatever in the public life of the secular metropolis.²

If religious experience is one's own private business, and a crowded culture has insulated one from his neighbor, evangelistic concern becomes passé. It is all right to worry aloud about evangelism in church meetings and to lament the religious decline, but it is really not in good taste to be insistent about others adopting your religious point of view. Eagerness for common denominator values in a pluralistic society makes Christian evangelism seem divisive, and therefore to be politely avoided.

2. Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1965), p. 2.

Complicating further the credentials for evangelism in urban culture is an impatience with words in an action-oriented atmosphere. Pragmatic minds bent on doing things have produced modern technology which in turn has given birth to modern cities. To persons of this mind bend, churches seem to be organizations structured toward the end of having members properly talked to. Christians see the need for demonstrations of life changes rather than mere words about change. They often feel uncertain about making claims for Christ. They are haunted by words of allegiance substituting for real commitment and are wary of repeating an empty pattern in the name of evangelism.

The word "credentials" has its root in the Latin word *credo* — believe. Credentials are that which makes one believable. Evangelism is believable in a modern urban culture just as it was in the New Testament day. It is believable because it is possible for men to know ultimate and adequate truth about God only in Jesus Christ. To make this claim is not arrogance or intolerance. C. G. Rutenber makes the distinction well:

Where all is relative and where we must be agnostic about ultimate truth, there is no virtue in being tolerant. There is nothing to be intolerant about. What is here called tolerance is merely the sophisticated agnosticism of those who believe that no one knows the truth or can know it. But where one believes that there is truth that is discoverable, he cannot be indifferent to error . . . The man who believes that God has spoken cannot act as though God had not spoken. Tolerance is the virtue of those who have great convictions about truth but who, at the same time, have great respect for people.³

Few Christians are as candid as a young college girl who gave her reason for not witnessing to fellow students by saying, "I guess I just don't really believe they are in as much trouble as you say they are." The basic thrust of the message of Christ is that these persons *are* in that much trouble and need to be helped immediately.

It is intriguing that the world of psychology is rediscovering the essential value of words just as many churchmen are ready to abandon them. Psychotherapists are finding that to get emotionally disturbed persons to express in words their innermost feelings has

3. G. G. Rutenber, *The Reconciling Gospel* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1960), p. 37.

therapeutic value in and of itself. Words are important. Words conveying the truth of God's revelation are of utmost importance. For one to verbalize his own experience with God in an attempt to explain it to another is to reinforce the impact of the experience itself.

While there should be no apology for words in conveying the message of Good News, the authenticating claims of Christ cannot be effective unless words result in deeds. Social action and social ministry provide a laboratory of concern which verifies the truth of evangelism. The skeptical urban dweller needs evidence that the church is a ministering community as well as a talked-at community for him to believe the words he hears.

A Christian social worker in St. Louis, Missouri, was asked whether a group of college students working in the black ghettos had succeeded in winning many black young people to Christ. His answer reflects the way the servant church makes possible the message-sharing church.

"What these white Christian young people did," he said, "was to make the message preached by the black pastor believable. Black young people had heard their preachers say that the gospel of Jesus Christ makes all men love each other. They looked around. They found no evidence of white Christians loving them. They rejected the message. Now here were white Christians demonstrating that love. The black kids started going back again to hear with interest what their black pastors were saying about the gospel."

SOME METHODS FOR EVANGELISM

If credentials are in order and men are urgently committed to sharing Christ's message in an urban culture, it is wise to examine methods for doing so. It is important that we do it with the realization that no two cities or situations are the same. It is also important to reject the sanctifying or deifying of any style or methods. None can be sacrosanct. Methods change although the message remains the same.

SOME OLD WINESKINS SEEM TO BE CRACKING

When anything begins to die, there is usually a panic-filled time in which a frenzy of activity seeks to substitute energy for life. Hypodermic needles of adrenalin are thrust directly into the heart muscle to preserve the semblance of life. But death moves on in its

inexorable fashion. Because men are basically institutionalists, they usually face strong temptation to place too great a priority upon a method which has worked well in its day, but which day is past.

Evangelism is going through just such a trauma in its encounter with urban culture. The old wineskins seem to be cracking, and men flounder in the panic of uncertainty about whether any new wineskins are available to keep all from being lost. To compound the problem, we have praised our methods so long and so eloquently that there is an unacknowledged plot of silence about the possibility that their day is gone. We move through our charades, dreading the day when the candid voice of the little child will say, "The king wears no clothes."

Such a voice spoke to a national denominational assembly a few years ago, saying, "Revivalism is dead even though our churches continue to hold one- and two-week long series of services in its memory each year." Leaders charged with emphasizing evangelism were shocked. The truth is, however, that less candid voices had been lamenting for years the fact that "it's getting harder to win people in revival meetings these days."

The style of evangelism geared to the agricultural community in the days of slow transportation and work centering around seed and harvest times made the annual two weeks of daily preaching a logical and useful tool of evangelism. There still lingers a nostalgia for those experiences in the minds of many persons living in cities. For the immediate future, revivals are a usable though decreasingly effective tool. The emerging urban culture may be demanding a different wineskin for evangelism to be effective.

A similar technique of evangelism is "crusadism." The city-wide or community-wide evangelistic crusade in which a number of congregations join in a massive effort of preaching has a contribution to make to evangelism, but the emerging urban culture is gradually eroding its usefulness. Its major contribution at this stage of development is the creation of an atmosphere in which religious matters can be discussed more easily by citizens of the secular city. An examination of the lasting impact of such crusades on the lives of persons aligning themselves with local congregations of Christians leaves serious question concerning crusades as a primary tool of evangelism. As cities become more massive, the impact of a crusade as a creator of atmosphere fades.

The emerging urban culture seems to be dealing a similar blow to the wineskin of organizational enlargement as a tool of evangelism. There was a day when experts in Sunday schools could verify the claim that classes structured in certain sizes, moving with a certain enlistment program would result in getting persons involved in Bible study and lead them to Christian experience. It is still true that the Bible study organization of the congregation is a primary place of witness for those connected with the congregation, i.e., the children of church families. However, the psyche of the urban dweller tends toward a desire for anonymity. Many downtown churches are discovering that their first contact with the city dweller comes at a worship service when he can drop in without establishing close personal relationships. People, especially at the adult level, are being won from the worship services into study classes. The principle of establishing a personal sense of responsibility toward ministering to an individual is still valid. It expresses itself well through the structure of organized Sunday schools. Therefore, this wineskin may be strained but not cracked at this stage of the urbanization process.

One wineskin which is cracked and should be discarded is that of a mechanical methodology of witnessing. The salesmanship approach to Christian witnessing with its memorized techniques was never worthy of the message of the Son of God. He is not a product to be sold. He can never be tailored to the customer's taste. He gives no commission for us to manipulate men into his kingdom. Therefore, the sales pitch version of evangelism borders on heresy and results in a great number of unregenerate persons within congregations unaware of their plight as lost men. While it is a healthy and helpful step for one to verbalize his own experience with God in such a way as to understand it better and to share it in concise and authentic fashion, it is dangerous to manipulate men toward merely saying the right words about Christ.

SOME EMERGING STRATEGIES FOR URBAN CULTURE

In addition to the ongoing programs of Bible study and worship services as avenues of evangelistic witness, a number of other strategies for evangelism are emerging in metropolitan areas. Necessity has forced many churchmen to imaginative ways of sharing the witness of Christ.

→ *Mass Media.* One of the most obvious means of sharing the gospel in this world of mass communications is through the media of television, radio, and newspaper. As the metropolis expands, mass communication becomes more pivotal and more crucial. Its function is both directly evangelistic and cultivative for the Christian witness. While many cities are developing a pattern of television policies, making it more difficult for churches to telecast morning worship services regularly, I am convinced it is still worth trying. In our culture, for the foreseeable future, the eleven o'clock hour still has a reputation of being an hour of worship. Persons in crisis often turn toward a church service at that hour. I have known personally a number of secularized and unchurched persons who found help through televised worship services and made their way to the church for additional counseling. The time may come with the developing of a leisure-oriented society when the major link between the organized church and its opportunity for witness will be the television channel.

Television, radio, and newspapers also serve as useful channels for communicating an image of concern which opens doors for evangelism. Our congregation has discovered that a thirty-minute weekly color television show featuring youth, with religious folk music and discussion of issues, has opened doors for witness not only for our congregation but also for our fellow Baptists in the area. Many churches across the nation are having similar experiences.

A weekly newspaper column written by the pastor concerning the moral side of the news conveys an image of a church concerned for the vital issues of the day and opens the door for discussion with men who read newspapers but who do not occupy church pews. Many of these channels are open even in increasingly secularized cities if churchmen will use initiative and imagination. It is true that most mass media are more open to communication other than preaching and preachments, but the fashion of the presentation of the message can be tailored without altering the message.

The Dinner Plate. Some of the most important transactions in cities transpire over a dinner plate. Civic decisions are made and business deals are closed over lunch. An urban culture geared to the dinner plate offers numerous ways for evangelism. Some churches are experimenting with Bible study in restaurants and shopping centers. Members living nearby and working in the area

form the nucleus for the group, inviting fellow employees or neighbors to attend. The meetings may center on a single week of emphasis. If they are periodic, they should have a definite cut-off date. What is a better way for a downtown church to reach people with its message.

One congregation is discovering that the guest dinner at the church, with an outstanding speaker, is one of the most effective initial contacts with persons who are not Christian. The technique has been used for years as part of a week of revival services. The form of the gospel of the dinner plate works even better as a one-night opportunity in which the guests do not feel manipulated into an evangelistic service following the dinner.

Churches located adjacent to military bases, colleges, or other centers of temporary residence may find the Sunday dinner hour a tremendous opportunity for evangelism. This is especially true for internationals visiting in our country. Our congregation serves lunch every Sunday for military personnel. A number of interested Christians host these guests, invite them to their homes, show them Christian hospitality. More than a score of men with Buddhist and Hindu background have accepted Christ as Savior through this gospel of the dinner plate.

The key is establishing authentic relationships of friendship. Communication of the gospel follows. One man has found that persons from other countries usually are able to read English with better comprehension than they can hear it. Therefore, he writes a letter explaining the Christian message to a person with whom he has established this friendship. Then he sits with him to go over the letter. Some of his letters sound like a modern apostle Paul as he answers the questions in simple yet genuine fashion.

An interesting form of this gospel of the dinner plate is a ministry to the newcomer. A group of women form a "hot casserole" fellowship. They fix casseroles ahead of time, freeze them, and stand ready. When a person moves into the community, they come bearing hot food on moving day, offering a gracious welcome to the city, sharing information on the basic needs of the family: finding a dry cleaner, grocery store, beauty shop, and so forth. Their gesture is welcome as a small but significant act of personal friendliness in a depersonalized city. Doors are opened for sharing their invitation to worship and later toward sharing their faith.

Coffee House Movement. An intriguing experiment in sharing the

Christian faith is the establishing of coffee houses by religious groups in the hope of confronting unchurched young people with the claims of Christ. Churches in urban centers are trying this technique with varying degrees of success. The use of religious folk music, light refreshments, discussions, and informal conversations make this a viable structure for sharing one's faith.

Actual experience of many of these groups has been frustrating at the point of evangelism. Some have disavowed the purpose of evangelism in favor of a ministry of presence or a ministry of "preevangelism." These have said that the kind of persons to which they would direct their efforts would be resistant to any direct confrontation about the message of Christ. They view themselves as ministering in preparation for a witness later or for trying to help confused youth who are on their way to dropping out of religious activities.

A number of these coffee houses have been so inundated by clientele from the drug-oriented, youth subculture with its antiestablishment bias, that young people coming to the activities are drawn away from rather than toward Christ. Painful reappraisals of purposes and programs have had to be made. Experience seems to be demonstrating that a great deal depends upon the perspective of the sponsors as to what will actually be attempted and accomplished through this kind of effort. Those with the open purpose of Christian evangelism may not draw the number of unchurched youth that others with less distinctively evangelistic purposes, but they may be able to mark more progress in spiritual response than do the ones with more generalized purposes. The specific situation will dictate the type of coffee house justifiable for Christian investment of energy and money. This tool remains a possibility for evangelism in urban culture.

Trailer Park Ministry. Our mobile society has produced a new phenomenon in the cities—the house on wheels. That which started as a vacation activity has graduated into a permanent means of housing families who prefer to remain rootless for either personal or business reasons. Vast mobile home areas have emerged. Some of these families become a more or less permanent addition to a community. Others do not. There has developed a whole subculture of persons on wheels. Many are retirees. Many others are families of military or construction personnel.

A vast opportunity of Christian ministry and evangelism is open among these persons. An interesting feature of this ministry is the

trailer-church. Our congregation has begun such a ministry, as have many others. A specially designed mobile chapel has been purchased. Open on the inside to provide a small auditorium, it has movable partitions for classes. It is air-conditioned and fully equipped with plumbing.

The owners and managers of trailer parks are often eager for such a ministry to their families. It makes an attractive "extra" to their appeal to the mobile couple with children. A census of the trailer park reveals whether the program design should be youth-oriented or directed to more mature persons. The ministry takes on the character of a group chaplaincy to a transient community. It provides excellent opportunity to gain access to a life style which is similar to but distinctive in the urban scene.

Apartment Ministry. One of the most difficult challenges to evangelism in the emerging urban culture is the apartment situation. The best minds of concerned Christians must continue to envision experimental means of penetrating the barrier of anonymity created by this life style. Apartment complexes take on personalities just as most social entities do. Some apartment buildings are family-oriented and have a style not dissimilar to the suburban neighborhood. In fact, dwellers in this kind of apartment complex remark that they know more neighbors than they did when they lived in single units in suburbia. For these, the methods of sharing faith are very much like those mentioned previously.

Other apartment complexes take on a totally different atmosphere. Privacy is the key value, and doormen are present to insure it. Persons living in this kind of apartment are often there for exactly that reason—they do not want to be bothered. They may or may not be lonely. They certainly are not open to the door-to-door visitation of yesterday's style.

Another personality in the apartment structure is the swinging singles-only apartment. Designed to attract young bachelors, both male and female, these apartments are geared to socializing. They also often become the flesh-and-blood fulfillment of the playboy life style. The pitch for this type of tenant creates an atmosphere in which the Christian witness meets a stringent challenge.

While many churchmen have pondered the challenge of the apartments and a number of experimental ministries have been launched, no one solution to the problem of communicating the

Christian faith in this milieu has been discovered. Some have found that a day-care service to mothers with small children has opened doors for Christian communication. Several groups have tried moving chaplain-like ministers into apartment complexes. A "ministry of presence" is achieved, but one's living in an apartment complex does not automatically open doors for Christian communication.

Generally the principle which emerges in dealing with apartment ministries is that one can only touch these persons when he addresses himself to a felt need. Analysis of what the persons in that particular style of apartment complex feel and need will determine the approach to opening doors for authentic relationships out of which a witness for Christ can be given.

An intriguing possibility exists for the singles-only style apartment. Managers of these apartments discover that they need to provide a "secular chaplain" for these young adults. They often hire an assistant manager who has the warm qualities of a substitute mother or father. Most single adults have their lonely and moody moments when their need of a listener is very real. A committed Christian woman in a southwestern city was turned down in an application for a job as an assistant manager for such an apartment complex because she did not drink alcoholic beverages. She was told that lonely young "swingers" need a sympathetic figure and that her refusal to drink might create guilt complexes.

Since this need exists, it provides a key to meeting the young adult at a teachable moment with the message of Christ. It may be possible for a group of young adults to infiltrate such an apartment complex with Christian mission in mind. Such a group, enlisted and trained, could quietly move into an apartment complex, sustain each other on the basis of their covenant, maintain an openness to their fellow apartment dwellers, create a fellowship of ministry, and be alert for teachable moments. This group would need leadership and support. A time commitment probably would be essential; a way to exit from the responsibility as well as a way to enter it should be provided.

One of the most effective instruments at God's disposal in our congregation for the winning of single adults to Christ has been Bible study and fellowship groups which have evolved. They meet on a week night at various apartments of participants. Loosely knit and unstructured study groups have become genuine instruments of

evangelism. While this particular group has not moved into a single apartment complex, the idea of ingrafting such a group into a singles-only, swinging apartment complex is an interesting possibility.

Bus Ministries. An avenue of evangelism which seems especially geared to the neighborhood with a large number of children is the bus ministry. While it is not exclusively geared to children, it is primarily so. The design of such an effort is for a person or persons to be committed to a pastoral and enlistment ministry in a specific area, utilizing a church bus. He visits the area, meets parents, establishes trust, and makes arrangements to transport children to Sunday school and to worship. He assumes responsibility for the child and delivers him back home.

This ministry meets with varying degrees of success. In some instances it is phenomenal. Usually its appeal is to persons who have a vague feeling of guilt about the religious and character guidance of their children but lack willingness for personal religious involvement. Once a relationship of concern for the children is established, however, the possibility of communicating the gospel in an authentic fashion to the parent is greatly amplified. The key seems to be in the commitment of the "bus pastor" and in fellowship of spiritual concern with others involved in the same ministry. This program seems to work in churches strong enough in leadership to absorb and to minister to a large number of children without their parents.

Social Ministries. Social ministries in an urban culture provide occasions for establishing relationships with those served, out of which faith can be shared. They also authenticate the gospel by providing a profile of concern. Men can sense a genuine caring which reflects the caring heart of Christ.

There is an unfortunate tension between some men committed to the task of Christian evangelism and some committed to social concerns. It evolves partially from misunderstanding of the nature of the gospel. Part of it, however, is the inevitable tension between the prophet and the priest. Social concern has two dimensions. Social ministry is the caring posture of helping individuals who are in need. Social action is the caring posture of attempting to change structures which destroy individuals and help create the need.

It is my conviction that these feed each other. Persons exposed to the hurts of helpless humanity in social ministry move with Chris-

tian compassion to bind up the wounds. In the process the question emerges of where the wounds originate. The next step is to help stop the practices which victimize men. Christians involved in social action seeking higher levels of justice find themselves driven to be exposed to persons who are wounded. Christian compassion moves them to meet the immediate need as well as the long-range one.

➤ Some so-called evangelists fear the results of social actions because they sense resentment and irritation by persons whose conscience has been assaulted by demands for changed behavior. These fear rejection of their invitation to religious profession by people irritated by religious demands for changes in society. One man, chiding me for a strong statement on racial injustice, said, "When you as a Baptist preacher get into that kind of controversy, you cut off my chance as a Baptist to win my neighbor who has racial prejudice."

This man misunderstands the nature of evangelism. Evangelism is not tricking people into signing the policy and then letting them read the small print. That is not good in the insurance business and it is tragic in Christian witness. Sharing the Christian message means sharing all of the message. Jesus never cheapened his demands in order to secure followers. His disciples cannot do so either.

Social ministry, however, does not connote the conflicts involved in social action. It is the giving of a cup of cold water in Jesus' name. Strangely enough, some are threatened in evangelism by social ministry, feeling that such programs absorb the energy of church members and prevent their investing their time in verbal witness. This is strange because it is incomprehensible that ministers would prefer persons to go around talking *about the message of Christ* while fearing to *perform the ministry of Christ*.

Every page of the New Testament testifies to the action of Jesus toward people who hurt. Nothing could be as counterfeit as a church which prefers words to deeds. The urban man has been tuned in to the pragmatic in his whole outlook on life and work. He may tolerate the idiosyncrasies of churches like this, but he will spot their phoniness and be turned off. God may be turned off by them, too.

There is a source of genuine concern about the evangelistic dimension of social ministries. Some persons involved in social ministries are so fearful of developing "rice Christians" that they are reluctant to emphasize the evangelistic task. That term comes from early days of mission enterprise in China when many persons claimed faith

in Christ in order to receive rice from Christians during famine. Of course, there is always a danger that a person being helped will feel some obligation to the helper and try to please him by agreeing to his presentation of the gospel rather than by authentically responding to Christ. This must be guarded against with all diligence. No man's need should be met on condition that he be or become a believer. Christians meet needs because men whom God loves are hurting.

There is also a tendency on the part of some involved in social ministry to feel that their task is done when the cup of cold water is given. There is so much satisfaction in giving it and in seeing the thirsty satisfied that one may stop there. Reacting to the verbal witness, they are satisfied with the ministry of presence and concern. These need to see that we have not met a person's deepest need until we also lead him to encounter God and his purpose. While there is great latitude for the strategy of leading this person to see Jesus, there must be deep restlessness of the Christian's spirit until he has helped meet this deepest dimension of need.

A number of forms of social ministry become avenues for evangelism in cities. They provide channels both to the person served and to those in his circle who care about him. Day care for children of working mothers or simply giving mother a day out of the house often fills a tremendous need and opens an effective avenue of communication. In one situation in New York City, this became the means of getting past the barriers to apartment dwellers. Most churches have facilities for child care or nurseries. Many find this a most useful tool of evangelism.

Tutoring programs are also filled with fantastic possibilities. Children from low income areas are in crucial need, but the need for tutoring does not confine itself to these areas. The offering of assistance to children creates relationships which could never be established otherwise.

Our congregation had used many strategies without success in seeking to get neighborhood children to our Bible schools. This year we launched a tutoring program for children in our neighborhood. The community is in the downtown area of the city, predominantly poor, basically Latin American with the traditional relationships to Roman Catholicism. We are now serving more than two hundred children two afternoons a week. One-fourth are Anglo, one-fourth are black, and one-half are Latin American. Each of them is there

with the parents' approval. In fact, the parents choose the subject in which the child is to be helped. The evangelistic opportunities of this situation are unfolding and seem to be very challenging.

Literacy programs offer vast evangelistic opportunities. Functional illiteracy is a problem with which all urban centers are plagued. There are talented and able people in our church pews on Sundays who have the time and willingness to learn basic literacy techniques. The relationships established by this kind of helpfulness naturally provide occasions for telling new friends about Christ.

Medical clinics in low income neighborhoods also open avenues. One mission pastor who has been an effective evangelist said, "We seldom see a person accept Christ as Savior to whom we have not demonstrated the genuineness of our concern by some tangible deed of service."

Day camps for ghetto children provide excellent opportunity not only for evangelism but for teenagers to become aware of the needs of persons. Ministries to aging persons, recreation, housekeeping help, as well as many other ministries, should be viewed as opportunities to actualize relationships out of which communication of the gospel can be affected.

SOME ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS

An increasingly skeptical and secularized urban man has a built-in radar for recognizing a phony. He will be increasingly sensitive in a depersonalized culture to whether we are genuinely interested in him or are showing an interest because we are concerned about our organization. Evangelistic concern based on our obsession with our own survival will simply not do the task in the urban scene.

Actually, it has never been sufficient in any cultural setting. In the midst of the pressures of metropolis its insufficiency will be dramatically demonstrated. Whether churches in their present forms will survive the changing patterns of secular city remains to be seen. I am convinced that the church which achieves the serving posture, which is more interested in helping than in being helped, which is willing to forget its future survival because it is excited by its present task, will survive because it is useful to God.

Evangelism must be a sharing of our experience and understanding of God rather than a manipulating of men into our structures. There must be a sensitivity to where God is at work and a flexibility

and openness to the changes he is producing. The genuine evangelist realizes his partnership with God. God's Spirit must draw men to himself. Our task is to be channels for this to occur. We must approach our tomorrows with a willingness to say yes to opportunity instead of continuing a built-in resistance to change.

Evangelism is the task of every man, but it is also a calling to some. We should be sensitive to the fact that some persons are better equipped by God for this task than others. Commitment should be secured. A fellowship of the committed should be provided. Some form of "Andrew club" often serves as a useful structure for this need. We should develop a respect for each other's gifts and callings, for it takes every part of the body of Christ for the church to function.

The questionnaire had to be completed. What was it that was happening in the life of a downtown church that enabled men to find their way to Jesus Christ? The computer may not have been able to program the answer written in the space, but I am convinced it is the secret of evangelism in every age and culture: "Some persons whose names I don't even know praying for the power of God, and a few folks who take seriously their gift for witnessing."

The major portion of the task of evangelism may be performed by persons who are never known. These are the quiet saints, the silent soldiers, who provide the ministry of intercessory prayer which enables the Spirit of God to work. The demons that possess modern men cannot be exorcised except by "prayer and fasting." Many of us who bask in the limelight of leadership need to be aware of the people who are making the whole enterprise possible. No new method can substitute for these essential ingredients of evangelism.