

# Person-to-Person, Face-to-Face Evangelism by Lay People

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## I. Past and Present Performance

On paper the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod has made a solid and impressive commitment to the cause of evangelism. Evangelism is at the heart and core of the published Purpose, Objectives, and Policies of the WELS: “The continuing purpose of the WELS, as a gathering of Christians, is to serve all people in God’s world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of the Holy Scriptures.” The very first objective of our Synod is “to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with all people” and the very first policy listed under the preceding God-pleasing objective is “to promote personal Christian witnessing to the Gospel by each member of the Synod.” Under Objective No. 4 of our Synod: “To assist in counseling and equipping all members of the Synod for ever greater service to the Lord, to each other and to the world,” we find another excellent policy proclaimed: “4.3 To promote the evangelism and stewardship activity of our members.”

Evangelism emphasis, at least on paper, is not really a new development in our Synod. In August, 1957 the Synod in Convention adopted the following fine resolution: (Note how often the laity is referred to.)

1. WHEREAS, the Great Commission and privilege of the Church is to “make disciples of all nations”, and
2. WHEREAS, our laity represents a vast reservoir for personal mission work, and
3. WHEREAS, our present pastor shortage only emphasizes the urgent need of employing our laity to better advantage, and
4. WHEREAS, such a program would surely stimulate greater lay participation in personal mission work, and
5. WHEREAS, population growth and distribution of the same offer unparalleled opportunities for a planned evangelism program, and
6. WHEREAS, evangelism programs initiated by local congregations in our Synod have been most promising, and
7. WHEREAS, better programs and more attractive material could be offered, if Joint Synod undertook this work; therefore, be it  
RESOLVED, that an Evangelism Committee be created, whose specific duties shall be to plan such programs consistent with our doctrine and practice.

The creation of an Evangelism Committee (Commission) was followed by materials which emphasized the challenges and opportunities connected with Evangelism. An 18 page mimeographed manual, “Gaining and Reclaiming Souls For Christ” was produced in the late 1950’s. This manual contains statements that can’t be improved upon, even almost two decades later because they are based squarely on the Scriptures. For example,

Every Christian should be a witness for Jesus Christ. Every true believer should let his lips speak the wonderful works of God by which He obtained eternal life for us. Only too often we think we are fulfilling our obligation when we contribute: our “fair share” to missions. However, there is a vast mission field within the range of our individual voices. We dare not overlook or ignore our **personal** obligation to those people who know not the Savior’s love, or to those who have lapsed into indifference and unbelief. This field, in which our personal testimony should be heard, may

be in the circle of our friends and neighbors, or within our own family and among our relatives, or within our community.<sup>1</sup>

1963 saw the publishing of three booklets relating to evangelism, “Study To Be Witnesses Unto Me”, “Train To Be Witnesses Unto Me”, and “Organize To Be Witnesses Unto Me.” The sound principles set forth in these booklets make them very worthwhile to this day; the first two are incorporated as vital parts of the Evangelism Commission’s current “Talk About the Savior” method.

The 1970 Mission Seminar at our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary zeroed in on evangelism. A 107 page report of the seminar, edited by Douglas J. Engelbrecht, published by Professor Martin Albrecht and entitled “Every Call A Mission Call” stresses very fittingly the need for pastors “to show the members the need for each of them to be an evangelist, to overcome their objections, to help them acquire confidence that they also could do this work.”<sup>2</sup>

The following are additional evangelism-related insights and statements which those seminarians and other workshop participants enunciated and subsequently put on paper back in 1970: “...God wants all men to be evangelists, not only the pastor.”<sup>3</sup>

One common fallacy is that witnessing for Christ is mainly the pastor’s job. But it is not just to high collars, but also to white and blue collar workers that the call of Matthew 16 goes out to “preach the Gospel to all men.” The example of Aquilla and Priscilla shows how boldly and efficiently two laymen witnessed for their Savior. Often the layman has more opportunities to witness because he is more involved with the world. The pastor does not run into an atheist at the punch press next to his at the shop or the golfer who does his worshipping on the first tee every Sunday. While people expect a pastor to witness, the open confession and interest of a layman may prove more effective. The trouble is many laymen are not qualified...The question now is what can a pastor do to train his people properly to witness, to be open confessors of Christ?<sup>4</sup>

What has a football team got to do with evangelism? Not a whole lot except that a good evangelism team is like a football team with the pastor as quarterback. A good team must have a good leader. Someone who knows the opposition and can call the right play at the right time. Someone who knows his players and their capabilities. The quarterback is the key man. The whole team keys off him. A quarterback does not take the bumps play after play. It’s the front line that’s getting in the contact. A good front line is what the pastor needs...A pastor needs to have his people out there working for him. Laymen can level with one another...<sup>5</sup>

Their published report certainly showed that the Seminarians of 1970 were very evangelism-conscious, recognizing the blessings which result when pastors serve, not only as quarterbacks, but as player-coaches, not only calling the plays and encouraging the laity from the pulpit to be evangelists, but actually leading the way, taking them out on calls and supplying on-the-job training. However one participant at that 1970 seminar made a sobering judgment about our Synod’s evangelism performance which I maintain still holds true today. He pointed out that “evangelism is the glaring weakness within our Synod, and that now is the time to start correcting that weakness...”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Gaining and Reclaiming Souls For Christ” – A Manual Prepared by the Commission on Evangelism of the Wisconsin Synod, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Mission Seminar 70 – Every Call a Mission Call* – A report of the Mission Seminar conducted at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, January 29 – February 4, Douglas J. Engelbrecht, ed., Published by Prof. Martin Albrecht, Mequon, Wisconsin 1970, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 21.

In spite of the fact that our 1971 Synod Convention theme, “We believes...and therefore speak.” (II Cor. 4:13) stressed evangelism and two fine papers were presented on the subject, I’m convinced that evangelism activity by the lay people in most of our 1000 congregations is still very limited. We have not conducted a scientific survey or circulated a questionnaire to come up with irrefutable statistics, but after two years of experience on the Evangelism Commission, it is my conviction that Professor Malchow’s assessment of the evangelism situation in our synod is still all too valid today. He stated in his paper read to the 1971 Convention:

Are not some soul-searching questions in order? How many people did **you** bring to the Lord during the past year? How many **efforts** did you make? **How often did you witness?**...To say that a majority of members and congregations of the Wisconsin Synod would profit by giving serious thought to their evangelism efforts can hardly be contradicted. A study of the past points to **some glaring and disappointing deficiencies** in this vital work.<sup>7</sup>

Certainly our Synod has been growing in numbers and has been opening missions in state after state in the past decade or so. Doesn’t that provide solid proof that we are an extremely evangelism-minded church body? However, we ought to examine how our growth and expansion have come to pass. In an ad for the film, “How To Grow A Church” the statement is made:

Churches grow in three ways — (1) Children are born, they grow and are added, as are wives and husbands; (2) people move and transfer memberships; (3) unchurched people are won to Christ and brought into church membership. It is the third area where the average church is weakest.

Must we not face the fact that the Lord has graciously granted us growth, mostly from the inside, through births and marriages, and that most of us in WELS are also very, very weak in that third area, bringing the Gospel to the unchurched around us?

A big part of the problem seems to center in the very word—evangelism. I have purposely given this paper a rather cumbersome and lengthy title: “Person-to-Person, Face-to-Face Evangelism By Our WELS Laity” lest there be any misconceptions about what I believe to be the greatest need and opportunity confronting our Synod in this field. The new Pastoral Theology textbook soon to be published for use in our Synod, has an excellent chapter on evangelism which beautifully stresses that pastors have the responsibility to train their lay people to be witnesses for Christ, to talk about their Savior to the unchurched. However, some of us fear that some misunderstanding, may result when evangelism is defined in this new textbook in the broad or wide sense to refer to areas like keeping the church property in good repair or that it is evangelism when a Christian family is faithful in going to church, supplying that example and the “witness” of a sanctified Christian life, even if they never actually talk about their Savior and verbalize the Gospel with the unchurched people next door.

Several months ago a brother in the ministry in a conversation with me about evangelism vehemently insisted that a dedicated layman in his congregation who had no time to call on the unchurched because he was too busy taking care of his ailing, aged mother did more genuine “evangelism” than all of those eager-beaver doorbell ringers caught up in the latest church fad-evangelism. On this key question of what really constitutes evangelism, I find myself in agreement with Pastor Wayne Mueller, a member of the Southeastern Wisconsin District Evangelism Commission, who wrote in a brief paper, “How Should We Define Evangelism?”, prepared for the Southeastern Wisconsin District Evangelism Commission,

Evangelism is a good work...But it does not follow that every good work of the Christian is evangelism. In other words, the Christian should not be allowed to think that if he does all good works except evangelism, he has done evangelism (i.e. preaching Law and Gospel)...Evangelism

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<sup>7</sup> “Therefore We Speak...” – *Evangelism in Practice*, Professor Daniel Malchow, August 1971 – Watertown, Wisconsin, p. 23.

is preaching the Gospel. When the believer motivated by the Gospel places his contribution for missions in the offering plate, he is supporting mission work, but he is not evangelizing. Thus, evangelism is not the “total work of the church as it relates to the Gospel.” It is only the work which the church does to relate the Gospel. That includes the ministration of the Word from the pulpit of the church, from the porch of the unchurched, (it’s better to do it in the parlor, R.J.S.), and from the podium of the classroom. Our word “evangelism” is derived from the Greek word for the action of putting the Gospel into words. Thus, only the work of the church which relates to speaking the Gospel is evangelism. A false sense of accomplishment comes to the pastor, layman, and congregation who believe they are evangelizing when they lead exemplary lives in most areas of sanctification, but are not minded to reach out with the words of the Gospel to win and strengthen the souls of others. A pastor was once asked why he did not visit a new family on the edge of town. He replied, “Why should I go and see them? They know where our church is, and they can hear our bell ringing on Sunday morning.” A definition of evangelism consistent with its limitation within the area of good works in general, can curb such attitudes. And it can encourage our people to that most important of all good works for which God still preserves this world.<sup>8</sup>

As we ponder the past and present performance of our WELS lay people in the field of personal evangelism, few can seriously contend that we have done even pretty well. Up to this time we have put many fine evangelism principles down on paper, but when it comes to our lay people regularly talking about the Savior out in the world where they work and socialize, I believe we can safely say that there is plenty of room for improvement. That is the primary purpose of this paper—to explore God-pleasing ways in which this badly needed improvement in the evangelism performance of our lay people, as verbal proclaimers of the Gospel, can come to pass. Although I’m running the risk of getting ahead of myself, I want to make it clear already at this point in the paper that the preceding remarks about the poor performance of most of our lay people in personal witnessing should not be construed as a sharp criticism or condemnation of our lay people. If anyone is to be blamed for this problem, this far-reaching failure of our people as verbal witnesses, it is the clergy, rather than the laity, who must bear the main burden of responsibility. More about this point of pastoral responsibility later.

## **II. Problems and Pitfalls**

The word “evangelism”, beautiful as it is, seems to arouse fear and suspicion in the minds of many. Evangelism Commission members often get the impression that they are marked men, who are thought to be in imminent danger of going off the deep end, because of their involvement with this activity. Most of the fears and suspicions, I contend, are groundless. However, it can’t be denied that some serious, problems and pitfalls do go hand in hand with “evangelism” that does not stay strictly faithful to the Scriptures. Naturally, we in the WELS do not want to have anything to do with false forms of evangelism that wander away from the Word, so we should be aware of some of the things that can go wrong in the field of evangelism.

We should be sensitive to the danger of sheep-stealing. There are so many millions of genuine “unchurched” people in our land that are in need of our Gospel witness that it is unnecessary and very unwise for us to waste our time trying, to walk a tightrope, visiting with people who claim that they are members of a church, talking with them about spiritual matters and confessing to them our faith in Christ, without giving them the impression that we want to woo them away from their church to ours. It is difficult in this area to come up with hard and fast rules that govern every situation, but we in the WELS surely should seek to avoid even the appearance of sheep-stealing. We should concentrate our evangelism efforts on people who are unquestionably unchurched. If a prospect who we are about to visit informs us that he is connected with another denomination and has another shepherd serving him, however tenuous we think that association may be, we should go on to

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<sup>8</sup> “How Should We Define ‘Evangelism’?”, Pastor Wayne Mueller, prepared for the Commission on Evangelism, Southeastern Wisconsin District, p. 2.

our next contact unless he specifically invites us to confess our faith to him in harmony with St. Peter's admonition: "...be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." (1 Peter 3:15)

Although I have not encountered the problem, some have expressed the fear that evangelism activity by our lay people could lead to a divisive spirit of elitism and a kind of super-Christianity, as if the lay evangelist is continually congratulating himself for being holier and more Christian than his brother or sister in Christ who is not involved in the congregation's organized lay evangelism effort. Since the lay evangelist is constantly reminded in training sessions and out on visits that he is a helpless sinner like everyone else and that it is due to God's free grace that he is saved, I don't see elitism as a serious problem, as long as the pastor and his people are aware of that danger and guard against it with God's help.

Speaking in tongues as well as other neo-Pentecostal practices, is also seen as a danger that inevitably goes hand in hand with personal evangelism. Although it's true that it is very emotionally gratifying to talk about the Savior with the unchurched, I feel it's very unfair to immediately associate excesses of the burgeoning charismatic movement with person-to-person evangelism. In his excellent essay, "The Charismatic Movement and Evangelism Today," Prof. Arnold J. Koelpin sounds the alarm about some of the errors of Pentecostals, such as Spirit baptism, but nowhere is it stated or implied that the Christian who seeks to share his faith in Jesus in person with others is taking the first step down the road of unscriptural Pentecostalism.

In the aforementioned essay Prof. Koelpin describes the anti-clericalism that pervades the Pentecostal organization, the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International. "I do not believe that Christianity should be promoted by professionals but by amateurs, as in the beginning"<sup>9</sup> is an expression of that anti-clerical spirit. Although most pastors will admit that there are situations where trained lay people can be more effective in witnessing than the more polished, professional, and sometimes excessively verbose clergy, I have seen no evidence of any anti-clericalism developing in our Synod due to our lay witnessing efforts. On the contrary, we find lay people expressing more appreciation for their pastor's efforts in training them to witness and showing greater interest in the study of God's Word because they want to be ready with Scripturally-authoritative answers when they visit the unchurched and face their frequently tough questions.

Unionism is a very real pitfall that must be avoided in connection with personal evangelism. Commendable zeal for sharing the Gospel can easily degenerate into a spirit of compromise that is willing to cut corners with Scriptural truth in the interest of efficiency, organization, and numerical impact. For example, the co-authors of a generally worthwhile book, *How To Grow A Church*, Donald A. McGavran and Win Arn, speak approvingly of a "fairly elastic Lutheranism"<sup>10</sup> to make evangelism efforts more effective in infant congregations among Chicanos and Blacks. In *Saturation Evangelism* George W. Peters states: "We should be able to cooperate in evangelism with all those who hold to the evangel as God's only way of salvation, even though we differ in other doctrines, church policy, and emphasis."<sup>11</sup> Most of Peter's book is devoted to a review of Evangelism-in-Depth and New Life For All, unionistic endeavors in evangelism in the 1960's by conservative evangelicals in Central and South America and Nigeria, Africa, respectively. In New Life For All in Nigeria, for example, evangelical Anglicans, British Methodists, Southern Baptists, Assemblies of God, and others saw no problems in working together.

The Key '73 effort in the U.S.A. provides a recent example of unionism going hand in hand with evangelism zeal. The head of that effort, Dr. T. Raedeke, former Evangelism Director of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, can serve as a sample of a spirit that we must guard against. In July of 1973 I had a brief conversation with Dr. Raedeke at a Billy Graham-sponsored School of Evangelism in the Twin Cities after he had led a denominationally-mixed group in prayer. In reply to my question as to how he could reconcile his

<sup>9</sup> "The Charismatic Movement and Evangelism Today", Prof. Arnold J. Koelpin in *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Volume 71, Number 1, January 1974, p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> *How to Grow a Church*, Donald A. McGavran & Win Arn (Regal Books, A Division of G/L Publications, Glendale, California, 1973), p. 144.

<sup>11</sup> *Saturation Evangelism*, George W. Peters, (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1970), p. 16.

prayer practice with Romans 16:17, he assured me that that passage calls upon Christians to “avoid” only outright non-Christians in prayer, worship, and church fellowship.

In his very revealing book, *Because We Have Good News*, liberal Lutheran Wallace E. Fisher breathes a unionistic, as well as a synergistic, spirit with the following statement:

The Christian witness, seeking to persuade others to accept Christ’s promises and do his commandments, accepts the fact that all human beings are free to accept or reject Christ. He discovers quickly that many who reject the gospel also reject its bearer. He learns, too, that millions of people, while respecting Jesus as a good man and a moral teacher, find meaning for their lives in another religion (Judaism, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Buddhism), another life philosophy (humanism), or another life-style. Not only during the Crusades and the “religious wars” of the early seventeenth century, but also in twentieth-century America, members of the “Christian” church have been chauvinistic and imperialistic. It would be tragic if a new crop of “Christian” evangelists, harvested through Key ‘73, were to disrupt the maturing dialogue and rising cooperation between Catholic-Protestant-Orthodox Christians and the adherents of the Jewish faith.<sup>12</sup>

It may surprise us that a liberal Lutheran like Fisher would write a book promoting personal lay evangelism. He manages to express some of the worst definitions of evangelism that I’ve ever read or heard anywhere as follows: “The basic objective in person-to-person evangelism is to present Christ as he is so that persons as they are will decide for or against him and his church...”<sup>13</sup> “Essentially, Christian evangelism is the sharing of the Good News so that persons in their freedom are persuaded to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to Christ and his church.”<sup>14</sup> “God, honoring man’s freedom, wants persons to decide for or against him.”<sup>15</sup> Listen to what this liberal Lutheran and self-styled evangelism expert has to say about the Scriptures:

Is the Bible the Word of God or does it contain the Word of God? What is the relation between the Word of God and the words of men? If God’s self-revelation is progressive (through myths, legends, historical events, the prophets and Christ)—and the record demonstrates that it is—how can all scripture be of equal authority?<sup>16</sup>

Yet even a false prophet like Fisher can supply some sound and worthwhile advice. He warns against slick, don’t-miss-a-step evangelism programs that are concerned only about numbers and body count instead of the spiritual welfare of the prospects. He declares that the Christian evangelist

is not a P. T. Barnum convinced that “a sucker is born every minute.” He is not a nineteenth-century drummer who, committed to the cynical philosophy, “Let the buyer beware,” hoodwinks his prospective. He is not a Madison Avenue huckster who, relying on motivation research manipulates his candidate into the church.<sup>17</sup>

Undoubtedly the greatest danger one encounters in evangelism in the literature and in contacts with evangelism-conscious so-called conservatives is the threat of Arminianism or Synergism, i.e. that man plays a key role in his conversion. Fisher’s very Lutheran definitions of evangelism quoted above provide a sample of what we must guard against. Fisher also tells of the “Holy Spirit who gathers willing persons into the new

<sup>12</sup> *Because We Have Good News*, Wallace E. Fisher (Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN 1974), pp. 27-28.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

community of faith and hope.”<sup>18</sup> The Billy Graham or Bill Bright Campus Crusade for Christ influence with their emphasis on personal decision seems to be everywhere :in the evangelism literature. The co-authors of *The Way*, Godfrey C. Robinson and Stephen F. Winward, give an all too typical description of conversion:

It should be made clear to the friend that he can become a Christian only by a definite act of acceptance and committal. It is not sufficient to decide to be a Christian; something must be done, or rather, Someone must be received. - a definite act to receive Jesus Christ...and to surrender himself to Him as Lord.<sup>19</sup>

Dr. George W. Peters, professor of World Missions at Dallas Theological Seminary, describes conversion in these terms: “...a conscious, personal appropriation of the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and a commitment to Him as Lord...a deliberate decision out of personal conviction of sin and a deep yearning for salvation.”<sup>20</sup> Although his book is not about personal evangelism, Bob Larson in *The Day Music Died*, promotes the same error: “Every man is given a choice. He can accept or reject Christ as his Savior, but he must choose. Satan wants to divert the attention of every person from this, the most important decision of life.”<sup>21</sup> Although I could provide many more examples of this synergistic, Arminian flavor in most works on evangelism (even the 1964 Concordia book *Adventures in Evangelism* by Elmer A. Kettner uses the phrase “accepting Christ as Savior”, pp. 15, 23), I will close this section with a final reference from a tract published and distributed by the World Literature Crusade entitled “Are You Happy?” The World Literature Crusade sponsored a 5 hour “World Evangelism Special” telecast on Channel 18 in Milwaukee on April 9, 1974 and on stations across the country in recent months. The pamphlet says:

Your Part—Now it is your turn to do something. Repent of your sins!... Then God will do the rest...There is one final thing left for you to do, and it is the most important. That is to welcome Jesus Christ into your life as your PERSONAL SAVIOR AND LORD. This is the first step for securing peace of mind and joy...Jesus is waiting outside your heart. He will come into your life the minute you sincerely accept Him as your Friend...Everything for your happiness is ready in Christ. He wants to give it to you. It is up to you to receive Him as a free gift. Will you accept Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and find happiness? Or will you reject Him and choose to remain as you are? It is true that you have absolute liberty in choosing. BUT YOU CANNOT CHANGE THE RESULT OF YOUR CHOICE. Sooner or later, every man must face this decision. Now is the best time for you to think over what you have just read and to courageously and believingly make the right decision!<sup>22</sup>

Yes, dangers and temptations in the form of Arminianism, Synergism, Unionism, sheep-stealing, elitism, soul manipulation, anti-clericism, unscriptural Pentecostalism, and other aberrations too often are found in organizations, movements, and programs that promote evangelism. However, we dare not become so preoccupied with the problems and pitfalls that sometimes mar and besmirch person-to-person, face-to-face evangelism efforts by lay people that we back off and do little or nothing in this field where God surely wants all of his pastors and qualified lay people to be eagerly active and alert to the numerous opportunities we have to talk about our Savior and to share the Gospel with others.

### III. Lessons To Be Learned From Others

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<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>19</sup> *The Way*, Godfrey C. Robinson and Stephen F. Winward (Moody Press, Chicago, 1945), p. 123.

<sup>20</sup> George W. Peters, *Op. cit.*, p. 215.

<sup>21</sup> *The Day Music Died*, Bob Larson (Creation House, Carol Stream, IL, 1972), p. 205.

<sup>22</sup> “Are You Happy?”, 7 page tract (World Literature Crusade, Studio City, CA, undated), pp. 5-7.

Our WELS can learn much also in a positive way from other Protestants, especially in the field of lay evangelism. Although we must be constantly guard against the errors and pitfalls referred to in the previous section of this essay, it would not be honest or fair to ignore the fact that we are deeply indebted to others in person-to-person, face-to-face evangelism. D. James Kennedy, the Presbyterian clergyman from Coral Ridge, Florida, and his now very well-known manual “Evangelism Explosion” are definitely tainted by his Reformed theology, but many WELS pastors were awakened to the privilege and responsibility of training their lay people to be witnesses for Christ by his book and inspirational films. His book, as long as one is alert for the errors, is “must” reading for practical guidance for any pastor who is serious about training his lay people in personal evangelism.

In the rest of this section of the essay I want to share some of the worthwhile lessons I’ve learned from raiding some of the more recent evangelism literature, written mostly by evangelical, conservative Protestants. Earlier, we had some words of criticism for the book, *How to Grow a Church*, co-authored by McGavran and Arn, but the wheat far outweighs the chaff in their work. For example, they may touch some sensitive spots in the hearts and consciences of our pastors and congregation leaders when they warn against getting so mired down in non-productive “busy” work that sharing the Gospel, one of the Church’s most vital tasks, is totally neglected or practiced only perfunctorily by one person, the pastor. They state:

Every church board should spend hours every year, maybe hours every month considering the growth of the church. Planning for it, praying for it, measuring it, and laboring in places where growth can be had is perhaps the main business of the church board.<sup>23</sup>

Some of the many aspects of growth should be on the agenda of every meeting of the church board, because as long as multitudes are living and dying without the Saviour, growth is what the church exists for. The church betrays those in need if she does not bring them to the Saviour, and there are so many who, without Jesus, are ruining their lives. So many!! So many!!<sup>24</sup>

...leaders become chained to non-productive work. There is always plenty of work to do in every church. Many leaders, both laymen and ministers, get tied to programs which have little to do with the propagation of the Gospel and nothing to do with finding the lost<sup>25</sup>

They can look after the church, put red carpets on the floor, pay the bills, paint the church, and attend to the various problems without concerning themselves as to whether the church is...reaching the multitudes who surge around our churches and never come in.<sup>26</sup>

In the following statements McGavran and Arn emphasize the vital point that lay people must be equipped and trained if congregations are to evangelize to their fullest potential:

Evangelism! If a church is to grow, it must equip its members for evangelism; train them to lead others to Christ. Biblically, you see, every Christian is a witness. We find as we study church growth around the world, that the church grows best when every Christian is trained in, and works at, evangelism. So, while the task of the local church is to equip its laity for “the ministry”, if the church would grow, it must equip laymen for this special sort of ministry we’re discussing, namely, evangelism.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Donald A. McGavran and Win Arn, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 82.



Evangelism which reaches out helps the church to grow and is effective as laymen are trained and functioning as witnesses.

First, lay leaders need biblical convictions about men's salvation. They must believe that men are lost without Christ, that God desires all men to be saved, and that the simple God-given way of salvation (repentance and faith in Christ) has been clearly revealed through Christ in the Bible.

The second quality is willingness to give regular time to evangelism. If people are to help churches grow, they must be willing to give freely of their resources, a very important one of which is their time.

The third quality is basic training in evangelism. This is the heart of any program for outreach and growth. We must have regular training sessions for evangelism.

A fourth requirement is that men and women being trained must report regularly to the board or session as to what objectives have been met. The church board session should give regular time to hearing what is being done, what is being planned, and what the outcomes have been—sharing in the defeats and rejoicing in the victories.<sup>28</sup>

The principle, then, is that for church growth to occur, recruiting and training lay leaders is necessary. In any growing church, you will find this principle in action as enthusiastic, trained laymen carry on the work of Christ and His Church.<sup>29</sup>

Some have accused McGavran of being too “numbers” conscious and concerned too much about quantity in church work instead of quality and doctrinal orthodoxy, but even making allowances for the validity of that criticism he and Arn supply some food for thought in our WELS when they point out:

In talking and planning about direct evangelism, let's be honest and list the direct evangelism that we are really doing and the amount of time we're really putting into it. Sometimes we'll find we are doing a good deal. Often we'll find that we are doing very little. Our need is to begin to do something, to innovate, or borrow, or adapt. In most cases, Christians should greatly increase the amount of direct evangelism they are doing.

There is a relationship between the amount of time and effort and the number of people involved in direct evangelism and the growth of the church.<sup>30</sup>

For us in the WELS who very properly lay much stress on Christian education, McGavran and Arn's discussion of the so-called “tension” between evangelism and education is of interest. They write:

It is a mistake to emphasize that “tension”. It is not either evangelism or Christian education, it is rather both evangelism and Christian education. If Christian education, for example, is unconcerned about whether neighbors, friends, or relatives come to know Jesus Christ, it is not Christian. In order to be really Christian, education must throb with the passion that other people know Jesus Christ.

And evangelism too must have concern for growth in grace. Evangelism is incomplete if it rushes from “soul” to “soul”, unconcerned whether the new convert grows, matures, and reproduces. Adequate evangelism, for me, must be concerned with the whole person. As you said, it is neither evangelism nor Christian education. It is both combined in a united effort to

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<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p. 105.

carry out the Scripture, “go into all the world and teach.” It is not “go” by itself or “teach” by itself. The two are inseparably interrelated.

If one analyzes that particular passage he sees that the command is to “make disciples.” How do you make them? You make them by going and by teaching. Making disciples is the command, and going and teaching are the methods by which Christians carry out the orders...Christian Education is always easier than evangelism. Christian education is serving ourselves, our children, youth and adults.

Yes, evangelism is more difficult. Evangelism is essentially doing things for other people which may be interpreted as being unduly concerned about their welfare, and impertinent. Because of that, many Christians in Suburbia are inclined not to do much in the way of evangelism. Often a church is heavy on Christian education, light on evangelism, and doesn't begin to develop its real capacities for evangelism.<sup>31</sup>

At the risk of being tarred and feathered and run out of this room on a rail I am going to summon up the temerity to suggest that the final words of that foregoing quotation fit our WELS all too accurately. We are heavy, very heavy on Christian education, perhaps too heavy if we're slighting evangelism in money and people power as a result of our stress on education. I make the preceding statement as one who recognizes the blessings of Christian education, from personal experience as a student and parent and as a member of the Wisconsin Lutheran College Board of Regents, who supports that kind of expansion of our educational efforts. But we must beware of imbalance, for that imbalance already seems to exist, namely, plenty of concern for the teaching of our own, but not nearly enough going out by our laity to share the good news with unchurched outsiders.

Wallace E. Fisher, who wrote the book mentioned already above, *Because We Have Good News*, is a liberal Lutheran pastor in Pennsylvania with whom we in the WELS would have almost nothing in common because of his beliefs advocating the social gospel, unionism, and higher criticism of the Holy Bible. Yet even a man like Fisher, can supply some valuable insights into the practice of person-to-person, face-to-face evangelism by the laity because there doesn't seem to be any doubt that the man is motivating and training the laity in his parish to go out and practice his perverted form of evangelism. Fisher has the following worthwhile things to say about involving the laity in the ministry of the congregation:

The proclamation of the Word will be viewed increasingly as a function of ministry to be exercised by the laity as well as the clergy. It appears that this proclamatory aspect of evangelism will be more pronounced during the seventies than it was in the fifties and sixties.<sup>32</sup>

Whereever, a congregation pays salaries to competent full-time staff members evangelism is underway, because these professionals seek out individuals and families in the community, present the cause of Christ to them, and persuade some to join His church. More significantly, these paid professionals search out and train ten or twenty (in a few churches, several hundred). laymen who acknowledge, accept, and act on Jesus' directive to witness person-to-person in the world. A congregation's economic investment in competent leadership pays dividends in a multiple witness, clerical and lay.<sup>33</sup>

“It is necessary, of course to motivate members to do person-to-person evangelism, to teach them the content of evangelism, and to equip them with skills for evangelistic work.”<sup>34</sup> ...“The professionals (clergy) also evangelize, but their primary responsibility is to motivate and equip the congregation to evangelize.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 163-164.

<sup>32</sup> Wallace E. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, p. 110.

Ideally, all members in all congregations should be evangelists. Except for the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, that is not the pattern in Protestant and Catholic churches. Consequently, to do person-to-person evangelism in any congregation, it is first necessary to recognize that few members engage in it. Next, it is necessary to recruit from the congregation ten or twenty or fifty or several hundred people to be motivated for and trained in that work. It is imperative to keep at this task year after year.<sup>35</sup>

Many of us immediately recognize the name of F. Dean Lueking. He is one of the leaders of the so-called "moderate" wing of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. We in the WELS may well be inclined to ask suspiciously: "Can anything good come forth from the pen of the man named F. Dean Lueking?" Well, in a book of essays honoring Dr. Richard R. Caemmerer, one of the rebel professors at the St. Louis Seminary, entitled *The Lively Function of the Gospel*, Lueking wrote as follows in his essay, "Ministry":

"God Gives the Ministry to the Laity"

And now to the question which is so crucial for ministry today: To whom does God give the gift of joining Him and working with Him in His ministering to the needs of human beings now? Who are the ministers? The New Testament has a very clear answer for the question: all of God's people. The ministry is given to the whole body of believers. The word ministry is not limited to a special group of people with particular gifts and training. That special group, which would include pastors, teachers, evangelists, prophets, et. al., has the assignment of supplying the laity with what they need to carry out their ministry of service to God in the church and world. Eph. 4:11-12 is one of the clearest New Testament statements on the subject: "And these were his gifts: some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip God's people for work in his service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (NEB) As we take our cue from this Biblical source on the meaning of ministry, this is the picture that emerges: God's saving will toward the world is revealed through the Gospel of Christ Jesus, a special corps of messengers of that Gospel is called into being by that very word of forgiveness which has found a home in their own hearts, and this special corps lives and works for the purpose of equipping God's people, the laity, for their work of ministering in His service.

What happens when we measure our present ways of thinking and doing in regard to the ministry by this Biblical pattern? The first thing that is obvious is that we have attached the word ministry to the small special corps of pastors and teachers instead of to the whole body of believers. This is more serious than a matter of semantics. As long as the laity thinks of itself as a passive group of people whose chief function is to support and maintain the professional workers in the church (whom we all call ministers), the full, vibrant meaning of ministry will be shriveled down to a mere caricature of what God means it to be. Likewise, as long as a special corps of helpers in the church think of ministry as the sum total of their own activities, the inclusive purpose for which God appointed them as pastors and teachers will not be realized.<sup>37</sup>

What about that passage in Ephesians 4:11-12? I haven't made a detailed exegetical study of it for this paper, but it seems to me we pastors ought to take those inspired words of St. Paul more seriously. In the past two decades we've been a church body that has become very familiar with Romans 16:17, and with good reason. Let's not lose our sensitivity to false teaching and to the need to avoid errorists, but let us also, with

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<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>37</sup> *The Lively Function of the Gospel*, Robert Bertram, ed., essay "Ministry", F. Dean Lueking (Concordia, St. Louis, MO, 1966) pp. 26-27.

God's help, become a church that is determined to train all of our well-qualified lay people to be able and effective witnesses for Christ. Can any of us really deny that there is huge room for improvement in this area of our Christian life?

In his manual, *Witness*, Richard Peace describes what the discovery of the true meaning of Ephesians 4:11,12 meant to him and his understanding of the Great Commission:

I remember how baffled I was when I first realized what our Lord was saying in the Great Commission. "Preach to every creature." "Impossible," was my reaction—"a great idea and useful as a guideline, but certainly not realizable." How could the Gospel be preached to everyone? Think what a task this would have been even in the first century when the commission was originally given. There were only a few disciples then and the Roman Empire was vast. How much more difficult the task is today with our more than three billion people. Did our Lord give us an impossible commission?

The more I thought about this, the more I felt that this could not be so. But yet, how could we preach to the World? How? This was the key question.

Then I came upon Ephesians 4:11,12—and as I read this statement by St. Paul on the nature of the Church, it was as if a great light suddenly flashed on. I saw how we could, in fact, do what our Lord commanded us.

These verses read like this:

And Christ gave to the Church some men to be Apostles, some to be Prophets, some to be Evangelists, some to be Pastors and Teachers, for the purpose of equipping God's people so they should do the work of the ministry with a view to the building up of the body of Christ.

What St. Paul is saying here is so self-evident when one thinks about it. (Why had I not seen it before?) The work of ministry (part of which is evangelism, or "preaching the Gospel") is meant to be done by all of "God's people," that is, by the layman, by the average man and woman who is a follower of Christ. Ministry is not the job of the minister! Ministry is the job of the layman. Ministry is your job and my job. The job of the minister, i.e. the full-time "professional" person (be he Pastor, Teacher, Evangelist, Prophet or Apostle) is train us to do our job of ministry!

I suddenly realized that here was the key to world evangelization—every Christian everywhere sharing the Gospel. All along I had been baffled by the Great Commission because I had assumed that this "preaching the Gospel" could only really be done by the full-time Christian minister or evangelist. (Was this as a result of my experience of how churches in fact operate?) Of course there would never be enough evangelists or ministers to reach the whole world.

But there are enough lay people. Almost one third of the world is Christian (at least nominally). We can, if we will, "Preach the Gospel to every creature."

Of course this makes real sense when you think about it. A local church with 600 de facto ministers is bound to make more of an impact than a church with only one minister, plus a passive congregation numbering 600. It is strange then that in the present day Church we seem to have developed a pattern whereby the layman employs a minister to do the whole job of ministry, while he himself sit back as a spectator—cheering the pastor on and occasionally assisting the pastor—but seldom ministering himself, much less allowing the pastor to train him. Leighton Ford points out that part of the blame for this misunderstanding of the nature of ministry may have to rest on a misplaced comma!

“Amazingly, a tiny mistranslation in our bibles may have contributed to our misunderstanding. We have been operating on ‘the fallacy of the misplaced comma’ in the fourth chapter of Ephesians! In this famous passage Paul is describing the various gifts and offices which the risen Christ has given to the Church. Most of the older versions and some newer ones translate Ephesians 4:11,12 in this sense: ‘And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ.’

The apparent meaning of this is that the evangelist (or pastor) has a threefold task: (1) to equip the saints; (2) to do the work of the ministry; (3) to build up the Body of Christ. Actually, there should be no comma between these first two phrases. Even a different preposition is used. In ‘for the equipment of the saints’ it is

‘pros,’ while in ‘for the work of the ministry’ it is ‘eis’ or, as it would be better to say, ‘unto the work of ministry.’ A more accurate translation, then, runs: ‘And these were his gifts: some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip God’s people for work in his service...’ (NEB, italics mine). Or as Phillips correctly paraphrases, ‘His gifts were made that Christians might be properly equipped for their service.’

The error is a small one in grammar, but a great one in practical consequences. For it now appears that the clergy’s main task is not to do the work of the church, but to equip God’s people to do this work...

In terms of evangelism, the old pattern will not do. It is not enough for the layman to pay the preacher to win souls, or even help him to do so. The pattern is that the minister helps the layman to evangelize!...

To use Elton Trueblood’s analogy, Christians are not like members of an orchestra society, who hire musicians and a conductor and sit back to enjoy the performance. They are members of the orchestra. Each has a part to play, and the minister is the conductor who helps each to fit in, as a whole orchestra presents a glorious symphony of praise to Christ.”<sup>38</sup>

The words of Leighton Ford, Billy Graham’s brother-in-law, who conducted a crusade in Milwaukee in Fall, 1973, were quoted in the previous excerpt from Richard Peace’s book. Ford has many other valuable insights to offer on the subject under study in this paper. For example, Ford warns that “A church which bottlenecks its outreach by depending on its specialists—its pastors or evangelists—to do its witnessing, is living in violation of both the intention of its Head and the consistent pattern of the early Christians.”<sup>39</sup>

Is not the above a valid criticism of our Synod? Aren’t we bottlenecking our outreach in most of our congregations? Only in recent years, I believe, have pastors, primarily in our mission congregations, begun to recognize the exciting potential of the laity and to utilize Christian lay people for spreading the Good Word that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. In my judgment, and I stand ready to be corrected if someone can convince me that I’m way off base, the overwhelming majority of our pastors and congregations are suffering from the evangelism bottleneck syndrome—the idea, which so delights the devil, that only the pastor is really qualified and able to witness, that that is what lay people pay him to do in their behalf. But in most of our congregations, especially those with hundreds or thousands of members precious little witnessing to the unchurched actually gets done because the pastor is swamped with classes, sick calls, counseling, sermon preparation and other very necessary pastoral responsibilities.

<sup>38</sup> *Witness*, Richard Peace, (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1970), pp. 30-33.

<sup>39</sup> *The Christian Persuader*, Leighton Ford, (London: Hodder and Stoughton and New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 46.

In a position paper, “The Church and Evangelism in a Day of Revolution,” presented to the U.S. Congress on Evangelism in 1969, Leighton Ford offers us mere food for thought on the respective roles of pastor and layperson:

All of us, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and laymen are going to have to understand that the church cannot afford to be made up of many spectators who pay and watch a few specialists do the work of evangelism. We pastors and evangelists must see that we are not to do all the work. We are coaches. Our job is to build an evangelistic team, starting with the leadership.

What I am saying here is commonplace. But the thing that concerns me is how few churches are doing anything about it! How many churches have a specific training program to teach their people how to give away their faith? Does yours? Why not? When are you going to start? How many of us pastors and evangelists are choosing twelve men as Jesus did, or even one or two, and equipping them for the work? How many of you laymen are actually **insisting** that your pastor turn over some of his tasks to others in order that he may give you this kind of training?<sup>40</sup>

If you were to ask the average person on the street if anyone has come to his door asking about religion and seeking to share his faith, probably 999 out of 1000 would remember a couple of wholesome, well-dressed, polite Mormons or some persistent Jehovah’s Witnesses who pushed their doorbell. It seems to be standard procedure for us in the WELS to dismiss the undeniable zeal of those sects to spread their devilish doctrines as so much weird fanaticism. In fact, it may well be the fear of being labeled as far-out religious fanatics like the Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses that keeps many of our people silent when golden opportunities to witness are laid in their laps.

Yet I can’t get out of my mind the memory of two men who came down an obscure dusty road when our church’s youth group was on a Sunday outing several summers ago. We were in the middle of nowhere, 50 or so miles from Milwaukee, and here were those two Milwaukeeans, Jehovah’s Witnesses, ready and eager to spew out their deadly errors to anyone who would listen. I had to ask myself then and I still keep asking myself today: “How well am I training and equipping the people of my congregation to witness as joyous, courageous Christians to the one and only saving truth of the Gospel?” Every time we see a Kingdom Hall or hear the Mormon Tabernacle Choir sing, I submit that we ought to resolve with our Lord’s guidance to redouble our efforts as pastors to train our lay people to share the **truth**. In motivating, equipping, and training their lay members for outreach these Satanic sects, very frankly, put us to shame.

In *Saturation Evangelism* George W. Peters refers to Dr. Kenneth Strachan (died of cancer, 2/24/65) and his well-known “Strachan theorem” as follows:

...his (Dr. Strachan’s) persistent and comparative study of certain dynamic and growing movements such as Communism, Jehovah’s Witnesses and Pentecostalism (he could have added Soka Gakkai of Japan) and the work of the Assemblies of God in El Salvador proves extremely stimulating and helpful. He formulated his findings in the following words:

“So as we examined groups like these: one anti-Christian, the other pseudo-Christian, and the third Christian but not in the conventional pattern, we wondered just what was the secret of the success of each one. Was it their doctrine? That could not be, because each was preaching a different message. Was it their emphasis? Was it their method? Was it their organization? The answer did not seem to lie with any of these. Finally we came to recognize that in spite of their many differences in doctrine, organization, emphasis and practice, they were alike

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<sup>40</sup> “The Church and Evangelism in a Day of Revolution”, Leighton Ford (Presented to the U. S. Congress on Evangelism, Minneapolis, MN, September 8-13, 1969), p. 10.

in only one thing—they had one thing in common and that was the secret of their success.

What they had in common was this: their success in mobilizing their total constituency in continuous evangelistic action. And so we came to the conviction that the secret of expansion was to be found in this thesis: that the successful expansion of any movement is in direct proportion to its success in mobilizing and occupying its total membership in constant propagation of its beliefs.”<sup>41</sup>

Also in *Saturation Evangelism* Peters speaks of church centripetalism and evangelistic centrifugalism, two interesting terms, as follows:

The total church worshiping must become the total church militant in Christian witnessing and evangelism. In the now familiar words: The total mobilization of the church and each local church must be achieved if the task of total evangelism is to be accomplished. Total evangelization of the lost requires total mobilization of the saved.

The practice of church centripetalism must be converted into the practice of evangelistic centrifugalism if success is to be assured and progress is to be accomplished. Church centripetalism refers to that traditional tendency to make the church as a place and building the center of its main activities and especially its evangelistic program. The people are asked, invited and urged to attend the services in the church building to hear the Gospel and become Christians. Church centripetalism is place and building oriented.

Evangelistic centrifugalism counteracts this traditional tendency and reverses the pattern. The church as a structure and place is the rallying point where the believers are mobilized and trained for effective ministries and then are sent out into the world to do the evangelizing. The believers fan out in small teams into the entire community to bring the Gospel into every home and, if possible, to every individual. The church must cease to live to herself. She must become an outgoing, aggressive body of living witnesses. Mission must be converted into militant missions. The church must be a going and sending church. The orders are to march into the world, and possess it for the Lord.<sup>42</sup>

Peters warns of churches being “well-taught but stagnant, ingrown, immobile, fat and self-satisfied.”<sup>43</sup> Certainly we cannot casually ignore that warning when we consider our own WELS congregations. We ought to ask ourselves whether the above adjectives don’t describe us or at least some of us, all too accurately.

For 10 years I served a church which worshipped in the **basement** of its school. (We usually used the term “lower level” for obvious psychological reasons.) In the past two years we’ve enjoyed a marked numerical growth in membership that coincides with the construction and dedication of a new church building, although we also believe that our first, admittedly faltering and feeble, efforts in a person-to-person, face-to-face lay evangelism program have been blessed by the Lord as well with more souls coming to the knowledge of salvation through God-given faith in Jesus Christ. From my personal experience I acknowledge the importance of having a highly visible, attractive church building, but I also recognize the danger of letting the building do it all for us in evangelism. No building, no matter how beautiful or strategically situated it is, can take the place of evangelism-conscious lay people and pastors, pastors who recognize and eagerly accept the challenge and responsibility to train their laity for the ministry of personal evangelism.

In *Saturation Evangelism*, George W. Peters quotes from Charles W. Kingsley who wrote in *Go!*, as follows:

<sup>41</sup> George W. Peters, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, p. 218.

Our evangelistic strategy of “building-centered evangelism” and “enlistment evangelism” falls far short of the New Testament.. Both of these concepts have one glaring flaw that hinders our church from ever becoming the instrument of the Great Commission.

Gene Edwards said, “The flaw is this: The only people who can be won to Christ by these two methods are those who will deliberately get up, get dressed, go down to the auditorium, and willingly expose themselves to the preaching of the Word. Most people will not do this! Today our church building concept of evangelism is the greatest single hindrance to world evangelization—not because we have the church buildings, but because we have failed to get out of them.”

In many new communities across our nation, we have built new physical structures without building New Testament outreach. Imagine a farmer building a barn in a new field and expecting the barn to harvest the crop.

“We must get the right perspective,” Edwards exhorts. “Realize that evangelism is not to be centered inside but outside the church building. Church is not a place to bring the converts into. It is a battle station to send Christians out from!”<sup>44</sup>

In his *A World To Win* Nate Krupp emphasizes again and again that the pastor who is in charge of the battle station as overseer is charged primarily with training and personally leading his laity in Gospel witnessing. Krupp also refers repeatedly to Ephesians 4:11-12:

It is highly improbable that a church will ever do personal evangelism until the pastor of that church first leads the way: There are many situations where there are soul-winning pastors without soul-winning people (because the pastor yet does not have the vision or know-how to mobilize his laymen), but the author does not know of a single instance where there is a soul-winning church without a soul-winning pastor at the helm of that church. The pastor cannot push his people into personal evangelism—he must lead them.

So the first step, in importance and in chronological order, in mobilizing a local church to do personal evangelism is for the pastor to start leading people to Christ.<sup>45</sup>

The harvest is plenteous. The laborers are few. The time is short. May the Lord of the Harvest use this presentation to help those pastors who are already committed to the task of mobilizing their church in the evangelization of their community to be more effective in their labor and to motivate thousands of other evangelical pastors to give themselves to equipping the saints to do the work of the ministry of reconciliation (Eph. 4:11-12).<sup>46</sup>

Many scholars commenting on Ephesians 4:11-12 state that one of the pastor’s primary functions is that of mobilizing his laity to do the work of evangelism. As J. E. Conant states:

It is as plainly taught in this passage (Ephesians 4:11-12) as language can make it that the Lord gave evangelists and pastors and teachers to His people to train and perfect them in the work of soul-winning... This defines the double work of the pastor. He is to feed his people and give them such watch-care as will make them strong and vigorous for their service of soul-winning, and he is to be their overseer, or superintendent, in that service, seeing that they do that work and guiding them wherever they may need it, that they may do it successfully.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>45</sup> *A World to Win*, Nate Krupp, (Bethany Fellowship, Inc., Minneapolis, MN, 1966).

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 34-35.



Emphasize in every way possible that the primary responsibility of the pastor is in inspiring and training the laity to do personal soul winning, as outlined in Ephesians 4:11-12.<sup>48</sup>

In *Dry Bones Can Live Again* Robert E. Coleman breathes a somewhat revivalistic spirit, but he also has some very valid, helpful, and worthwhile things to say about Ephesians 4 and the pastor's proper role:

He is the teacher ordained to train the congregation for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12). He is not called to do all the work of the church but to help the church to do the work.

In this capacity the pastor might be compared to a playing coach. It is his duty to prepare his team for the game. He knows his men, their abilities, their weaknesses, and he seeks through disciplined nurture to develop the full potential of each person. But as a playing coach, he is not a mere strategist. He plays beside his men, directing the contest from the field, not the bench. "The mark of his success is not the amount of attention which he can focus upon himself, but the redemptive character which emerges in the entire congregation or team." (Elton Trueblood, *The Incendiary Fellowship*, p. 44)

It can be seen that the involvement of the whole church in the ministry does not depreciate the role of the pastor. Rather, it enhances his office. By virtue of his leadership position, he is the key man in fulfilling the mission of the congregation. His pulpit is the prophetic conscience of his people and in public and personal life, he sets the pace for others to follow.

Yet one, two, or five pastors in a church is not enough to care for the needs which are always present. The pastor will do all he can, but his strength is limited, as is yours. It must be a team effort. Only as the church enters into the ministry with him, and shares together in the joy of servanthood, can the church fulfill her mission.

In the final analysis, the ministry is not a job; it is a life—the life of God incarnate in the flesh of His Son, and now lived by His Spirit in the Body of His Church. When this life is harnessed with the yoke of Christ, the church as a whole becomes a mighty instrument of revival.<sup>49</sup>

George E. Sweazey in *Effective Evangelism: The Greatest Work in the World* connects the pastor's involvement as leader of an effective lay evangelism program with his preaching, pointing out very accurately that the preacher who converses regularly out in the world with unchurched people will add an important dimension to his sermons:

For most ministers, stage fright is in inverse proportion to the size of their audience. They can pour out their hearts before a congregation with little embarrassment; but talking to one or two people about personal religion may be blocked by an unendurable nervousness. There is nothing in a minister's work which forces this practice on him. One who is deeply dedicated to his calling may take his seminary training and be ordained and go through years of a pastorate without ever talking face to face with anyone about the deepest things of life. But because of that he will have a frustrating sense of inadequacy and guilt.

The pastor is the natural teacher and leader of lay evangelism. It forces him to learn and it forces him to practice. A program of lay visitation is likely to bring to the pastor something essential which he may never get in any other way.

A preacher cannot be sure that his public messages are not missing the mark unless in intimate talk with people he has learned what that mark really is. The best preaching is simply conversation continued. Its mood is "—as I was saying." It has a high exhilaration when it gives

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>49</sup> *Dry Bones Can Live Again*, Robert E. Coleman, (Fleming H. Revell Co., Old Tappan, NJ, 1969), pp. 76-77.

the preacher a chance to say those right things he was not quick enough to think of when a conversation called for them. If he has not been talking of such matters in private, he misses the flying start, the eager sense of unfinished business, which good sermon preparation has to have.<sup>50</sup>

#### IV. Some Specific Suggestions

What should we be doing in our Synod in evangelism that is not presently being done? As I now offer some specific suggestions, I do not mean to imply that there are no pastors or WELS congregations active in person-to-person, face-to-face evangelism. I know of many in many districts of our Synod and I thank God for giving them the zeal to talk about the Savior with the unchurched where the unchurched are, that they are not bottling up the Gospel message within the four walls of the church building. However, it is my conviction, based particularly on my own experience and practice as a WELS pastor for more than a decade, that such evangelism-conscious congregations and pastors are very much in the minority in our church. I know that until recently I was not offering the lay people in my congregation on-the-job training to equip them for the ministry of person-to-person, face-to-face evangelism. Back in the 1950's the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary was not impressing upon the students the urgency and wisdom of training and equipping the laity for a personal evangelism ministry. We were given the impression that the pastor was to be a one-man team, doing, if not all, at least most of the canvassing and personal contacting of the unchurched. Pastors who would provide their lay people with on-the-job training and who would serve as player-coaches were not being prepared by our Seminary until quite recently, after my graduation from WLS. In other words, I don't think I was that much different from most pastors in our Synod. Surely I was very busy during all those years, but there was a void in my ministry, a void that is starting to be filled now as I see what blessings the Lord showers upon pastors, lay people, congregations, and particularly on the unchurched souls whom we seek to reach with the Gospel, when pastors systematically train their lay people to be the kind of witness the Lord wants them to be. Thus it is in a spirit of humility and gratitude to our Lord that I offer the following specific suggestions as one who, as a fairly typical WELS pastor, wasn't doing (in the past, until the last year or two) most of the things I'm now going to list. But because the systematic training of my laymembers has brought such joy and blessings, visible and otherwise, to these lay Christians, our congregation, and to me, I want to share the following ideas with others WELS pastors.

I suggest that pastors, whether they're serving infant missions or 1,000 plus member, long-established congregations, spend as much, if not more, time on training their lay people to be personal evangelists as they spend on adult membership or Bible information classes. I believe that the instruction we give to non-Lutheran adults preparing them for possible communicant membership in our churches is one of the strong points in the WELS. This is not always the case in other more liberal Lutheran synods. On Milwaukee radio station WTMJ several months ago 4 Lutheran clergymen representing the 4 largest synods (Pastor Carl Leyrer of St. Lucas, Milwaukee, represented our WELS) told of their respective churches on a program devoted to Lutheranism. The ALC and LCA men agreed that it is pretty standard procedure in their churches to give non-Lutherans about 6-8 lessons to prepare them for membership. I would hope that most of our pastors would refuse to settle for such "quickie" courses. I would expect that all of our WELS pastors realize that 15-20 or more lessons are needed if people, are to be properly prepared to be communicant members. I have the impression that few of our pastors would yield to the temptation to cut corners on an adult course, to make it too easy to join our churches by omitting instruction in vital teachings of the Word.

Indeed, once we have some people who are interested in learning more about the Bible and the Lutheran faith, I'm certain that most pastors in the WELS will give them solid and thorough instructions. But how do we come in contact with such interested non-Lutherans? Isn't it primarily when John or Mary Solid-member meets and wants to marry Mr. or Miss Non-Lutheran? Usually we sit back and wait for such. people to come to us. We

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<sup>50</sup> *Effective Evangelism: The Greatest Work in the World*, George E. Sweazey (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1953), pp. 93-94.

print an announcement in the church bulletin and especially in larger congregations we'll be certain to pick up a fair number of the above kind of prospects to make up a class.

I suggest that we ought to be beating the bushes of our communities with teams of lay people, trained and often accompanied by the pastor, to seek out and invite the unchurched to our solid and thorough Bible information classes. To pastors of larger congregations who are saying at this point that they just don't have the time for this, I respectfully suggest that a reordering of priorities is probably called for in your ministry. To get a person-to-person, face-to-face evangelism effort by your lay people off the ground, out of your church, and into the homes of the scores of unchurched people living around most of you will take time, no two ways about it. It will take time that is tough to find, tough to spare. The best time to call on unchurched people is in the evening when meetings and classes are often scheduled. Nevertheless, I suggest that there is no better way for a pastor to spend his time than in training and taking along with him on visits to the unchurched his well-qualified lay people, and 90% or more of our lay people are very well-qualified, whether they and their pastor want to admit it or not.

It takes time to attend District Evangelism workshop-seminars to learn about programs like *Talk About The Savior*. It takes time and gentle persuasion to recruit lay people to expend their time and effort to be trained as capable witnesses. It takes time to build up a nucleus of lay evangelists who can effectively train other lay people. It takes time to serve as a player-coach once a program reaches the on-going stage. Time, precious time, large amounts of it, are required all along the line in personal lay evangelism. But, I repeat, pastors will find no better use for their time. I've had people thank me when I preached a sermon that was particularly meaningful for them. I've had people thank me for visits to their sickbed, where I was privileged to supply solid comfort from the Scriptures. The feelings a pastor experiences on such occasions may match, but they don't surpass the joy a pastor feels when a lay member, a fellow Christian who wanted to share his faith for years but didn't quite know what to say, thanks his pastor for equipping him for the ministry of personal lay evangelism.

Thus I am suggesting that our WELS pastors seriously consider a re-ordering of their priorities and resolve to set aside a healthy chunk of their time for the kind of effort we're advocating in this paper. Yes, I am suggesting that our pastors prayerfully rethink their role and I pray that they begin to see their role as Arn and McGavran recommend as follows:

What about the clergyman? What is his role? The minister in our churches must not do the evangelism by himself. His duty is rather to train other Christians to do it. The minister by himself can do a rather small amount. He should not count on preaching such good sermons that he will pull in non-Christians to hear him. That isn't happening today and doesn't seem likely to happen. The minister must think about his sermon as perfecting those who are already Christians. He should become one who trains Christians to do evangelism. If he does not know how to win men and women, he should learn. The minister's first task is to grow skillful in personal evangelism, then take his people, one by one, and let them learn by doing. The minister teaches evangelism or calls someone in who can teach it.. My conviction is that somehow the ministry must lead the laity in evangelizing.

I had an exciting conversation a few days ago with a minister who had discovered how he can lead his laymen into evangelism. In the past he had taught many courses in evangelism, but the people never evangelized. Now he is using a reproduction method where he takes two laymen with him for a home visit. After these laymen are trained, they train other laymen. The minister is training others, not by telling them how, but by actually **showing** them how.<sup>51</sup>

Yes. Paid leaders must say to themselves, "It is not primarily what **we do**, it is primarily what we get **others to do** that counts."<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Donald A. McGavran & Win Arn, op. cit., pp. 86-87.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, p. 114.

Considering direct evangelism, I would like to emphasize that we're not talking of a special crusade once every four years lasting a week or two, or of a once-a-year evangelistic emphasis in a local church.. We're calling for a consistent program of evangelism fifty-two weeks of the year.<sup>53</sup>

Is it possible or even advisable to have an evangelism program going 52 weeks a year? In our congregation we've hit on a system that has not yet passed the test of time, but it seems promising after several months of practice. It does not overtax the time or effort of either the lay people or the pastor, but it is accomplishing the purpose so far. Personal lay evangelism started rolling in our church with several intensive 16 week training sessions utilizing the *Talk About The Savior* method. As time went on it became more difficult to get our trained lay evangelists to go out once a week for 16 weeks, in a row, nor was it very easy to get the untrained lay people to lock themselves in to 16 weeks of lessons and visits. Therefore this January we started a 52 week evangelism, program. We are presently having our 9 member Stewardship Committee serve as trainees who are being trained by 4 of our experienced lay trainers and the pastor. The 9 trainees attend just one class a month and make just one visit a month. The lay trainers and pastor take out trainees once every 3 weeks. Currently we are visiting and witnessing both to our members and to unchurched prospects. We have noticed that our trainees are becoming much more evangelism conscious, suggesting unchurched friends, neighbors and relatives whom we should visit, and this God-pleasing evangelism consciousness is beginning to carry over to many others in our congregation. With the above system we hope to avoid the problem Fisher has experienced:

church members, lay and ordained, are disposed to give up on evangelistic work. They are inclined to take up less frustrating and less demanding tasks in the congregation's care of persons. Church members must be motivated and recalled periodically, therefore, to the demanding work of evangelism.<sup>54</sup>

Unquestionably, whether they like it or not, pastors are the key people when it comes to person-to-person, face-to-face evangelism by the laity. If the pastor pays only lip service to personal evangelism, preaching fine sermons about people in the Bible who eagerly confessed their faith in Christ to others, but then does it all himself, unwilling to spend the time and effort to take his lay people with him on visits and to conduct evangelism training classes, the lay people, with very rare exceptions, are unlikely to do much witnessing to Christ on their own. In the bargain, they'll probably be plagued by a pastor-provoked bad conscience because they know they're not doing something the pastor tells them the Bible says they should do, but the sad part is that the pastor is not providing the on-the-job training most lay people need to gain confidence for this vital task.

I suggest that pastors ought to ask themselves how effective and successful they are. These terms "effective" and "successful" are open to misunderstanding when they are used in connection with the ministry. We concede that many faithful pastors have done the work the Lord required of them even though the world may have judged them ineffective failures. I suggest that the pastor who wants to be a "success", where it really counts, in the eyes of his Lord, will spend a good deal of his time training his lay people to be personal witnesses. At the present time, although we may not like to admit it, we are tempted to think of "successful" pastors as ones who serve large congregations, who have been involved in "successful" building programs, whose congregations send along sizeable sums of money to our Synod coffers, who serve congregations which send large numbers of their youth to study to be pastors or teachers, even though in many cases the pastors themselves would be the first to admit that they had little to do with their supposed "successes."

How would this serve as a standard of pastoral success in our Synod? How many lay people has the pastor trained to carry on his ministry long after he accepts a call to another congregation or dies? I submit that

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>54</sup> Wallace E. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

that wouldn't be bad yardstick to employ to measure pastoral success as the Lord sees it. Each pastor can measure himself, his own ministry, avoiding sinful pride or smug comparisons with other pastors who may have the desire to train their lay people but who find the going tough because of local problems and peculiar circumstances. Arthur Z. Graf in his very worthwhile *The Church in the Community: An Effective Evangelism Program for the Christian Congregation* has some things to say about success, proper priorities for pastors, and the real work of the church as follows:

Mere busyness and activism does not build the kingdom. Committee meetings, organizational meetings, suppers, and even fund drives, while important and necessary, are of value only if the Word is used and shared in connection with them or if they prepare the congregation to use the Word more effectively in the future. Generally there is too much majoring on minors. Success in a parish ought not to be measured primarily by the amount of activity around the Church or the number of meetings attended, but by the amount of time minister and people spend in speaking and sharing the Word.<sup>55</sup>

Too often when congregations have their buildings, have a fair-sized membership, and can meet their own budget by giving about three percent of their income, they become self-centered and self-satisfied. They become so busy with themselves that they forget about the lost who are living all around them. One denominational executive estimates that most congregations spend over 90 percent of their time on themselves.<sup>56</sup>

Any minister who limits his call of responsibility to his congregation or feels that soul-keeping has priority over soul-winning has a wrong conception of his call. The same Lord who said "Take heed to the flock" also said "Preach the gospel to every creature." Neither has priority over the other. Let the minister pray for help and let him lead his congregation to take care of both.<sup>57</sup>

In his *Basic Evangelism*, C. E. Autrey expresses stubborn disagreement with those who want to widen the concept of evangelism so that every good work a Christian does finally might be described as evangelism in the broad sense. Autrey points out:

Some people think that evangelism is everything we do. Often we do everything but evangelism. This definition is a far cry from the concept found in the New Testament. A church could use this kind of reasoning to excuse itself from every definite commission to which God has assigned it. It could say "everything we do is missions" and let the lost world outside of its immediate communion go on to eternity without a witness. This concept may be the reasoning of a church member whose faith has never been defined in his own mind and whose experience is so vague it does not seem worth sharing with others. This view may be held by the Christian who has never learned how to present the plan of salvation to the lost. Evangelism is not everything we do. One might conceivably spend all his time doing good and never evangelize. Moral righteousness is not evangelism. One never evangelizes until he stands directly before the heart's door of a sinner and clearly confronts him with the Gospel of Christ.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *The Church in the Community: An Effective Evangelism Program for the Christian Congregation*, Arthur E. Graf, (Erdmanns Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1965), p. 44.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>58</sup> *Basic Evangelism*, C. E. Autrey, (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1959), pp. 26-27.

Yes, I suggest that when we think of evangelism, we think primarily of verbal proclamation. Luther had the following to say on this point:

“Evangel” (Gospel) is a Greek word and in German means a good message, good tidings, good news, a good report, which one sings and tells with rejoicing. So when David overcame the huge Goliath, the good report and the comforting news came among the Jewish people that their terrible enemy had been slain, that they had been delivered, and that joy and peace had been given to them; and they sang and danced and were happy because of this.

So the evangel (Gospel) of God and of the New Testament is also a good message and report. The Gospel has resounded in all the world, proclaimed by the apostles. It tells of a true David who fought with sin, death, and the devil, overcame them, and thereby delivered, without any merit of their own, all those who were held captive in sin, were plagued by death, and were overpowered by the devil. He made them righteous, gave them life, and saved them. Thus their needs were satisfied, and they were brought back to God. Because of this they sing, thank God, praise Him, and are happy forever if only they believe and remain steadfast in this faith.<sup>59</sup>

Let’s keep words like announce, proclaim, tell forth, and the sharing of good news in the center of our thoughts when we think and talk about evangelism. And I suggest that evangelism cease being almost a dirty or at least a suspicion-provoking word in our midst. On the latter point, A. Skevington Wood in his book *Evangelism—Its Theology and Practice* has these comments which apply pretty accurately to attitudes I’ve sensed in our Synod:

Evangelism is clearly on the agenda of the Christian church today. It may be only a talking-point and not yet a call to man the action stations, but this upsurge of awareness is in itself a hopeful feature of the contemporary ecclesiastical scene. Evangelism is in the air. Soon it may be brought down to ground level.

This readiness to discuss the mission of the church reflects a noticeable change of climate. There was a time, and not so long ago, when evangelism was, in Principal James Denney’s phrase, “the disinterested interest of the comparative few.” Regarded simply as a hobby for cranks and fanatics, it was suitable for specialists and sensationalists, so it was said, but the majority of ministers and members must concentrate on the routine business of the church. Evangelism was not thought really necessary. It was considered to be an extra. It was rather like an optional question on an examination paper. Those who had a flair for it could tackle it if they wished, but the rest could conveniently leave it alone and would be none the worse for their omission.

Nowadays we have been driven from that unsatisfactory position. The pressing challenge of these nuclear times has compelled us to abandon such an easy-going attitude. Evangelism is important and emphasized once again. It is seen to be an inclusive preoccupation. It is not merely a single item on the church’s program, but the dominant and controlling factor. At last it is taking its place in the forefront of our priorities. In theory, if not yet always in practice, it is recognized that evangelism represents the *raison d’etre* of the church.<sup>60</sup>

Verbalizing the Gospel in all its precious saving truth and purity, by lay people as well as pastors! That’s what our Commission on Evangelism is seeking to promote. We are zeroing in on what should be seen as a great joy and privilege by every Christian who is blessed with the faculty of speech and who does not suffer from some mental disorder or pathological shyness that prevents him from talking about his Savior, I suggest that those people who communicate perfectly well at work, at home, and in their social and recreational

<sup>59</sup> *What Luther Says*, Ewald M. Plass, compiler, (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO, 1959), pp. 26-27.

<sup>60</sup> *Evangelism—Its Theology and Practice*, A. Skevington Wood, (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1966), pp. 9-10.

contacts, but who are so ready to say: “I can’t witness! I can’t talk about religion!” should be tactfully told by their pastors that they’re missing out on and neglecting a most important part of their Christian discipleship.

In our **Evangelical** Lutheran congregations, where the doctrine of the **priesthood** of all believers is a key tenet of our faith, I suggest we ought to be getting our lay priests more involved in evangelism in the basic, narrow, and, I believe, the best sense of that word as Peters maintains:

No evangelism has happened until the good news had been told...What if Jesus had silently walked the paths of Galilee or the streets of Jerusalem?...Evangelism does not take place until the good news has been orally, intelligently, and understandably communicated...Presence [and] social action [are] no substitute for proclamation.<sup>61</sup>

Is every believer really a priest of God? Do we realistically and not only ideally and theoretically believe in the universal priesthood of all believers? It is time that we put some realism into our idealism.<sup>62</sup>

Yes, I’m suggesting that more realistic emphasis is our synod on the priesthood and prophethood of all believers, emphasis that would be put into practice by our lay people and pastors, would bring boundless blessings to us and particularly to the millions of precious, blood-bought souls who still do not know Jesus as their Savior and who are easily within the range of the voices of our laity. I’m suggesting that we face up to the challenge issued by evangelism-conscious individuals like A. Skevington Wood who asserts:

The overriding commission, that is laid upon us is to evangelize. This essential outreach is the church’s top priority. It is our basic business. To us God has entrusted the task of telling this pagan generation about Himself and the salvation that is in His Son, Jesus Christ. We must not be idle. We dare not be silent. We must work while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work (John 9:4)...it is not sufficient that we should display a theoretical concern. It must be put into practice.<sup>63</sup>

...anyone who claims to be a Christian and is not seeking to bring others to Christ must seriously question the reality of His discipleship. In the New Testament there are no non-propagating Christians. Every convert becomes a witness.<sup>64</sup>

The church. must not degenerate into a closed shop.<sup>65</sup>

A recent article in *Christianity Today* by Douglas Stave entitled “Coming Boom: Paraministry” prompts me to offer the following suggestion, especially for pastors who plead that their large congregations leave them no time for organizing and carrying on person-to-person, face-to-face evangelism efforts by their trained laity. Stave recommends that “churches need to prepare for paraministry. A worthy goal for churches is one staff member for every 100 attendees. To reach this goal in most churches would mean adding two to twenty full-time staff members.”<sup>66</sup> Stave’s recommendation sounds ridiculously unrealistic to us who are accustomed to pastors serving, or trying to serve, congregations with hundreds or even thousands of members. I tend to agree with Stave, however, and I suggest we ought to inform our church councils and voters’ assemblies that most of our large congregations are woefully understaffed. If cost would cause pastors and people to hesitate to add staff members, especially in evangelism, I’m confident that an effective evangelism paraminister ought to be able to pay for himself, so to speak, through the new members who would join the church in time as a result of the

<sup>61</sup> George W. Peters, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>63</sup> A. Skevington Wood., op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>66</sup> “Coming Doom: Paraministry,” Douglas Stave in March 15, 1974 issue of *Christianity Today*, p. 42.

paraminister's efforts. I suggest we should start setting some standards for full-time evangelism paraministers and giving some thought to where and how such personnel might be trained. I don't think we should casually dismiss the point Stave insists upon in the final paragraph of his article: "Soon the main work of evangelization, teaching, and Christian nurture in the churches will be performed outside the pulpit. This is a fact of life, and pastors should get ready for it."<sup>67</sup>

Finally, I strongly suggest that a full-time servant on the Synodical level be called to coordinate and give direction to the kind of person-to-person, face-to-face evangelism efforts by the laity that we have tried to describe in this paper. I'm well aware that the question of calling full-time men out of the parish or teaching ministry to be specialists in stewardship, special ministries, et al., has become a controversial matter in recent years as these offices have been multiplying. Personally, I believe our Synod has been richly blessed through the efforts of our full-time Synodical servants and I would hate to see evangelism be the victim of a kind of backlash reaction from those who are genuinely concerned about a burgeoning big brother bureaucracy blooming like sunflowers at the Synod office building, 3512 W. North Ave. in the fair city of Milwaukee.

After two years of service on the Commission on Evangelism I've learned primarily how much could be done and how much more should be done in the field of personal evangelism throughout our Synod. We're just barley scratching the surface of utilizing the priceless resource we have in our laity and with part-time people serving on the Synod and District Commissions we'll continue, I fear, to just barely scratch the surface of our evangelism potential until someone is called and accepts the challenge to lead the way in evangelism as has happened with world missions, home missions, stewardship, special ministries, parish and higher education, and in our purely financial affairs. I'm suggesting that evangelism's time has come, that it's really long overdue, and that a full-time Synodical counselor, director, or whatever title may be given the man, is needed now to review, introduce, and make available to pastors and laymen the very best in materials and methods for use in a personal evangelism ministry. We need someone now to serve as a coordinator and inspirational promoter of this work. Our past and present performance in person-to-person, face-to-face evangelism by our laity has been and still is disappointing, leaving much to be desired. I suggest that a full-time Synodical evangelism servant, who is determined to remain strictly faithful to solid Scriptural principles in evangelism, will help to steer our lay people and pastors away from the problems and pitfalls referred to above, will help us learn more of the positive lessons others, particularly conservative Protestants, can teach us, and will be able to put into practice at least some of the specific suggestions we've offered in this essay. May the Lord enable all of us to be more eager to speak of sin and grace, to talk about our Savior, with as many precious souls as possible.

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<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, p. 42.



## An Expanded Evangelism Bibliography

Some of the books listed below have been read from cover to cover by the undersigned; some have been skimmed very superficially; some have been spot-checked for evangelism interest; some have not been touched or seen, but have been included in this attempt to show some of the literature that can be studied in evangelism. The quality of these books is very uneven; some are excellent, other's next to worthless. Let the reader beware and constantly compare what he reads with the Sacred Scriptures!

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—For the expanded Bibliography above I am indebted to Kennedy's *Evangelism Explosion*, pp.189-190, for many of the references.