

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

ENCOURAGING CALLED WORKERS TO REMAIN FAITHFUL IN EVANGELISM

SUBMITTED TO PROFESSOR TACKMIER
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
TH3300 – SENIOR THESIS

BY
DANIEL L SCHMIDT
MARCH 9, 2020

ABSTRACT.....	1
INTRODUCTION	2
EDUCATION	4
History	4
Current Evangelism Strategies	11
Education as Evangelism	24
Conclusion	25
IMMERSION.....	26
Vicar Year	26
Role Models	28
Current Practices	31
Conclusion	34
INTENTIONALIZATION	34
Church Duties	35
Scheduling	36
Make It Manageable	38
Be Welcoming	39
Conclusion	40
CONCLUSION.....	41
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	44
APPENDIX.....	45

ABSTRACT

Evangelism is an important part of the church's work. Through evangelism, Christians bring the gospel to the world. This is especially true of called workers. Part of their duties is to do evangelism and train others to do evangelism. Yet, it can be easy for a called worker to lose their zeal to do evangelism. This thesis seeks to find ways in which the zeal for evangelism can be retained in called workers. Through interviews conducted with pastors who do well in the area of evangelism, as well as evaluations of the former and current evangelism programs, I determined that zeal for evangelism requires three main components: education, immersion, and intentionalization. These three categories may help a called worker to retain the zeal for evangelism until after they are retired.

INTRODUCTION

As Jesus left his disciples and ascended into heaven, he gave his disciples the commission to go into the whole world and share the good news, the gospel, with all people. That commission has been handed down and carried out in the Christian church in various ways throughout the centuries. This is also our task today. Jesus' words, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few" (Matthew 9:37 NIV11) still ring true, maybe even more so now.

Nevertheless, this is something with which many Christians may struggle. They do not have a problem talking to people who they already know as believers. However, when it comes to telling the lost that Jesus has forgiven their sins, many people hesitate. This is even true of pastors. For one reason or another, some pastors are not actively evangelizing the lost.

This problem is also not something new. Throughout the history of the church, some people have recognized that the church must grow externally (by new adult members being added to the church) as well as internally (by babies being born and baptized into the church and youth being confirmed into membership). These people have often done well at staying evangelism focused, but they have been an exception.

Some called workers have tried to do evangelism and may have seen some growth in their congregation but lost the zeal to evangelize as things seemed to decline. For one reason or another, these called workers have given up zeal and motivation to evangelize their community and the people who visit their church.

For some called workers, this happens more as they close in on retirement. I wondered why that was and what could be done to help called workers who were nearing retirement find the zeal to do evangelism again. Some of the men I interviewed said that those who have lost the zeal for evangelism and are close to retirement (or “have retired, they just haven’t told anyone yet”)¹ will most likely not regain zeal for evangelism. The men I interviewed were recommended to me because of their faithfulness in evangelism.

Many things can help to prevent the loss of zeal for evangelism in those who are not already focusing on retirement, those who are just starting ministry, or those about to start ministry.

To find out what these many things are, I interviewed several pastors who have been faithful to evangelism throughout their years of ministry. They have played different roles in the evangelism scene of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Some of them have been professors of evangelism and on the synod Commission on Evangelism. Others of them have been in churches that have seen plenty of growth and have the zeal for evangelism. Others have even had the distinct privilege of training vicars to be evangelism focused in their ministries. All of these men have remained faithful to evangelism.

From the interviews that I conducted and the sources that I read, I concluded that remaining faithful to evangelism requires three general things: education, immersion, and intentionalization. These are the main categories under which many different aspects of evangelism loosely fit.

¹ Interview with James Huebner, Milwaukee, WI, October 16, 2019.

EDUCATION

One of the most frustrating parts of evangelism can be not knowing what works or how to do it. The zeal for evangelism can quickly disappear when a person's efforts only have negative or no effect. Just like almost anything, it can be hard to do evangelism without learning a few things first. Evangelism needs to start with education. We can begin our look at evangelism education by looking at how it has been done in history.

History

Throughout the history of the Lutheran church in America, evangelism has had a prominent place. Some of the first Lutheran pastors in America came here with a great zeal for evangelism, such as John Campanius, Daniel and Justus Falkner, John Conrad Weiser Jr., John Caspar Stoever Jr., and the Henkels. Many of these men spent much time ministering to the Native Americans in their area, some even producing written forms of oral languages and printed materials for them.² Some mission societies and universities in Germany sent men over to America to help established congregations as well as to start new churches and to go to the areas that had not previously heard God's Word.

One of those men was Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. He was a missionary sent to America by the University of Halle to deal with Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf.³ After he had established himself as the pastor at the three churches in Pennsylvania, Muhlenberg helped to set

² E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 72–74.

³ Nelson, *Lutherans in North America*, 49.

up the Pennsylvania Ministerium.⁴ Muhlenberg often wrote in his diary of the *Ecclesia plantanda*, (“the church being planted” or “the church must be planted”), referring to the churches of America. This phrase would later turn into *Ecclesia plantanda et colligenda* (“the church being planted and gathered.”) These phrases later would be known as his motto. For Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, however, they were more than just a motto. It seemed that they were a way of life.⁵ Robert F. Scholz, in his essay “‘Ecclesia Plantanda’: The Uncertain Muhlenberg Legacy and the New York Experience,” says that “Muhlenberg was possessed of a restless evangelical energy. He was primarily interested in the salvation of souls by the ingathering of new members through the sacrament of Baptism and by their edification through the ministry of Word and Sacrament.”⁶

Muhlenberg was a great organizer; in fact, he “was more than an organizer.”⁷ This was one of the things that helped him to be successful. He had the ability to organize churches, even writing the first congregational constitution in America as an example for other churches.⁸ Muhlenberg was doing his work at a time when there was a lack of pastoral leadership in America. As a result, many of the people coming over from Europe were losing their faith. They did not have religious materials to read, and they were not able to regularly attend a worship

4 Nelson, *Lutherans in North America*, 49.

5 Robert F. Scholz, “‘Ecclesia Plantanda’: The Uncertain Muhlenberg Legacy and the New York Experience,” in *Missionary to America: The History of Lutheran Outreach to Americans*, ed. Marvin A. Huggins, vol. 15 (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1994), 9–10.

6 Scholz, “‘Ecclesia Plantanda,’” 9.

7 Scholz, “‘Ecclesia Plantanda,’” 10.

8 Nelson, *Lutherans in North America*, 54–55.

service. It was for these people that Muhlenberg made missionary trips in every direction, often over impassible paths and subjected himself to all kinds of danger.

Throughout the history of the Lutheran church in America, others came and served faithfully in the church with an evangelism mindset. One of those is Frederich Wyneken, who eventually joined the Missouri Synod. He was initially sent to America and connected with the Pennsylvania Ministerium, which sent him as a circuit rider to Indiana. It was through this endeavor that he became confessional and recognized the need for confessional Lutheran pastors in America. To remedy this, he sent letters and made a trip to Germany to convince the mission societies to send men to America. He even influenced Wilhelm Loehe, the man who sent many Lutheran men to America as pastors and provided the Missouri Synod with a seminary, Concordia in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

In the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), evangelism has an extensive history.⁹ While evangelism may not have been the main focus of the WELS for very long, it was the reason for the start of the synod. Johannes Muehlhaeuser was the first missionary sent to America by the Langenberg Mission Society. Muehlhaeuser was a baker by trade, but he found himself intrigued by foreign mission work when an acquaintance of his enrolled at the Basel school. In 1829, Muehlhaeuser enlisted as one of Christian Frederich Spittler's pilgrim missionaries. Spittler had created two "break-off" societies from the mission society at Basel. Muehlhaeuser was sent around Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary for four years, where he

⁹ For a more in depth look at the history of evangelism, especially home missions, during the early 1900s see Professor Joel Otto's dissertation, *The Church Grows Under the Cross: Mission Expansion in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod 1929-1983*. This essay can be found on the WLS Essay File.

experienced many difficulties, including being imprisoned. His imprisonment resulted in the conversion of two prisoners and two prison officials. This only fueled his zeal for foreign missions. In 1835, Muehlhaeuser enrolled at the Barmen Mission School. He was not sent to Asia or Africa or the likes because of his age. The school authorities thought it would be too difficult for him to learn the native languages. Instead, they elected him to be one of the first two men from the Langenberg schools to be sent to America in 1837.

When Muehlhaeuser arrived in America on October 3, 1837, he began to go about his work but found it very difficult because he was not able to instruct children in English. At the advice of a friend, he headed to Rochester, New York. There he was eventually ordained by the New York Ministerium. Things went well for Muehlhaeuser in Rochester until another pastor by the name of C.F Soldan divided his congregation. Growth slowed down for a while in the Rochester church but picked up again before Muehlhaeuser left.

In May of 1848, Muehlhaeuser decided to move to Wisconsin to continue his mission efforts, at the encouragement of fellow Barmen student, Langenberg missionary and friend, John Weinmann. In 1848, they were joined by William Wrede. Together these three men founded the German Evangelical Ministerium of Wisconsin. It would go through several name changes to what we know today as the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod or WELS.

One of Muehlhaeuser's tactics in his evangelism was to sell religious books. In order to support himself in Wisconsin, Muehlhaeuser applied to a tract society (a society that publishes and distributes religious works) to sell their publications in Milwaukee.¹⁰ He became the first

¹⁰ Edward C. Fredrich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans: A History of the Single Synod, Federation, and Merger* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1992), 3–8.

president of the synod and was not as concerned with confessionalism as he was with evangelicalism. Later on, John Bading would steer the synod to confessionalism, adding a confessional paragraph to the constitution. The original constitution did require pastors to subscribe to “the Augsburg Confession and to the other confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.”¹¹

When we look at what these men did at their time to spread the gospel, we see that they recognized a need of the community. Many of these men looked at communities of scattered German settlers with no spiritual leadership. Often, they went to where the people were. Some of them even functioned as *Reiseprediger*. A *Reiseprediger* was, often, an itinerant preacher. The *Reiseprediger* would often serve many different congregations. He would also sometimes go to communities that did not yet have an established congregation. He would ride around as a general missionary. It is important to note, as Robert Hartman does, that when the First German Lutheran Synod (the synod started by Muelhaeuser, Weinmann, and Wrede), the Minnesota Synod, and the Michigan Synod were committed to the *Reiseprediger* program, they grew most rapidly and organized the most congregations.¹² Perhaps this was because they were going into the communities rather than focusing only on serving their members.

On the other hand, these men were not flawless in their approach to evangelism. In fact, like every “good” German, they were focused on serving only their people. The congregations

¹¹ Nelson, *Lutherans In North America*, 184.

¹² Robert C. Hartman, “The History of WELS Home Missions,” in *Missionary to America: The History of Lutheran Outreach to Americans*, ed. Marvin A. Huggins, vol. 15 (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1994), 262.

that they created and served were most often made up of German immigrants who had immigrated to places in America where Lutheran pastors had not yet gone.

As the Wisconsin Synod became more orthodox, it realized that it needed to split with the mission societies. This caused the Wisconsin Synod to create a training facility of its own. The creation of a seminary brought about the problem that the main focus for the Wisconsin Synod was on trying to fill the need for pastors. It did not have the resources to devote to evangelism.

In 1872, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and Missouri joined to form the Synodical Conference. This was a significant hindrance to Wisconsin's mission efforts. They could now rely heavily on the Missouri Synod and the Synodical Conference to start the missions and do evangelism. In areas where the Wisconsin Synod (and later, the Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and Other States) did not have a church, they had the convenience of transferring Wisconsin Synod members to Missouri Synod churches.

That was until 1961 when WELS split with Missouri. Starting in the 1940s, the WELS was already looking to do evangelism, mostly through world missions. After WELS split with Missouri, both world and home missions became a priority. If our little synod wanted to survive, we needed to grow to be able to serve our people as they moved around as well as those who were unchurched.¹³ During the 1960s and 1970s, one could argue that WELS experienced the most growth it had ever experienced. In an interview, Pastor Jim Huebner¹⁴ pointed out that the

¹³ For more information on how the WELS was affected by the split between WELS and Missouri, Daniel R. Marshall's Senior Church History paper, "The Possible Impact of the 1961 Wisconsin–Missouri Separation on the WELS Home and World Mission Outreach," presents a more in depth overview of the missions and programs that came out of the split. This essay can be found on the WLS Essay File.

¹⁴ Pastor James Huebner is one of the pastors at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in downtown Milwaukee. He graduated from the seminary in 1980 and has served many different positions throughout WELS. Most notably he

split was a shockwave to WELS and its people. It took a while for the WELS to figure out how to address the issue it faced, but then came the culture shift of the '60s in America. This opened many opportunities for the WELS. At the 1968 WELS convention, the cry was "Every state by '78."¹⁵

The problem that WELS had was that the men coming out of the seminary were not thoroughly trained in evangelism. They were trained to serve in the established congregations of the Midwest. That is not to say that none of the men graduating from the seminary in the '60s and '70s was qualified for evangelism. In the 1960s, the vicar year¹⁶ underwent some changes. At the 1961 Synod Convention, when the WELS decided to cut ties with the Missouri Synod, the seminary Board of Control proposed that the vicar year be made mandatory for all seminary students.¹⁷ This was adopted and implemented in 1963.¹⁸

This revision to the vicar program did not have a considerable impact on the evangelism education for many of the seminary students. Many of the students were still sent to established congregations where the pastor(s) required help with preaching, teaching, member visitations, and other such ministry related duties. Some students were sent to congregations that were actively doing evangelism. Whether a large, established congregation that recognized the need

has served as district coordinator for the Southeastern Wisconsin District, on the Commission on Evangelism, and as First Vice President of the synod.

15 Jim Huebner, Interview.

16 The vicar year is the third year at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. At the end of middle year (second year), vicars are assigned to their vicar congregation. They move to these congregations at the end of July or beginning of August. Vicars spend an entire year at their congregation learning how things work in a church.

17 Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, "Proceedings of the Thirty-Sixth Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod" (Wisconsin Lutheran High School Milwaukee, WI, 1961), 63.

18 Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, "Proceedings of the Thirty-Seventh Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod" (Wisconsin Lutheran High School Milwaukee, WI, 1963), 95.

for external growth or a mission church out in California or Arizona, this was the only evangelism education that seminarians received “except for a twelve-minute slide video at the end of Senior Year”¹⁹ or a talk from a mission counselor after being assigned to a mission congregation.²⁰

Finally, when the seminary called Joel Gerlach in 1971 and Ernst H. Wendland in 1979, the students began to hear of missions and evangelism, but there was still no formal focus and training in evangelism. That did not come about until David Valleskey was called from California to teach “pastoral theology with an emphasis in evangelism.”²¹ With the introduction of Professor Valleskey, the students received more training in evangelism. Valleskey introduced materials such as *God’s Great Exchange*, and *We Believe, Therefore We Speak*. These materials are still used at the seminary.

Current Evangelism Strategies

With the realization of the need for growth and missions came a need to train men who were already in parishes, and their congregations, to do evangelism. Different people and organizations came up with materials to go about doing this.

The one that ended up sticking out for many pastors was “Talk About the Savior” (TAS). It was a binder explaining exactly how to go about evangelism. It laid down a foundation that

¹⁹ Huebner, Interview.

²⁰ Aaron Mueller, “Seeking the Saints in the Sixties and Seventies: A Review of the Board for Home Missions Practice during This Vital Time, and What We Have Learned,” 8 December 2003, 4–5
<https://essays.wls.wels.net/handle/123456789/3353>.

²¹ Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, "Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Report to the Twelve Districts" June, 1984, 7.

started with the pastor. The introduction to the course lays out one of the general principles as “The witnessing program begins with the pastor. 1. He will seek and participate in on-the-job training, such as is provided at evangelism clinics, 2. He will, then, choose two dedicated Christians and give them on-the-job training.”²²

This course was the predecessor to *God’s Great Exchange*. In it, trainees learned how to get into people’s homes. From there, they were instructed to strike up a normal conversation with the occupants of the house. At some point during the visit, the person making the visit, who had two trainees with them, would ask the person they were visiting, “If you were to die today, do you know for sure where you’d be?” This would lead to a presentation on sin and grace, supported by Scripture. The visit was then supposed to end with a prayer after the person being visited confessed their faith.

Looking through the course, some of the things that it suggests would never work in today’s society. It may have worked in the 1960s and ’70s when people still allowed a pastor or church members into their home and most people still had some knowledge of the Bible. This was expressed by retired pastor Arno Wolfgramm²³, who was a young pastor during the time that this course was produced. In an email interview, he laid out the benefits and drawbacks of this style of evangelism.

22 WELS Commission on Evangelism, “Talk About the Savior” (The Evangelism Bookshop, 1973), 5.

23 Retired pastor Arno Wolfgramm graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1968. In 1964, Pastor Wolfgramm helped Grace Lutheran Church, Downtown Milwaukee canvass it’s neighborhood. In 1968, he was assigned to a mission congregation, St. Andrew in Toledo, Ohio. He retired in 2009 but is still active in the evangelism at St. Paul in Appleton, WI. He is especially active among the Asian community there. He also served at the worker training program in Bulgaria (1995-2001) and Russia (2010 -2015). (Email interview with Arno Wolfgramm, December 11, 2019.)

TAS had many positives. 1. It taught WELS members to talk about Jesus in daily conversation and how to express law and gospel with correct terms.... 2. It prompted Pastor Reuel Schultz (a fine, evangelical pastor who for many years served at Woodlawn in West Allis, WI) to write “Let Us Talk About the Savior,” an excellent evangelism hymn. (Mel O du Liebe meiner Liebe, CW380) 3. TAS spawned The Great Exchange presentation.

TAS also had some negatives. Unfortunately, 1. TAS was “dated.” It was written for a time when unchurched individuals would welcome members of the local WELS church (total strangers) into their homes; and it assumed that the unchurched viewed the Bible as the final authority, just as we do in the WELS. 2. TAS led some of the brothers to believe that this is the only effective method that will lead people to Jesus. After seeing the TAS material one of the brothers announced, “I have wasted the first 20 years of my ministry!” (A serious over-statement.) 3. Some of the brothers criticized the TAS program, saying that TAS presented law and gospel in such a way that the unbeliever could reach only one logical conclusion: We are saved by faith in Jesus. According to TAS, they said, “Logic and not the Holy Spirit becomes the source of faith in Jesus.” At least one brother ended up leaving our fellowship. (My opinion: These brothers had a point. They raised a caution flag.) 4. Others criticized TAS because it was a rewriting of Kennedy’s “Evangelism Explosion” and contained “Reformed errors.” Their claim: “With the TAS program it is not God who creates the opportunity to give a law/gospel presentation. It is rather the evangelist, the church member, who (sometimes artificially) creates the situation in which he can give the TAS presentation. (My opinion: These brothers also had a point. There are in fact times and situations where the “TAS method” is not an appropriate approach.)²⁴

David Valleskey, in a paper presented to the Synod Convocation on Evangelism in 1978, said of this course, “I know that I now feel more competent and comfortable in my evangelism calling, having learned a basic outline for witnessing as presented in the *Talk About the Savior* manual.”²⁵ This came right after Valleskey suggests that the seminary should add an emphasis on evangelism.

Pastor Wolfgramm also mentioned a program called Gospel Outreach 1989 (GO89). He listed the benefits and drawbacks to this program as well.

²⁴ Email interview with Arno Wolfgramm, December 11, 2019.

²⁵ David J. Valleskey, “The Pastoral Office and Evangelism,” 1978, 4.

It encouraged a neighborhood canvass and follow-up on the unchurched and/or heathen.... GO 89 had many good points. The congregation I served at the time (First German in Manitowoc) used it. It focused our attention on gospel outreach and got members out in the neighborhood, talking to others in the community. But it was short-lived.²⁶

When I researched this, I could not find much about it. The closest I could find was a video from 1987, talking about mass media canvassing. Other people who I talked to suggested that it may have begun in 1987 and lasted a few years, which would account for the difference in years. This proves Pastor Wolfgramm's point that it was short-lived. Either way, the point that he made was that getting into our communities works. If members are taught how to go to the communities, it will work.

In the early 1990s, *Locating the Lost* came about. This course seemed to be an improvement to *Talk About the Savior*. It had different sections and types of evangelism for different situations. The first section taught "canvassing." It taught the participants to figure out an area that they wanted to canvass and to survey the community, looking for "prospects," people who were not already regular attenders at church. No longer were the witnesses to try and get into the homes of the community, nor were they to spend a long time at each place. The initial contact was supposed to be quick and straightforward. It helped the church to identify who attended a church regularly and who did not, as well as what needs the community was feeling. This method of evangelism is still taught to Seminary students, but, as I heard many times during my interviews, knocking on doors is a thing of the past. It is more time consuming, and often unproductive since many people will not open their doors when people knock on them. Pastor Wolfgramm wrote about something he felt was an issue in general but can be applied to this method of evangelism.

²⁶ Wolfgramm, Interview.

I don't like the term "prospects." It makes some people think we are conducting a "membership drive" and does not suggest our use of the gospel to gain souls for Christ's kingdom. Some go so far as to rate the prospects as either "good," "fair," or "poor." I don't care for that either. If the Holy Spirit (or my pastor) had given me a rating years ago, it would certainly have been "poor." The Holy Spirit (and my pastor) would then have spent time with the "good" and "fair" prospects. Result: I would be heathen today.²⁷

Locating the Lost focuses heavily on ranking prospects based on how friendly and interested they were. While I understand the use of the term "prospect" and rating them to know where to focus, I can also understand where Pastor Wolfgramm is coming from. Some of the pastors that I talked to used the term "prospect" in a way that seemed to mean a person with whom gospel contact has been made one or more times already. One pastor who seemed to do this well was Pastor Mark Henrich.²⁸ He has a stack of visitor cards that sit on his desk. He said he shuffles through them every so often, and he will text or email a few of those people. This is one of the tools that he uses for making calls.²⁹

One of the benefits of this portion of *Locating the Lost* is that it gave the community a friendly face to associate with the church. It also helped the church to understand what they could offer to their community that might open up the possibilities for the people in the community to hear the gospel again.

Locating the Lost also had a program for telephone evangelism and mass media evangelism. These also have their positive and negative qualities. These programs allowed a church to reach

²⁷ Wolfgramm, Interview

²⁸ Pastor Mark Henrich served for 12 years in central Milwaukee and 16 years in Antigua. He currently serves at Hope in Toronto, Ontario. Hope has over 200 members from 27 different countries. About half of the population in Toronto are first generation immigrants to Canada. This presents interesting opportunities and challenges for Pastor Henrich and his congregation. (Email correspondence with Daniel L Schmidt, October 11, 2019.)

²⁹ Video Interview with Mark Henrich, October 17, 2019.

many people very quickly. The telephone evangelism functioned somewhat similar to canvassing. The main goal was to find out who was churched and who was not. The mass media gave people a talking point. When people saw their friends, relatives, acquaintances, and neighbors (FRAN), they had a way to invite those people to church. This program encouraged FRAN evangelism. The problem that arises from these programs is that they can be expensive. The section on Tele-touch³⁰ even laid out an idea of what it might cost depending on the amount of stuff needed. In an email, Pastor Huebner also remarked “those kinds of area media campaigns are expensive and generally don't work because they give individuals the feeling, ‘If I give my money to support an area media campaign, I have done evangelism’ or ‘The media will do the witnessing for me.’”³¹

In the 1990s, *School of Outreach* was the Commission on Evangelism’s strategy for training congregations in evangelism. Starting in 1991, Pastor Huebner, who was on the Commission on Evangelism Committee, served as one of the men who took this program on the road, going to congregations and teaching the course.³² Much of what *School of Outreach* had in 1997 is similar to *Locating the Lost*. There is a focus on making prospects and on following up. It emphasizes choosing what “Go” strategies³³ will work in your community and having “come” programs.³⁴

30 Tele-touch was the name given to the telephone evangelism program that churches used to reach out to their communities. Churches would go through the phonebook and would call a list of people that were not members of their church, inviting them to an upcoming function. They would call back up to three times if no one answered and there was no answering machine. This was before the time when cellphones were popular.

31 Email with James Huebner, December 12, 2019.

32 Huebner, Interview, October 16, 2019.

33 “Go” strategies are the ways in which the church members go out into the community. This can be knocking on doors, or making phone calls, or mass media/mailings. It is anything that goes to the community.

34 “Come” programs are the things that bring your community to your church. They are the things that you are most likely going to be inviting the community to in your “go” events. They can be events such as Christmas/Easter for Kids, Bible Information Class (BIC), or any other event that your church puts on and invites the community to.

School of Outreach is still one of the strategies that Synod uses for evangelism. The program has been revised to reflect what works better at this time. It is broken into two sessions. The first session focuses on having a program such as Salesforce³⁵ or Prospect Management.³⁶ It also includes a survey for the church and a survey for the community. It seems to be designed to connect the church with the community. The second session focuses on the follow-up material. It has explicit instructions for mass mailings and a form for each participant to identify someone they know (FRAN) whom they can invite to church.

As we look toward the future, evangelism will become even more focused on personal witnessing. Eric Roecker³⁷ said that the Commission on Evangelism³⁸ is looking to roll out two new programs that help congregations and individuals to do more personal witnessing. One of those programs is the Let's Go video-based training that will be available to congregations. It will be available for congregations to train their members to do personal witness evangelism. As Roecker pointed out, this will help to shift evangelism from just the pastor's job to the whole congregation's job.³⁹

35 Salesforce is a computer program that allows a church to keep track of all of its contacts. It is a Customer Relationship Management software. It allows multiple people or teams to record and see who the prospects are, and how many and what kind of contacts have been made with each prospect. It is a paid for subscription.

36 Prospect Management was a program that was created by Jonathan Schroeder. It was a simple program that used Microsoft Access to keep track of prospects. It was able to be customized to fit the congregation's needs. It was downloadable from a Dropbox folder.

37 Eric Roecker is the current director of the Commission on Evangelism. He graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1998. He was assigned to Virginia Beach, VA. There he was able to help grow the church to be able to support a second pastor and build a new church.

38 The Commission on Evangelism is a service available to WELS and ELS congregations that helps congregations to excel in the area of evangelism. They are one of the commissions under Congregational Services. They offer programs, training, and other resources to help congregations.

39 Interview with Eric Roecker, Mequon, WI, February 5, 2020.

These are only a sampling of the many different resources that are available to WELS pastors and congregations. Many other programs exist in our Synod to educate a pastor and his congregation on how to do evangelism. Many of them are ways to do *God's Great Exchange*. They teach the participants how to get into the community and share the gospel with other people with whom they interact. One of those that has been quite active in the last few years in our Synod is Praise and Proclaim Ministries. Dave and Lori Malnes work with congregations to implement a plan that gets the members excited to evangelize while also training them how to evangelize effectively and often.⁴⁰

No matter how the pastor decides to go about it, part of a pastor's call is to be evangelizing. In order for him to do that, he needs to know how to go about it. If he wants to be successful, he needs to know what engages people and what puts a stumbling block in the way of them hearing the gospel. He needs to educate himself on what ways work for him and his congregation to connect with the surrounding community. Pastor Bill Limmer⁴¹ suggested that one way to do this is to look at the churches that are growing, see what they are doing.⁴² It may be able to be imitated. The caution here is that not everything that the other churches do is in accord with what Scripture says. Pastor Limmer seemed to agree with that. Cautiously examine what the churches in the area are doing to evangelize the community. Get to know what is

40 "About Us: Approach," Praise and Proclaim Ministries, <https://praiseandproclaim.com/approach-and-methodology/>

41 Pastor Bill Limmer grew up in a small town in Texas. Before he went off to college, he was part of a team that had the goal of planting a new church in their area. This team was led by Pastor Steven Blumer. Pastor Limmer served at St. Mark's in De Pere, WI. He currently serves at Victory of the Lamb in Franklin, WI. Victory of the Lamb has approximately 500 members but this year has had over 700 visitors. They are a church that is growing rapidly.

42 Interview with Bill Limmer, Franklin, WI, October 28, 2019.

working and what is not working, humanly speaking. This might also help a called worker to recognize a need in the community that is not already being met and therefore avoids proselytizing (sheep stealing). When someone observes success, they should not stop learning. Pastor Henrich stressed that. In his advice on what resources he would recommend for strengthening one's zeal for evangelism, he recommended ongoing education. He and Pastor Kenneth Mellon⁴³ suggested subscribing to the email list that Mission Counselor Ed Shuppe (WELS) and others put out.⁴⁴ Pastor Donald Patterson⁴⁵ emphasized continuing education, particularly in the area of one's community. He said, "After one year, your knowledge of your community becomes obsolete. So continually study your community."⁴⁶

Professor Emeritus David Valleskey⁴⁷, as well as Pastor Huebner, talked about being educated not only in the field of evangelism. They both emphasized the need to continue to learn and improve in the other duties as well. They both stressed the need for pastors to study for their

43 Pastor Kenneth Mellon is currently the pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church (ELS) in West Bend, WI. He previously served in the Air Force for four years. There, his desire to reach out to the lost grew. After graduating from seminary, his first two churches were missions starts.

44 Henrich, Video Interview; Email Interview with Kenneth Mellon, November 10, 2019.

45 Pastor Donald Patterson grew up in Texas. He is pastor at two churches in the Austin, Texas area. Every Easter, his church has an Easter sunrise service (weather permitting) that attracts around 600 people. From this there are usually 1-3 new members added to their numbers. Pastor Patterson also serves as the District President of the South Central District. Pastor Patterson also serves as the bishop for a Vicar-in-Mission-Setting.

46 Interview with Donald Patterson, Waukesha, WI, November 19, 2019.

47 Professor Emeritus David Valleskey graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1962. One of the places that Professor Emeritus Valleskey served was starting a church in San Jose, California. In 1984, he was called to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary where he taught Pastoral theology with an emphasis in evangelism. He retired in 2004 from the seminary and moved back to California where he served a vacancy and now spends his time visiting, preaching sometimes, taking people through 1-on-1 BIC, and making sure every person is greeted as they leave church. Valleskey wrote many books and essays on evangelism, including *We Believe, Therefore We Speak* (the evangelism textbook at the seminary) and *God's Great Exchange* (the Law and Gospel presentation that all Seminary students learn in their junior year.)

sermons⁴⁸ and become a better preacher and teacher.⁴⁹ Pastor Huebner and the staff at Grace call it “excellence,” meaning they are always trying to excel at whatever they do. He explained it as “He who has given us his best, deserves our best. It’s the reason that we do all things and do them well.”⁵⁰ The people who someone invites to church also want to see excellence.⁵¹ They want something that will keep them coming back, something that sets the church that invited them apart from all the other churches. They want to see that the called workers are knowledgeable about their topics.

All of this education has to be built off of a foundation. If the foundation is weak, it will not matter how much education the called worker has in evangelism. Called workers, especially pastors, are expected to be the local “expert” on God’s Word. Laypeople look to called workers for spiritual guidance, and often, so do the communities in which the called worker works. God’s Word is where called workers start for everything else. The pastor’s sermon begins with a study of a portion of God’s Word. The Bible class is centered on God’s Word. In God’s Word, there is the basis for evangelism too. In a personal study of God’s Word, Christians see Jesus’ love for us and the whole world. When we understand that love and think that there are people who do not know about God’s love for them, it can motivate us to want to evangelize. Personal devotion is the best place to start when it comes to being motivated for evangelism. It can help a pastor put enthusiasm into his work of evangelism.

48 Video Interview with David Valleskey, October 7, 2019.

49 Huebner, Interview, October 16, 2019.

50 Huebner, Interview.

51 Valleskey, Video Interview.

All of God's Word is practical for believers' lives, but some sections of God's Word are more practical for evangelism. Some passages that may be helpful to study for evangelism are Eccl 11:4; Isa 55:10–11; Matt 28:19–20; Luke 15; 2 Cor 5:11–21; Eph 4:11–16; 1 Tim 4:12–16; 2 Tim 4:1–5; 1 Pet 3:13–16; and 1 Pet 5:2–5. All of these passages talk about different aspects of evangelism.

Eccl 11:4 gives excellent encouragement for evangelism. Do not wait for the right time. The right time never comes along because now is the right time. If you wait for the right time, you will never do it. Moved by the gospel, we should not want to wait either. Knowing the joy that we find in the gospel, we see every opportunity as the right time to share the good news.

In Isa 55:10–11, God tells his people that they have no need to worry about how people will perceive their message. The Word is effective in itself. God calls on his people to spread his Word because it does not return to him empty.

Matt 28:19–20 is Jesus' Great Commission. He sent his disciples into the world to make more disciples. In these verses, Jesus commands us to go and share the gospel with the world.

Luke 15 contains the three parables of the lost. Jesus illustrates the joy that the Heavenly Father has when one person returns to him by faith with three parables. The first parable is a picture of a shepherd who has lost one of his sheep. He leaves the rest of his sheep to search for that lost sheep. The second parable that Jesus tells is of a woman who has lost a very expensive coin (or bag of money). She cleans her whole house, looking until she finds her coin. The third parable that Jesus tells really has two lost items. It is the story of the prodigal son. A father had two sons. The younger son asked for his share of the inheritance early, and he moves far away, where he squanders his inheritance. When he becomes so poor that he cannot even buy any food,

he returns to his father. His father has been waiting for him to return, watching for him every day. When the older son hears of his brother's return, he is jealous and angry that his brother has returned. His father talks to him to try to get him to see the joy that there is in being with the father. When we look at how Jesus illustrates how God searches for his lost creatures, we see that God uses us to search for them. We want the same ambition in searching the lost as what God has in searching for the lost.

In 2 Cor 5, Paul explains that we are the instruments through which God chooses to work. He has given us a ministry. That ministry is the ministry of reconciliation. We proclaim the news to everyone that God has reconciled himself to us in Christ Jesus. Sin has been wiped away. This is also the reason that we do evangelism. The love of Christ that we experience is the reason that we share our faith with others. We want them to experience Christ's love as well.

Paul writes to the Ephesians in chapter 4 that God gave some to be evangelists. God did this so that the body of Christ may be built up by the members of the body doing works of service. As members of the body of Christ, we are equipped to bring others into the body of Christ.

1 Tim 4:12-16 teaches us two things for our evangelism. The first thing it shows us is that we are never too young. Paul told Timothy not to let anyone judge him because he was young. The second thing that we learn in these verses is that we cannot bend our doctrine to do evangelism. While many practices concerning evangelism are not prescribed in the Bible, holding to doctrine is prescribed. We teach the Word of God, as God has given it to us. We do not twist it or bend it to make people happy or more responsive to it. We hold to the doctrines of Scripture.

In his second letter to Timothy chapter 4, Paul encourages Timothy to do the work of an evangelist. Even when situations are tough and people refuse to listen to sound doctrine we need

to be prepared to do this work. The work of an evangelist is to spread the gospel. It is not an easy task but it is a rewarding task.

1 Pet 3 instructs us to use the opportunities that are placed before us. In the instance that Peter writes about, a person might be suffering and on trial for a crime they did not commit. Even in a situation like that, we can share the gospel. We can “give the reason for the hope that we have.”

In 1 Pet 5, Peter gives instructs to the overseers of how to be shepherds of God’s flock. Sometimes, the best evangelism we do is in the way that we act towards our fellow Christians. We witness to people who do not believe in our interactions with other Christians. Therefore, we ought to act according to the way that Peter told the overseers to act, as shepherds of God’s flock. We lead by example.

Also, do not stop studying the four Gospels and the Book of Acts. Look at what Jesus and Peter and Paul did. See how they ministered to the people. See their pastoral heart for all people. Looking especially at Paul and Jesus, we see good examples from the Bible of men who continued to have the evangelism zeal and shared it with others. Paul often thanked the recipients of his letters for the work that they were doing as well. Jesus’ pastoral heart can be a motivator for the called worker to want to share the gospel with others. This is not an exhaustive list by any means. Many passages in the Bible could qualify as passages that lead us to do, or direct the way we do evangelism. The passages listed here merely serve as a guide to assist in the study of evangelism in the Bible.

Before a pastor can train his congregation to do evangelism, or before he can do evangelism, he should learn how to engage the people in his community rather than be a stumbling block to them.

Education as Evangelism

Sometimes education can be used as a form of evangelism. WELS has been quite successful with this strategy lately. Many churches are using their preschools and day schools for outreach.

While these churches also serve their members with these institutions, they focus on reaching out to the community.

One of the schools that has done well in this area is St. Marcus in Milwaukee. Pastor Mark Jeske⁵² said they have over 920 students, and most of the students are not from member families.⁵³ St. Marcus has had many unique opportunities, but it also has not been easy.⁵⁴ The pastors who had a school that was used for outreach told me that if that is the route of evangelism that one chooses to take (and why not take it), it requires just as much effort as knocking on doors in your community. Education evangelism is not something that is any easier than other ways of doing evangelism.

52 Pastor Mark Jeske graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1978. He serves at St. Marcus in Milwaukee, WI. He is one of three pastors there. He was also the host of *Time of Grace* for many years. St. Marcus has over 60 staff members listed in the WELS Yearbook, as well as other staff members not listed. The staff at St. Marcus are dedicated to bringing learning and Jesus to the children that they serve.

53 Interview with Mark Jeske, Milwaukee, WI, October 29, 2019

54 For more information on how evangelism can work in schools, Paul Steinberg (one of the former pastors at St. Marcus) wrote his doctoral thesis on outreach in schools. His thesis is *Education Evangelism: Sixteen Best Practices For School Outreach*.

Another way that many pastors stressed education as, or after, evangelism was through Bible Information Class (BIC)⁵⁵. Every pastor seemed to have a different philosophy of how to use BIC, but they stressed having one often. Some pastors have their members take BIC, while others suggested finding people to take the BIC. Pastor Jeske said that he found that if he could get twelve people through his BIC, which is twenty-two chapters on the basics of Christianity that takes twenty-two hours to go through, five people from that class would often be confirmed into membership.⁵⁶

In BIC, people who are often biblically illiterate learn what God has done for them. They have a chance to interact with the pastor and God's Word in a way that allows them to ask the questions that they may have. In BIC, people can feel more comfortable studying God's Word than sitting in a worship service.

Conclusion

Education plays a significant role in keeping a called worker motivated for evangelism. The communities and the way people are reached keep changing, and so, called workers must continuously be learning. They need to be studying the people around them, the community of their church, and the neighborhood of the church. Most importantly, they need to be studying God's Word. Called workers, as well as all Christians, cannot forget what God has done for them. When called workers fully understand that and take it to heart, then they can be genuine with people and can tell them what God has done for them. They can train others to do the same as well.

⁵⁵ Bible Information Class (BIC) is a course that prospective members (and members) take to learn the truths of Scripture and the teaching of the WELS. There are many different curricula for this.

⁵⁶ Jeske, Interview.

IMMERSION

Education is only useful if it can be put to use. It is not enough for a pastor to know how to do evangelism. To truly be faithful to evangelism, a pastor must immerse himself in the work of evangelism. The more that he puts his knowledge to use, the better he will become. The advice that I heard over and over again throughout my interviews was “just do it.”

Vicar Year

That advice came with some other practical tips on how to go about “just doing it.” One of the easiest ways for a pastor to learn how to “just do it” is during vicar year. Since vicar year was made mandatory in 1963, it has undergone many changes. For many years, most vicars would serve in an established church in the Midwest that needed help. This call was not part of the seminary curriculum. For some vicars, they were assigned by the Board for Home Missions to serve as Vicar-in-Mission-Setting (ViMS).

A ViMS is a vicar who is assigned to a congregation that is a mission setting. A mission setting is a church that is under Board for Home Missions (BHM) subsidy or an established church with a mission mindset.⁵⁷ These congregations are often small with an added emphasis on evangelism and growing. The men who serve as vicars in these settings are often thought to have more experience in evangelism and outreach than those who do not serve as ViMS.

According to Jared Oldenburg⁵⁸, the history of the ViMS is not easy to put together. The minutes of the BHM meetings only record motions but are not “updated to record actions and

57 “Vicar in a Mission Setting” Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary <https://www.wls.wels.net/vims/>

58 Jared Oldenburg graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 2002. In the summer of 2001, the Board for Home Missions asked him to evaluate the Vicar-in-Mission-Setting program. His Senior Church History paper was

results.”⁵⁹ From what he could find, the ViMS started in April 1988, and men were assigned under this title in May 1988. In 1989, there were no men assigned by BHM to mission settings.⁶⁰

The program seems to have started back up in 1994/1995. It was first brought to the BHM’s attention in 1994 that the class that needed to be assigned as vicars in 1995 was rather large. In 1995 sixteen vicars were assigned as ViMS.⁶¹ It seems that this program has continued since then.⁶² For the men who serve as ViMS, much is learned over that year. The seminary website claims, “In seminaries without this kind of training, it takes pastors two years of ministry to gain the kind of experience our men get in one year.”⁶³

The vicar year is where many of our pastors “catch” an evangelism mindset. They learn how to be effective in evangelism and what it takes to be “successful.” For the first half of the year, many of them watch their bishop and follow him around, learning what he does. Pretty soon, the bishops send their vicars to do things on their own. The Vicars-in-Mission-Settings do not always learn to do the same things as the men who are assigned to large established churches. Rather than learning how to do shut-in calls and hospital calls, the ViMS are learning how to

his evaluation of this program. He was assigned in 2002 to start a new mission in Covington, WA. Jared Oldenburg currently serves at Eternal Rock in Castlerock, Colorado. Eternal Rock started in 2011 with the help of Pastor Oldenburg.

59 Jared Oldenburg, “An Evaluation of the Vicars-in-Mission-Settings Program” (2002): 3, <https://essays.wls.wels.net/handle/123456789/3519>.

60 Oldenburg, “An Evaluation of the Vicars-in-Mission-Settings Program,” 3–5.

61 Oldenburg, “An Evaluation of the Vicars-in-Mission-Settings Program,” 5–6.

62 For more information on the Vicar-in-Mission-Settings and what changes were proposed and what worked about the Vicar-in-Mission-Setting read Jared Oldenburg’s Church History paper, *An Evaluation of the Vicars-in-Mission-Settings Program*. Jared served as a Vicar-in-Mission-Setting in Thornton, Colorado. He also did his Early Field Training (EFT) at St. Marcus in Milwaukee. Jared now serves as a home missionary in Castle Rock, Colorado. In 2018, Jared served as a bishop to a Vicar-in-Mission-Setting.

63 “Vicar in Mission Setting”, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

engage the new people in the community or how to canvass the neighborhood. While the vicars assigned to established churches learn to teach an entire class of sixth, seventh, or eighth graders confirmation class, the ViMS often learn better how to run a BIC.

While it is not entirely true for every vicar, there is something to be said about the men who serve as ViMS being more evangelism minded. The training that they receive during vicar year most often stays with them throughout their ministry. These often end up being the pastors that are called to start new churches because of their experience and the zeal they have for evangelism.

I want to be careful with the words “success” and “successful.” People often measure success in the church by numbers. They look at how many members a church has or how many adult confirmations a church performs in a given year to see how successful a church is. While these things can be very good indicators of how mission-minded a congregation is, they are not the things off which we base success in the church. Instead, success is only something that God can judge. Paul states that in First Corinthians 4. Even if we look at success from a worldly perspective, we ought to measure it by how many law/gospel presentations are done because every law/gospel presentation opens up an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work. We may never see the fruits of that presentation but it is still a success in our ultimate goal of leading people to heaven.

Role Models

For the men who do not get to serve as ViMS, they are not completely left in the dark about evangelism. We have proved this in the previous section, but there is even more that those men can do to immerse themselves in evangelism. When they are assigned, no matter where that is,

they can find role models. No matter where a pastor may serve, there is usually a pastor or pastors in the area who are especially mission-minded. These men take what they have learned and put it into practice.

This is how Pastor Huebner learned to do evangelism. In Seminary, Pastor Huebner had no idea what evangelism really was. Having grown up in a WELS “bubble,”⁶⁴ Pastor Huebner did not even know what Vacation Bible School (VBS) was when it came up in Middler⁶⁵ Education Class.⁶⁶ Even when he was assigned, Pastor Huebner said the only evangelism training he had was a twelve-minute video at the end of senior year.⁶⁷ Within three years of arriving at Grace, he was elected as the district coordinator for evangelism. He said that much of the knowledge that he had about evangelism came from “drinking in information from men like Paul Kelm, Paul Soukup, David Valleskey, Bob Hartmann, and Jim Radloff.”⁶⁸ These men had been great leaders in WELS for evangelism at the time. Most of these men graduated from WLS between 1961 and 1970.

Role models such as these men helped Pastor Huebner to shift his mindset from “shepherd the people” to “search for the lost.”⁶⁹ It is that shift in mindset that can help to motivate a pastor

64 Someone who grows up in a WELS “bubble” is someone who has been in the WELS education system almost all of their life. They most likely went to a WELS grade school and high school. They most likely went to one of the WELS worker training schools such as Martin Luther College (MLC) or Northwestern College (NWC). Most of the guys who went to NWC went on to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS). These people who grew up in a WELS bubble may have never really interacted with someone who is not WELS, at least not on a spiritual level. They often have very little ideas on how to interact with someone who is not WELS.

65 A Middler is a second year student at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. These men are the men that will be assigned as vicars at the end of the school year.

66 Huebner, Interview.

67 Huebner, Interview.

68 Huebner, Interview.

69 Huebner, Interview.

for evangelism. When the pastor's largest concern is not about taking care of his members but is on seeking the lost, he will make that a priority. While this is not an excuse not to also take care of the members of the congregation, it may help a pastor to see what is important. The mindset shift often occurs because of the role models a pastor has, who have already had that mindset shift.

Pastor Wolfgramm described best who to look at for a good role model. His description of the men who make the best role models

are not necessarily the men who have the best statistics in the Synod Report, but the men whose hearts are on fire for sharing the gospel. They are not necessarily the men who have the slickest, cleverest worship services, but the men who preach law and gospel with a passion, confessional men who have studied their text and then make “unambiguous assertions” from the pulpit and in Bible class.⁷⁰

These are the men that a called worker can go to when he is having problems or needs some encouragement in his ministry. Pastor Chuck Westra⁷¹ “[feels] that there can also be encouragement among brothers in ministry to carry out this work in an aggressive way.”⁷²

A good role model will help a pastor to know what to make a priority and what will help a pastor to be “successful” in evangelism. He will also teach those who look up to him how to be role models. Often a pastor who is evangelism minded is not only the one who does the work, but he trains others how to do evangelism. He will not only train his people with an excellent

⁷⁰ Wolfgramm, Interview.

⁷¹ Pastor Chuck Westra currently serves as the District President for the South Atlantic District. He is also one of the pastors at Christ Our Savior in Columbia, Tennessee. He graduated in 1988 and, according to Professor Emeritus Valleskey, embraced what was taught in evangelism class at the seminary. He has been a bishop to many Vicars-in-Mission-Setting who are now very active in missions as pastors.

⁷² Email Interview with Chuck Westra, November 11, 2019.

curriculum and instruction but also in the way that he lives his life. The mission-minded pastor is also a role model to his congregation and other pastors around him. He shows his love for Jesus and his love for people in the things that he does and the words that he says. People are like sheep. They will follow the shepherd, the pastor, trying to imitate what he does. They will often justify their actions based on what their pastor does. A pastor who shows his people the heart of a missionary, one that takes the ministry of reconciliation⁷³ seriously, will see his people start to imitate him in showing that same heart to the people they encounter.

Training others is something that David Valleskey stressed in *We Believe, Therefore We Speak*. His first chapter in the *We Speak* section of his book is about training the congregation to be evangelists. In this chapter, Valleskey points out that “it is a cumulative effect of a Christian’s words and actions that provide a hearing for the gospel.”⁷⁴ Modeling what one is taught is one of the best ways to open up an opportunity to share the gospel.

Current Practices

Many different pastors and churches have different ways of immersing themselves in evangelism. Many pastors still knock on doors. They go around from house to house, knocking on doors, talking to the people in an area about the savior and usually inviting those who do not have a home church to a special event that the church is having. For some churches, this works well. Chuck Westra does this and teaches his vicars to do this. In his email interview, he stated that they canvass two thousand to three thousand homes over a period of five months. From this,

⁷³ Paul says in 2 Cor 5:18 –20a “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.” (NIV)

⁷⁴ David J. Valleskey, *We Believe, Therefore We Speak: The Theology and Practice of Evangelism* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern, 1995), 170.

the people who they end up putting on their prospect lists receive two more contacts with the hopes of having them join the fall BIC.⁷⁵ Christ Our Savior in Columbia also sends out about 12,000 postcards advertising their Christmas Eve and Easter services.⁷⁶

Canvassing does not work for everyone though. Pastor Limmer argued against canvassing in favor of other ideas that he felt reached more people at the same time. Pastor Limmer is not entirely against going door to door. He suggested that this might work best in a new neighborhood (or at least a neighborhood that the pastor is new too.)⁷⁷ He told me to “look to get ten instead of one.”⁷⁸ At Victory of the Lamb in Franklin, many of the things that they do for evangelism brings the community to them. They host many community events on their campus, often free of charge. Pastor Limmer felt that this made people feel more welcome at their church.⁷⁹

Other pastors such as John Hering⁸⁰ and Tim Gauger⁸¹ mentioned doing programs such as New Movers. These programs give the congregation a list of people who are new to the area and

75 Westra, Interview.

76 Westra, Interview.

77 Limmer, Interview.

78 Limmer, Interview.

79 Limmer, Interview.

80 Pastor John Hering graduated in 1989. He served as a missionary to Japan and currently serves at Divine Peace in Garland, Texas. He was called to be a Mission counselor but returned the call. His congregation is a multi-site congregation with a site also in Rockwall, Texas.

81 Pastor Tim Gauger graduated in 1989 and was assigned to start a new mission in northeast Grand Rapids, Michigan. He has served there since that day. He has seen the congregation grow to where they could call a second pastor. He said that in some way everything that they do at Christ Our Savior is an evangelism Ministry. (Email interview with Tim Gauger, October 21, 2019.)

allow that congregation to reach out with materials from the church. This also allows the church to identify new prospects rather quickly.

Many of the tried and true programs that some congregations still use can be very effective. Programs such as Christmas and Easter for Kids, Trunk or Treat, Vacation Bible School, and Soccer Camp or a similar camp can help to bring many new people to the church. These are all “come” events that have worked for many churches. They have helped a pastor or congregation to reach large numbers of people.

There is any number of other programs that can be used for evangelism. Some of the pastors I interviewed mentioned food drives, demographic surveys, parade floats, community workshops, and Theology on Tap⁸². The most recent form of evangelism has been online, social media evangelism. Many of the pastors I talked to said that they do not do this but have someone who is better at social media control the church's social media.

If a called worker is feeling stuck for ways to do evangelism, WELS has put out many programs lately. With the decline in our synod in the last number of years, WELS has been trying to retain many of its members that do not regularly attend services, as well as bring in visitors, prospects, and new members. They have put out programs such as C19, E20, and other such programs. They have also produced films for churches and individuals to use to show to

82 Theology on Tap is a night where the congregation plans a time for the pastors to be at a brewery or other type of establishment, such as a restaurant. The pastors usually come with a question or two to discuss. After the discussion is over, then there is a time for fellowship. Pastor Hering said that this has been very easy for people to invite friends to. (Hering, Interview)

those who are unchurched. Many of these materials can be found on the WELS website under the evangelism tab.⁸³

Conclusion

Nike's slogan is "just do it." When it comes to evangelism, that can be a pastor's slogan as well. The best way to learn evangelism is to do it. For many guys, that is what the vicar year does. It gives them many opportunities to do evangelism. It teaches them ways to do evangelism. Even for men who do not have the opportunity to vicar in a mission setting, it is not too late. There are most likely men in the same circuit, conference, and district who would be more than willing to be a role model to whoever asks. They will most likely teach the called worker to be a role model as well. Many people have pointed out that "the mission spirit is more caught than taught."⁸⁴ The best way to "catch" the mission spirit is to do it and keep doing it.

INTENTIONALIZATION

The last overarching principle for remaining faithful to evangelism is to intentionalize one's efforts for evangelism. This may be one of the most important parts of remaining faithful to evangelism. It may also be the hardest to do. It is not an easy thing to do something that no one besides the called worker will know if it was done or not done. Professor Emeritus Valleskey summed it up well. He said, "The squeaky wheel gets the grease. The unbeliever is never the

83 "Evangelism" Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, <https://wels.net/serving-you/christian-life/evangelism/>

84 Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, "Vicar in Missions Setting."

squeaky wheel.”⁸⁵ What Professor Emeritus Valleskey meant by that statement might best be explained by what Pastor Jeske said about intentionalizing evangelism: “People will tell you about the maintenance things”⁸⁶ or in all the things that people will notice, such as the actual maintenance, or the sermon or the Bible class.

Church Duties

Even in church maintenance there can be evangelism. Under the heading of “education,” I mentioned the need to learn more in the areas of preaching and teaching.⁸⁷ When it comes to the actual maintenance of the church, Pastor Jeske suggested finding a balance between being “a pastor who is on his knees in jeans” and a pastor who “refers to the proper team.”⁸⁸ “Referring to the proper team” means letting those who have been elected or appointed to perform a task do that thing. This was what Paul often did. He worked with his hands to support himself, but he also knew when to have someone else do the work for him. Paul was not afraid to do the work himself, but he also let others provide for him. Sometimes Paul would even use his gifts to gain friends for himself that he could instruct and tell about Jesus. The evangelism part of all this is that the pastor who is on his knees in jeans can sometimes work with people for his community one on one. He can show a genuine interest in who they are and what they do, all while telling them about and showing them the love of Jesus.

⁸⁵ Valleskey, Interview.

⁸⁶ Jeske, Interview.

⁸⁷ For more information on how pastors can add an evangelism tone to their preaching read Professor Paul Wendland’s essay *Lutheran Preaching through the Centuries: Preaching Today*. Especially look at the bottom of page 20 into the top of page 21. Wendland quotes Dr. Mark Paustian’s doctoral thesis, talking about letting the unbeliever “overhear” our conversation with the believer.

⁸⁸ Jeske, Interview.

Balance plays a major role in all intentionalization of evangelism. Pastor Huebner stated that Jim Radloff, one of the pastors that taught *School of Outreach* with him, taught him (Pastor Huebner) that there has to be a balance between nurture and outreach.⁸⁹ A pastor needs to know when to be the shepherd who tends to the flock, and when to be the shepherd who goes looking for the lost. This can be a hard thing to do.

Scheduling

In order to make it easier for them to strike that balance, some pastors have made a point of putting outreach on their calendars. They set aside one evening of the week that they go to do evangelism calls. They plan a night that others know about and can join them. This helps them to stay true to the appointment. It makes it harder to slough off this duty. Pastor Henrich even suggested putting this on the church calendar.⁹⁰ Not only does that allow anyone to join the called worker on his evangelism night, but it also helps the pastor to stay faithful to that night.

Putting an evangelism night on the called worker's calendar, or even the church calendar, can help a pastor to stay faithful to evangelism, but it can be even easier to intentionalize evangelism. In almost every congregation, there is at least one person who is moved by the gospel to share the good news of Jesus. This person wants to go and share Jesus with everyone but may not know how to go about it or may be looking for someone else to accompany them. Find this person in the congregation. Look at their schedule and plan evangelism night according to their schedule, as well as the called worker's. Find a night that will work almost every week. More than likely, this person will look forward to that night every week. They will be excited when

89 Huebner Interview.

90 Henrich, Interview.

that night arrives. Having someone like that can help the pastor and others that come out for that night to be excited as well.

Pastor Patterson has what he called an “Accountability Partner,” someone who keeps him accountable to his evangelism night. Pastor Henrich also mentioned two of these people who he had at his different places of ministry. In Antigua, he had a man that would not let him skip that night. Even on days that had been extremely hard for Pastor Henrich, those calls would often be therapeutic for him.⁹¹ Pastor Gauger said that evangelism had the same effect on him. “To this day if I feel stuck in a rut or other things are just especially draining, I try to follow-up on a worship visitor or some other newcomer (even though such things are other people’s responsibility around here now a days). I find it uplifting, re-invigorating, and keeps everything else about the ministry in perspective for me.”⁹²

Part of scheduling a night for evangelism also includes having people to visit. Professor Emeritus Valleskey suggested scheduling some appointments in the area which the called worker and his companions are going to be doing evangelism.⁹³ This gives the group a reason to be in that area. When someone knocks on the door, they can tell the person that comes to the door that they were just in the area. This gives them an opening that does not seem awkward. It also ensures that they do not feel like their time was entirely wasted.

The appointments that are scheduled do not always have to be with prospects. They can also be appointments that the called worker makes with members. Often members will appreciate being visited. The pastor also gains some benefits from visiting his members. He sees how they

91 Henrich, Interview.

92 Gauger, Interview.

93 Valleskey, Interview.

live and what they are like in their own environment. While one would hope that the people you see at church are the same as the people that the outside world sees when they watch the members, that is not always the case. This gives the pastor ideas of the actual struggles that his members are going through. It helps the pastor to direct his sermons and his Bible classes to the needs of his people, rather than sitting in his office thinking of ways that he can bring specific law and gospel into his sermon for Sunday. It may even give him an idea of how he can make evangelism a fruit of faith rather than a burden for his people. It can help him answer the question of how to motivate his people in an evangelical way rather than with the law.

Make It Manageable

When scheduling evangelism, it does not have to be elaborate and over the top, making it manageable. Evangelism should not be stressful. It should not be something that the called worker is unable to sustain. Too many times congregations and called workers have tried to make all their evangelism dreams a reality, and they have not had enough people to implement those dreams. This has led to far too many people being burnt out and not wanting to do evangelism.

Make the prospect list manageable.⁹⁴ Make it something that is realistic to get through. While we do not want to keep the gospel from anyone, this may be where categorizing prospects comes into play. Focus on those who show an interest in being members first, but do not forget about those who do not seem to show an interest. Save them for a time when the prospect list seems to thin out.

⁹⁴ Patterson, Interview.

Make training efforts manageable. Training other people does not have to be complicated. Once a called worker has learned what he is doing, it can be as easy as taking one or two people along with him on evangelism calls until they are comfortable going on their own.

Called workers do not have to do everything available for evangelism. Sometimes picking a few things, and doing them very well is more effective than doing many things poorly. This helps to ensure that those who help are not burned out and lose their zeal for evangelism.

Be Welcoming

One of the easiest ways to evangelize people is to be welcoming. Many people have left churches because “no one knew them,” or they did not feel welcome at that church in some way. There are so many easy things that can make a church feel welcoming.

Most pastors greet the people in church after the service. This can be the first place to start. Just as the pastor often remembers the names of all his members, he should also make a point of remembering the names of visitors. Have them write their names down and memorize them. Some pastors even have pictures taken with the visitors so that they can remember what the visitors look like. Then when the visitors return, they will feel like the pastor cares about them just as much as he cares about his members (because he does. They are a sinner for whom Jesus died as well.)⁹⁵

Another practice that many churches have is greeting the people around you after service. This is a great start to being welcoming. It helps the people at service to feel like the other people there care that they are there also. Unfortunately, right after this, many churches have the ushers

⁹⁵ Valleskey, Interview.

usher everyone out to the narthex, which in many churches can stifle the welcoming atmosphere due to a lack of space. While there are several ways to fix that, the least expensive way may be to allow people to leave as they feel comfortable.⁹⁶

Along with that can be the problem that visitors to church do not know anyone in the church and have no idea how the hymnal works or are uncomfortable with other things that happen during service. Pastor Jeske suggested that the pastor announces at the beginning of the service that “if you do not know the person sitting next to you, introduce yourself.” This is different from the greeting those around you at the end of service. This would look more like leaning into the person next to me and saying, “Hi. I am Dan Schmidt,” as the first hymn begins. Knowing the name of the person next to them allows visitors to ask for help without feeling like they are asking a complete stranger.⁹⁷

When visitors come to churches, they want to feel welcome. Many congregations are realizing this but are not always sure how to go about becoming more welcoming. Pastors can help congregations learn to be welcoming.

Conclusion

The hardest part of doing evangelism is often finding the time to do it. Sometimes opportunities will present themselves without any conflict, but that can be rare. Unless a pastor is called specifically to be the evangelism pastor, he most likely has other things that need his attention just as much as evangelism does. The difference is that people will notice if he does not get them done. They expect him to write a sermon and prepare a Bible class for Sunday. His students

⁹⁶ Jeske, Interview.

⁹⁷ Jeske, Interview.

expect that he will be prepared to teach catechism. His other duties will seem to go on forever, but if he does not schedule evangelism, more than likely it will not happen.

Intentionalizing evangelism can motivate a called worker to be faithful to evangelism. It can help to work out a schedule that makes the called worker, his spouse, his congregation, and his community happy. His spouse knows when he is going to be out, and his congregation and community know when he will be coming to visit them or others. Intentionalizing also helps the called worker and his congregation to be more welcoming. It helps them to think about what they are doing to make people feel welcome and put the effort in to welcome people. After a while, intentionalizing can even seem to become second nature. If a called worker intentionalizes at the beginning of his ministry, it will last through his whole ministry.

CONCLUSION

Motivating a called worker to remain faithful to evangelism requires three general things. It requires that a called worker be educated in evangelism. Having an active devotional life sets the foundation for all evangelism efforts. Knowing what to do and being able to train others to help in evangelism can help in keeping one's zeal for evangelism. Sometimes looking at what has been done in the past can help called workers to see how they can keep the zeal for evangelism in the present. Many men in the past have had a heart for evangelism and a heart for people. The synod is also able to help. They have put out many different resources and programs to train those who want to learn more about evangelism.

It also takes immersion. It takes putting into practice what has been learned. That immersion can take many forms. It can be a vicar year, or it can be role models in the field. Immersion takes

being shown how to do evangelism and then being pushed to do it. As called workers look at what they can do for evangelism, they can look at what others are doing and do what those groups do, or they can meet the needs of the community that are not being met by others. Maybe the best slogan to have for immersing ourselves in evangelism is Nike's "Just Do It!"

The third category for remaining faithful to evangelism is to intentionalize it. Make sure that it is on the called worker's personal calendar or the church calendar. The called worker should try to have someone who will keep them faithful to an evangelism night. Called workers should not overwork themselves. Instead, there should be a manageable program.

Most importantly, be welcoming. Learn people's names. That will go a long way in helping a called worker to keep the zeal for evangelism. Making sure the called worker balances shepherding duties with the search for the lost.

I hope that this study will help called workers to evaluate what they are doing in terms of evangelism and give them a way to find and retain their zeal for evangelism. We want the gospel to spread to the ends of the earth, and that starts in our backyards. We want our synod to be able to continue in proclaiming the gospel throughout the world. Most importantly, we want to see all people in heaven with us. Therefore, we must remain faithful to evangelism. This starts with called workers.

This study could have been expanded more to include men like Professor Dave Scharf, Pastor Jon Hein, and others who have been faithful in evangelism but are not considered veteran called workers. These men may have added insights on how they started with their evangelism zeal and what impact it had on their ministries.

This paper also could have easily turned into more of a review of current evangelism practices. More research could have easily been put into the history of the vicar year and evangelism at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

Above all, I hope that the reader of this paper will be edified, that God will be glorified, and that the reader will have a better understanding of how to go about doing evangelism in a way that does not burn them out or leave them without zeal.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Fredrich, Edward C. *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans: A History of the Single Synod, Federation, and Merger*. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1992.
- Hartman, Robert C. "The History of WELS Home Missions." Pages 252–269 in *Missionary to America: The History of Lutheran Outreach to Americans*. Edited by Marvin A. Huggins. Vol. 15. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1994.
- Mueller, Aaron. "Seeking the Saints in the Sixties and Seventies: A Review of the Board for Home Missions Practice during This Vital Time, and What We Have Learned," 8 December 2003.
- Nelson, E. Clifford, ed. *The Lutherans in North America*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975.
- Oldenburg, Jared. "An Evaluation of the Vicars-in-Mission-Settings Program" (2002). <https://essays.wls.wels.net/handle/123456789/3519>.
- Praise and Proclaim Ministries. "About Us: Approach," <https://praiseandproclaim.com/approach-and-methodology/>
- Scholz, Robert F. "'Ecclesia Plantanda': The Uncertain Muhlenberg Legacy and the New York Experience." Pages 9–41 in *Missionary to America: The History of Lutheran Outreach to Americans*. Edited by Marvin A. Huggins. Vol. 15. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1994.
- Valleskey, David J. "The Pastoral Office and Evangelism," 1978.
- . *We Believe, Therefore We Speak: The Theology and Practice of Evangelism*. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1995.
- WELS Commission on Evangelism. "Talk About the Savior." The Evangelism Bookshop, 1973.
- Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. "Evangelism", <https://wels.net/serving-you/christian-life/evangelism/>
- . "Proceedings of the Thirty-Seventh Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod." Wisconsin Lutheran High School Milwaukee, WI, 1963.
- . "Proceedings of the Thirty-Sixth Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod." Wisconsin Lutheran High School Milwaukee, WI, 1961.
- . "Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Report to the Twelve Districts," June 1984.
- Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. "Vicar in a Mission Setting." <https://www.wls.wels.net/vims/>

APPENDIX

These are the questions that I asked during my interviews.

1. What evangelism programs do you currently have going at your current place of ministry?
2. How involved are you in the evangelism work at your current place of ministry?
3. What gives you the zeal to continue to do evangelism?
4. What advice would you give to someone who is struggling to do evangelism or is just starting out in ministry?
5. What resources might you recommend for strengthening one's zeal for evangelism?
6. What plans do you have in the future for evangelism?