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Urban Evangelism In India: An Evangelistic Project Conducted In The City Of Poona

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Andrews University

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ABSTRACT

URBAN EVANGELISM IN INDIA: AN EVANGELISTIC PROJECT CONDUCTED IN THE CITY OF POONA

by

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After two thousand years in its advent to India, Christianity still remains an unknown entity to the main core of the population. There are more than 3,000 cities and 550,000 villages in India with a population of 683,810,051 people. The urban development in India presents the greatest challenge to the church. It must discover ways of employing effective methods of evangelism to reach the massive population.

Guidelines for evangelistic outreach in the cities of India were drawn from certain theological implications for evangelism under the headings: evangelistic priority, participation, incarnation, and proclamation. An actual evangelistic project was carried out in the city of Poona in which these guidelines were applied.
A study of the Scriptures reveals that God has employed a variety of methods in seeking to communicate with men. Both the Old and New Testament strongly support the idea of the whole church proclaiming the whole message for the whole world. Both leadership and laity participation in evangelism can better reach the community with diversified ministries to lead the people to the hearing, understanding, and obeying of God's spoken word through proclamation. The unusual participation of young people and other lay members of the church and participation in personal ministries seemed to be a particular benefit. Although this approach was effective in reaching certain groups in the community, it is suggested that these methods should also be tested in several more such outreach attempts before final determination is made regarding their usefulness. This project report, while emphasizing the need for biblical proclamation for outreach success, indicates an awareness of the practical difficulty of not being able to reach the Hindus, who make up the majority of the population. Thus, the report contains certain possible suggestions and recommendations for improvement in future evangelistic methods in urban India including the other areas of the country.

The impact of evangelism in India makes it necessary to continue to implement methods to meet the contemporary situation. Emphasis in improving methods of communication such as the formation of an action research committee to ascertain receptive groups, homogeneous units, and language groups; development of evangelistic centers with a view to coming in contact with the community; promotion and preservation of records and reports from the theoretical and practical action research ventures; and organization and
implementation of frequent training programs for both leadership and laity involvement are a few ways of achieving efficiency and effectiveness in evangelism.
Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

URBAN EVANGELISM IN INDIA: AN EVANGELISTIC PROJECT CONDUCTED IN THE CITY OF POONA

A Project Report
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Ministry

by
John Willmott
August 1981
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Date approved
DEDICATION

To Mr. & Mrs. I. R. Thomas who taught by example, the value and the dignity of hard work, and to set Christ-centered objectives and goals in life. Also to Pastors W. G. Lowry, W. H. Mattison, and D. R. Watts who were my companions in the cause of evangelism.
NOTE

This Doctor of Ministry Project falls in a category described in the Andrews University Theological Seminary Bulletin as "Project II" in fulfillment of requirements for an alternate curriculum plan under which the candidate prepares two related papers--a theological position paper that addresses some issue or problem that exists in the church in a theological setting and a professional paper that addresses that issue or problem from a standpoint of ministerial practice.
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PART I

CERTAIN THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF EVANGELISM

APPLICABLE TO THE INDIAN CONTEXT
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Christianity is one of the oldest religions of India." \(^1\)
The statement was made not by a Christian apologist, but by a non-Christian leader of modern India. The first Prime Minister of this great Hindu culture, Jawharlal Nehru, so affirmed Christianity's right to a place within the body of this country.

Tradition says that the good news of the gospel was brought to the shores of India centuries before it even penetrated the Western world, and it was brought by that disciple who gave expression to a basic and fundamental Christian confession, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). Millions of Christians in India today, particularly on the western coast, trace their religious roots to the evangelism of the apostle Thomas and identify themselves by the label "Thomas Christians." \(^2\)

And yet two thousand years after its advent to India, Christianity still remains an unknown entity to the main core of the population. "Jesus" may appear to millions of Indians a word to be


looked up in a dictionary, and not the "name given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).¹

Why?

Even the historic sweep of modern missions has made only a marginal dent on the masses. Since Vasco da Gama sailed along the west coast the Roman Catholic church has sent missionaries with the Portuguese traders and colonists in the late 1400s and established work in cities and towns in India. The first protestant missionary, Zieganbalg, came to the southeastern coast in 1706. This is the beginning of Protestant Christianity in India. William Carey and others came later in the eighteenth century. As of 1980, there are nearly seventeen million Christians settled everywhere, with specific concentration in the south and northeastern parts of the country.² Major protestant organizations were at work for over 250 years. The Bible was available in the major languages of the country for more than a century. The Seventh-day Adventist church with its global outreach structure, a centralized budget, a visionary leadership, a meticulous organization, and committed missionaries, has a tradition of nearly one hundred years. Yet, what are the results?

The Christian influence today is mostly secular. The church is known for its schools, its hospitals, its welfare work. The Indian leaders and their children from every walk of life—from politics to commerce to industry—pride themselves in sending their

¹Ken Newton, Glimpses of Indian Church History (Bombay: Gospel Literature Service, 1975), p. 11.

children to Christian schools. They are never afraid that their children are going to be converted to Christ: seldom they are!
The prime thrust of the Christian church--to make the Cross a point of decision to people who come to the church--seems to have been blunted throughout the history of the Christian church in India. Evangelism has seldom been the watchword of the church in India. If there was a watchword at all, it was not evangelism, but enlightenment; it was not the message of the Cross, but the "massage" of ideological and theological relativism.

The Seventh-day Adventist church position is not much better off. It is true that the church has made great strides in its eighty-year-old history. The Christian schools provided by the church's education program have contributed greatly to the evangelistic thrust of the church. The report of the Seventh-day Adventist church in India, given recently at the Dallas World Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, contains this statement:

For more than 50 years, until 1960, the growth in membership was measurable in terms of hundreds each year. Thereafter, increases have had to be counted in thousands. For example, during the past 20 years period membership has risen from about 22,000 to more than 100,000 to day. This represents an increase of 351%, or a growth factor of four and one-half times within this period (nearly double the average growth rate of the world church during the same period). A graph representing this growth rate would run almost in a straight diagonal line upward, at a 45-degree angle.

Vast opportunities present themselves in Southern Asia to preach the gospel of the soon-coming Saviour. There is an awakening to spiritual need among both Christian and non-Christian alike.

And yet, ask anyone in the streets, in the bazaars, in the trains, in the buses, in the restaurants of India as to who Seventh-

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day Adventists are; it is doubtless if one in a 100,000 will know. Current statistics show that one in 9,118 is a Seventh-day Adventist,¹ and even that one may be a poor, weak Chrisitan who, for one reason or other, has taken the name of "Adventist" sometime in his brief history. Moreover, statistics have a way of turning a whisper into a shout!

What has gone wrong with evangelism? What has gone wrong with the central mission of the Christian church, particularly the Seventh-day Adventist church, in India? Why is the cause of God not moving forward? Why cannot we say, as it was said of the apostolic times, that India is turned "upside down" by the evangelistic program of the church?

The problem is even more acute when it is realized that there are 3,000 cities and towns, and over 550,000 villages² where there is not even a shadow of the church's presence. And these geographical entities have within them 683,810,051 precious souls for whom Christ died.³ The challenge increases as a consequence of the population explosion wherein for every person who accepts the cross, 1,500 to

¹According to 1981 Census it is one in 9,118.
2,000 new persons are born without any possibility of ever hearing the name of Christ.¹

Perhaps the greatest challenge to the church stands out more clearly. It is the urban character of our world. Until recently urbanization was a typical development in Europe and in North America, but today it has become the common pattern of world development. In the world as a whole nearly 55% or some 2.5 billion people, live in cities.²

Indian cities are no exception to this. There is a tremendous need to understand the life and existence of the population who live in these cities. The gospel should be communicated to the needs of the people and should be relevant to the local context.

This project was based on the thesis that evangelism should grow out of a theological orientation relevant to the people who are the object of the evangelistic outreach. How can the challenge of evangelism be faced in India? The only safe plan is to discover from the Scriptures the foundational principles, pattern, and strategies for evangelism in the early church and then draw lessons and applications relevant to the Indian context.

The project had several purposes. First, it was intended to help the church to take a fresh look at evangelism in India and to ascertain how successful it was with respect to its expansion program. Where has evangelism failed in building strong communities of faith? Are there factors that could be isolated which will help in easing possible difficulties?

¹For details see report of Dr. Roscoe S. Lowry in the same articles referred to above.

²Gottfried Oosterwal, "A Church that Serves the World," These Times, May 1, 1981, p. 11.
Secondly, the project grew out of a burden that evangelism be given top priority in the church and that this emphasis be made prominent by the organizational leadership. The administration of the Southern Asia Division was interested in providing this renewed sense of mission and evangelism.¹

Further, the project was born out of the conviction that evangelism required broad participation of believing members.² Traditionally, evangelism in India has been a "one-man-show." The members of the church remained as spectators while the evangelist carried the load. The project grew in my mind out of the conviction that evangelism cannot fail where there is adequate leadership involvement and where this involvement includes the members of the church.

Another strong undergirding of the project is the matter of communication. Since evangelism is the communication of the gospel and communication is personal, this project set out to engage in gospel communication which is personal and people-oriented. Evangelistic strategy is dependent upon proper understanding of the individual, social, and cultural context.³ Communication takes place best in the atmosphere of need satisfaction of the communicant.⁴

¹G. J. Christo, "Build up, Built up, Prepare the Road," Southern Asia Tidings, January 1981, p. 2.
⁴David M. Robinson, Communication (Columbus, Ohio: C. E. Merril Books, 1964), p. 3.
Are there needs that an evangelist must meet in his mission? How crucial are the diversified ministries of the church to provide this satisfaction of felt needs of the people in the community?

The study consists of two parts. Part I is in the form of a theological position paper dealing with Christian evangelism. Part II makes practical application of certain principles which were identified as being applicable to the urban scene in India.
CHAPTER II

THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF EVANGELISM

"Go"¹

Just a simple word. In two little letters, it symbolizes heaven's direction for the Christian. It is a word spoken by the risen Jesus, commanding His followers to go into all the world--go wherever there is a person; go wherever there is need; go with the power of the Holy Spirit; go with the good news of the gospel; go until the kingdom of God is established once for all on earth. The command of Jesus is the germ for evangelism.

This chapter will present: 1) a definition of evangelism; 2) the relationship between theology and evangelism; 3) the foundation, motivation, and scope of evangelism describing the priority nature and mission of the church; 4) a need for the proclamation of the whole gospel by the whole church describing the leadership and laity participation in evangelism; 5) the theological concerns, the content, and the communication principles of evangelism, focusing on the discernment of needs of the people who are the object of evangelism with a view to commitment to Jesus Christ and His church on this earth; and 6) strategies for evangelism which take into account certain hinderances.

¹Matthew 28:19.
This chapter will also summarize and present certain theological implications for later implementation in the practical project.

Definition of Evangelism

But what is evangelism? The concept of evangelism runs like a thread through the New Testament. The verb form *euaggelizesthai* appears fifty-two times in the New Testament; Luke alone uses it twenty-five times. The noun form *euaggelion* (good news) appears seventy-two times in the New Testament, of which at least fifty-four usages belong to Paul. Mark has seven references to this word. The bringer of the gospel, *euaggelistes* (from which we receive the word evangelist), is mentioned three times in the New Testament (Acts 2:1; 8; Eph 4:11; 2 Tim 4:5).¹

A study of these references reveals that evangelism has to do with good news. What kind of good news? The New Testament suggests the following:

1. It is the proclamation of the good news from God and about God (Mark 1:14; 1 Thess 2:2, 8, 9)
2. It is the proclamation of the good news of the kingdom (Matt 4:23; 9:35; 24:14)
3. It is the proclamation of the good news of salvation from sin for all men (Rom 1:16, 17; Mark 13:10; 16:15; Acts 15:7)
4. It is the proclamation of the good news that must be

personally appropriated (2 Cor 4:3; 1 Thess 1:5; 2 Thess 2:14; 1 Cor 15:1-3; Mark 1:14, 15)

5. It is the proclamation of the good news linked directly with the demonstration of the good news (Luke 4:18, 19)^1.

To summarize, evangelism may be defined as the good news of God's Word spoken to man in his present need for salvation from sin. That is ultimately the task of the evangelist and herald, and to this end he must be not only faithful to the message entrusted to him, but also dependent on the Holy Spirit who alone can glorify Christ and bring the heavens in touch with the living God.

Ellen White states that:

The whole body of believers need to be vitalized by the Holy Spirit of God. We should study, plan, economize and set in operation every means possible whereby we may reach and bless suffering and ignorant humanity. The light which God has given to us as a people is not given that we may treasure it among ourselves. We are to act in harmony with the great commission given to every disciple of Christ, to carry to all the world the light of truth.2

Evangelism is thus seeking out people, recognizing their need and ministering to that need. In other words, evangelism is God's word spoken to man's need by showing how the event of Christ meets every possible need in the human situation. J. I. Packer puts it forcefully: "To evangelize is to present Christ Jesus to sinful men in order that through the power of the Holy Spirit they may come to

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^1David Watson, I Believe in Evangelism (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), pp. 27-35.

put their truth in God through Him."¹

Evangelism is explosion. We are "exploded to explode."² The Holy Spirit plays a unique role in this explosion. He explodes Jesus into our lives to explode Jesus in the lives of others.

Theology and Evangelism

The very definition of evangelism suggested above is in itself a theological statement because no definition of evangelism is possible without its theological implication. Any attempt to separate theology and evangelism is both futile and meaningless. The New Testament does not drive a wedge between the two. All efforts in evangelism must be grounded and rooted in the Word of God. Evangelism with a theological basis is sound evangelism because while theology provides the content, evangelism provides for the communication of that content. Theology provides the structure while evangelism provides the direction. An avoidance of theology in evangelism or suspicion of evangelism in theology is dangerous. The great concepts of God, man, sin, salvation, forgiveness, reconciliation, resurrection, and the second coming are all expressed in evangelism. Evangelism is theology exposed, expressed, and expounded. "Theology defines evangelism and evangelism describes theology."³

¹J. I. Packer, Evangelism and God's Sovereignty (ILL: Inter-Varsity Press 1940), p. 35.
³Ibid., p. 90.
Foundation, Motivation, and Scope of Evangelism

The fundamental blueprint for evangelism is the Bible itself. The Word of God supplies the content, the mandate, the inspiration, and the direction for service to the world. Without the Bible there would be neither the authority nor the inclination to engage in evangelism. With the Bible, however, all excuses for opting out of it are nullified.

The foundation of evangelism is God Himself. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God loved this world so much to visit this planet through His Son. This thought was rightly captured by the declaration issued by the International Missionary Council in 1952 which gave much impetus to modern evangelism:

The missionary movement of which we are a part has its source in the true God Himself. Out of the depth of His love for us, the Father has sent forth His own beloved Son to reconcile all things to Himself, that we and all men might through the Spirit, be made one in Him with the Father, in that perfect love which is the very nature of God.²

God so loved the world. This meant that no man, woman, boy, or girl was excluded from God's love. His loving ministry reaches to everyone regardless of language, caste, creed, or living conditions.

The motive for evangelism is well summarized in the words of Jesus Himself: "As the Father hath sent me even so send I You."


The sending by the Father is an act of unselfish, sacrificial, outgoing love. Without such love, no "sending" by the Father would have been possible.

So is the "sending" of His followers by the Lord. Christ's command "Go ye" is a command born of love to a lost world. As the apostle states: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3:16).

God's love for mankind, man's love for God, and the consequent love of man for all mankind are the starting and empowering points of evangelism.

Out of this motivation, the scope for evangelism takes its own dimensions. Love is the motivation. The whole world is the scope—that is wherever there is a lost man or woman. Hence Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world" (Matt 28:19, 20). "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: (Mark 16:15)." "And the Lord said unto the servant, God out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (Luke 14:23).

This universality of the commission to "go," so prominent in the New Testament, was emphasized in the Old Testament as well, particularly in the prophetic literature. As John Stott asserts:

The God of Israel is no tribal deity like Chemosh, the God of the Moabites, and Milcom, the God of the Amorites. He is the living God, the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, the Ruler of the Nations, and the Lord of history. So even in the Old
Testament, in which God's judgment on the Nations is pronounced, the salvation of the Nation is also pronounced.

But within the Jewish history, this universality was dimmed by tradition, tribal isolationism, and pharisaical exclusiveness. Instead of being torch bearers going to the nations of the world, the Jewish leaders expected the world to come to them. To quote John Stott again:

In the case of the Jews it was not so much one of mission (Israel going out to win the nations) as of Universalism (the nations being included one day). This centripetal missionary consciousness (the nations flowing to Jerusalem) was replaced by centrifugal missionary activity (the disciples going out to the nations).  

Whole Gospel--Whole Man--Whole Church

The content of evangelism is the whole gospel. It should be presented in an intelligible way in order to be understood by those who hear it. We are to declare the whole counsel of God. The presentation of the gospel should be simple, but any attempt to reduce it or water it down to suit the different cultures and religious traditions should be carefully guarded. Failure to unite mankind affected by varied cultures on the basis of faith and doctrine may lead the church from gospel consciousness to social consciousness.

Neither, however, should the gospel fail to address itself to the social needs of a person. The gospel should be addressed to the

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2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
whole person. Evangelism is a ministry to the whole person. Christ sets the example for us to follow in performing a Christian ministry to the whole person.¹ Evangelism is not segmented into social and spiritual aspects. The church has the responsibility to meet both physical and spiritual needs. It must be prepared to look at the value of the individual to God and not neglect the person because of caste, creed, or economic standing.

The Master has shown us the best way to spread the gospel. It is finding those who are in need and helping them. In so doing hearts will be opened to receive the distinctive Christian truths. One writer observes: "With unwearing patience and sympathetic helpfulness He met men in their necessities. By the gentle touch of grace He banished from the soul unrest and doubt, changing enmity to love, and unbelief to confidence."

"Love was exemplified in helping others, and then the love of the Father was explained in simple lessons."² This is to be a model for evangelism.

The whole gospel to the whole person. The whole gospel to the whole person by the whole church. The gospel commission is addressed to the whole church. According to the New Testament it is plain beyond doubt that the church is to be a missionary community. By nature this is her function, i.e., participation in Christ's


apostolic ministry. "Our gospel came to you, you received the word, the word of the Lord sounded forth from you," (1 Thess 1:5-8). The gospel came to the Thessalonian church, they received it and passed it on. As a result, the gospel came to others who also passed it on. The whole church was involved in the participation of the missionary witness of the church. Maurice Wood's comment on the "wholeness" of the gospel commission is appropriate: "We shall never cope with those around us unless we see the whole worshipping family of God in the local church as a body of evangelists in that area." Thus evangelism is "the most solemn, sacred work ever given to mortals." "There is no other work of so great importance."4

Theological Concerns, The Content, and the Communication Principles in Evangelism

Having defined evangelism in terms of God meeting man in his need, and having looked at the love-based motivation and the universality--individual tension within the scope of evangelism--the question of theological concerns in evangelism presents itself. These concerns may be viewed from four angles: involvement, incarnation, liberation, and hope.


Involvement is the first concern. Evangelism began with God involving himself with this world through Christ. "God so loved the world..." Christ involved himself with man (Matt 9:35). The apostle Paul carries that point of involvement to its logical conclusion of complete identification with the people with whom the evangelist works:

And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews: to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law of Christ) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor 9:20-22).

The church cannot evangelize from a distance. If ways have not been found to come to know persons, how can one expect to evangelize them? Success in evangelism is dependent upon the church's involvement in the life of the community and the lives of most persons in that community.

The church is in the world to heal its hurt and alienation. The church is in the world to preach the gospel to the poor. The church is in the world to bind up the wounds of those battered by life and to proclaim deliverance to those held captives (Luke 4:18). When the church discovers that by getting involved it is continuing the incarnation of Jesus in the world, will have discovered the "why" of evangelism. Then the "how" of evangelism will naturally follow. Evangelism then becomes a matter of loving people without strings attached, loving the down and out, alcoholics, drug addicts, etc., and providing them fellowship that leads to freedom; loving people without distinctions and discriminations; loving people who
belong to minority groups or the suppressed and backward classes. Evangelism is loving people who are also rich and affluent in society. Evangelism reaches all classes of people in all levels of society.

Incarnation is the next concern. "As the Father hath sent Me, so send I you" (John 20:21) is the mandate for evangelism, and in the mandate is the model for involvement. The God who said, "Let there be light," could easily have said, "Let man be saved." But he chose not the distant, the uninvolved path of commanding the new man. He deliberately chose to become one with the blood and the flesh of man. "The Word became flesh" is the anchor of the incarnation of God with man. Evangelism, to be effective, must become the extension of this incarnation. When those who receive the gospel take legs and arms and walk in schools, hospitals, businesses and industrial plants, and through the streets and visit the homes of people, the Word really becomes flesh. It becomes a regular traffic pattern of real men and women with flesh and blood incarnating Jesus Christ in their personal lives and witness. Evangelism must penetrate into the world.

Liberation is the third concern. At the very beginning of His ministry, Jesus proclaimed His mission as one of liberation (Luke 4:18).

Indeed the church is in the world as a company of freed persons to show to the world that "If Christ makes you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

The gospel is a freeing power. It frees man from the burdens
of the past, the predicaments of the present, and the uncertainties of the future.

The proclamation of this freedom in Christ is what evangelism is all about. Evangelism is free persons telling others where they can find freedom from those things which have enslaved them. It is "one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread"—a statement popularized by D. T. Niles, a former missionary to India.

Hope is the fourth concern. Jesus came into the world to make bad men good, good men better, and sinners saints. That is hope. Moreover, the church looks expectantly for the coming Lord. The church is a pilgrim driven to the ends of the earth and driven to the ends of time by her eschatological hope. But that hope for the future is not just future. The future is now in Jesus Christ. It is a hope that in Jesus Christ one can do better than before, and it is a hope which includes our family, neighbors, and entire society. The poor can be uplifted, the naked clothed, and those who live on the pavements can find a house to live in. There is hope for the sick, the widow, the orphan, and a million others with no hope. The gospel has the answer to all ills of society. Jesus is the answer. He died to make it so.

The church exists in the world in order to make the world better. The church is in the world as salt, light, and leaven to make the world better. The church is in the world with Christians who are like Christ to show to the people in every place—cities, towns, and villages—the only Christ they can see—Christ in us. The church offers hope for the hopeless. The Christian church is filled with people who are incurable optimists. They believe that God is in
charge and the game is not yet over. He is going to make all things new. There is a new world coming. Evangelism finds its reason and its meaning in this hope.

Theological Content of Proclamation For Commitment in Evangelism

A proper understanding of the theological content of evangelism is vital to the concerns in evangelism just expressed and the methods and approaches we take to meet the human need in society. Problems in communicating the gospel should lead us to the need for a total grasp of its content. In fact, the content of evangelism should always control and guide the methods of its communication. This content may be looked at under the following concepts:

First, the content of evangelism is the gospel—good news about God Himself. It is good news from God, about God. He is the creator. It is "in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:26). We men and women are created to bring honor and glory to the Creator. We have been made to worship Him and serve Him. God's will and purpose were intended to be man's supreme delight.

Second, the content of evangelism is the gospel—good news from God and about God to fallen man. Through disobedience mankind became incapable of meeting the Creator's claim. He became a failure as a result of rebelling against God's authority. Though the predicament of man is that he is lawless, guilty, unclean, and helpless, in seeking to be "as God" he lost his original state where God had placed him. Man became more rebellious and is in a position where he cannot put himself right. This is man's predicament. Until we grasp the magnitude of the Holy God, we can understand neither the
the sinfulness of man nor the seriousness of sin.

Third, the content of evangelism is the good news of the
gospel which tells of the God-Man. The gospel is good news about a
Person. That person is Jesus Christ. Evangelism is to make it clear
who Jesus is and what He has done through His incarnation, His life,
death, resurrection. Evangelism is educating people to evaluate and
interpret life in terms of Christ and to find meaning and purpose in
life. Theory, doctrine, precept, and principle all have their place.
But the key to all this is the Person. It is the Person of Christ
and His love for man that prompted Him to take his place on the cross
as a substitute and surety for man. It is only this that will draw
sinners to Christ.

Fourth, the content of evangelism is the gospel--the good
news about the redemptive act of Jesus Christ finding a responsive
chord in mankind involving their faith, commitment, and reconcilia-
tion. Faith brings conviction; repentance effects a change of life;
reconciliation restores unity and oneness with God; and loyalty ex-
presses itself in faithful obedience to the Lord's revealed will.
Evangelism teaches all things clearly to anyone who desires to fol-
low the Lord Jesus Christ.

The content of evangelism ever remains the same. It is the
gospel--the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ. But "different
persons, different nations and different cultures facing the gospel
will find different facets of it more meaningful than others."^ The

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^Jacob A. Lowen, The Gospel: Its Content and Communication--
An Anthropological Perspective in Down to Earth, Studies in Chris-
tianity and Culture, eds. John R. W. Stott and Robert Coote (Grand
Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 120.
goal of evangelism is to communicate the gospel to man in the midst of divergent tensions in order to help him in his own context to appreciate and respond to the gospel call.

A missionary statesman recently asked Bakht Singh, the famous evangelist of India, what dimensions of the gospel he found now useful in witnessing to his own people.

"Do you preach to them about the love of God?"

"No," he said, "the Indian mind is so polluted that if you talk about love they think mainly of sex."

"Well," the missionary said, "do you talk to them about the wrath and judgment of God?"

"No, they are used to that," he replied. "All the gods are mad anyway. It makes no difference to them if there is one more who is angry."

"About what do you talk to them? Do you preach on the crucified Christ?" the missionary guessed.

"No, they would think of him as a poor martyr who helplessly died."

"Then what is your emphasis? Eternal life?"

"Not so," he said, "If you talk about eternal life the Indians think of transmigration. He wants to get away from it."

"What then is your message?"

His answer was: "I have never yet failed to get a hearing if I talk to them about the forgiveness of sins, hope, and peace and rest. That's the product that sells well. Soon they ask me how they can get it, and then I can lead them to the Saviour who
alone can meet their deepest longings."

**Communication in Evangelism**

Many words are used in the New Testament to describe the process of communication. As the believer engaged in evangelism in the world and in the church, many facets of communication appeared in the way they proceeded to carry out the Great Commission.

As they came in contact with those in the world, they "taught, declared, spoke, proclaimed, preached, testified, witnessed, exhorted, praised, reasoned, refuted, explained, demonstrated, persuaded, and gave evidence for what they believed." And as they gathered together as believers "they engaged in fellowship, broke bread, prayed, and praised God." They encouraged and strengthened one another, and reported and described God's work and blessings in other parts of the world. And when they faced theological, administrative or ethical crises, "they debated, wrote, implored, and admonished one another."^2

A rapid scanning of the biblical book, the Acts of the Apostles, reveals that God was then using the church to draw multitudes to himself. This little band of believers may have wondered how they, with all their limitations, could fill an order of that magnitude. But along with the commission was the promise of power. Along with power they had in Christ an "unequated communication

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1 George W. Peters, "Is Missions Homesteading or Moving?" Mennonite Brethren Herald, April 15, 1977.

Subsequently, Acts refers to the numerical growth of the young movement in the face of external and internal odds and opposition. Soon the followers of Christ numbered a few thousand (Acts 4:4). There are other passages which relate to continuing growth.\(^1\)

There was remarkable geographic expansion in those years. For a time the gospel was limited only to Palestine, particularly to Jerusalem, with its overload of provincialism and prejudice. The vitality of the movement aroused severe opposition, exploding with persecution. The stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, triggered further persecution, and the Christian flock in Jerusalem fled for safety. As they dispersed they did not forsake their faith. Instead "those who had been scattered went about preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Persecution thus provided the impulse and the impetus for the extension of the gospel throughout the province of Judea and into Samaria and Galilee. Further persecution efforts sent a vigorous young Pharisee named Saul to Damascus to suppress any believers who might be found there. His conversion enroute added to the consternation of Jewish opponents and provided the Christian fellowship with its most dynamic leader. Under the aggressive direction of Paul the Apostle, the gospel advanced to fresh success in Asia Minor, then Europe, and finally to imperial Rome itself.

Christianity so moved the Mediterranean world of that day that in Thessalonica it was reported that these people "who have turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6) had reached their city.

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\(^1\) For an extended treatment on the communication situation in Christ's ministry, see A. T. Robertson's *A Harmony of the Gospels* (New York: Harper, 1922).

Christ, to live in and for the church and to live in and for the world.\textsuperscript{1}

Thus in the early church, evangelism was a natural, spontaneous "chattering" of good news. It was engaged in continuously by all types of Christians as a matter of course and of privilege--the whole church with the whole gospel to the whole world.

3. The principle of people-orientation. In the early church, the policy was to go out to where the people were, meet them in their need, and make disciples of them. The maximum impact was made by the changed lives and quality of community among the Christians. They witnessed by what they were, did, and said. Their life, their actions, and their words had a message for those who came in contact with them. They reached out in love in order to take care of the needy and God provided them with the miraculous power to do the work.\textsuperscript{2}

4. The principle of participation. In the early church every Christian was a minister of Jesus Christ. They took seriously the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. The members were prepared to minister at work, at school, at home. Wherever there was a need God had a minister ready to meet that need. The apostolic church did not look at ministry in terms of an hierarchy of distinction between priesthood and laity. Gottfried Oosterwal's study on the meaning of laity brings out three forceful points:

First, the Bible uses the word laos almost exclusively in its


\textsuperscript{2}Acts 3:2-8; 8:7; 9:33, 34; 9:36-41; 14:8-10; 20:7-10.
singular form. This points already to a very important view of the laity; it is one single and indivisible unit. The laity is like the human body, a comparison that is frequently made in scripture.

Second, the biblical word laity is nowhere used in context with other believers in the church (church officers, ministers, et al.), but with those who are outside the church. Laos literally means, God's own people.

Third, the Laos are God's chosen ones, but for a special purpose "to proclaim the triumph of Him. . . . The service of all men to all people on earth."

"Ministry is the job of every lay man." "The lay person is a Christian under orders." "The church is missionary and ministerial. They [the Laos] belong to the church as breathing belongs to the human body." "The whole church exists to serve the world." "They are all at work and always at work."

The priesthood of all believers is the one greatest single hope for the fulfilling of God's mission on earth. This does not

1 Gottfried Oosterwal, "The Role of the Laity," Focus Supplement, No. 23, Andrews University, p. 3.
2 John A. Kroncke, "Who are the Laity and What is Their Task," unpublished paper presented in Spring 1975 at Andrews University, p. 3.
6 John A. MacArthur, a sermon delivered at Moody Bible Institute, 1978.
mean that everybody is his own priest, so that no community is necessary; but rather that everybody must be a priest to everybody else, so that community is indispensable. Everyone was a minister in the New Testament and there was total participation.

**Hindrances to and Strategies for Evangelism**

This is not the place for a full scale analysis of the hindrances to evangelism. However, it does seem essential to mention certain crucial areas.

First, the early church preached the person of Jesus Christ and the gospel of Jesus Christ. They were very flexible in their preaching of the good news, but utterly opposed to syncretism¹ (mixing other elements with the gospel) of any sort. Many sections of the modern church, however, are far from convinced that it must matter whether one has Christ or not. Other religions, they infer, are nearly, if not quite as good, a way to God; humanists live blameless lives; and in any case, it will all come out right in the end--God is far too nice to damn anyone. Thus they tend to be syncretistic in their evangelistic categories. They play with syncretism.

Second, the early church made evangelism its number one priority. For them buildings were not of supreme importance; they did not have any during the period of their greatest advance. Today institutionalism dominates. Buildings seem all-important and their upkeep consumes the money and the energies of the members. Indeed, even the Word has changed meaning. "Church" no longer means a

¹Loewen, p. 127.
company of people. These days it means a building.

Third, the early church possessed an evangelistic lifestyle. The participation was total, natural, and spontaneous.¹ But today evangelism is spasmodic, periodic, and heavily dependent upon the skills and enthusiasm of specialists. While in the early church maximum impact was made by changed lives and the quality of community among Christians, much of today's Christian lifestyle is almost indistinguishable from that of non-Christians, and much church fellowship and witness is conspicuous for its absence of warmth and indifference.

Last, the early church was very open to the leadings of the Holy Spirit. In the modern church, however, managerial skills, committee meetings, evangelistic budgets, and endless discussions are thought essential for evangelism. Prayer and dependence on the Spirit seem often to be optional extras.²

Success in evangelism is not determined only by numerical growth and geographical expansion, not in terms of structures and strengths of institutions and organizations, its financial capacity, or its world-wide impact. True success is measured more by the way that evangelism is helping to change people and society. While success had attended God's church in the past, the question remains today as to what possible new methods or strategies we can implement to make the evangelistic ministry of the church more effective. What forms should evangelism take to meet effectively the opportunities


before us? Are there basic principles which apply at all times in all places which we may use as guidelines for effective evangelism today and tomorrow?

The answer is Yes, if the early church is any example at all for evangelism today. From the brief study of the evangelistic principles of the New Testament presented thus far, the following strategies for evangelism emerge.

1. Jesus-Centered proclamation. The Christian faith which exploded with transforming power across the first century world was centered in the good news of Jesus Christ. The spirit-filled proclamation of the good news was so profound because it narrated the mighty acts of God in Jesus Christ bringing salvation from sin, and death, to live a new life of liberation.1

Like the first Christians, the church today must preach a person--Jesus crucified, risen, reigning in power with His people. It must proclaim a gift--the gift of forgiveness, reconciliation, new life, adoption, and the Holy Spirit offered with the promise of eternal glory. It must look for a response--repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21).2

2. A strong lay movement. Like early Christianity, the church today must be a strong lay movement. Local congregations must be responsible for the evangelism of the surrounding communities.3 Lay witnessing is the cutting edge of communicating the faith.

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1 Anderson, p. 648.


3 Ibid.
"Wherever there are large harvests of souls, they are the work of a motivated and mobilized laity."¹ "Until the pastor and the church leaders are seriously committed to the lay ministry, the sleeping giant will slumber on."²

One author suggests that "the work of God on earth will never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with that of ministers and church officers."³

Effective evangelism today would be characterized by the recovery of lay participation in ministry both to build up the body of Christ and to be his witnesses and servants in the world. It is God's general plan that "community evangelism be carried out in the context of dynamic, and vigorous body life."⁴ The Holy Spirit effectively communicating the message through human witnesses results in spiritual and numerical reproduction and geographical expansion.⁵

Evangelism should be a natural outflow of loving relationship between Jesus Christ and the believers. Where there is this koinonia there is provided the proper motivation to share Christ's love and grace with others.


² Kraemer, p. 131.

³ White, Testimonies for the Church, 9:221.

⁴ Getz, p. 41.

3. An incarnational ministry. Paul understood this privilege and strategy of a credible witness. He wrote to the new converts in Thessalonica, "You know how we lived among you and gave ourselves to you" (1 Thess 2:8). Somehow it seems to the secular world that the church has lost this "smell of Christ."¹

The church needs to plant the truths of the gospel in the native soil. Church-growth studies indicate very clearly that the role which the evangelism of tomorrow will play is to adopt strategies shaped and related to people in their own cultures.²

The gospel destroys certain aspects of culture, preserves others, and creates new patterns. While customs such as idolatry, witchcraft, cannibalism, head-hunting, ritual prostitution cannot be tolerated; and while customs such as servitude, levels of society, tribalism, and polygamy are temporarily tolerated, there are other customs such as women wearing a saree or growing long hair or people eating with their fingers which need not be objected to.

The endeavor to transplant culture and an attempt to introduce new life style from the West have done considerable harm to Christian missions, especially in third world countries like India.³

John Stott quotes Leslie Newbegin, a missionary bishop from South India who playfully chides early missionaries for exporting all the


paraphernalia of western life "from archdeacons to harmoniums."¹

Another issue is music. In hymns the music is as important as the words. Musical instruments such as drums, cymbals, lutes, and castanets have been traditionally used to accompany singing. Good native music with truth-filled words to go with it has helped Christianity to take roots in other cultures. A Hindu is reached with music he can understand, learn to sing, and appreciate.

A national Indian bishop says:

A common core of basic Christianity must allow for distinctive cultural expressions. . . . The African drums speak of Jesus in their distinctiveness just as the modern pop spirituals speak to the youth of the West; the Indian lyrics, Kalakshebems, portray the life of Christ to the Indian people just as television and radio programmes communicate to the people of the West.²

4. A caring community which endeavors to meet human needs.

The apostolic church was noted for its care and compassion within and without the community. The challenge that the church faces today especially in the third world is to have plans and programs to meet the needs of the people. Regarding this, Edward Turner states: "To the most casual observer it is absolutely clear; we are surrounded by a vast throng of unmet human needs."³ He further suggests that "Congregational life in the first three centuries centered around five activities: worship, fellowship, witness, service and nurture.

²Clarke, p. 6.
³Edward Turner, "Pastoral Care as a Factor of Church Growth in Servants for Christ," The Adventist Church Facing the '80s, p. 139.
They were the elements to a healthy, alive, thriving Christian community."¹

The church today faces a new period in history with new challenges in the face of amazing developments in sciences and technology that affect the human person. Both in developed as well as developing nations new approaches are being taken to meet the hitherto unmet needs of a suffering humanity, "Europe, Asia, Africa, South and North America are all beginning to develop programmes of nurture and care for persons and families experiencing pressure and dislocation."²

The church cannot afford to lay behind in its caring ministry.

5. A mobilized laity. The early Christians were all involved in the mission, and they were deeply involved in their communities as well. Beginning from Jerusalem the gospel reached unto Judea, then to Samaria, and to the other places of the earth. Along with the commitment to the community and involvement with its life went a remarkable mobility. One only needs to glance back to the book of Acts to see how readily these Christians were prepared to abandon home comforts for the sake of the good news. The question arises: Is it so today?

6. The early church was conscious of the fact that they had but one life—a very brief life—and determined to use it to the full for God. Their planning, oversight fellowship, and proclamation were all under the governance of the Spirit.

¹Ibid., p. 144.
²Ibid., p. 140.
In the oversight of their evangelistic endeavors, they depended on the spirit. In planning the missionary outreach, the Spirit dictated their directions. They went to Antioch, the third city in the empire; Philippi, a Roman colony and administrative capital; Athens, the cultural center of the world; Ephesus, the biggest city in Asia; and Rome, the mistress of the world. Such achievement was possible only by prayer and dependance upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

They exercised oversight. This is an important factor in early church evangelism. From the start the early Christians needed to be strengthened. Every person won by them needed to be added to the church as well as to the Lord (Acts 2:47). They were conscious of the two functions of the Christian community—evangelism and edification.\(^1\)

In building the fellowship, the early Christians embraced all colors, all classes, and all untouchables of ancient society. The ancient gulf between Jew and Samaritan, Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female was bridged by the Spirit-built unity. This unity so impressed the pagans that they gradually began to call Christians "the third race"—not pagans, not Jews, but something radically different. Wise, diligent, Christian oversight was instrumental in maintaining this God-given unity and fellowship.

But fellowship was for the sake of witnessing. The small band of believers met, studied, prayed, praised, and worshipped in homes

\(^1\)Getz, p. 22. For an extended treatment of this see also the table which appears on pp. 24-27.
and in small groups. The advantages were many and obvious: the leader and the led felt no distinction between them; difficulties in fellowship were minimized; corporate action and service became aggressive; the church became a symbol of God's power in the midst of common clay.\footnote{David W. Johnson, Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975).}

In sharing their conviction through proclamation, the early church was apologetic. This was a marked feature of early evangelists. They were ready to express a reason for their faith and related the gospel to the intellectual, existential, and cultural concerns of their day. Doctrinal teachings were characteristic of this spirit-filled proclamation. They effectively carried on this work by personal conversation—a method Jesus employed a great deal. It is still the most effective way of evangelism—\textit{to introduce Jesus as a personal friend to the friendless of this age; to introduce Jesus as one who can transform the life and character of a person who comes to him. This method adopted by the early church brought success. This will bring success once again today and once more the gospel will spread like wild fire.}\footnote{Green, pp. 12, 13.}

Summary and Conclusion

The overriding commission that is laid upon the church is to evangelize. This essential outreach is the top priority and is basic to the church's business. It is to the church that God has entrusted
the task of telling the world about himself and the salvation that is in his Son, Jesus Christ.

Two questions emerge from the theological principles enumerated above, and these questions must be understood and answered before implications of these principles can be implemented for possible improvement in evangelistic models and outreach methods in the future as they relate to the Indian context.

First, why should the church evangelize? This question leads the church to the heart of evangelism and its challenge today. An understanding of this urge to evangelize is crucial for the entire treatment of evangelism in practice. As Christians we have good news to share—the best news in the world, the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. We cannot hold our peace. We cannot keep it for ourselves. It must go out and we must go out with it (2 Kings 7:1-17). This is God's command to his church. In obedience to this command we must go and tell. The word news covers the compass of the whole earth—north, east, west, south—that is where the good news is to be carried. We are God's news bearers. The Bible lays the obligation upon us and we have no option but to obey.

Two points summarize this aspect of our study so far. We must evangelize because of the appeal that comes from God through his holy Word. We must evangelize also because of man's desperate need. God's command to go is supplemented by the plea of human need. God has brought us to the Bread of life. Now we must not be content to eat alone but bring others to the feast. But for the grace of God we would be among the careless multitude. We too would be hungry still. This is why D. T. Niles has defined evangelism "as one poor
beggar telling another beggar where to get bread."¹ This is how the love of Christ will constrain us to go. This is how evangelism is born. It is born out of a personal conversion experience to Jesus Christ.

We are consumed with a burning concern for the salvation of our fellow human beings. Our hearts and our religion become a flame and do not remain like ice. When someone asked a man in a pagan land what his country needed most, he answered, "Men with hot hearts, to tell of the love of Jesus."

The second question is: What are those strategies for evangelization which suggest relevance as they relate to the Indian context? Although the theological chapter covered a wide range of implications, we shall summarize and focus only upon certain key aspects in order to evaluate their effectiveness as they are implemented in the practical evangelistic project in the city of Poona.

These key concepts could be listed as follows:

1. **Proclamation**: An attempt to separate proclamation of the central doctrines of the Christian faith from evangelism will only result in a church that is lifeless. In fact, we cannot conceive a theology of evangelism apart from these doctrines. Evangelism will be effective only in terms of its relation to the adequate understanding of the great themes of the Christian faith. The identity of Christian ministry and evangelism is preserved in the context of the proclamation of the gospel with themes such as the doctrine of

revelation, Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, eschatology, and other related subjects.

The evangelist has a message to convey. It consists both of bad news and good news. Indeed, it is bad news before it is good news. Law and gospel must precede. Man's real condition and God's real demands must be made clear before the offer of grace and mercy can be announced. Man should be awakened to a sense of need and guilt before the gospel solution of love and forgiveness is applied.

This study has brought a growing conviction that there is great need to keep the message clear and to declare the whole counsel of God. In our evangelistic approach to any cultures or countries this must be kept clear and never be permitted to socialize the gospel or water it down with syncretism or compromise. In the modern setting too much evangelism goes on where there is religion without the Holy Spirit, a Christianity without Christ, a forgiveness without repentance, an ethics without morality, freedom without authority, a salvation without regeneration, and a heaven without a hell.

We must be sure about our message. There should be no haziness or hesitation about it. It would be fatal if "the Voice said cry and he said, what shall I cry?" (Isa 40:6). The Bible is our message for evangelism. God has given us his Word in Scripture. This is the Book from which we speak. This is the compendium which dictates to us what we have to say to the world. True evangelism will have as its foundation God's Word, and there is no other instrument of greater usefulness in saving souls. In the hands of an evangelist utterly dedicated to God and submissive to his word, the Bible becomes more than a mere symbol of divine authority, it
actually channels God's power and blessings. Preachers and listeners alike will recognize this dynamism of Scripture. Therefore, in the practical project the aspect of proclamation of the gospel and the tennets of the Christian faith will receive due emphasis.

2. Incarnation. In order for proclamation to be effective and fruitful, incarnation becomes inevitable. If proclamation is vital and supreme in evangelism, then the mode or the vehicle through which it is communicated becomes vitally important also. Theologians speak of it as the "Christological form of Christian ministry."¹

... it is God addressing humanity in such a way that the Word becomes flesh in a concrete and identifiable individual who in his particularity is inextricably identified with the revelation of God.²

The Word of God in proclamation comes in human form, human words, human acts, etc. Kenosis in Christ is the supreme demonstration of the kenotic love of God for humanity.

A church whose existence, identity and purpose is in the revelation of God in Christ cannot believe that the way of kenosis was taken away by the Son of God so that the church could go another way--the way of individualism and self-interest. Christian ministry is the ministry of Christ as continued through the church for the sake of the world.³

Thus, the concept of Christian ministry and evangelism in meeting the needs of the people in their situation is a conviction emerged from the study. Evangelism is a proclamation in word and deed. The evangelist both proclaims the work of God in Christ and continues that proclamation of that ministry of Christ in the world through various forms of direct service. This is not a social

²Ibid., p. 22. ³Ibid., p. 23.
gospel. It is a ministry of love that expresses a deep gratitude to God for what he has done for the individual who engages in this ministry.

People have needs. People in India are no exception. Both the rich and the poor, the high class and the low class, the educated and the uneducated, Christian and non-Christian have needs. Christ is the answer to man's need. The church is God's instrument to meet the needs of the people in this world. We need to go where the people are and meet them in their needs and offer satisfaction and the joy that comes only through believing in Jesus Christ. Plans and strategies should be outlined to assess and ascertain the various needs of the people, and this must be followed up with programs and guidelines that provide the required need-satisfaction.

In other words, the study of these theological principles revealed that even Christ, in his method of work, created an awareness of the needs and the problems in people and offered the solution and the satisfaction they so desperately desired. This should be our method of work. The church, indeed, has a responsibility to assess and ascertain the physical, the psychological, the social, and the spiritual needs of the individual as well as the community and seek to address itself to meet these various needs. Where there is need for hope, Christ should be offered as the source of all hope. If it is one of health or freedom or fellowship, the church should introduce such persons to Christ in Whom alone one can find these true blessings.

In the practical application, needs assessment will be made and attempts will be made through personal and public contacts to bring
changes in the population's awareness and satisfaction irrespective of caste, color, or creed.

3. Participation. The study further revealed that the church is a living, loving, worshipping, and serving community. In fact, the emphasis was that we can never cope with the enormity of the task unless we "see the whole worshipping family of God in the local church as a body of evangelists in that area."¹

All attempts must be made to keep the unity of faith and doctrine, purpose, and action. As such all barriers to evangelism must be removed--such as geographical, linguistic, economical, racial, or cultural barriers. Body life of the church is vital. The priesthood of all believers is not just a sixteenth century doctrine. These emphases are New Testament principles. Therefore, they must not be overlooked in the life and experience of the church.

Distribution of responsibilities and discovery of Spiritual gifts are of divine order. God uses all in the church and there is none he does not need or does not desire to use for his service. Mobilized laity is an important factor in church growth and evangelism.

Our programs should be people-oriented. Family units, homogenius units, cultural and linguistic units must be recognized and worked for. The key to success in evangelism is people-relatedness. It is love for one another in the church and genuine love for those outside. It is taking interest in people, sharing with people, understanding people, and becoming involved with people in their experiences and needs, their worries, and anxieties, working

¹Wood, p. 12.
and praying with the people. The early church attracted a large number into the church because of this people-relatedness. During the days of the early church the world held the people within the church in high esteem (Acts 2:46, 47). Without such it would have been practically impossible for the church to expand as it did.

Moreover, this was Christ's method of work. The success in the practical aspect of this project demonstrated the fact of a whole-hearted participation of a mobilized laity.\(^1\) In a country like India there is "little hope of fulfilling the commission to evangelize" or to see any "resurgence of dynamic growth in the local churches until the principle of total participation is incorporated."\(^2\)

4. Priority. There are several metaphors used in the Scriptures to describe the nature and the mission of the church. For example, the church is spoken of as a living plant and a well-constructed edifice. These speak about the church as an organism and organization. The Bible is not opposed to organization. In fact, there is order, structure, and organization in everything we see in God's creation. Order and organization are evident in God's people both in the Old and the New Testament (Num 1-4; Josh 3:1-4:13; 1 Ch 25; Neh 3; Acts 6:17; 20:28; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet 2:25; Acts 11:30; 14:2, 3; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18; 1 Tim 5:1; 2:17, 19; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Tim 3:1-13; 1 Pet 5:1-4).

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\(^2\) It is acknowledged that in many cities and villages where there is, "not even a shadow of the church's presence," (see Introduction) this poses a serious problem. However, the author is convinced that even here as soon as a nucleus is formed it should be involved in the evangelization of the whole community.
While structures and organizations are important they can become binding and blinding. They can either choke the movement, or they can mobilize, build, strengthen, channel, and thus give dynamic direction, purpose, meaning, and realization to a church or a movement. A balance should be kept and the priority should be maintained.¹

How do we keep the balance and still maintain the priority? The following suggestion by Peters is helpful to understand God's divine design for the church.²

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outward to the World</th>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reproof</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this threefold function evangelism takes priority.

Our upward reach must become motivating as we are being related to God. Our inward ministry, while it is supremely


²Ibid., pp. 186, 187.
edifying, must also equip the saints for a ministry. Eventually all must eventuate in service to the world. In this service evangelism becomes central and focal.

The above mentioned four theological principles provided the basis for determining strategies, methodology, and communication techniques for the practical application. What were the characteristics of the location of our campaign? What were the contributing factors for the choice of the location? How was the project organized? What were the methods used to discern the response of the people? What were the findings? How successful was the outcome?

Part II of the project presents these details and further presents suggestive proposals, strategies, and recommendations for future evangelistic outreach.

1Ibid., p. 206.
PART II

AN EVANGELISTIC PROJECT CONDUCTED

IN THE CITY OF POONA
CHAPTER III

AN EVANGELISTIC PROJECT IN THE CITY OF POONA

Introduction

In this section certain theological principles pertaining to the evangelistic mission of the church are applied to a program of evangelistic outreach in Poona, India.

As noted in the preceding pages, evangelism must be accorded a place of higher priority with higher levels of leadership and laity participation; the demand is for "incarnational ministry" (defined as the diverse ministries of the church which seek to meet the needs of the people where they are); and finally, evangelism involves "proclamation"—the preaching of the gospel message of Jesus Christ in a culturally appropriate context.

Priority Awareness

The Poona city evangelistic project was an outgrowth of a healthy awareness of the priority of evangelism for the church. It was appropriate that the leadership of the Southern Asia Division should have extended a call to evangelize all cities and villages in Southern Asia and seek to double the membership of the church by the General Conference Session in 1985. The Executive Committee met and
passed actions affirming that the essential mission of the church is
to evangelize all people.¹

The Division Ministerial Association Secretary, D. R. Watts,
in one of his appeals said that "the fundamental changes of contem­
porary society in the large cities of India make evangelism all the
more urgent. "When Jesus saw the multitudes," he continued, "He was
moved with compassion and our hearts should be moved toward the mul­
titudes in the lands of Southern Asia."² This is characteristic of
the spirit in which the project was started. All local churches and
church-related organizations seemed convinced that evangelism is the
essential function of the church. This spirit of evangelistic aware­
ness provided an opportunity for my personal involvement in the pro­
ject in the city of Poona, India. I was called to organize this
work in view of my years of evangelistic experience in other cities
of India. Moreover, my responsibility as the Division Assistant
Secretary included the development and implementation of programs of
evangelism in the church.

Planning

This particular assignment was launched with a series of
planning, study, and organizational meetings. Several group meetings
and planning sessions involving conference leaders, church leaders,
and Spicer College administration and faculty were conducted both at

¹Christo, p. 2.

²D. R. Watts, Sermon delivered at Southern Asia Division
Headquarters Church at Salisbury Park, Poona, India, February 7,
1981.
the Poona Seventh-day Adventist Headquarters and on the campus of Spicer Memorial College. These were commitment meetings which focused on the needs within the church--particularly presenting challenges for outreach. These planning sessions were given over to a study of basic questions: What have we accomplished? What present trends are discernible? What should be the future direction of our activities? Other very basic topics which came under study were: the nature and mission of the church, church growth and evangelism, and hindrances to church growth.

During these planning sessions certain searching questions which are often avoided were also addressed. Since most of our city churches in Southern Asia are institutional churches, we wanted to ascertain the nature of church growth, if indeed there had been growth. It was noted that most growth is accounted for by staff additions to institutions and the baptism of the children of present members.

More specifically, the following questions received attention: 1) What kind of a challenge did the city of Poona present for evangelism? Thus a demographic study was undertaken. 2) What potential is there in our churches and church-related institutions for leadership and laity participating together in evangelism? This was considered in recruitment sessions, spiritual gifts discovery sessions, and in the distribution of assignments and responsibilities. 3) What constituted a suitable place for the project and what were the relevant methods for evangelism? This led to the choice of a specific area of Poona city influenced by regular Sabbath outreach contacts by Spicer Memorial College students and other members.
Questions leading to the nature of the location, areas of felt needs of the people, and details of program methods were also studied.

Once these general, broad outlines of the evangelistic approach had been settled upon we were ready to launch into the project. Church leaders saw advantages in launching this venture in Poona, the church's headquarters city. The five churches in the city accepted this proposal.

As noted earlier, our strategy would include a more careful study of our target area prior to our campaign than had normally been the case. The following is a description of the city of Poona and the locale of the project in terms of 1) history, 2) education, 3) culture, 4) languages, and 5) religion of the people.

Poona city, "The Queen of the Decan," is located in the southwestern region of Poona district--17° 54' and 19° 24' N latitude and 73° 19' and 75° 10' E longitude. Situated thirty miles from the crest of Sahadri (Western Ghats), the city is 119 miles from Bombay by rail in an east south direction.¹

The earliest mention of Poona city is to be found in the writings of Ptolemy (A.D. 150).² According to Ptolemy this city was called "Punnata."³ Available evidence suggests that the town was named after the temple of "Puneshwar." In the Rashtrakuta inscription of the tenth century the town is mentioned as Punekawadi--the village (wadi) of Puneshwar.

The Rashtrakutas, a royal dynasty, were overthrown in A.D.

²Ibid., p. 3. ³Ibid., p. 8.
973 by Yadav kings of Deogiri, who in turn were defeated by Allauddin Khilji. Poona then came to be known as "Kasbe Pune" which was developed by the Mohammadans. The city passed from one dynasty to another for a time, until it became a prominent part of the Maratha Kingdom founded by Shivaji. With the expansion of the Maratha empire the Peshwas began to feel the pressing need of a capital from which to conduct the affairs of State. Baji Rao selected Poona as the capital of the Maratha Empire (A.D. 1730). Internal strife and disorder invited the British to intervene. They occupied Poona on November 17, 1817, governing it until 1947 when India became independent.

Poona has occupied a prominent position in the field of education and has established its role as a leading center of education for a number of years. It has a university and a large number of colleges. The university provides education under faculties covering a wide spectrum of subjects. There are many arts, science, and commerce colleges as constituent parts of the university academically, but independent in their internal management.

All the colleges except one, Baramati, are situated at Poona. Facilities for post-graduate studies are provided in addition to Poona university by the Deccan College, the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, and the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute. All four institutions are located at Poona. Only four colleges, viz., the college of Engineering, the college of Agriculture, the B. J. Medical college, and the Armed Forces Medical college are managed by the government, while the rest of the colleges are
operated under private management, most receiving grants for maintenance.

The higher secondary and secondary schools (HSS) are dispersed throughout Poona. Private institutions manage most of the higher secondary schools. Most of these institutions are subsidized by the government through different grants in aid for maintenance, salaries, buildings, equipment, loans, scholarships, etc. Special concessions are made to scheduled castes/tribes and other backward class students.

There are more than ninety higher secondary schools,¹ and approximately eighteen to twenty are girls' schools. Some of the higher secondary schools impart instruction through the medium of English. Such schools are mostly operated by Christian missions and are normally located in the Kirkee and Poona cantonments.

Primary education is the function of the Municipal Corporation. Primary education is free and compulsory in the lower standards of Municipal schools in the Poona area.

There is a government technical high school at Poona which provides for instruction in technical subjects prescribed for the Secondary School Certificate examination. Similarly, Moledina Anglo-Urdu High School, Gujarati High School, and the J. N. Patit Schools also make provision for technical subjects, such as workshop technology, geometrical machine drawing, and elements of electrical and mechanical engineering. Spicer Memorial Secondary School, located at Aundh, not only imparts academic knowledge, but develops

the whole individual as students there gain work experiences through participation in various industries and enterprises maintained by the school. About thirty government recognized institutions in Poona city impart education in technical courses in keeping with the syllabus approved by the government.

Apart from the purely academic services, the city also provides opportunities for the cultural growth of the people by providing facilities for education in the fine arts, drawing, painting, and architecture. The most important institute of this type is the "Abhivan Kala Vidyalaya." Courses in architecture and interior decoration, drawing, painting, modelling, sculpture, photography, and block making are some of the subjects taught. Another institute of this type is the Film and Television Institute of India which provides courses in acting, directing, photography, screenplay, etc.

The city of Poona has a large number of well-equipped libraries; the most important one among them is at Poona University, housing more than 150,000 volumes catering primarily to the needs of university students. The library of Gokhale Institute is a storehouse of books on economics while the one at National Chemical Laboratory has a unique collection of books on chemistry and allied subjects. Besides these there are a number of other public libraries run by private associations and trusts. In addition to these, there are over thirty-five municipal libraries scattered all over the city. These libraries are equipped with newspapers, periodicals, magazines, and books.

The language spoken as mother tongue by the majority of the
people of Poona is Marathi, the language of the region in which the
city is located. Provision is made, however, for the use of all the
fifteen major languages of the country as outlined in the constitu-
tion of India. A relatively high percentage of the Urdu-speaking
population is due to the immigration of Muslims during the Moghal
period. Ranking close to Urdu are Gujarati, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu,
and Malayalam. The dominance of Marathi is quite in accordance with
the numerical strength of the Mahashtrian community.¹

About four-fifths of the population of Poona are Hindus;
the rest are Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, and others. Since the
population is predominantly Hindu, the city is a typical Hindu city.
This is the hinterland of Poona, consisting mainly of the whole of
Maharashtra, Madya Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh,
is a region populated mostly by Hindus.

During the Muslim rule large numbers of Muslim families
settled in Poona, while during the same period a sizable number of
families were converted to Islam. A fairly large population of
Christians in Poona is the result of the British influence and mis-
sonary activities between 1918 and 1947. At that time, a large num-
ber of Hindus were converted to Christianity. After 1947, when
India became independent, the Harijans (backward classes), following
the governance of the late Dr. Ambedkar, in large groups took to
Buddhism which accounts for a sizable Buddhist population. Christians
are concentrated mainly in Poona Cantonement, though a fairly large
number resides in Aundh. There are about 36,000 Christians in Poona,

¹Ibid., p. 198.
and the figures below indicate the ratio of Christians to the general population in the city. ¹

### TABLE I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City/Town</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Christians</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tr>
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<td>58,496</td>
<td>5,586</td>
<td>1:10.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poona</td>
<td>59,562</td>
<td>21,201</td>
<td>1:2.8</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poona Cantt.</td>
<td>65,838</td>
<td>9,584</td>
<td>1:6.9</td>
<td>14.5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>183,896</td>
<td>36,371</td>
<td>1:5</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The city of Poona presented to us a challenge for evangelism against this historical, educational, cultural, linguistic, and religious background. Understanding these backgrounds the church made plans to penetrate the city with the gospel message. Of the three geographical areas mentioned in Table 1 above, Kirkee, a major section of the city, was chosen for the project.

The notion of evangelistic priority in the church must, however, be supported not only by careful study and planning, but by the implementation of those plans. This is our next consideration.

**Lay Participation and Involvement**

No church experiences church growth without serious involvement of its members in inreach and outreach activities. A church grows best when the total body of believers is mobilized and trained

¹Ibid., pp. 200, 201.
in continued ministries of praying, sharing, witnessing, and evangelizing. It will become effective and meaningful to an individual or to a community only when its members become active participants in the life and witness of the church. Such participation, therefore, is of utmost significance, and as noted in Section I, has a theological support as well.

Fortunately, years of consistent lay contacts in the community has helped prepare the way for this public evangelistic project. Spicer Memorial College is located about a mile from where the public meetings were to be held. The college community has maintained good relationships with the local community. Carefully planned social activities, personal contacts, and meetings of different types were designed to promote good will in the area. Systematic lay and youth Sabbath afternoon activities of a missionary nature were undertaken to strengthen this relationship with the community and create a favorable climate for the public meetings. Prior to and during the time of the public meetings, denominational officers, pastors, and lay members of the various categories united in different aspects of evangelism, such as "friendship evangelism," personal evangelism, small group Bible evangelism, prayer ministries, singing, and several forms of supportive services.¹

¹Subsequent follow up activities are being cared for by these persons with the help of others who have since come into the church.
The Public Meeting

A private school hall centrally located in the target area was chosen as the place of the meetings. It had a seating capacity of about 350 to 400 people and included accommodation, lighting, and other necessary facilities. The first meeting was scheduled for February 19, 1981, at 6:30 p.m. for which personal invitations were given out to all homes in the community.

Distributing the announcements, preparing the hall, designing banners, charts, and visual aids for use at the meetings, arranging music, and ushering—all these were completed by membership participation. According to our design, lay members were to be involved in a heretofore untried way during the public meetings. Trained groups were to engage in ministering to the more obvious needs of those who would begin to attend. It seemed necessary, therefore, to try to obtain, as unobtrusively as possible, a better understanding of our audience. A survey was conducted with the purpose of obtaining a description of the audience with respect to sex, age, language, education, employment, income, religion, and relationship to the Seventh-day Adventist church. This survey provided the cultural, educational, economic, linguistic, and religious background of the people who attended the meetings.

The evangelistic campaign had an average attendance of 160 persons. Preliminary attendance cards were taken from 289 people who attended the meetings at one time or another. Out of these only

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1See appendix A for Questionnaire.

2It did not appear necessary to conceal our identity or our intent with these people.
those who attended at least twenty meetings and who were willing to cooperate in filling out survey sheets mentioned above were selected for analysis. ¹ These numbered one hundred.

What kind of people composed this sample population? What were the characteristics which dominated the group? What were their regular beliefs, their employment, economic, and educational status?

The audience survey indicated the following: There were slightly more men (52 percent) than women. The majority of those attending were young—between the ages of twenty and forty (60 percent). A good number of teen-agers attended as well. Seventy percent of those attending were married. Of this group, twelve were living in joint-family systems and eighty-eight were living in single or family groupings.²

Two major languages of the country were represented. Sixty-nine spoke Tamil. They were migrants from South India who had settled in the industrially expanding part of the city. Thirty-one of this group spoke Marathi, the main language of the area. The Tamil speaking group was conversant with Marathi as well, although the opposite cannot be said of the second group.

Employment and economic strength of the group was also surveyed. Forty-seven were employed. Of these, eighteen were earning a

¹See appendix B for Visitation Survey Sheet.

²Joint-single family concept is a social phenomena prevalent in most villages and cities in India. Under this, children, particularly sons, marry and live with their parents, all pooling their economic resources and meeting their liabilities. The parents and, at times, grandparents act as the head of this joint-family.
homes. Twenty-two were Methodists; four were from other protestant groups; and four were Hindus.¹

Thus, the audience was diverse in nature and composition. It was such an audience that the church was attempting to reach for Christ and his message. What were the methods of communication? How well did the church understand the physical, social, and spiritual needs of those who came to the meetings? What aspects of the outreach ministry seemed to be helpful in evoking a response in the group? These questions are now addressed.

**Incarnation**

The enthusiasm generated by lay members in the pre-meeting involvement carried over into the public campaign itself. A group of volunteers was assembled to enter into what we are labeling "incarnational ministries"--the Word was to become flesh. Christian love was to put on working clothes.²

¹It is difficult to get Hindus to attend a public Christian meeting. Even on instances when they do attend, they prefer to do so unidentified. Many a religious Hindu prefers to live as a secret Christian until he makes an open confession to follow Christ rather than making a formal profession and remaining a secret Hindu. Therefore, it could be understood that although a number of Hindus were present at the meetings, only those who participated in the survey were included for the purpose of the study. My experience in other cities have shown that many Hindus attend the meetings and many among them decide to follow Christ.

²"Consideration should be given to felt need in the community. This needs to be underlined. Not necessarily the universal and eternal need of man, but local temporal hurts in a given community demand consideration in formulating the ministries of the church. If you plan to reap a harvest, the soil needs to be tested. Go house to house and attempt to discover those programs for which there is a crying need. Then, under the leadership of God, meet the need" (Charles L. Chaney and Ron R. Lewis, *Description for Church Growth* [Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1977], p. 175).
Small bands of six to twelve volunteers were organized under several full-time workers for planning and training in diversified ministries in the locality chosen for our project. They became our cells for outreach ministry in the community.¹

Periodically, these volunteers rendered social services such as cleaning houses, streets, and children. They conducted mobile clinics with the help of our medical team to help mothers, babies, and other sick people. Children of parents were contacted and parents were persuaded to send them to a Christian school and at times these volunteers provided financial support. They became the guardians of these children. On Sabbath days they organized themselves to visit these families and help them in their spiritual needs. They sang songs, gave Bible studies, organized vacation Bible schools, visited the sick in the hospital, and met with people in the prison.

Two examples of this ministry are listed below: A student introduced a young man who was ill to a faculty member at Spicer Memorial College. This teacher was sponsor for a group for Sabbath afternoon lay witnessing activities. The group took the boy to receive medical attention. The boy regained his health. This family was invited to attend the series of meetings. The entire family responded to the message and was baptized.

Another band working in a particular area invited the parents of a family to send their children to Spicer College. They consented.

¹"A small group of eight to twelve people meeting together informally in houses is the most effective structure for communication of the gospel in modern secular urban society. Such groups are better suited to the mission of the church in today's urban world" (Howard A. Snyder, The Problem of Wineskins [Downers Grove, Ill: University Press, 1975], p. 139).
The student (a girl) finished her studies at Spicer and had her marriage service conducted at the college campus during our series of these meetings. The entire family joined the church.

As a result of this project a number of small bands were trained and equipped to engage in community service. These bands helped consolidate the interests developed by the evangelistic campaign and aided many in making the decision to follow Christ. When this experience is compared with other places in India where city evangelism has been the traditional "one-man-show," this approach has recommended itself to us as eminently worth further experimentation and development.

Incarnational ministry, in this instance, prepared the way for and undergirded the public preaching of the Word.

Proclamation

Beginning with the apostle Peter's great sermon on the day of Pentecost, the history of the Christian church is linked with the history of preaching. The early church made a profound impact upon its world through proclamation. Protestantism, later Adventism, sprang out of and was nurtured by spirit-filled, Bible-based proclamation. Churches are born where the gospel is publicly proclaimed.

Some have raised the question as to whether or not evangelistic preaching is a relevant and valid means of reaching people today. Should we still continue to have public evangelistic preaching in India? In my opinion, preaching is an instrument especially suited to the proclamation of the gospel. Technological approaches to human communication (such as the printed page, radio, television, or
whatever) cannot substitute for the face-to-face spoken word. Preaching and proclamation bring people to a personal and direct confrontation. When God sent a prophet to convey a message to the world, "more frequently he chose a sayer." In the Bible God seems to be "having a preference for 'Go, tell' over 'write or send.'"¹

In this personal encounter the preacher acts as a herald and announces the news, the warning, and calls for response. No other instrument can be as effective in achieving this purpose as the proclamation of God's Word through preaching. Another spiritual writer says that "there is no department of the work of God but that is as constantly under the eye of God as is the preaching of the Word."² "The preaching of the gospel is God's chosen agency."³ "The preaching of the word is ordained of God."⁴ "Preaching is God's appointed means,"⁵ "it is God's appointed way . . . the measure which God has provided." "The preaching of the gospel is the Lord's great method."⁶

From the beginning of the Christian era proclamation has continued to call people to Jesus Christ, to guide them to follow in His footsteps, and to promise them life everlasting. The world still needs preachers who can make the power of the gospel penetrate into the lives of people everywhere through spirit-filled proclamation.

² E. G. White to E. & F. White, September 10, 1875.
³ ⁴ ⁵ T 118. ⁴ ⁵ T 300.
⁶ Ellen G. White, sermon on missionary work, MS-38-1894.
Proclamation must take place contextually to be effectual. It must be culturally sensitive. We attempted to achieve this goal. Evangelism in the city of Poona was, hitherto, carried on in the English language. Because an objective of this campaign was to raise up an indigenous church, the Tamil language was employed.¹ There are several such language pockets in the city of Poona, in addition to the Marathi speaking majority who make up the city's population.

For our purposes certain factors which appeared to contribute to the success of the evangelistic program will be considered.

The nightly program included the following features:

- 6:00 - 6:30 ... Recorded music
- 6:30 - 6:45 ... Song Service
- 6:45 - 6:55 ... Announcements
- 6:55 - 7:25 ... Health Lecture
- 7:25 - 7:30 ... Special music
- 7:30 - 8:30 ... Evangelistic sermon, prayer, after-meeting, and feedback sessions.

Recorded music played over the public address system prior to the evangelistic meetings each night encouraged those who regularly attended to come on time, and others who were passing by heard

¹Sixty topics were presented during the evangelistic series. See also appendix C, #1 for sample list of subjects and #2 for sample sermons and sermon outlines translated from the Tamil language.
also the invitation to the meetings. The song service was followed by welcome and other announcements connected with the meetings for that day and the day to follow.

To take advantage of the health consciousness of the people of India, health lectures were given to orient people to the basics of healthful living and from this point of contact to lead them gradually to an understanding of the God of heaven as Creator and Sustainer. This aspect of the program, as it turned out, interested many to attend. A staunch Hindu, it should be explained, considers Christians as outcasts because of what he regards as their unclean habits of eating, drinking, and other social behaviors. The eating of flesh food, the use of intoxicating beverages, indulgence in habits of smoking, etc., are held in contempt by a religious Hindu. Seventh-day Adventists are held in high regard because of their position in regard to these health issues. It should be noted that several people who attended the health lectures did not choose to remain for the rest of the program because of the emphasis on Christianity. It may be possible and, perhaps, desirable to conduct programs only for Hindus and to present health-oriented themes for a much longer period to gradually prepare these persons to give attention to the full message of Seventh-day Adventist churches for the whole person (physical, mental, social, and spiritual).

The use of a projector to show slides and movies to

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1 In most cases the local Municipal Corporations grant licence to permit the use of public address systems to broadcast songs and the lectures in the streets from about 5:00 a.m. to about 10:00 in the night. People do not consider it as a disturbance.
illustrate these health lectures, appeared to contribute signifi­
cantly. Perhaps, where in times past our meetings have failed to
attract many non-Christians, this method of presenting health-
oriented messages may prove more effective in holding more non-
Christians for longer periods of time in future campaigns.

Music appeared to play an important role. This aspect of the
program encouraged participation and the use of songs and instruments
which were culturally oriented. This seemed to be appreciated by
those in attendance. It has been the practice of the church to use
translated songs from the English hymnals such as "The Church Hymnal,"
"Gospel Melodies," "Christ in Song," and "Singing Youth." Although
these books contain some inspiring songs, it must be understood
that they lack their full impact when transferred to other cultures.

The following factors seem to have made a positive contribu­
tion in the evangelistic campaign: 1) Uplifting Christ in the
presentation of the messages by means of simple, Indian illustra­
tions, quotations, visual aids, and charts. 2) An emphasis on
beliefs common to all Christians. 3) Low key presentations of teach­
ings distinctive to Seventh-day Adventists without claims of superi­
ority. 4) Attempting to explain the teachings simply and clearly
without attacking other churches or religions. 5) Attempting to
clearly place the options before the people, giving them the freedom
to choose their own life-style or doctrine. 6) Patient and tactful
answering of questions which people asked.

Attempts are now being made in Southern Asia to integrate
health-oriented lectures with the spiritual and doctrinal aspects of
the Christian message and to communicate these messages through the
use of slide projectors.
The "after meeting," prayer periods, personal Bible studies, and feedback opportunities established relationships between the people and the evangelistic team. Home visits were appreciated. People in India value having a spiritual or religious leader visit their homes. Once they know him, they gratefully accept his counsel and often express their gratitude in spontaneous hospitality, sacrificing time, money, and even food to highlight such visits. Later responses revealed that although there were many professed Christians attending the meetings, except for a few, many had not attended church for long periods and had seldom enjoyed a pastoral visit from the clergy. Some would later testify to a significant change in their lives because of their relationship to the evangelistic campaign.

The evangelistic meetings resulted in a new church being raised up. Fifty-seven persons were baptized. However, before we can accurately assess the various aspects of the campaign, it will be necessary to conduct several more such programs, seeking to identify negative and positive features. This campaign is only a beginning. Others must engage in studies of a similar kind as we continue to search for the most effective ways to fulfill the gospel commission in India. Our recommendations for evangelism in India, emerging out of this study appear in the following pages.
CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are an outgrowth of an experience in evangelism in Poona, India in the spring of 1981.

1. It is recommended that our church leaders in Southern Asia Division, Poona, India assemble an evangelism task force to lead Adventists in India in a careful study of evangelistic possibilities and strategies. The findings of contemporary missiological research must be identified and examined: What is known with respect to processes and causes for acceptance and rejection of new ideas and innovations? How do we recognize potential receptors of the gospel? How does the church best adapt its message and methods to the various groups and subgroups of society in a given place? What is the potential for people movements in India?

2. It is recommended that members in our large institutional churches be encouraged to swarm into different areas of the community and help initiate new growth and fellowship groups and provide leadership and direction in these places for effective witnessing.¹

3. It is recommended that Spicer Memorial College establish a center for evangelism in the city where young ministers will receive training in personal and practical evangelism. This center

¹See the study by Larry Evans, "Toward the Development of a Church Planning Strategy for the Local Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America" (D. Min. project report, Andrews University, 1981), for helpful suggestions along these lines.
could also attract the public for various types of evangelistic endeavors.

4. It is recommended that training programs and workshops for ministers and laity be organized and be held more widely and frequently. (The church in India needs more trained laymen if it is to make an impact upon the masses.)

5. It is recommended that the type of action-research represented by this project report be extended to other sections of Poona. These outreach efforts should adapt to the different language groupings rather than employ the English language as has largely been the case up to now.

6. It is recommended that the ministerial students of Spicer Memorial College be teamed with experienced city evangelists to engage in similar evangelistic action-research as represented by this report.

7. It is recommended that careful records be maintained of such evangelistic programs for purposes of analysis and ongoing improvement.

8. It is recommended that denominational leaders in India be encouraged to make adequate budget provisions for evangelistic action-research.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

1. Audience Survey
APPENDIX A

AUDIENCE SURVEY

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** Score out that which is not applicable

73
APPENDIX B

1. Visitation Survey
APPENDIX B

VISITATION SURVEY

Name ____________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________

Bible Studies Given: Date __________ Subject __________

Prayer Offered ______________________________________

Prayer Requests Made ______________________________________

Needs Expressed ______________________________________

Objection(s) Raised ______________________________________

Question(s) Asked ______________________________________

Others present during visit __________________________

General Observations ______________________________________
APPENDIX C

1. Sample List of Topics
   Presented

2. Sample of a Complete Sermon
   and Two Sermon Outlines
   Translated from the Tamil
   Language
LIST OF SUBJECTS

1. Origin of Things (Creation)
2. Is There a God? (Existence of God)
3. Authority of Sacred Writings (The Bible)
4. Jesus--The Light of Asia (Divinity of Christ)
5. Salvation--What is It? (Steps to Salvation)
6. History of the Future (Prophecy--Daniel 2)
7. The Climax of the Ages (Second Coming)
8. Future Abode of Saints (Heaven)
10. God's Great Sign (Sabbath)
11. A New Life Style (Christian Standards)
12. Gateway to a New Life (Baptism)
Take a look at the world in which we live. What is our attitude toward things that happen around us? Do we laugh or cry? Doesn't it seem foolish that millions of us should be on a little planet spinning in space? Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? We do not understand many things about our world and while we are here we do not seem to be getting along with each other. Most of us have not seen much of the rest of the planet, and the majority of us do not really care about it. Just so long as we have food in our stomachs, a roof over our heads, and money in our pockets, we let the world go on its way and we do not care. We cannot stop the world from spinning; we cannot change its course. There is not a thing we can do about its relation to anything. We are stuck with it, and on it, with the exception of a few people who have taken expensive trips away for a week or two. We can call this an indifferent approach.

Then there is what is known as the mythical approach. In an attempt to try to understand how the world began, most ancient myths depict it as a result of a great struggle of some kind. The gods fought each other and then created the earth, the heavens, and the living things out of the bodily parts of the vanquished gods.
According to the Babylonians, the god Marduk fashioned the heavens by splitting the goddess Tiamat in two like a shellfish. As a god, Ea, made man from the blood pouring out of the severed blood vessels of the primeval monster Kingu. A Sumerian myth tells of the creation of man from the blood of Lamga, god of the carpenters. In all these ancient myths the creation of life occurred after some kind of fight to the death between the gods over who would be supreme, or after a struggle with the forces of chaos.

The Egyptians often explained the beginning of life through the only source of life they knew—sexual activity or the fertile waters of the Nile. Just as plants and animals seemed to spring spontaneously from the silt and waters of the Nile, they believed that all life originated in the mud. Others in the ancient Middle East viewed the sun to be the source of all life. So their main god in the religious pantheon is the sun. The moon and the stars are lesser deities. The Egyptians also believed and depicted creation as a slowly developing process, all beginning from the giant egg. The problem of the origin of things naturally fascinated the brooding mind of India. Varuna (sun) is praised as the maker of all things. According to Indian mythology, the center of the world is a great mountain (Meru, Sumeru = Himalayas) where the gods dwell, and around which the Sun moves. To the south lies India and the other sides, the other continents. The mythical approach is strangely fascinating.

The third approach, known as the speculative approach, has attracted many to its camp. People who belong to this camp are not satisfied with either the indifferent approach or the mythical approach. They do not want to accept the fact that they are aimlessly
spinning in space or the results of gods fighting. Fascinating people they are. They sit under trees and scratch their heads and think. We call them Pundit. What do they have to say? The more they think the more uncertain they become. They spend much of their time thinking about what other thinkers think and then proceed to think that others are thinking wrong! So many philosophies are very confusing and discouraging.

We are faced with the problem. That problem is knowing where to start. Instead of starting with the human mind trying to reach into mysteries it cannot comprehend, why not listen to God? While human thinking may produce speculation, divine thought produces revelation. Has God spoken: Has he revealed himself to mankind? Can we understand his language? One of the most exciting things a person can know is that God has spoken and we can understand.

God has spoken in many ways and in diverse manners. God has spoken through creation; everyone has been confronted one way or another with that silent voice of creation. God has spoken through his own Son who came to this earth and died on the cross for the redemption of the human race. God speaks through sacred writings--the BIBLE. This is a far more detailed voice than creation. When God speaks through both the general and special revelations, there is stereophonic force and clarity.

The idea of God revealing himself in an incarnation is not limited to Christianity, but the specific Christian doctrine of incarnation is that God in his infinite wisdom, after a long time of preparation, chose a specific time, a specific cultural setting, a specific political situation, where he could reveal himself to man
once for all in a way understandable to man. God was made man, which means that he came into our midst to talk to us in human language, using words, gestures, symbolic actions, etc., that we understand. This complete immersion into a life situation, a very particular, definable, life situation, is what we mean when we speak of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. This is recorded in the Bible and is in part why the Bible has authority.

The story of creation is not limited to Christianity, as we have noted earlier in this message. There were parallels to the biblical creation story in the surrounding contemporary religions. Although there was a pattern well known to people in those days who had been used in writing biblical account, still it does not exclude divine inspiration from the story. We are right when we state that the Bible uses the language pattern prevalent in that culture as a point or connection, or nothing could have been said at all.

The important thing is that the biblical creation story conveys a new message. We know, e.g., that the sun, moon, and stars were considered divine beings in the surrounding cultures and therefore worshipped. In the biblical story, however, we find that words used for celestial bodies are words that clearly indicate created things. The sun is called a "lamp," a created thing, nothing divine. And it is said that God "pasted" the stars in their place. They are only things put in their places by the Almighty God.

The key point is to discover the distinctive difference of the other sacred document from the sacred Scriptures of the Christian religion. We should be careful to avoid the notion that the book has
authority in itself, i.e., its words, phrases, sentences, stories, etc. Neither are we to think the words in the Bible any holier than ordinary human words or words used in other religious writings.

The authority of the Bible is rather in that which the words point to. And what the Bible points to is an event in history that is unique—the God Incarnate. The Old Testament reveals history leading up to this decisive event helps us to see this historical event as something significant and inevitable. They are authoritative in that they show history as preparation for God's saving action in Jesus Christ. In the same way the New Testament reveals the historic event in relationship to the future of the world in general and the individual in particular, by witnessing to the event itself and the effect it had on real life.

To supply the knowledge of God, a revelation is necessary. God has supplied that revelation and embodied it in a book. This book is not the sole revelation of God but the revelation God has made in many ways, summed up more fully in that book than anywhere else.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works (Tim 3:16, 17).

Three important things about the Bible should be understood:

1. It is genuine: The men who wrote it who claim they wrote it. There is no fraud about it. This is further confirmed by the testimony of the church, the testimony of the books themselves, the testimony they heard concerning Jewish, Roman, and Greek history contained in them, and the testimony borne through the centuries by
various opponents of the book. This very opposition confirmed the truth that such writings by such writers existed in their day and were genuine.

2. **It is credible.** It is worthy to be believed. Other books may be genuine but not true. The Bible is both. Its credibility is evidenced by the character of its writers, its agreement with the known facts of history, the beneficial and helpful effects of its contents, and the corroboration of archeological research. Of all the discoveries of archeology very few have been in conflict with the Bible and none has proved it untrue.

3. **It is divine.** Men wrote the book but it was God's message. Men did the writing but it was God who supervised it. The Bible contains God's message to man in human language. This being so, the question of ultimate and final authority in religion is settled. The last and the supreme record concerning God, man, life, and eternity has been spoken. Therefore, it is prior to reason, tradition, and church. The Bible becomes the authoritative basis for man's life and conduct. It serves as spectacles to help man to focus precisely on who God is and what God's will for man's life is. It is a schoolmaster to serve as man's teacher and guide to lead in the path of truth and eternal happiness.

By way of a few simply guidelines I would like to enumerate the following steps for study in the Bible, which, in my personal experience, has been very profitable.

1. **Read the Scriptures.** Read it carefully and prayerfully to understand the meaning intended in the passage (John 5:39).

2. **Recount what God has done in salvation history.** As the
Scriptures basically contain a testimony to what God has done, both under the old dispensation and under the new, our reading of God's message will necessarily lead us to the recounting of God's deed for man. This need not be a complicated study but a simple recollection of what he has been doing in past history. We will discover, as we read, that the Bible talks to personal life situations (1 Cor 10:11; 2 Pet 1:16-20).

3. Study personalities. God always intends to achieve a personal relationship between himself and man. What man lost originally through sin is to be regained ultimately. It is to accomplish this that we have in history the incarnation and the Jesus event. The Scripture record of God's dealing with individual men sets a pattern of what he intends to do with modern man today in the context of his life situation. The study of biblical personalities become very profitable in this context.

4. Study themes. By the study of these different themes, concepts, or subjects, we gain an understanding of who God is and what purposes and plans he has for man. As we read themes such as creation, redemption, sin, death, future inheritance, etc., and frequently hear them preached we begin to understand what the writers of the Scriptures had in mind when they wrote what they wrote.

5. In-depth study of text, passages, chapters, and books. This attempt to penetrate into a deeper understanding of a given text, passage, chapter, or book can become a life-long delight of even biblical scholars and laypersons as well. The more we learn and understand the historical background, its literary origins, its theological content, and its modern-day application to individual
lives and society, the more fruitful and persistent will be our study (Prov 2:1-5).

5. **Study the Bible's prayer and praise.** It is interesting to note that the Bible not only contains messages but it contains prayers and praises. As one reads these prayers it creates an attitude of prayer and worship of the God of the Scriptures. Thus, there is this meaningful dialogue between God and man. Scripture is God's effective way of communicating with man, and prayer and praise are the best means of man's response to God. In this environment the attitude of a person toward one's own self, his environment, and his God changes. He delights in a new life-style because his whole way of life is brought under the control and authority of God.

Scriptures lend themselves to the creation of a new experience in man. The more a person comes to know God the more his delight will be to do God's will. This is why this old book has never lost its freshness and power. Wherever the Bible is honored, studied, and obeyed, individuals, families, and societies have prospered. The principles and teachings of this book have attracted men of all nations and religions. The life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father in India, were governed by the Sermon on the Mount found in the Bible. Millions everywhere are saying, Give me this book!

Dear Friend, why not get a copy of this book and begin this exciting spiritual journey?
Where are the Dead?

Objectives of the Sermon:

1. To teach the truth of the condition of man in death
2. To highlight the hope of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
3. To remind the precious promises during hours of sorrow and death

I. Introduction

Death is an age-long question which confronts us. It pays to seek to understand its mysteries especially in the atmosphere of sorrow. Where are our loved ones after death? Are they suffering in purgatory or enjoying the pleasures of heaven? Or are they in the grave?

1. Illustration of Hindu beliefs in rebirth, transmigration of soul, etc. Visit of loved ones expected in the original home after death. Thus a chair is left vacant or food is provided in a specific place every day
2. Illustration from the Bible to consult as to what God says in answer to these questions

II. What happens at death?

1. Death is a cessation of life. It is the result of sin. Gen 2:7, 17; 3:22-24; Eccl 9:5, 6; 12:7
2. Death is a sleep--life's functions cease. Ps 13:3; John 11:11, 14. No consciousness, no activity, no praise. Eccl 9:5, 6; Ps 146:4; Ps 115:17; Isa 38:18, 19
3. The word "sleep" in reference to death. 1 Thes 4:14-16
4. Life's decisions are made when alive. Ecc 9:10; 2 Cor 5:10; Ps 146:2-4

III. Man is unconscious in death--the dead rest in the grave

1. They are not in heaven
   a. Lazarus not in heaven
   b. David not in heaven John 11:43, 44
   c. Righteous not in heaven Acts 2:29

2. They are not in hell or purgatory
   a. Wicked resurrected for resurrection John 5:29; Dan 12:2
   b. Wicked reserved till the end of the world 2 Pet 2:9; Matt 13:40-42
   c. Prayers of the dead not heard Ps 115:17; Ps 6:5
   d. Prayers for the dead are in vain Isa 38:18, 19

3. All rest in the grave
   a. The dead sleep in the grave Dan 12:2
   b. Both righteous and wicked sleep in the grave Ecc 3:20
   c. Saints wait in the grace Job 14:14, 15
   d. Resurrection takes place from the grave 1 Thess 4:16, 17

IV. Promise of Reward

1. Soon we shall see God face to face Job 19:25-27
2. Jesus died to make it possible John 3:16
3. In Jesus we pass from death unto life
4. He who hath the Son hath life 1 John 5:11, 12
5. He has promised to return to reclaim his people John 14; 1-3
V. Conclusion

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord (Rev 14:13). We cannot afford to miss eternal life when Jesus comes. We must be ready. Life is uncertain. So it must be committed to Jesus Christ always. Claim the promise that we will be with those who see Him on that resurrection day.
God's Good News for Health

Objectives for the Sermon:

1. To provide a biblical basis for the understanding of the health message
2. To prepare the people to desire a biblical life-style which includes the body and the physical well-being
3. To build up faith in those who are seeking to become overcomers in terms of various habits which had enslaved them
4. To appeal to everyone "to present their bodies as a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God" Rom 12:1.

I. Introduction

1. Purity and holiness to characterize God's people
   1 Pet 2:9
2. God's people to be different from the world 2 Cor 6:15-18
3. Those who are called by God to hold a high standard on all points Phil 4:8
4. Christ desires to present a people faultless before the throne of God at his coming Eph 5:25-27; Jude 24

II. God's good news for health

1. God has a health message for today ps 67:2; Feb 14:6, 7
   a. This message is found in his Word Ps 107:20
   b. We are warned not to be indifferent Deut 12:8, 28; Jer 6:16
c. We should maintain proper attitude toward God's message
   i) by enjoying good food Eccl 3:13
   ii) by obeying God's requirements for good health Dan 1:8; Deut 30:19, 20

2. God's health message has sound principles
   a. He wants us to be healthy to serve God and our fellowmen in the best possible manner 2 Tim 2:11
   b. He wants us to bring glory to God in all things 1 Cor 10:31
   c. He wants his Holy Spirit to indwell us and be our constant guide and helper 1 Cor 6:19, 20
   d. He wants us to be careful and moderate and avoid becoming wreckless and fanatics Phil 4:5; Rom 14:17

III. God's wholesome menu for man

1. For God's ancient generation
   a. Diet: fruits, grains, nuts, vegetables Gen 1:29; 2:16; 3:18, 19
   b. Man's diet changed after the entrance of sin and destruction of this world by flood Gen 9:4, 5; 7:1-3
   c. God's call for reform Ps 78:19
      i) manna supplied every day Exod 16:15
      ii) flesh foods to be avoided Lev 11; Deut 14
      iii) strong drink and heathen practices to be shunned Lev 10:9, 10; Deut 29:17-20
      iv) Standing for God becomes difficult when our minds
become ensnared by wrong habits of diet Num 11:4-7; Ps 69:22

2. For God's modern generation
   a. Where ancient generation failed we are not to fail
      Ps 106:13, 14; Ezek 22:26; 1 Cor 10:5-7; Jer 4:1, 2
   b. We are called to live sober, righteous lives 1 Thes 5:6, 7; Luke 21:34, 35
   c. God's call for separation from the world and its practices Rev 18:1-4; Isa 66:15-18
   d. God's people should gain mastery over intemperance and unclean health habits 1 Cor 9:25
      i) swine's flesh Isa 66:15-18; 65:4-6
      ii) intoxicating drinks Prov 20:1; 23:29-35
      iii) eating of that which is not food such as narcotics, stimulants, etc. Isa 55:2
   e. God's people should be overcomers
      i) claim victory by faith 1 John 5:4
      ii) pray for victory James 1:5, 6; 5:16
      iii) flee from evil habits 1 Tim 2:22; 1 Cor 10:14
      iv) cherish good habits Phil 4:7, 8; Rom 12:21
      v) resist the devil James 4:7, 8; 1 Pet 5:8, 9

IV. Conclusion
   1. God's special people in the last days Rev 14:1-5
      a. They will exhibit loving obedience to God's expectations
      b. They will purify their lives with God's Word Eph 5:25-27; John 15:3.
c. They "present their bodies as a living sacrifice wholly acceptable unto God" Rom 12:1

d. They will enjoy a more abundant life both here and in the hereafter John 10:10; Ps 16:11

2. God calls for everyone to adopt this biblical lifestyle
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VITA

John Willmott was born in a Seventh-day Adventist minister's family in Tamil Nadu, India. His entire educational career was undertaken in Seventh-day Adventist institutions and he graduated from Spicer Memorial College in 1958 with a Bachelors degree in Business Administration. It was at SMC that he sensed a call to the ministry during weeks of spiritual emphasis conducted by Elder Joe Crews and Dr. Steven Vitrano. Though a business graduate he was elected the pastor of the graduating class.

In 1959 his marriage was arranged by his parents to Dorothy, a girl from another Seventh-day Adventist minister's family, and was soon blessed with a son and a daughter (Allan and Susan). In 1964 he received the opportunity for further study at the Seminary at Andrews University and graduated with the degree of Master of Arts in Religion in the spring of 1966. He was ordained to the gospel ministry in 1969 and has had a very fruitful ministry as an evangelist in different parts of India and Sri Lanka.

In addition to direct pastoral-evangelistic work since 1958, he has held several offices in the church: Ministerial Secretary of the Conference (1971), Conference President (1972-1975), Union Ministerial Secretary (1976), and Division Associate Ministerial Secretary (1977-1979). Following the fifty-third Session of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, held in Dallas,
Texas, 1980, he was appointed as the Assistant Secretary of Southern Asia Division. At that time he was at the Theological Seminary at Andrews pursuing further study and earning his Doctor of Ministry degree which was completed in August 1981.

John loves people and the cause of evangelism and his life is dedicated to singing and preaching the gospel message to win souls for the Master.