

SCHOOL OF OUTREACH II: ITS WORK--ITS WORTH

by
Kevin McKenney

Senior Church History, A
Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
Professor E. Fredrich
May 15, 1989

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library
11831 N. Seminary Drive. 65W
Mequon, Wisconsin

School of Outreach II: Its Work--Its Worth

Recognizing that the Church's mission, as clearly defined by Christ in Matthew 28:18-20, is to make disciples of all nations; and realizing the many obstacles which stand in the way of that mission, the Board for Evangelism together with the Board for Home Missions of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod hosted a pilot project known as the "School of outreach". The project was to be a week-long, intensive training program for pastors and key lay leaders from fifteen congregations selected as follows: five mission congregations aged 3-7 years; 5 synod-subsidized congregations of more than 7 years existence; and 5 established congregations of more than 25 years existence.

The objectives of this pilot project were:

- 1) To develop an effective comprehensive approach to the need for evangelism leadership, skills and strategies in WELS congregations.
- 2) To determine whether an annual such program of extensive continuing education can meet the need for increased evangelism awareness, priority and activity in the WELS.
- 3) To determine whether intensive and practical training in evangelism is an efficient means of increasing the growth rate of WELS mission congregations.
- 4) To train a core group of pastors and lay leaders in the hope

of their developing congregational models of effective outreach.

- 5) To develop a curriculum of evangelism resources that can be used elsewhere in promoting and developing congregational outreach.

The first School of Outreach was held in the summer of 1987 at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, concurrent with the seminary's summer quarter. Response to School of Outreach I in 1987 was so overwhelmingly positive that the Board for Evangelism was convinced to offer the program again in the summer of 1988, once again concurrent with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's summer quarter.

It is my purpose in this paper to briefly describe the work which School of Outreach II accomplished and to evaluate their efforts based on input received from several pastors who attended School of Outreach II.

The synod's Board for Evangelism described the second School of Outreach as an evangelism "immersion" experience designed to provide an "A to Z" exposure to congregational outreach, with the intention that strategic planning for specific congregations will result. It was hoped that through presentations, resources, discussion and workshops the participants would be provided with the tools and insights for such strategic planning.

Participation in School of Outreach II was limited to two-man teams (a pastor and a layman) from 20-25 congregations, with the intention of providing geographic and situational diversity. A list of the participants in School of Outreach II can be found in Appendix A. It is interesting to note that two pastors from

our sister church in Sweden and Pastor Jerry McWaters from Hawaii also participated in the School of Outreach. Also noteworthy is the fact that one of the congregational teams represented the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Each congregation involved in School of Outreach II was asked to complete a congregational self-study and community analysis prior to their arrival. It was hoped that these basic diagnostic tools would be helpful in the planning and consulting that would take place in the School of Outreach for each individual congregation. In an evaluation questionnaire that each participant completed before leaving the School all felt that this self-study and analysis prior to their arrival was very useful. However, many felt that not only these but all the materials presented in the School should have been made available prior to their arrival to facilitate discussion by allowing for more informed discussion by the participants.

As was mentioned earlier, the School of Outreach was a week-long endeavor. The School began in the evening of Sunday, June 26, 1988 and concluded with a devotion in the evening of Friday, July 1. While the amount of material presented made a week-long workshop necessary, many of the participants felt that a week was perhaps a bit too long. It is often difficult for a pastor to take an entire week from his busy schedule, and I'm sure the same holds true for the laymen involved. The length of the School of Outreach may prove to be a hindrance for future participation by both pastors and laymen.

Throughout the course of the week presentations were made in the areas of mission awareness; unique characteristics, needs

and opportunities of different congregations; analysis and self-assessment of individual congregations and their communities based on the forms they filled out prior to the School; organizing for outreach; the use of media in outreach; reaching prospects and follow-up; recruiting and training lay evangelists; friendship evangelism and assimilation of new members; and the place of worship in outreach strategy. Throughout the week there was also much time devoted to personal spiritual growth through regularly scheduled devotions. The agenda for School of Outreach II can be found in Appendix B.

One of the main goals of School of Outreach II was for each congregational pastor/layman team to have developed a specific plan of outreach for its congregation by the close of the school. This outreach plan would ~~serve~~ then serve the individual congregation in its future outreach efforts. Each pastor/layman team was to make use of whatever resources were made available in the presentations which it felt would be especially useful and appropriate for the unique needs and situations of its congregation. Many of the pastors surveyed felt that this was too great an expectation. One pastor commented that it was unreasonable to have a finished plan by the close of the School, since new ideas were presented each day often altering the plans which were made on the previous day.

The opening session of School of Outreach II dealt extensively with the subject of defining the mission of the church. Several of the pastors, while they felt that such a presentation was certainly important and relevant to their reason for being there, still^{they} felt that such a presentation could have been left out,

thereby allowing more time for discussion in other areas. I tend to agree with that sentiment. Their participation in School of Outreach II implies that the participants were already firmly convinced of the church's mission, so they wouldn't have needed to be told something they already knew. However, a useful and important part of the presentation on mission awareness was the presentation of practical suggestions for developing mission awareness in the congregation.

The next presentation was in the area of self-study and community analysis. Again, many of the participants indicated that extensive self-study and community analysis had been done prior to their participation in School of Outreach II. Perhaps the amount of time devoted to this area could have been shortened considerably.

The remaining presentations were much more practical for the actual planning and execution of an outreach program. The idea that outreach is the responsibility not only of the pastor but also of the laity was set forth in a presentation entitled Biblical and Practical Insights on Lay Ministry as the Basis for Congregational Outreach. In this presentation it was shown that outreach is an opportunity for joyful service, a joyful opportunity of which the lay members should not be deprived.

The need for structure and organization was then presented, focusing on the need for establishing an evangelism board or committee which will tune the entire ministry program and life of the congregation to outreach and nurture. In this area several practical tools were presented to aid each congregation in its establishment of an evangelism committee. In the same area the

principles of strategic planning were presented in order to aid the congregation's evangelism committee in planning its own unique strategy for outreach.

One of the easiest ways to grow was presented by showing the participants the need to have good impact on the community. This presentation was entitled Getting Prospects to Come to Us. It dealt with ways of attracting people to the congregation. This method, however, is usually only effective in large, established congregations with visibility and a reputation in the community. For small, relatively new congregations other strategies must be used. These strategies were dealt with in a presentation entitled Going Out After Prospects.

A congregation's outreach to the unchurched will be most effective when the congregation recognizes the needs and attitudes of the unchurched. These needs and attitudes were discussed under the heading Understanding the Unchurched. Ways of meeting those needs and attitudes were discussed further in a presentation entitled Making the Visitor Feel Welcome.

The fourth day of presentations dealt with the following up of the congregation on its outreach efforts. Things discussed were the need for follow-up programs, keeping a prospect file, and the various tools and options available for effective follow-up programs. Also discussed were the principles for recruiting and training lay evangelists and several demonstrations of evangelism presentations such as God's Great Exchange.

The final day of presentations dealt primarily with friendship evangelism and the assimilation of new members. Also discussed was the place of worship in the congregation's outreach

strategy.

It is apparent that a great deal of time, effort and material went into the planning and execution of School of Outreach II. The three-ring binder of materials made available to each participant alone contains hundreds of pages of materials. Several of the participants commented that the volume of materials tended to be overwhelming and I would have to agree. School of Outreach II was truly a great deal of work for all involved. The question is: Was it worth all the work?

The best measure of the worth and effectiveness of School of Outreach II is the impact that it has had on the congregational outreach of the participating congregations. In order to get an idea of the amount of impact the School has had a questionnaire was sent to the participating pastors for their reaction (a copy of the questionnaire is found in Appendix C). Unfortunately only about twenty percent of those surveyed responded, so it is not the most reliable measure of the effectiveness of the project.

Each participant was asked to indicate on a scale of one to ten where his congregation was a year ago in its mission to the community and where it is today. Every pastor who responded indicated a substantial increase in the outreach efforts of his congregation since his participation in School of Outreach II.

Each participant was then asked to indicate whether his congregation has planning occurring and a program underway in each of the following areas: 1) Mission awareness/Commitment-raising among members; 2) Self-study, particularly for outreach; 3) Community analysis; 4) Organization and planning; 5) Publicity/Advertising; 6) "Come" strategies of locating prospects; 7) "Go" strat-

egies of locating prospects; 8) Lay evangelist training and visits; 9) Prospect nurture; 10) Friendship evangelism; 11) Visitor welcome; and 12) New member assimilation.

In the area of mission awareness all indicated that they had both planning and specific activity underway. Specific activities mentioned included increased Bible study, development of a mission statement and engaging missionaries from the field to speak at special services.

In the area of self-study and community analysis nearly all indicated that this had been done already prior to the School. It was suggested that this area receive less treatment in future Schools. One participant indicated that some activity was being done in the area of community analysis in determining the concentration of children to guide them in their annual community canvass for Vacation Bible School.

In organization and planning much progress has been made by all participants. Specific activities reported include establishment of a long-range planning committee for coordination, goal setting, funding and reporting.

All participants have a program of publicity underway, including weekly and/or seasonal advertising in newspapers, monthly newsletters, periodic editorials, and ads in the yellow pages. One participant indicated plans for future use of public access television and radio.

Only one participant indicated activity in the area of "come" strategies of locating prospects. This activity involves welcoming newcomers to the city by means of a welcome card and brochure, followed up by a phone call and personal visit if unchurched.

These activities are categorized under "8" below.

These activities, however, really belong under "go" strategies.

In the area of "go" strategies all participants listed active programs including direct mailings to newcomers, contact with parents of newborns in the community, and canvassing of homes.

All reporting participants are at least in the planning stages of training lay evangelists. Some specific activities mentioned are participation in seminars, training in God's Great Exchange, and visits by Board of Elders to inactive members. All indicated planning in the area of prospect nurturing as well.

Most of the reporting participants indicated that their congregations are active in friendship evangelism, encouraging members to seek opportunities to expose their friends to church.

In the area of visitor welcome some activities mentioned were the establishment of a greeters program and thank-you cards sent to visitors who sign the guest book.

All participants have established programs for the assimilation of new members since their participation in School of Outreach II. Some specific activities include sponsor families, a public reception, orientation meetings with pastor and elders, and the display of pictures of new families on a bulletin board in church.

Every participant who reported listed several problems that he has encountered in his efforts to promote and develop outreach in his congregation. The greatest problem seems to be getting the people beyond the point of saying that outreach is important to the point of actively participating in that outreach.

Many specific blessings were listed by every reporting pas-

tor as a result of his efforts to promote and develop outreach. Most often mentioned was the individual personal growth of each participant. One pastor felt that it was very beneficial to have had a layman participate with him in the School. He felt that it has helped to promote a more positive attitude toward outreach in the whole congregation. Most participants also mentioned the tangible results of their efforts including community awareness of the congregation's existence and concern for the community, several adult confirmations and baptisms of children, and a happier, more enthusiastic attitude of those involved in the training sessions and Bible classes.

Finally, when asked for specific suggestions for School of Outreach II, most had nothing but good comments. Some, however, did feel that the amount of material covered and the length of time spent in covering it was a bit too much. Others felt that the School should somehow develop simultaneous involvement of more members of the congregation so that more of the congregation can benefit and be involved in the planning.

To answer the question, then, of whether School of Outreach II was worth the time, effort and material put into it we need only look at the results of the survey sent to the participants. Every participant has indicated that some very successful plans and programs have resulted from their participation in School of Outreach II. It is my opinion that School of Outreach II has successfully reached all of its objectives. I strongly recommend that the synod's Board for Evangelism and Board for Home Missions continue their efforts to promote mission awareness in the synod by conducting future Schools of Outreach until the gospel has

been preached to every creature and disciples have been made of all nations.

APPENDIX A

ROSTER OF PARTICIPANTS IN SCHOOL OF OUTREACH II

- 1) Rev. David Ehlers and Mr. Tom Anderson, St. Mark--Normal, IL
- 2) Rev. Bruce Bitter and Mr. Mel Pavlisin, Our Savior--Arlington, TX
- 3) Rev. Steven Blumer and Mr. Harold Moss, Faith--El Paso, TX
- 4) Rev. Norm Burger and Mr. Ron McKay, Shepherd of the Hills--Lansing, MI
- 5) Rev. Joe Dietrich, Ascension--Plymouth, MN
- 6) Egil Edvardsen, St. Lukas--Algard, Norway
- 7) Rev. David Laabs and Mr. William Haberman, Faith--Tacoma, WA
- 8) Rev. Norman Paul and Mr. Alvin Haferman, St. Paul's--Wisconsin Rapids, WI
- 9) Rev. Neil Hansen and Mr. Dennis Schaepe, Redeemer--Schofield, WI
- 10) Rev. Ron Muetzel and Mr. George Hausman, Trinity--Bay City, MI
- 11) Rev. Charles Heup and Mr. Albert Wolf, Prince of Peace--Rochester, NY
- 12) Rev. Phil Hoyer and Mr. Niel Jakab, St. Paul--Calgary, Alberta Canada
- 13) Rev. Charles Huebner, Grace--Fayetteville, AR
- 14) Christer Hugo--Ranea, Sweden
- 15) Rev. David Russow and Mr. George Hulse, St. Peter--Fort Collins, CO
- 16) Rev. Rick Johnson and Mr. Dennis Napier, Risen Savior--Chula Vista, CA
- 17) Rev. Daniel Kelm and Mr. Ronald Rathke, Divine Savior--Indianapolis, IN
- 18) Rev. Peter Kruschel--Milwaukee, WI
- 19) Rev. Leroy Martin, St. Paul's--Menomonie, WI
- 20) Rev. Jerome McWaters, St. Paul--Honolulu, HI
- 21) Rev. Norman Seeger and Mr. Jeff Schlepp, Good Shepherd--Sioux Falls, SD
- 22) Rev. Scott Spaulding and Mr. Jon Ziesemer, Bloomington--Bloomington, MN
- 23) Rev. James Witt III and Mr. Jeff Samelson, Martin Luther--St. Louis, MO

APPENDIX B

SCHOOL OF OUTREACH II - AGENDA

SUNDAY - JUNE 26

7:30 p.m. MIXER

Welcome, refreshments and introductions, with participants prepared to introduce their congregations as to:

- a) age/size
- b) nature of community
- c) strengths and unique characteristics of the congregation
- d) current level of outreach

MONDAY A.M.

7:00 Chapel with sem summer quarter

7:15 CLARIFYING THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH
KELM - 60 min.

8:20 DEVELOPING A VISION FOR YOUR CHURCH
(including a model that encompasses the components of the week's agenda)
KELM - 60 min.

9:30 BREAK-OUT (peer groups) to identify the barriers to mission awareness and effort

10:05 PRACTICAL OPTIONS FOR DEVELOPING MISSION AWARENESS AND COMMITMENT
RADLOFF - 60 min.

11:15 PASTOR/LAY LEADER TEAMWORK IN BUILDING MISSION AWARENESS
RAABE - 45 min.

12:00 Dinner

MONDAY P.M.

2:30 SPLIT SESSION - UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS, NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE:

- a-c
each
85 min.
- a) SMALL CHURCH - HAGEDORN
 - b) MIDDLE-SIZED CHURCH - OLSON
 - c) LARGE CHURCH - HARTMAN

- 4:00 HUDDLE (Pastor and lay leader from each congregation meet to apply principles to their own church and begin formulating strategy)
- 5:00 Supper
- 6:45 CONGREGATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT
(based on the self-study document)
OLSON - 70 min.
- 8:00 COMMUNITY ANALYSIS
(based on the community analysis document)
HARTMAN - 70 min.
- 9:15 Closing Devotion
R. MUETZEL

TUESDAY A.M.

- 7:00 Chapel
- 7:15 BIBLICAL AND PRACTICAL INSIGHTS ON LAY MINISTRY
AS THE BASIS FOR CONGREGATIONAL OUTREACH
J. HUEBNER - 60 min.
- 8:20 ORGANIZING FOR OUTREACH
HAGEDORN - 70 min.
- 9:45 BREAK-OUT (peer groups) on church organizations
and outreach, with case studies to stimulate strategy-
formation
45 min.
- 10:40 PRINCIPLES AND MODELS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING
FOR OUTREACH
HARTMAN - 75 min.
- 12:00 Dinner

TUESDAY P.M.

- 2:30-5:00 HALF-HOUR CONSULTING SESSIONS WITH STAFF
MEMBERS, based on self-study and community analysis,
with remaining time for HUDDLE
HARTMAN, RADLOFF, OLSON, HAGEDORN, KELM
- 6:45 PUBLIC RELATIONS, PUBLICITY AND ADVERTISING
BARBER - 120 min.
- 8:45 Closing Devotion
D. KELM and BARBER

WEDNESDAY A.M.

- 7:00 Chapel
- 7:15 GETTING PROSPECTS TO COME TO US
SOUKUP - 90 min.
- 9:00 GOING OUT AFTER PROSPECTS
KELM - 90 min.
- 10:40 BREAK-OUT (mixed groups) "Ten Most Far-Out Ideas"
for prospecting
30 min. + 20 min. report-back
- 11:30 BOOK REVIEW
RADLOFF - 30 min.
- 12:00 Dinner

WEDNESDAY P.M.

- 3:00-5:00 HUDDLE, with staff members available
- 6:45 UNDERSTANDING THE UNCHURCHED
HARTMAN - 60 min.
- 7:50 MAKING THE VISITOR FEEL WELCOME
SOUKUP - 70 min.
- 9:00 Closing Devotion
RUSSOM

THURSDAY A.M.

- 7:00 Chapel
- 7:15 A PHILOSOPHY OF FOLLOW-THROUGH
KELM - 75 min.
- 8:40 THE PROSPECT FILE
HARTMAN - 60 min.
- 9:50 TOOLS AND OPTIONS
RADLOFF - 75 min.
- 11:10 BREAK-OUT (mixed groups) case study approach to
devising personalized strategies
- 12:00 Dinner

THURSDAY P.M.

- 3:00-5:00 HUDDLE
- 6:45 PRINCIPLES FOR RECRUITING AND TRAINING
LAY EVANGELISTS
VALLESKEY - 70 min.
- 8:00 ONE-HOUR DEMONSTRATIONS (pick one) OF:
a) God's Great Exchange - VALLESKEY
b) RSVP - RADLOFF
c) Listening Visit/Witness Visit - KELM
- 9:00 Closing Devotion
BLUMER

FRIDAY A.M.

- 7:00 Chapel
- 7:15 OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS TO FRIENDSHIP
EVANGELISM
KELM - 45 min.
- 8:00 TEACHING STRATEGIC FRIENDSHIP WITNESS
KELM - 60 min.
- 9:10 STRUCTURING TO MAKE FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM
HAPPEN . . . AND HAPPEN
RADLOFF - 60 min.
- 10:20 RECOGNIZING BARRIERS TO ASSIMILATION
KELM - 45 min.
- 11:10 PRACTICAL MEANS TO ASSIMILATING MEMBERS
VALLESKEY - 50 min.
- 12:00 Dinner

FRIDAY P.M.

- 1:30 FINAL HUDDLE
- 3:00 WORSHIP IN YOUR OUTREACH STRATEGY
VALLESKEY - 80 min.
- 4:30 BRIEF ORAL SHARING SESSION in which each congrega-
tion team outlines the one-year plan and five-year vision
it has been working on
- 6:30 WRAP-UP and Closing Devotion
C. HUEBNER

APPENDIX C

SCHOOL OF OUTREACH SHARING REPORT

- I. On a scale of one to ten (ten representing optimum outreach), circle the number that represents where your congregation was a year ago in its mission to the community and underline the number that represents where your congregation is today.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- II. In each of the following areas indicate whether your congregation has 1) planning occurring and 2) program or activity underway, then briefly describe what specifically your church is doing.

A. Mission Awareness/Commitment-Raising among members

1) Planning _____ Yes _____ No

2) Program/Activity _____ Yes _____ No

3) Specifically: _____

B. Self-Study, particularly for outreach

1) Planning _____ Yes _____ No

2) Program/Activity _____ Yes _____ No

3) Specifically: _____

C. Community Analysis

1) Planning _____ Yes _____ No

2) Program/Activity _____ Yes _____ No

3) Specifically: _____

D. Organization (structure) and Planning (strategic, long-range, overall)

1) Process Initiated _____ Yes _____ No

2) "On paper" _____ Yes _____ No

3) Implemented _____ Yes _____ No

4) Specifically: _____

E. Publicity/Advertising

1) Planning _____ Yes _____ No

2) Program/Activity _____ Yes _____ No

3) Specifically: _____

F. "Come" Strategies of locating prospects

1) Planning _____ Yes _____ No

2) Program/Activity _____ Yes _____ No

3) Specifically: _____

G. "Go" Strategies of locating prospects
(e.g. canvasses, farming, direct mail, new resident or other "transition" approaches)

1) Planning _____ Yes _____ No
2) Program/Activity _____ Yes _____ No
3) Specifically: _____

H. Lay Evangelist Training and Visits

1) Planning _____ Yes _____ No
2) Program/Activity _____ Yes _____ No
3) Specifically: _____

I. Prospect Nurture (files, mail, sequenced contact, etc.)

1) Planning _____ Yes _____ No
2) Program/Activity _____ Yes _____ No

3) Specifically: _____

J. Friendship Evangelism

1) Planning _____ Yes _____ No
2) Program/Activity _____ Yes _____ No
3) Specifically: _____

K. Visitor Welcome

1) Planning _____ Yes _____ No
2) Program/Activity _____ Yes _____ No
3) Specifically: _____

L. (New) Member Assimilation

1) Planning _____ Yes _____ No
2) Program/Activity _____ Yes _____ No
3) Specifically: _____

III. How many prospects are currently in your (working) file? _____

IV. What specific barriers or problems have you encountered as you've attempted to promote and develop outreach to the lost in your congregation? _____

V. What specific blessings can you report as a result of your effort to promote and develop outreach to the lost? _____

VI. What specific suggestions do you have for School of Outreach II after several months of reflection and experience? _____

VII. Any "stories" you'd like to share? _____

RESOURCE MATERIAL

All information for this paper is taken from the notebook of materials distributed to the participants of School of Outreach II and from the responses of the pastors surveyed.

Wheaton College Library
Wheaton, Illinois
1971