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A STUDY OF VISITATION EVANGELISM
AS A METHOD OF MEETING
THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF CONTEMPORARY LIFE

by

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A Thesis

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A STUDY OF VISITATION EVANGELISM
AS A METHOD OF MEETING
THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF CONTEMPORARY LIFE

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem Defined and Delimited

How we prize the last words of departed loved ones! We tell them over and over again. If there has been a last request, we hasten to fulfil it. The early disciples felt this way about the last words of their Master:

"Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."¹

They began immediately to be witnesses right where they were--in Jerusalem. Over and over again they told how Jesus Christ was the Son of God, the Messiah for whom Israel had been waiting, the Saviour not only of the Jews, but of the whole world. They told of the things they had seen Him do, of the words they had heard Him speak, of His death and resurrection that men might live, and they proclaimed that outside of Him there was no salvation. The early Church grew by leaps and bounds because of the

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1. Acts 1: 8.

enthusiasm of its witnesses. Each new convert became an evangelist passing on the Word of Life to others. And so the followers of Christ in later generations continued to hear and heed His words, "Ye shall be my witnesses," until there are today very few places in the world where the message of the Gospel has never been preached. Nevertheless, there are millions of individual lives that have not been touched by it. In the process of reaching the "uttermost parts of the world," the Church has sometimes overlooked "Jerusalem." Today many Churches have only to step outside their doors to find people who do not know Christ and His freely offered salvation.

One has but to look about him to see the insufficiency of man without God. The Spirit of Christ is not permeating the life even of so-called Christian nations. We are again in the throes of a World War brought on by man's selfishness and greed. Increase of crime, especially among the younger people in our own country, appalls us. There is hatred between races and nations. Men and women everywhere are experiencing not only the physical suffering and heartache caused by war, but also its accompanying disillusionment, perplexity, fear. We hear the cry, "Why does God permit all this?" There is a yearning for a God Who is good and Who cares. If ever there were a time when the fields are "white unto the harvest" it is now when people are hungry for something that will make life worth living in spite of all the

heartaches and suffering.

The Christian Church has the only adequate message to meet the present crisis. The Christ of the early disciples "is the same yesterday and today, yea and forever."¹ Only as this same Christ transforms the lives of individuals can we hope for a better world. He is still calling us to be His witnesses and to "Go and make disciples."² The question now is, how can this task which confronts the Church best be accomplished? What methods can be used to bring the Gospel to the millions who do not come to the Church?

During recent years much attention has been given to improvement in the field of religious education. A wealth of material to aid in the teaching programs of the churches is now available at the various denominational headquarters. The position of the director of religious education in many of our larger churches is gaining a place of importance almost equal to that of the minister. This swing of the pendulum toward a greater emphasis on religious education probably began when Horace Bushnell protested against the sole emphasis on revivalism as if that were the only means by which the Spirit worked, and against the lack of stressing the progress of the Christian once he had been started on the road. He did not discredit evangelism and conversion, but he did start church leaders thinking in terms of Chris-

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1. Hebrews 13: 8.

2. Matthew 28: 19 (Moffatt's Translation).

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tian nurture.

To the work of the Sunday School has been added that of the Daily Vacation Bible School during the summer months and the Week-day Church School during the school year. In the early part of the present century Home Bible Classes for children were started in connection with the Church of the Open Door in Los Angeles, California.² Later the International Child Evangelism Fellowship, Inc., was formed for the express purpose of promoting a program of Child Evangelism that would win for Christ children who were not being reached by the church schools. This spread rapidly throughout the country and groups not connected with the Fellowship began to sponsor Child Evangelism programs. The method used is that of having classes held in the homes, and the emphasis is usually upon bringing children to a definite decision for Christ.

But today church leaders are becoming increasingly conscious of the fact that religious education and evangelism must go hand in hand. The Presbyterian Church U.S.A. first conceived the idea of a Mission to Christian Teachers with the ultimate aim of winning boys and girls to Jesus Christ. Because of the splendid response to their efforts, a committee from the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. was asked to cooperate with the Federal Council of Churches of Christ

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1. Cf. E. G. Homrighausen: Choose Ye this Day, p. 40.
2. Cf. J. Irvin Overholtzer: The Children's Home Bible Class Movement, p. 9.

in America and the International Council of Religious Education in planning a National Mission to Christian Teachers. This was carried out during the months of October and November, 1944.¹ According to Dr. Joseph R. Sizoo, chairman of the planning committee, the main purpose was to get, on the part of boys and girls in the church schools, a "commitment" to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour which would be so vital that they would not drift away from the Church and the Christian faith as soon as their Sunday School days were over. He felt that the weakness in the program of religious education had been that children were merely being taught without ever being brought to the point of definite decision for Christ.

Now this work in Christian Education is an essential part of the Church's program. The hope of the Church will always lie in her little ones. But it must be remembered that "the supreme character problem today is not a youth problem; it is a parent problem."² The Church has never been able to afford to minister to any special group. All classes and all ages must be reached or else the Church is not fulfilling her sacred duty to anyone. "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."³ Even-

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1. Cf. The National Mission to Christian Teachers Manual, p. 5.
2. R. Q. Leavell: The Romance of Evangelism, p. 76.
3. Acts 2: 39.

gelism cannot be isolated or banished from any part of God's family. It is our aim, therefore, in this study to examine a method that will include the children, of course, but that will be aimed particularly at reaching unchurched adults, many of whom are having a great influence upon the children who are trained in our church schools.

Mass evangelism once played a great part in the life of our country, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Men like Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Francis Asbury, Theodore J. Frelingheusen, Charles Finney, Dwight L. Moody, Billy Sunday, Gipsy Smith and many others went up and down our land bringing countless numbers to a saving knowledge of Christ. Lay people did their share in bringing about great revivals that swept the country. The Fulton Street Prayer Meeting, which has continued uninterruptedly to this present day was started by a consecrated layman, Jeremiah C. Lanphier, on September 23, 1857. This was the beginning of what was known as the Prayer Meeting Revival of 1857 and 1858.¹ The Business Women's Council, which still holds weekly Bible Classes and prayer meetings and carries on an active program of Christian service, had its beginnings twenty-seven years ago during one of Billy Sunday's evangelistic campaigns in New York City.

Preaching Missions, conducted by teams or by prominent

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1. Cf. Collegiate Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of the City of New York, Her Organization and Development, p. 83. Cf. Lars P. Qualben, A History of the Christian Church, p. 521.

men like E. Stanley Jones or George A. Buttrick, sponsored¹ by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, have been attempts to revive the Church from within. In the twentieth century the radio has proved to be a powerful means of reaching an unnumbered unseen audience. Charles E. Fuller and Walter Maier are reaching many of the otherwise unreached by this method.

But there is a quieter and surer method than even these periodic mass revivals which move in and out of town, often leaving a number of babes in Christ whom no one can father. It is not a new method. It is the method of the Master Himself as He walked for miles and miles, ministering to the needs of people wherever He went. It was the method Jesus had His disciples use when He sent them out to go from house to house to preach and to teach and to heal.² It is what He had in mind when

"He appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come."³

It is what Paul speaks of having done at Ephesus--"teaching⁴ you publicly, and from house to house." In these homes the Church had its beginnings.

This method is again coming into prominence and it is known as Visitation Evangelism. It is defined by one

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1. Cf. Pamphlet, "The National Christian Mission Manual," Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.
2. Cf. Matthew 10.
3. Luke 10: 1.
4. Acts 20: 20.

of its modern promoters as follows:

"Visitation Evangelism is the approach by Christians in individual visitation, at their homes, of prospects for Christ and the Church, with the purpose of securing their decisions to accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour, to sincerely endeavour to obey Him, and to become a member of the Church in one of its local groups."¹

As compared to other methods of evangelism, it is the approach to the individual rather than to the masses; it is done primarily by lay people rather than by professionals; it goes to people where they are rather than having them come to where we are. It is the most natural way for this work to be carried on because it is the "friendly" way.

Dr. Shoemaker, in a definition of evangelism, includes the statement: "Evangelism is loving people with the help of God till they find His love."² Visitation Evangelism is based on the love and friendship of laymen and women for all those unchurched people in their community who will learn of Christ only as those who know Him make Him known.

It is not our purpose to advocate Visitation Evangelism to the exclusion of other methods. "There are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit"³ among the members of the Church. "Those who think that men should be won to Christ 'one by one' ought not to look askance at the revivalist with his passionate public appeal."⁴ Because of

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1. Raymond W. Cooper: Modern Evangelism, p. 70.
2. Quoted by S. M. Zwemer: Evangelism Today, p. 116.
3. 1 Corinthians 12: 6.
4. R. L. Ownbey: Evangelism in Christian Education, p. 140.

the various talents among Church people and because of the different types of people that must be won, there can and must be various methods of evangelizing. But all must work together in love and "none think of himself more highly than he ought to think."¹ However, it is the purpose of this thesis to make a study of Visitation Evangelism as a particular method, to determine how effectively it might be used at the present time.

The methods used in Visitation Evangelism may have to be varied according to the location of the church which is conducting the program. The writer is limiting her field of study to New York City. The problem of the Church in this city is increased because of the wealth of cultural and social advantages by which people are surrounded so that Christ is crowded out of their lives. The large number of people of foreign descent in this city must not only be Americanized, but Christianized. The unusual working hours--especially in these days of defense work--make the church's ministry more difficult. If people can not come to the church, the Church must find a way of going to them. We shall endeavor to develop a program that will meet the needs in this city in particular, and incidentally, of other cities throughout the country.

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1. Romans 12: 3.

B. Significance of the Problem

The writer's interest in the problem is due to her own experience in working with young people and children and visiting in their homes on Manhattan's Lower East Side as well as in one section of the Bronx.¹ This has made her aware of the deep need of people for Christ and of the specific problems which the New York City churches face. Any member of a church staff inevitably comes face to face with people who want help in meeting seemingly unsurmountable difficulties. As followers of Christ we naturally have an earnest desire to lead them to Him Who has the solution to every problem, and to be able to teach lay people in the Church to help their friends and neighbors in this way.

Much visitation work of the Church has been done merely for the sake of checking up on absentees in the Church School and for the purpose of increasing church membership and attendance,² or for getting contributions. Our motives must go deeper. When people really come to know Christ as their personal Saviour, these other things take care of themselves.

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1. The writer had the privilege of being a member of the staff at the Middle Collegiate Church, New York City, and of assisting in a program of Visitation Evangelism at the St. Thomas Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bronx, New York.
2. Cf. C. R. Zahniser: Casework Evangelism, p. 179.

One authority says,

"Less than 7% of the people in the metropolitan area of New York City are in churches of any kind. More than 70% are outside of organized religion."¹

The task is too big for ministers and professional religious leaders alone. What we do need is leaders who recognize the "priesthood of all believers" and who have the vision of Moses of old when he said, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!"² Not until every new convert again becomes an evangelist will the Church of Christ be a living and active power in the life of our country, and not least in the City of New York. Today we are reading many articles on the future of this city such as "The Super-Block instead of Slums" in which Joseph D. McGoldrick, Controller of the City of New York, "offers a plan for rebuilding our cities and reviving blighted areas."³ But unless the hearts of people who live in these city blocks are filled with the love of Christ so that they are able to live in peace with their neighbors and are concerned about the welfare of all, their condition will not be greatly improved even though they live in the "Super-Block." We may change social conditions, but unless the people who live in these areas are themselves changed, they will be as far from Utopia as ever.

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1. C. F. Yaeger: The Multiplication of Usable Personalities, p. 23.
2. Numbers 11: 29.
3. New York Times Magazine, November 19, 1944.

C. Method of Procedure

We shall consider, first, some of the conditions in our country today that give evidence of the great need for the Christian Gospel. Chapter II will point out the immediate need for the Church to give more emphasis to its evangelistic program. We shall mention some of the inadequacies of the present Church program, which is failing too often to minister to the ordinary work-a-day people with their personality problems and social problems--especially in crowded underprivileged areas of New York City.

In any program of Visitation Evangelism the visitors will come in contact with many different types of personalities. In the third chapter we shall cite actual cases which will show some of the psychological factors that must be taken into consideration in dealing with people. We shall study the methods of Jesus in His contacts with people and learn from Him principles that we can apply in the work of evangelism.

In the fourth chapter we shall make a study of past experiences of those who have done this type of work. In evaluating what has been done we shall notice where the principles of Jesus have been used, and consider where their techniques can be improved upon.

The fifth chapter will suggest a program that can be used in a local church. This will include the preparation for Visitation Evangelism Week, the actual procedure to be

followed, instructions for visitors, and plans for making this a permanent part of the church organization.

From all this we will be able to draw some significant conclusions for future endeavors in this important type of Church evangelism.

D. Sources of Data

The sources of information for this thesis will be periodicals giving present trends, literature published by various Boards, books by those concerned with the evangelistic program of the Church as a whole and by others who have had experience in this particular kind of evangelism, personal interviews and correspondence with religious leaders who may be able to give helpful suggestions, and the writer's own experiences in working with people in New York City.

CHAPTER II

THE PRESENT SUMMONS TO EVANGELISM

CHAPTER II

THE PRESENT SUMMONS TO EVANGELISM

A. Introduction

We live today in a suffering world. The suffering is caused by human selfishness and greed. If the teachings of the Church were followed, much of the suffering might be avoided. Church people, though not free from blame, are probably less guilty than the world at large. But this does not justify aloofness on the part of the Church or church people. Like the Master Himself, Who was entirely innocent of the sins of the world yet took them upon Himself and identified Himself with mankind in order that He might bring them to God, so Christians cannot turn deaf ears to a sin-burdened world.

In this chapter the conditions facing the Church will be considered. We shall try to find out, in the first place, how many people are actually being reached by the Church. Secondly, we shall take note of social and economic conditions. We shall then try to determine what there is in the Church itself that may be responsible for some of these deplorable conditions, and finally, we shall consider evidences of the awakening of church leaders to the need.

Yearbooks will be used to get church statistics. Current periodicals and recent books by prominent religious

leaders will be used in making a study of present conditions.

B. Symptoms of Irreligion

1. Decline in Church Influence

We are summoned to a larger evangelism when we think of the millions in our country upon whom the Church is having no direct influence. Statistics on Church Membership prepared by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America¹ for 1926 and 1941-42 indicate that the total church membership reported by 212 religious bodies in 1926 was 54,576,346, and that reported by 256 religious bodies in 1941-42 was 68,501,186 members, an increase of 25.5%. The total population in the United States in 1926 was estimated at 117,136,000 and in 1941-42 it was 133,952,672, an increase of 14.3%. This means that membership in the churches has done slightly better than just keeping up with the increase in population. These same figures indicate that in 1941-42 there were approximately 65,451,486 people in the United States who did not belong to Catholic, Protestant, nor Jewish faiths. One-half of the people in this so-called Christian country, then, are not affiliated with any religious organization.

Fifteen million young people of school age are grow-

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1. Information Service issued by Department of Research and Education, Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, January 1, 1944.

ing up without any sort of religious education. More than twenty-five millions of young people under twenty-five are¹ wholly untouched by the Church.

In New York City the situation is particularly alarming. The population in 1942 was 7,573,000. Protestant church membership, according to 1941-2 statistics, totaled 540,047. In other words, 7% of the people in New York City are members of Protestant churches, and this includes all those who are irregular in their attendance. Of the 1,175,494 pupils enrolled in public, Catholic, and Jewish elementary and high schools, 212,254 are in Catholic schools, 6,587 in Jewish schools. Church statistics give the Sunday² School enrollment of Protestant churches as 252,439. The total, therefore, of those known to receive religious instruction is 471,280. This leaves 704,214 of those children attending public schools unaccounted for as far as religious instruction is concerned. These are the future citizens of our city and they are being allowed to grow up without the Christian ideals so essential to high and noble living.

2. Social Lawlessness and Juvenile Delinquency

The spiritual status of a country can not be determined

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1. Ownbey, op. cit., p. 11.

2. Protestant Church and Welfare Directory, pp. 195-6.

merely by the number of people who are church members.

Dr. Homrighausen points out how deceiving statistics can be with the exclamation:

"Witness what happened in Germany where nearly everyone is a member of some church, where religious education is given in the public educational system and where the Christian religion was regarded as part of the national culture!"¹

There are other facts, however, that are not deceiving.

The amount of our annual crime bill in the United States is sixteen million dollars per year. Five million people, or three times as many as there are students in colleges and universities, are criminals. FBI reports tell us that the majority of these are young people:

"During 1943, age 18 predominated among all persons arrested according to finger print records received in the FBI from all parts of the nation. Arrests of 17 year old boys increased 27.7% and of 16 year old boys 61% during this period. For the past two calendar years arrests of girls under 21 years of age have increased 130.4%."²

The war has caused a frightening rise of immorality among teen age girls. Reports from many large cities tell of the "uniform hunting" that goes on, and of the unhappy

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1. Homrighausen, op. cit., p. 16.
2. Leavell, op. cit., p. 25.
3. J. Edgar Hoover: "Crime--Unlimited Freedom," Arkansas Methodist, September 14, 1944.
4. Eleanor Lake: "Trouble on the Street Corners," Common Sense, May, 1943 (Taken from a reprint from the Reader's Digest): "A year ago, 75 per cent of the venereal infection in the armed forces in the United States could be traced to professional prostitutes. Today, 80 per cent of it comes from young casuals and amateurs."

consequences. The real source of the trouble is in the lack of real home life.¹ In some cases parents work at night and children are left alone. When the parents are at home they prefer to have the children away so that they can have a quiet place to sleep. The most alarming fact is that so many parents today are indifferent and positively unwilling to face their parental responsibility. As one authority states it,

"When fathers and mothers of delinquent or truant children are asked to come to school for a conference, they often do not even bother to reply."²

According to social workers and juvenile court records,³ 80% of youthful criminals come from broken homes. In many homes the atmosphere is such that children prefer to stay away as much as possible.

The Church can be of real help to boys and girls by providing a place where they can have wholesome fellowship. Many churches today do have Boy and Girl Scout organizations to meet this need. There are also the civic organizations such as the Manhattan and Kips Bay Boys'

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1. Lake, loc. cit.: "The root of the problem lies in the American home. Back of every delinquent girl, every tragedy of promiscuity and disease, stands the shadow of delinquent parents. . . American mothers today must become more deeply conscious of the importance of family life; if they do not too many of our mothers of the future will have a sordid background of immorality and venereal disease."
2. Agnes E. Meyer: "War Orphans," The Washington Post, February 21 - April 30, 1943 (Taken from a reprint from the Reader's Digest)
3. Cf. Leavell, op. cit., p. 75.

Clubs, the Henry Street Settlement House, and others sponsored by the Y. M. and Y. W. C. A.'s. But the Church can do more than this if it will make a real effort, not just to give children and young people a place to spend their time and to do things together, but to arouse their consciences as well as the consciences of their parents. The fundamental Law of God wrought in the constitution and consciences of men's lives must be made real to men and women of all ages. America's homes must be Christianized.

3. Wrong Relationships between Labor and Management

Without making an extensive study of conditions in industry, we can not help but be aware of the unchristian practices going on and the strained relationships and wrong attitudes existing between the laboring people and their employers. We have these things constantly called to our attention by the newspapers and radio, as well as the multiplicity of articles appearing in the "Reader's Digest."¹ Labor Unions have done much to eliminate the conditions prevailing a few years ago when employers

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1. Cf. E. T. Cheyfitz: "Let's Stop 'Flowing Under' in our Factories," Reader's Digest, January, 1945; W. W. Cenerazzo: "Labor Reform by Labor," Reader's Digest, November, 1944; Sidney Hillman: "Is the PAC Beneficial to Labor and to the Country" and "Some Comments on the PAC from the Labor Press," Reader's Digest, November, 1944; W. M. Leiserson: "Why is Labor Unrest at the Danger Point?" Reader's Digest, February, 1945.

lived in luxury while their employees starved, and the tables have now been turned so that laborers can take unfair advantage of their employers. Labor Unions make it possible for laborers to do very poor work, or take much more time for it than is actually necessary, and still continue to draw a good salary because the employer is not allowed to discharge them. There is the "closed shop" which makes it impossible for employers to hire any but Union members. Laborers may discover more efficient ways of doing things, but if telling of their discoveries means doing more work for the same amount of pay, they prefer to use the slower method.¹ Laborers, furthermore, are not always favorably inclined toward their Unions because the fees are very high and there is no assurance that the money is being used in a legitimate way or for their benefit.

The mutual dislikes between people in the industrial and business world show the inadequacy of life lived only under law. Mere laws can never make people love each other and live at peace with one another. Greed and selfishness cause much of the trouble. Money is the goal for which people are striving and in all their striving they lose the happiness that comes from the Christian ideal of service to others.

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1. Cf. Cheyfitz, loc. cit.

4. Race Prejudice and Discrimination

"The one valid hope in the present situation is the fact that millions of Americans have not yet frankly and openly abandoned the Christian faith even though they refuse to practice it. But that hope will be lost if practice is delayed longer."¹

In other words, "faith without works is dead." Whatever other unchristian practice of professing Christians this might refer to, this particular writer was talking about the "color caste" in America today, which he says can no longer be tolerated by the Christian conscience. Warning against any tendency to think that colored people are not antagonistic, he says further:

"In the early days of the present war, before the United States had become an active participant. . . it was not unusual to hear expressions of approval amongst Negro Americans over the way in which Japan was twisting the tail of the British lion in the Far East, showing the white man that he could not dominate the earth."²

Already we are being haunted by the fear of a war between
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races.

The problem becomes more complicated when the unrest of the Negro is used by some to promote anti-Semitism. The Negroes are told that the Jews are responsible for their sufferings. This is one of the weapons of Fascism; the very crime which has so provoked our wrath against Germany may have seeds sprouting in our own country, and

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1. B. G. Gallagher: "The Christian Conscience and the Crisis of Color," Christendom, Autumn, 1944.
2. Gallagher, loc. cit.
3. Cf. Detroit, Philadelphia, and Harlem race riots in past couple of years.

especially in New York City.¹

Although these feelings are shared even by some church members, there is hope in the fact that Christian people of all races are concerned about this unchristian situation. As one Christian colored man said, "Only when the love of Christ came into my heart did I begin to love the white people and then I realized that I did not really love my own people until I also loved the white people."

5. War Emergency

We are challenged to a larger evangelism when we think of the one hundred thousand men of the armed forces that are being discharged every month and returning to our local churches. Government and social organizations will do much for the physical and economic welfare of these men. To the Church falls the task of providing the spiritual fellowship and training that will feed the religious life that has just begun in many of them. Some have formed a very high opinion of the Church and may be sadly disillusioned if the spiritual life of Church people in general has not kept up with their own experiences.

There will be those who have been embittered against God and the Church by the horrors of army life. These will not come to the Church and we will have to find another avenue of approach to them if we would help them.

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1. B. Richardson: "Anti-Semitism and the Negro," The Protestant, June, 1944.

Another tremendous problem may be the newly acquired appetite for strong drinks on the part of many. In time of war there is great scarcity of water. Wells are often poisoned by the enemy. Soldiers will drink anything they can get. And above all, the tension of warfare leads to a spirit of abandonment.

For all of them it will be hard to settle back into the monotony of everyday existence after having been lauded as heroes. Dr. Wyckoff points out that in the last war the boys welcomed the calls which plunged them into the thick of the fight.¹ This adventurous spirit could well be used in a fight against the forces of evil. The Church has too long been taking the defensive. Why not give these boys a place where they can be militant for Christ?

The war is affecting the church life of people on the home front. Many wives and children are moving along with their husbands and fathers in service until the latter are sent overseas. Then there are those thousands of people moving into areas where they can be engaged in defense work. With such uncertainty with regard to their stay in a community, their church life becomes most unsatisfactory and many yield to the temptation to take a vacation from religion until such time that they will again be permanently located. This makes it essential that churches be on

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1. A. C. Wyckoff: Acute and Chronic Unbelief, p. 39.

the alert for newcomers into a community and be ready to bring them into the Church fellowship even though it may be only for a short time.

We hear much talk about post war plans. Only the Church is thinking in terms of the character of the people who will make and carry out the plans. Planning a service for V-Day is not enough. There must be a call to repentance that will prevent the same old mistakes from being repeated. We need to point out that if people continue to think only of themselves there can be no lasting peace. Selfishness prevented a satisfactory peace at the end of the last war. So it will be now unless people have the love of Christ in their hearts. We must anticipate and prevent, if possible, the spiritual decline that comes into the lives of many people when the anxieties and tensions of wartime are released and they no longer feel the immediate need for God's help.

C. Weaknesses within the Church

1. Lack of Vitality within the Church as a Whole

One of our greatest problems is the indifference and lack of concern on the part of those associated with the Church. The Rev. Mr. John L. Tucker says,

"Statistics show that only 25% of the present church

membership attend worship services and are engaged in church activities."¹

Lack of concern for the work of the Church is shown by the decrease in contributions.

"The Catholic, Jewish and Protestant Churches received \$820,000,000 for their work in 1928. In 1943 the total amount was approximately \$540,000,000, nearly \$300,000,000 less."²

Gifts during the past year gained slightly, but not in proportion to the greatly increased income of most church members.³ The approximate amount spent annually for recreation⁴ is \$10,000,000,000.

This situation is apparent to the critics outside the Church who say that the trouble is not that men and women are too bad to care about religion, but that the church is not good enough.⁵

2. Extreme Attitudes with Respect to Belief and Practice

It is to the discredit of the Church that increasingly the distinction is being made which classes a church either

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1. John L. Tucker: "Evangelism and a New World Order," Arkansas Methodist, May 25, 1944.
2. W. H. Leach: "What's Ahead for the Churches," Church Management, July, 1944.
3. Ibid.
4. Wm. E. Doughty: Christ and the World Today, p. 73.
5. W. C. Barclay: The Church and a Christian Society, p. 55: "Men demand of the church plain evidence of the vital power of the Christianity it professes, asking to see within its membership more sacrifice, more fellowship, more heroism, more brotherhood, more zeal for the uplifting of human life, and for the regeneration of the whole social order than they can discover within its border."

as "fundamental" or as "liberal." Before the opening of the twentieth century the emphasis in the Church was upon its creed, on the things which Christians believe. This has sometimes caused people to become fanatical and made them intolerant of those outside the Church. Some have said that the Church meets the needs only of the middle classes. Those in the so-called intellectual class feel that the advances of science are neglected and that the teachings of the Church are not always undergirded by sound reasoning. They say it is dogmatic and does not face squarely the real facts of life. They demand the practical social gospel. The industrial class, on the other hand, is not concerned with logic and science. They want someone to take an interest in them. They feel that religious people are too satisfied and concerned only with gratifying themselves.¹

Dr. Joseph Fort Newton says that in five years he received over ten thousand letters from perplexed men and women seeking help on spiritual matters, in response to his "religious" column in the daily press. These people might easily have sought help in the Church, but they did not.² People outside the Church often feel that the people within the Church live in such a different world that they can not possibly understand the situation in the world out-

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1. Cf. Homrighausen, op. cit., p. 13.
2. Cf. Yaeger, op. cit., p. 23.

side. To them what the Church offers seems to be far removed from the things they have daily to cope with.

The Church which has been "fundamental" in its beliefs has sometimes failed to understand the economic or social problems that make it difficult for some people to live up to the standards of the Church. The Church cannot lower its standards nor condone actions that are unchristian or inconsistent with its standards, but it does need to be understanding and patient with those whose unwholesome environment makes right conduct doubly hard. The religion of the fundamentalist may be legalistic rather than an actual experience of the power of God in his life.

There is, therefore, an extreme orthodoxy which is rigid in its theology, but lacks the power to apply its precepts to everyday living and to the social problems that confront men and women everywhere.

In the endeavor in recent years to meet the demands for a practical religion, the pendulum has in many instances swung to the other extreme--to what is commonly thought of as "liberalism" with an emphasis on the "social gospel." The Christian message then becomes so diluted that it loses all its power. Richard Niebuhr describes it as "a liberal modernism" which "is seeking to tell the people that a God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgement through a Christ without a Cross." ¹ Adolf

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1. Quoted in Leavell, op. cit., p. 10.

Keller speaks of it as "shallow moralistic recipes and Utopian idealism."¹ He says the central theme of present day preaching in Europe is the Cross,

"...the unfathomable depth of the world's sin and the unfathomable depth of God's love as revealed in Christ, Who died for us that we might live."²

The attempt to make Christianity more practical has resulted in taking away its uniqueness and making it less militant. It is presented very often as a debatable subject, rather than a once-for-all revelation which makes specific demands upon men.³

Dr. Buttrick has well said, "The individual gospel alone is a selfishness, and the social gospel alone is a tree without roots."⁴

3. Lack of a Definite Plan and Challenge to Evangelism

There was a time when the Eastern churches of all denominations set apart some part of the year for intensive evangelistic work. Very often the Week of Prayer was the beginning of a series of meetings for the specific purpose of bringing people to a definite decision for Christ. The preaching was done by the pastor himself and every sermon had in it a direct appeal to decide for Christ. An "after-meeting" was held and those who had made decisions were

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1. Adolf Keller: Christian Europe Today, p. 142.
2. Ibid.
3. Homrighausen, op. cit., p. 31.
4. George Buttrick: Jesus came Preaching, p. 98.

assigned to persons already in the Church to help them become established in their faith and their church life.¹

The Methodist Class and Camp Meetings once were a vital organ within their church life, but they are now found functioning only among the smaller Methodist sects.

It is still the practice in many Reformed and Presbyterian Churches for the minister and an elder to visit in each home some time during the year for the purpose of ascertaining and strengthening the spiritual status of that home. In New York City where church families are so widely scattered, it would be almost impossible for the minister to cover his entire congregation in this way.

The Presbyterian Church in Scotland and Canada has the practice of sending an elder of the Church to every home just before the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered for the purpose of giving a ticket of admission to the Lord's Table to every member of the Church. Members are always asked whether they know of any people living near them who should be drawn into the fellowship of the Church.

These practices have, no doubt, done much to maintain the spiritual life of church congregations, but there is need at this present time to go further. The millions outside the Church must be reached and the task is too large for ministers to do alone.

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1. Cf. W. E. Compton, "Evangelism--Do we want it?" Church Herald, September 22, 1944.

If the Church has not been sufficiently evangelistic it has often been due more to the fact that ministers have not challenged their people than to the fact that people were unwilling. "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"¹ Furthermore, there has been no definite organization for the carrying out of personal evangelistic work such as there has been for the work of religious education.

D. Awakening of Laymen and Church Leaders to the Need

Not only is there encouragement in the fact that the Church does have a message for the sad and perplexing situations which people face today, but Church leaders are sensing the immediacy of that need and making plans to do something about it.

There appeared on the press this past spring a popular book entitled, Amen, Amen,² by a young Lutheran air-pilot. This book, which is being prominently displayed in many of our religious book stores, is written in the jargon of modern youth and expresses their thoughts about the church and their spiritual yearnings. It implies the desire on the part of young people for firm convictions, and they are looking to the Church to answer their questions about God.

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1. 1 Corinthians 14: 8.

2. S. A. Constantino, Jr.: Amen, Amen.

Church papers have an increasing number of articles which sound the evangelistic note. This is particularly noticeable among the churches which have in the past been emphasizing Christian education more than evangelism.

A report on the condition of the Presbyterian Church included these words:

"The growing concern over the slow growth of our church in reaching the unsaved is a healthy sign. . . Our church is disturbed, alarmed. We are not at ease in Zion and by the grace of God we are going to do something about our failure to win the lost."¹

The Reformed Church in America has recently incorporated a Department of Evangelism into its Board of Domestic Missions. Dr. J. Prins, who has been appointed the Minister of Evangelism, says:

"The need for greater effort in the field of evangelism has been felt in many Protestant communions for several years. The Reformed Church in America has been, and is, no exception. Ministers and lay leaders, across the nation, are crying for help in this field. The Gospel of Christ, with its message of total redemption, must be proclaimed in larger measure, with greater simplicity, by all of His followers. There is a growing sense of the need for 'Visitation Evangelism' and 'Personal Witnessing' in our communion. We seek to meet that need by laying the claims of Christ upon the hearts and lives of men."²

Visitation Evangelism is also recommended by a representative of the Methodist Church:

"Properly planned and put into execution, Visitation Evangelism will steer the church into a great spirit-

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1. F. A. Brown: "As I see it," The Presbyterian Survey, September, 1944.
2. Personal letter to the writer, February 7, 1945.

ual experience and bring many from the home, the community, and the world into a personal knowledge of Christ and the church."¹

Political leaders look to the Church for help in solving national problems. J. Edgar Hoover says:

"But our cause is not without hope; we can prevent crime and produce a noble citizenry. The answer lies in religious education. Religion reaches a part of man where sociology is ineffectual; it reaches his motives, his reasons for pursuing a way of life."²

Various interdenominational groups are stressing the need for evangelism. The Federal Council of Churches has been emphasizing different types of evangelism and publishing much material along this line. The National Association of Evangelicals sponsored an evangelistic conference in New York City for the week of January 7 to 14, 1945. The Greater New York Federation of Churches, Inc., sent out special literature to ministers emphasizing the need for a united effort in evangelism in New York City, and they feel particularly the need to enlist the lay people in this endeavor.

E. Summary

We have found in this chapter that millions of people in the United States today are outside the direct influence of the church, and conditions around us show that the Spirit

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1. Tucker, loc. cit.
2. Hoover, loc. cit.

of Christ is not permeating the life of our country which is supposedly Christian.

The lack of religious training among the children and young people is especially alarming when we note the increase of crime on the part of teen age boys and girls. Many feel that the great problem is "parent delinquency." The Church is summoned to Christianize the homes in our country.

Labor and capital problems are constantly being brought to our attention. The quarreling between them and reciprocal unfair dealings point out a need for practical Christian living in the economic world.

The hatred and antagonism between races will lead eventually to another war if Christian people do not do something about it. They need to have the right attitude themselves and foster that attitude in the people about them. The Church is summoned to Christian brotherhood which can only be had through the Spirit of Christ in the lives of individuals.

The war accentuates already existing problems, and brings new ones. The Church is challenged by returning service men who need to be re-incorporated into church and civilian life, and given a place of opportunity to grow in the religious experience which has come to many of them for the first time.

There are weaknesses within the Church that may account for its failure in recent years to make conquests

for Christ. Lack of interest on the part of Church members themselves is indicated by the decline in church attendance and the decrease in contributions for the work of the church.

There has been the extremely fundamental church with its lack of social vision which has failed to meet the everyday needs of people. Those who have gone to the opposite extreme, preaching only a "social gospel," have lost out because there was no power in their message.

Lay people are often more willing to share the responsibility for lost souls than ministers realize. There is need today for a more definite challenge and plan for personal work.

Not only does encouragement rest in the fact that we know Christ has the answer to the world's despair, but leaders are sensing the immediate need and are making plans for a larger program of evangelism.

CHAPTER III

PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING VISITATION EVANGELISM

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A. Introduction

The foregoing chapter has shown us the general conditions in our society that reveal the need for the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ. But social conditions are not changed en masse. Transformation of society requires the transformation of the individuals that make up that society. So our great task of evangelism is with individuals rather than with society in general. Our purpose in this chapter is to determine principles that will help us to work effectively with individuals.

We shall cite individual cases to show the kinds of people visitors will encounter. We want to find out the psychological needs of men and discover how Jesus Christ meets those needs. Finally, we shall study Jesus' own methods and learn from Him principles that underlie effective Visitation Evangelism.

The cases cited are known to the writer personally or have been told to her. Books on the psychology of religion will be drawn upon for psychological factors and the Bible itself and books by personal workers for a study of Jesus' methods.

B. Psychological Analysis of Unbelief and Misbelief

1. Typical Cases Encountered by Visitors

The situations that will confront visitors are varied and sometimes extremely complex. They present problems that baffle the most experienced callers. For this reason it is well to have some knowledge of the kinds of people that may be met and the things in their natures that cause them to react as they do. The cases described, ranging from those who are fairly well integrated without the aid of religion to those who show an ever increasing degree of personality disintegration in spite of their religious training, fall roughly into five groups: (a) the indifferent, (b) the searchers for truth, (c) the acute unbelievers, (d) the chronic unbelievers, and (e) the super-believers.

a. The Indifferent

The great majority of people who will be on the church's prospect list are simply indifferent to the call of Christ and the Church. Many of them live comparatively good lives. They have set their own standards and are living up to them so that there is no conflict to cause personality disintegration. They are fairly successful in life and are content to get along without the church. Circumstances have made it difficult for the following couple to attend services, but they are not concerned about it:

Case No. 1 - Happily married couple with two children; neither parent is a church member although both attended Sunday School when they were children. Father works

nights and Sundays. Mother cannot come to church because she has to take care of Harold, age 2. Robert, age 7, attends Protestant Sunday School. There is no antagonism to Christianity; they do want their children to receive religious instruction, but have no desire to make a definite decision for Christ themselves.

Some were trained in religious homes, but for one reason or another have turned against the church. Like Mrs. S--- they have never overcome an old prejudice:

Case No. 2 - Mrs. S--- with her husband and ten year old boy has a happy home life. She has been ill and her husband is in need of an operation, but these things have been accepted as normal life experiences and have in no way embittered them. Boy attends Sunday School and parents encourage him, reading over his lessons with him, but they do not attend church services. Mother has been prejudiced against the church because the minister in the church she attended as a child was a habitual drinker and even conducted services while under the influence of alcohol. For this reason she has never again associated herself with the church and says she does not care to now.

Mixed marriages are often the cause of real problems among those who have never given much thought to the claims of Christ:

Case No. 3 - Young married couple with two children. Jean, age 7, attends Protestant Sunday School because mother wants her to although father, who is Roman Catholic, opposes it. Mary is only two and cannot be left alone. Mother attended Protestant Sunday School and church before marriage, but never made any public confession of faith in Christ. Marriage was performed by the Justice of the Peace. Husband took no interest in his religion before marriage, but now because of pressure from his family, he wants the children to be trained in the Roman Catholic faith. Mother says she can not attend church because her husband always decides to go to mass at the same time the Protestant service is held, so that she has to stay with the baby. Religion is causing so much trouble in this home that the mother is embittered and feels it is better to get along without the church

for the time being. She feels her husband is entirely at fault and seems not to take any of the blame upon herself.

This information was received from the mother so it gives her point of view. To get the whole picture, of course, it would be necessary to get the husband's side of the story.

There are those at this present time among the in-different group who are allowing the war to turn them against God and the Church, as in the following case:

Case No. 4 - Mrs. B---, age 50, used to attend church when her boy was in Sunday School, but never joined and was never active in any church organizations. At present she does not attend church. The son is now in the service and Mrs. B--- is unhappy and prejudiced against any religion because she says she doesn't see why God allows this war. She says the church people are unfriendly.

b. Searchers for the Truth

There are many people who would come to church if someone invited them and showed a friendly interest in them; they would accept Christ if someone made Him known to them. There are some who are actually yearning for someone to tell them, as was the case with Mary:

Case No. 5 - Mary, Jewish girl, age 19, married to a Lutheran. Mother a registered nurse; has stepfather; neither parent cares what religion daughter chooses, they themselves having no interest in religion. Mary says she has longed to know more about God, but can not seem to make any contact with Him. She feels there must be a God and that He is loving and concerned about people. Sees selfishness in Jewish people and wonders if they would be different if they knew Christ. Husband tries to explain Christianity to her, but is unsuccessful. Girl wants something to do to occupy her time, but is very nervous; says she never does anything right; wonders what kind of work she is fitted for. Thinks her nervousness may be due to her unsettled spiritual condition.

It must be remembered that the countless numbers who have grown up outside the church, but who have some consciousness of the basic moralities of life, belong in either the indifferent or the seeking group.

c. Acute Unbelievers

When religious doubts cause real distress in the lives of people we call them "acute unbelievers." These very often come from good Christian homes where they have been carefully trained. In their earlier years they may accept their parents' standards of right and wrong, but in the adolescent period when there is the desire for independence they rebel against parental authority. They feel they are unnecessarily being hindered from doing things they enjoy doing. Sometimes acute unbelief is brought on by what is taught in college, or in recent years even in high school. At this period their minds are fed liberal doses of the facts of science and historical and Biblical criticism, and not having sufficient knowledge of the things of the Spirit to digest all this and interpret it in the realm of human and religious experience, they begin to doubt the teachings of the Bible or of the Church. What they read, what they hear over the radio, what they see in the movies, what they talk about with their companions, all has an influence upon adolescents and may cause religious doubts. Usually the real reason, however, is unwillingness to conform to God's standard. They are ready to accept any-

thing as true which offers them an excuse for living on a lower standard than that required by Christianity. The girl in the following case has a strong self-will and is unwilling to surrender her will to God's:

Case No. 6 - Helen, age 18, has a beautiful voice and dreams of becoming an opera singer, but has not the necessary initiative and perseverance to put much effort into realizing her ambition. Her father deserted her mother with four small children when Helen, the second oldest, was ten. There are two younger boys and an older girl in the family. The mother has always had to work to support this family and the children have helped as soon as they became old enough to work. There have been times when there has been nothing to eat in the house. There is no extra money for education. Helen works at Woolworth's, but does not like the routine. She feels herself to be a "victim of circumstances;" does not see why if God is good, things like this happen. Helen attends church spasmodically and is always willing to sing solos for services or special meetings. Choir director has offered her free singing lessons which she has taken from him, but he becomes very impatient with her because of her irregular attendance.

Acute unbelief is not limited to adolescents. Adults, whose Christian experience has apparently been very normal, may have their faith seriously disturbed by emergencies such as failure in business, disappointment in love or marriage, loss of confidence in someone whose religious views were respected, or death of a loved one. These are the immediate causes, but as we probe deeper we find that just as in the case of the adolescent, there is a rebellion against the moral conduct requirement of the Christian faith, so for the adult there is some point at which the person is unwilling to comply wholly with God's demands. Some of these acute unbelievers gradually slough off their associations with religion and drift into the indifferent class. Others go

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into super-belief cults.

d. Chronic Unbelievers

When the acute unbeliever continues to rebel and feed his doubts and rationalizes his unbelief so as to justify his conduct he eventually becomes a chronic unbeliever. While acute unbelief can often be traced to the circumstances around the unbeliever, or to people who misinterpret facts, chronic unbelief is due to the attitude of the believer himself.²

Chronic unbelievers may to all appearances live good moral lives. Some become stoical and have a very good opinion of themselves and therefore feel no need of God. They very often have the conceited belief that they are above the average in intelligence and therefore find it hard to believe. But usually there is some moral issue which they do not want to face and on which they do not want to surrender to the demands of a holy God. The following case is typical:

Case No. 7 - Betty, age 58, a graduate nurse, very capable and active both physically and mentally, says she does not believe in God. She is critical of people who are the least bit religious and says she wonders how they can believe such teaching. Ridicules patients by discussing "religious problem cases" with other nurses. Says she had too much religion when young, having been brought up in a minister's family. Does not like "all this talk about heaven." Smokes and drinks, but also enjoys opera, good music, and good reading material. Is an excellent nurse and well liked, although some have complained of her dominating spirit.

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1. Post, p. 43.
2. Cf. Wyckoff, op. cit., pp. 45-6.

e. Super-believers

Super-believers, or people who believe more than normal, come largely out of that class of indifferent people who have never taken their religion seriously, and when they come to a crisis in life they are spiritually unprepared. They may also come out of the acute unbelief group. They are emotionally unstable. Super-belief occurs most often in middle life. Perhaps the vitality of youth has worn off, life has become commonplace, adjustments have to be made, there are disappointments in the home, children leaving the home circle, breakdowns in health, and other things difficult to cope with. The loss of a loved one may turn them to Spiritism which promises the possibility of communion with that person. If there has been a physical breakdown they may turn to Christian Science which promises health quickly and easily. The cults promise a happiness for this life--health, wealth, and happiness. They open up a newly discovered right of way to truth without the normal demand of acquiring knowledge through the laborious process of education, and its moral requirements are less strenuous.¹ The church holds up the way of the cross which is the slower, but sure way to abundant living which Christ promised to all His fol-

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1. Cf. Wyckoff, op. cit., p. 77.

lowers. Mrs. L--- illustrates the super-believer:

Case No. 8 - Mrs. L---, age 60, attends and supports the church, but also goes regularly to meetings at the Unity Center. Has speech defect caused by goiter operation which she had ten years ago. When she first became aware that she had a goiter and was continually losing weight, she refused to see a doctor because she firmly believed she would be healed by faith. She continued to pray for healing, but got gradually worse until her husband forced her to see a doctor who said she must have an operation immediately. Much against her will the operation was performed. She is now completely well except for her voice. She is still praying for that to become normal and believes it is better than it was. She still feels she could have been healed without the operation, but that God allows one to go to the extreme before answering in order that one's faith may be tried to the utmost and thus become very strong.

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2. Fundamental Types of Maladjustment

We have seen how varied are the situations that visitors meet and how different are the individuals in each case. Some need only to be challenged with a vital Christianity while others present real personality problems. Psychologists tell us that in every act of consciousness or unconsciousness there are three elements--thought, feeling, and will--each playing a constituent part. A normal person sees a need, feels a desire to do something about it, thinks it over and decides what is best to do, then does what he has decided to do. Thought, feeling, and will have all played a part in the action and the doing of it has given him a feeling of satisfaction. Some people who are not Christians are fairly well integrated on a human

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1. Class Lectures of A. C. Wyckoff in Psychology of Religion and the Christian Faith.

Cf. A. C. Wickendon: Youth Looks at Religion, pp. 18-21.

and social level. They can get along tolerably well with their associates and with themselves. They are not greatly moved by the unpleasant things that happen, nor do they give much thought to changing conditions, and they live up to the standards they have set for themselves. Such people are only stirred when confronted with Christ and His standards in a very strong and forceful way. But as we have seen there is not a small group of personalities who very soon show in adolescence certain abnormalities of character which are bound to affect their religious behavior and faith.

a. The Voluntaristic Type

There are those of strong self-will like Helen (Case No. 6).¹ They want to have their own way and they resent being dictated to by anyone. They are strongly individualistic and want to be doing things, doing them as they please--never stopping to reflect what it may mean or lead to in the future. The acute unbeliever may say that he has intellectual doubts, but the real trouble is that he wants his own way.

b. The Intellectual Type

Many people who are unwilling to surrender their own wills rationalize in order to justify their conduct, and fall into the class that we think of as chronic unbelievers. The chronic unbeliever says he can not honestly believe in God and so he sets his own standards of conduct. Jesus said,

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1. Ante, p. 41.

"He that willeth to do the will of God shall know of the doctrine,"¹ and the actual trouble with the chronic unbeliever is that he is unwilling to conform to some of God's requirements. He over-emphasizes the place of thought in one's experience. He despises anything that smacks of emotionalism because he says it has no basis in reason. We can see why this type of person can not have a satisfying religious experience because when feeling and will are both cast aside, we have left a mere system of truth based upon reason, which is cold and meaningless.

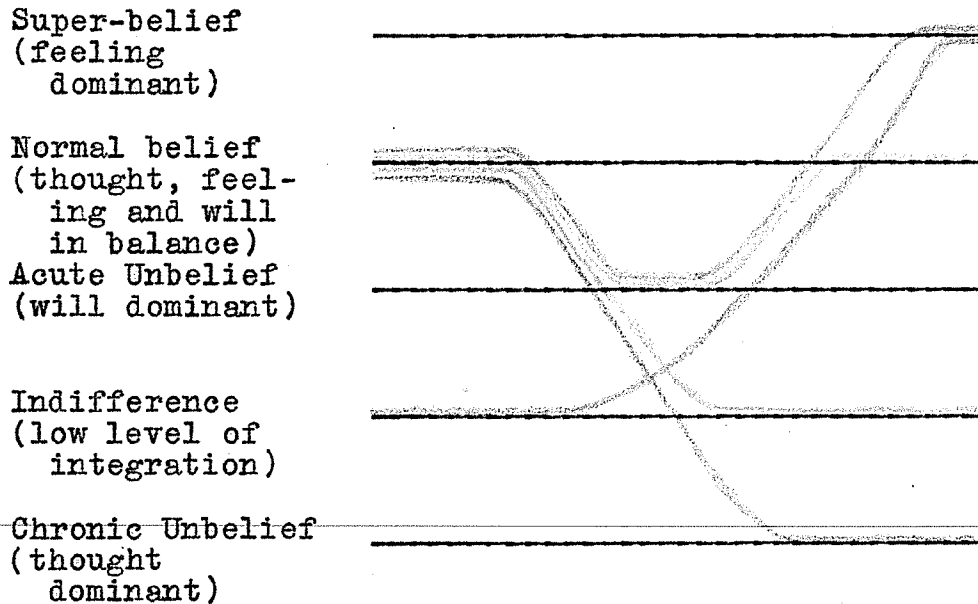
c. The Emotional Type

On the other hand we can see that mere emotion without thought can also cause maladjustment. Some people always live in the realm of their feelings. Their actions are the result of their feelings rather than being supported by thought as to what is best to do. They do things impulsively without much thought of the outcome. They may become inspired by a wonderful sermon, but they soon forget it and do not do anything about it. Super-believers are in the emotional class. They expect miracles to happen and their reasoning is unsound. They want their own way and therefore they take up some cult which does not present too high a moral standard and which explains in both intellectual terms and emotional expression what they themselves want to do.

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1. John 7: 17.

The following diagram may help us to understand the various types of maladjustment:



- _____ Adolescent has attack of acute unbelief,
but is cured and returns to normal.
- _____ Acute unbeliever becomes a super-believer.
- _____ Acute unbeliever becomes indifferent.
- _____ Acute unbeliever rationalizes and becomes a
chronic unbeliever.
- _____ Indifferent person becomes a super-believer.

3. Common Elements in Human Nature

Although we find such great variety in the personalities of people we meet that it is hard to prescribe any special techniques or rules that can be applied in all instances, there is, nevertheless, encouragement in the fact that there are some elements in human nature that are common to all. It is on these common elements that we must base our appeals for the Christian faith and from which we can deduce principles that can safely be followed. There are certain longings that we can expect to find in every human heart.

a. The Urge to Confide

Probably the most fundamental is an urge to confide:

"To confide one's troubles, griefs, and sufferings, to confide one's life experience of all sorts, this is an unquenchable, an irresistible longing, from which no one is altogether free. ."¹

Although this urge to confide, to be friendly and to make friends, is present within every individual, we find that some talk more freely than others. Mary (Case No. 5)² wanted someone to whom she could unburden herself, and there are many like her. The great numbers of people who are today seeking the help of psychiatrists give evidence of this need to relieve oneself of one's inner feelings. This is why Christians who come in the spirit of friendli-

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1. Gamaliel Bradford, Life and I, p. 255.
2. Ante, p. 39.

ness are cordially received into almost any home. People are glad to talk to others who they feel will understand and be sympathetic.

Those who do not confide their troubles easily are sometimes much unhappier than those who tell everything because repression always causes distress. Visitors must sense when tactful questioning may relieve tension, but questions should never be asked out of mere curiosity.

Like the psychiatrist the Christian who listens to another's problem must realize that the problem as analyzed by the person himself may not be the real problem. He may be trying to shield himself from blame which causes him to rationalize. Rationalization, according to Freud, is

"the unconscious tendency to represent our conduct in the best light, to suppress the real source of our questionable deeds, to depict them as actuated by worthy and disinterested motives, and to represent past occurrences rather as we wish they had been than as they were."¹

The woman who blames her husband for all their family troubles (Case No. 3)² may be covering up her own guilt complex. There may be other causes for their troubles besides those revealed by the wife. We would not diagnose this case until we had also the husband's side of the story.

b. The Urge toward Wholeness

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Mary (Case No. 5) typifies what St. Augustine had in

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1. Harry Emerson Fosdick: On Being a Real Person, pp. 135-6.
2. Ante, pp. 38-9.
3. " p. 39.

mind when he said, "Our souls are restless till they rest in thee." Her life is unfocused and therefore lacks integration. Hers seems to be a case of psychological "anxiety" which would probably need the help of a psychiatrist. She feels inferior and is unhappy because she has many conflicting desires. Every life needs a center around which it can be unified. Whatever person or thing becomes the center of one's life sets the standards to which that person will be loyal. When one tries to be completely loyal to more than one person or thing there is great conflict within the individual. Helen (Case No. 6)¹ suffers because her desire to attain to her ambition on the one hand, and her duty to her family on the other, cause a conflict. Mrs. B---, who centered her life around her son (Case No. 4)², became unhappy when her "center" was removed from her.

Some people choose a low standard (Case No. 1)³ which requires little of them and they are comparatively well satisfied, but when there is a desire for higher things but no power to attain to them, there is the conflict within which Paul describes so vividly when he says, "for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I," and "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind." In great anguish he cries out, "O wretched man that I am! Who

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1. Ante, p. 41.
2. " p. 39.
3. " pp. 37-8.

shall deliver me from the body of this death?"¹

People so often have the wrong conception that if this or that thing would happen, then they would be contented. The truth is that no disorganized personality can be put into such an ideal situation that that by itself will make him happy. What is necessary is that his basic faith and spiritual resources should be right.² His whole consciousness needs to be centered upon God.

c. Urge to Feel Significant

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Mrs. B--- (Case No. 4) felt she was of some importance while her son was with her and she felt he needed her. Children by their dependence upon their parents fill a need within the parents. This urge to feel significant because one is needed causes people to go on to the attainment of certain goals even though it may involve sacrifice and suffering. Dr. Cartwright says,

"There is something ingrained in the human heart that responds to the appeal to suffering. Say what we will, the love of the cross runs deeper than the love of comfort and ease. . . Let us not be fooled by the apparent love for comfort and escape from pain. John R. Mott has truly said, 'When you have made the gospel difficult you have made it triumphant.'"⁴

d. Urge for Security

People are often afraid of the future. Mary (Case No. 5)⁵

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1. Romans 7: 15, 23, 24, 25.
2. Cf. Fosdick, op. cit., p. 48.
3. Ante, p. 39.
4. Lin D. Cartwright: Evangelism for Today, pp. 50-52.
5. Ante, p. 39.

was afraid she would not be able to hold a job if she got one because of her nervousness. Helen (Case No. 6)¹ saw nothing ahead for years and years, but the monotony of doing work she did not enjoy. People want the assurance that the future holds something better. Not only do people want security for this life, but for the hereafter, although in our modern day this does not seem to be evident. Cartwright believes that there is an innate sense of justice and that people are haunted by the thought that somewhere² there is a "great white throne." He says,

"One of the deepest hungers of the soul lies in the desire for the security and permanency of personality. . . . The modern man appears nonchalant about the issues of eternity, but such questions will not down, and he is as interested in them as any previous generation."³

e. Sense of Right and Wrong

Whether people admit it or not they all have some sense of right and wrong. From earliest childhood an ideal self is being formed and when something is done to violate this ideal a conflict is set up which destroys one's peace of mind.⁴ This conscience is made more sensitive when it is conditioned by Christian influences. Most of the people we meet have some church background. However, even those who do not have this training have a sense of right and wrong. Paul says that the Gentiles do by nature the things of the

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1. Ante, p. 41.
2. Cartwright, op. cit., p. 53.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 46.

law, and "they show the work of the law written in their hearts."¹ Failure to live up to the "moral law within" causes a feeling of guilt, which can be a very disturbing factor. This guilt complex may very well and usually does become associated with religious experience in such a way that a wrong against one's fellows is recognized as a wrong against Deity.

f. Consciousness of the Divine

There is also in every man some consciousness of God. Paul believed that "Whatever is to be known of God is plain to them (the Gentiles)"² When he spoke to the people of Athens he recognized that they worshipped God even though they did not know Him. Their own poets had said, "we are His offspring."³ John said that Christ was "the True Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;"⁴ in other words, no person that is born is without any Light from God at all. It is not strange, therefore, that people are unsatisfied until they find and know this true Light which they find within themselves.

There are, of course, people like Betty (Case No. 7)⁵ who say they do not believe in God. But no one can get away

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1. Romans 2: 14, 15.
2. Romans 1: 19.
3. Acts 17: 22-28.
4. John 1: 9.
5. Ante, p. 42.

from the fact of the law and order in this universe. There are some so-called scientifically minded people who feel they can not honestly believe in God and therefore substitute Law or Principle. But, as Dr. Wyckoff says, what really fascinates them

"is not the reign of law, but the underlying conviction that knowledge and mastery of the secrets of nature offer to human personality control over this law and infinite possibilities of creative progress. And this is faith in benevolent personality, not individual, but cosmic."¹

Thus it comes back to the fact that Personality is more satisfying as that which governs the universe than Law or Principle.

g. Desire to Pray

There is further the desire on the part of people to have communion with the One Who has created and Who controls all things. When they feel unequal to their tasks or are confronted with difficulties that they can not surmount, they want a power beyond their own. People who never recognize God in their lives at any other time suddenly find themselves gasping out a prayer in time of crisis. This shows that there is an inner consciousness that God is good and that He is concerned about them and will listen to their prayers and deliver them out of their distresses. Even though prayer may be very selfish to begin with, it can result in securing dominance over our selfish desires

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1. Wyckoff, op. cit., p. 153.

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in the end. Dr. Wyckoff says,

"Let the human spirit go to God with any petition! It is the going to God and the asking that are the psychologically potent experiences. The pray-er invites God to come into his life and assist in solving its problems. And God will not come in unless invited."²

h. Desire for a Mediator

The early Hebrews had a very high conception of God. They recognized His authority over them and they were sure of His love and care for them. They communicated with Him through chosen leaders--Moses, Samuel, the prophets--who revealed God's will to them and interceded to God for them. Their priests offered sacrifices for them and made atonement for their sins. These were their human mediators to bring them closer to God. But they were unsatisfied. They longed for a more personal communion with Him, but felt that was reserved for a chosen few. Some of the Psalms express this longing for God:

"My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"³

"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is..⁴

Job, in his despair, cried out:

"Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat!"⁵

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1. Cf. Wyckoff, op. cit., p. 179.
2. Ibid., p. 180.
3. Psalm 42: 2.
4. Psalm 63: 1.
5. Job 23: 3.

They wanted someone to make God more real to them and make them more conscious of His Presence with them. When Jesus Christ came, this need was met for those who accepted Him. When He left this earth, the disciples again felt that aching void. They had depended upon Him to show them God's way for them. Jesus knew their need and sent the Comforter, or the Holy Spirit, to be their Guide, and to give them power to go on.

Today the need for a mediator is still evident. Most people welcome the pastor or church visitor because even though they make no pretense of being religious, they are glad to be in touch with someone who can help them to find God in case they should feel any need of Him. Even though they never pray themselves, they like to have others pray for them. People's inclination to depend upon their pastors or priests for their spiritual resources shows this need for a mediator. Dr. Wyckoff says,

"The human spirit possesses an insatiable desire for some kind of a concrete mediator between the finite and the infinite, the human and the divine, man and God. And every non-theistic philosophy and science, and every super-belief cult unconsciously seeks to supply this mediator."¹

Those who do not look to the church for spiritual help and who refuse to recognize Jesus Christ as the Mediator must find substitutes. The rationalist substitutes Reason, the unbelieving psychologist substitutes the Christ as an Idea,

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1. Wyckoff, op. cit., pp. 207-8.

theosophists have their Mahatmas, spiritualists their mediums, Christian Scientists have Mrs. Eddy. "The indestructibility of the human need for the Christ is one of the greatest psychological facts of religion."¹

4. Jesus Christ and the Psychological Needs of Men

Only in Jesus Christ have men recognized the true nature of God. His ministry of love--healing the sick, making the blind to see, the dumb to speak, raising the dead to life, His encouragement to sinsick souls--His authority in forgiving sin and in His teaching, His own unique self-consciousness, His Cross which was the ultimate goal of His life, finally His glorious resurrection, all point Him out as the supreme revelation of God in the flesh. Jesus Christ is this Mediator for Whom men through the ages have longed. He not only makes God's law most real to men; He also makes God's love most real, so that men can pray in His Name most intimately, calling God "Father."² Furthermore, this Jesus portrayed in the Gospels by men who knew Him, brings God's power and Holy Spirit close to men.

a. Jesus reveals God's law

We have observed in many of the cases cited above that some knowledge of right and wrong is present in human consciousness. If people live up to the standard that they have set for themselves their lives are integrated on a low level

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1. Wyckoff, op. cit., p. 215.

2. Cf. Romans 8: 15.

and they are fairly well satisfied.¹ But there is no real victory over sin, no freedom from the fears and guilt so often caused by sin, and consequently no lasting joy and peace. When Jesus Christ comes into a man's life, the standard set becomes much higher. God's law, then, is not merely a matter of outward conduct, but of right thoughts and attitudes. Paul's conception of God's law was completely changed when he was confronted by Jesus Christ and there was a real struggle until he surrendered to the demands of Christ and could say, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death."²

b. Jesus reveals God's love

If Jesus had only revealed God's law and not His love, man would be most miserable. There would then be no way of attaining to the standard nor of being released from the sense of guilt when one did not attain to it. God's love was revealed to mankind when God became incarnate in Jesus Christ, Who identified Himself with man and took upon Himself the consequences of man's sin. Man can thus through Him be released from his sin and begin a new life. This process, which we call conversion, is defined by William James as:

"The process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided and unconsciously inferior and unhappy becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy."³

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1. Ante, pp. 44-45.

2. Romans 8: 2.

3. William James: Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 189.

Life thus becomes integrated because Christ becomes the unifying center. The desire to follow His way of life becomes dominant and other desires are subordinated to the supreme desire of service to Him. Jesus said, "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister,"¹ and it is in service that people find the answer to their yearnings for happiness. The truth of Jesus' statement, "Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's shall save it,"² then becomes clear.

c. Jesus makes the power of God's Spirit available

We have noted that people pray, particularly in times of crisis, because they feel their own inadequacy and hope to bring a divine power into their lives by means of prayer. As the Mediator between God and man, Jesus has made it possible for everyone to have communion with God through His Holy Spirit, and thus to receive power to live victoriously over sin and to do the things that make life worth living. When the power of God comes into a life through Christ there can no longer be any inferiority complex, for that Power which moves in us is the same as that which controls the universe. There is no superiority complex for we recognize that all that we are and have comes from God.

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1. Mark 10: 43.
2. Mark 8: 35.

5. Underlying Principles for Visitors

The following principles, which can be drawn from the foregoing study, should be kept in mind by visitors:

(1) There are differences in human nature which must be recognized and people will have to be approached and appealed to on the basis of their individual characteristics.

(2) Every person has some kind of religious experience; therefore, when we talk to people about spiritual things we are not talking about something absolutely foreign to them. We can build on the religious experience that people already have.

(3) People are unsatisfied when they fail to act upon what they know to be right.

(4) Visitors should let people talk if they want to, and be understanding and sympathetic listeners. Questions must never be asked out of curiosity, but tactful questions may help to relieve tensions.

(5) The prospect's diagnosis of any problem he may have is not necessarily correct. Attentive listening will help visitors to find the real source of trouble.

(6) When people begin to pray for themselves and for others, they have taken an important step toward a vital Christian experience.

(7) Visitors can have the firm conviction that Christ is able and willing to meet every individual's need.

C. The Master's Methods of Dealing with People

Not only do we point to Jesus Christ as being the only One Who can satisfy the need of every person, but we can learn much from His methods of dealing with people. The Gospel of John lends itself particularly well to a study of Jesus' methods and most of the incidents cited have been taken from it although the Synoptics have also been used. We propose to observe how Jesus dealt with different personality types to see if we can discover sound methods of personal evangelization which we may use.

1. Kinds of People Jesus Met

First, we shall take note of the great variety of needy people whom He helped. Jesus met every type of individual that we will ever meet--from the person who was sick both physically and spiritually, a seemingly hopeless case, to the ruler in the synagogue, who was a prominent teacher and religious leader.

a. Sick People

Perhaps one of the most hopeless cases was that of the cripple at the Pool of Bethesda.¹ Not only was he helpless physically, but he was friendless. He had no one to put him into the pool from which he might receive healing. For thirty-eight long years he had been in this condition and

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1. Cf. John 5: 1-15.

he had probably grown bitter and discouraged. Jesus healed the man and then left him because of the multitude. But Jesus did not merely help people physically. He got to the source of their troubles. Later He found this man again in the temple and He said to him, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee."

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The man sick of the palsy was somewhat better off. He had friends to bring him to Jesus. Again Jesus looked beyond the physical to the spiritual need. In this instance, even before He healed the man, He said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

b. Moral Derelicts

Jesus, the holiest man who ever lived, was at the same time the most sympathetic man who ever lived when He was confronted with the down and out sinners of His day. This was particularly apparent when a woman had been taken in the very act of adultery and was brought to Him.² This woman was made painfully aware of her guilt by her accusers. But Jesus would not embarrass her. He wrote in the sand and seemed hardly to notice her. When He did speak, it was not to condemn her, but to make her accusers aware of their own sins. Guilty consciences would not permit them to cast the stones they had brought, and with the kindly words, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more," a sinful woman was

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1. Mark 2: 1-12.
2. John 8: 3-11.

given a new lease on life--a new desire to be clean and pure.

Another woman who was a sinner met Jesus one day as she came to a well to draw water.¹ She did not expect Him to notice her, much less speak to her, for she was a Samaritan and He a Jew. To her amazement, He asked her for a drink. This woman was not concerned about her sins. She knew about God and had been taught to obey His laws; but she did not want to be bound by such rigid requirements and was living as she pleased. Jesus might have accosted her with the stern rebuke she deserved. But He did not. He started the conversation by asking for water, but He directed it so that she became interested in the "living water" which He had to offer. It would be natural for her to want to share this with those closest to her, particularly her husband. This was an opening for Jesus to bring her to a conviction of her sins. She tried to change the subject by asking a theological question. The question as to where men should worship had been one that had caused much argument. Jesus would not argue. He corrected her erroneous idea that the place of worship was important.

Jesus was skillful in leading this woman from thinking of material things to thinking of spiritual things. He made the best use of the consciousness of God, the sense of right and wrong, the longing for the Messiah, which this woman had,

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1. Cf. John 4: 1-42.

to bring her into a more vital experience with God.

c. The Successful Business Man

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Zacchaeus was one of those indifferent people who paid little attention to the religion of his day because he cared little for the religious people he knew and they cared less for him. He had a talent for making money and he had no scruples about taking advantage of people when he could. He lived up to his reputation of being a "dishonest publican." But Jesus looked into the heart of this man and saw the dissatisfaction that was there. He knew this man could be won by friendship and therefore He invited Himself to have dinner with Zacchaeus. We do not know the conversation that took place between them at dinner, but of his own accord Zacchaeus decided to go far beyond the requirement of making amends for past misdeeds and further to dedicate half his goods to the poor.

d. The Unhappy Man

There were among those whom Jesus met people who were living good moral lives, but who were not happy. The blind man in the temple² accepted his blindness as his fate and did not expect much happiness in life. Jesus made it very clear that this man's affliction was due neither to his own sins nor to those of his parents. Both he and his parents were living according to the law of God, but it

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1. Cf. Luke 19: 1-10.

2. Cf. John 9: 1-41.

was mere formal religion and gave them little real joy. The Jews, rather than rejoicing with the man when Jesus had restored to him his sight, ridiculed him and tried to turn him against Jesus. On the basis of a real experience with Christ, the man stood his ground, and they finally cast him out of the synagogue. The man was already well on the road to belief when Jesus came to him and revealed Himself to him; he responded to Jesus' question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" with the words, "Lord, I believe," and worshipped Him.

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e. The Morally Good Man

But even Jesus was unable to break through the self-centeredness of one man who, having kept all the commandments, felt no sense of guilt. The rich young ruler was quite confident that he had done everything he could to deserve eternal life, and still he was not satisfied. He recognized God and obeyed His laws. Undoubtedly, he was looked upon as an outstandingly righteous man. "Jesus looking upon him loved him," but He put His finger unerringly on the sore spot in this man's life. Money had become his god and there was no love in his heart for his fellowmen. The religion he had was merely intellectual legalism. Nothing less than complete surrender of all that he had and was could make this man truly happy, but he was unwilling to take this step.

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1. Cf. Mark 10: 17-22.

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f. A Religious Leader

Nicodemus was one of the thinkers of his day. He was a highly respected teacher in the synagogue. He was a very religious man and lived in strict accordance with the laws of Moses. When he met Jesus he sensed that this man had something more than he had. He wanted to know what it was, Who Jesus was, and how he could get the power that Jesus had. Jesus spoke to Nicodemus positively, with conviction and authority. He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This was a new idea to Nicodemus. When Jesus spoke of being born of the Spirit, he became still more puzzled. Jesus challenged him with his responsibility to understand these things because of his position as "the teacher in Israel." Nicodemus had to learn that to enter the Kingdom of God required humility and the trust and dependence of a little child. He had to learn the difference between legalism and the life of grace.

g. A Worried Housekeeper

Martha was the practical kind of person. She was an energetic and busy woman and was constantly doing things. But Jesus saw that her ceaseless activity was a way of covering up an inner restlessness--anxiety and worry about many little things. He pointed out to her in a kindly way that her sister Mary had something she lacked and needed.² Martha, however, had great faith in Jesus and it was to her

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1. Cf. John 3: 1-15.

2. Cf. Luke 10: 38-42.

that Jesus first revealed the great truth of the resurrection. With those wonderful words, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die," and with His question to her, "Believest thou this?" He called forth from her lips the parallel to Peter's "great confession," "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even He that cometh into the world."¹

h. Potential Evangelists

A study of Jesus' methods of dealing with men would not be complete without mentioning those who were closest to Him--His disciples. He chose them from various walks of life. He knew that they too would meet with various kinds of people.

He knew they were not perfect, but He saw in them great possibilities. To Simon He said, "Thou shalt be called Peter (that is, Rock)."² When He saw Nathanael, He said,³ "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"

When He first called them, He simply called them to "follow" Him. Later He used one of their boats from which to speak to the multitude and when He had finished He told them to go out into the deep and let down the nets for a draught. They had toiled all night and taken nothing, but He spoke with such confidence that they let down the nets

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1. Cf. John 11: 25-27.
2. John 1: 42.
3. John 1: 47.

against their own judgment. They drew in such a multitude of fish that their nets were breaking and the boats began to sink. Simon Peter fell down at Jesus' feet and said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." It was at this time that Jesus said to him, "Fear not; from hence-¹ forth thou shalt catch men."

By constant association with the disciples Jesus trained them for the great task of building His Church. As His days on earth were drawing to a close and He Himself knew He faced death on a cross, He challenged the very highest in them and said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."²

2. Attitudes Revealed by Jesus

J. Wilbur Chapman said,

"It is not so much what we say, as the way we say it, and indeed, it is not so much what we say and the way we say it, as what we are, that counts in personal work."³ 2

What Jesus was, no doubt, accounted to a large extent for His success in dealing with people. We can see from the foregoing incidents that He was a man who had firm convictions. His love and understanding, and His high regard for human personality, drew people irresistibly to Him.

a. His Convictions

We noted the authority with which He spoke to Nicodemus.

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1. Luke 5: 1-11.
2. Matthew 16: 24.
3. J. Wilbur Chapman: The Personal Touch, p. 31.

He was sure of the necessity of being "born again" in order to enter the Kingdom of God. He was sure of His own unique relationship to the heavenly Father and His purpose for coming to earth. He revealed Himself as the Son of God to the blind man whose sight He had restored; He told the woman of Samaria that He was the Messiah. He was sure of man's sin and need for forgiveness and He knew that sin and God's Spirit could not dwell in the same place. He was sure of the resurrection and used that great truth to comfort Martha in her sorrow.

b. His Love for People

We have seen further that Jesus' love for people did not depend on the nature of the individual nor upon their reactions to Him. Whenever He saw anyone in trouble, He was moved with compassion. He loved the rich young ruler in spite of that young man's conceit and rejection of Him. His love was always being expressed in deeds of mercy and kindness. People came to Him because they felt instinctively the genuineness of His love. He was concerned for their bodies as well as their souls, for their happiness now as well as for eternity. His whole life was a ministry of love.

c. His Respect for Human Personality

Jesus placed great value upon each individual soul. Though the crowds thronged Him, He was always taking time to be with individuals. He disregarded social convention-

alities in order to win a Samaritan woman whom the Jews treated with scorn. He saw the yearning for a better life in a woman who was marred by sin. He saw beyond what Zacchaeus was to what he might become. He took ignorant and unlearned fishermen and patiently trained them to become His witnesses.

3. Techniques Used by Jesus

Jesus had a unique way of dealing with people. Along with His love and friendliness, we have seen that He possessed the ability to say and do the right thing at the right time. Certain techniques stand out as guides for present-day personal workers.

a. Began with men's interests

Jesus was concerned primarily with bringing men and women into the Kingdom of God. But He did not always begin by talking to them about that subject. He knew that the most urgent need in most people's lives was to get rid of their sins. But He did not begin by pointing out to them their sins.

He began with people where they were. He first concerned Himself with their interests and then led them to become interested in things of far greater value.

When people were sick, they were interested mainly in becoming well, and Jesus healed them. The cripple at Bethesda and the palsied man wanted to be well. Jesus gave them their desire, but He gave them more. He

released them from the sins that may have been partly responsible for their troubles.

Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for a drink, since she was at a well drawing water, but gradually and in a very natural way, He led her to a conviction of her sin.

When the disciples had toiled all night without catching any fish they probably were in no mood to listen to great spiritual truths. But after Jesus had helped them to bring in a great draught of fishes, they were ready to leave all and follow Him.

In beginning with men's interest, Jesus was acting upon the "psychological law that little or no impression can be made upon one who has no interest in or knowledge of the subject to be presented."¹ But by putting their interests first, He was able to get them to think about things of infinitely greater value.

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b. Commended rather than condemned

When Jesus first called His disciples He saw their weaknesses and shortcomings, but before He showed them where they were at fault, He commended them.

If there was anyone about whom there was no question as to guilt, it was the woman taken in the very act of adultery. But Jesus did not condemn her. "For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world

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1. Pratt, D. M.: The Master's Method of Winning Men, p. 40.
2. Cf. C. G. Trumbull: Taking Men Alive, pp. 176-7.

should be saved through Him."¹

Jesus did not condone sin; after people had become His followers, He sometimes rebuked them openly, and He denounced in no uncertain terms the sins of the Scribes and the Pharisees. But His main objective was to win men and to lead them to realize their own faults. His skill in this is especially evident in His visit with Zacchaeus.

c. Convinced with conviction rather than argument

The woman of Samaria asked several questions that might have started an argument. But Jesus had no desire to prove any points by arguing. He answered her only by stating truths which He Himself firmly believed.

The conviction with which Jesus spoke was evident in His conversation with Nicodemus where He prefaced His statements with the words, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee."

d. Led to conviction of sin

Jesus realized that people could not come into vital relationship with God unless they got rid of the sin in their lives. In some cases Jesus, in the course of ordinary conversation, brought people to a conviction of sin as in the case of Zacchaeus and the woman of Samaria. Sometimes just being with Jesus and seeing the wonderful things He did brought about a conviction of sin, as in the case of Simon Peter, when he said, "Depart from me; for I am a sin-

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1. John 3: 17.

ful man, O Lord."¹

e. Adapted approach to the individual

Jesus recognized the differences in individuals.² The woman of Samaria needed to be "born again" as surely as Nicodemus, but those terms were far beyond the level of her thinking. Nicodemus was a highly intellectual man and was ready to ponder the deep mysteries of the Kingdom. However, Nicodemus may have been over-emphasizing the thought content of religion and had to learn that trust and humility and love also had a part to play. Jesus appealed to the woman of Samaria in the realm of her affections, but He also made her think by the surprising things He said. Jesus knew that Zacchaeus was a practical man, and He got him to do something to show the genuineness of his conversion.

f. Corrected wrong impressions

Jesus would not allow people to continue to think that all suffering was due to sin. Furthermore, He corrected the wrong ideas that the woman of Samaria had in regard to worship.

g. Led men step by step

We find a number of instances where Jesus made it a point to have another contact with someone whom He had already helped. When He healed the cripple at Bethesda, He found him again later on and told him to "Sin no more."

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1. Luke 5: 8.

2. Cf. Richard Hoiland: The Ministry of Friendly Guidance, p. 25.

He went back to the temple to tell the blind man whom He had made to see that He was "the Son of God."

Dr. Charles R. Zahniser points out that in the psychological process of making a Christian character there are four stages: (1) a period of seed-sowing; (2) a period of gestation or incubation; (3) an emotional crisis, commonly called conversion; (4) an ensuing period of development. He parallels with this the teaching of Jesus on the nature of the Kingdom of God: "first the blade, then the ear,¹ after that the full corn in the ear."

Jesus understood this process and perhaps it is most evident of all in His training of the twelve disciples. All the while He was leading them to a higher level "step by step," first bringing them to a recognition of His identity as the Messiah and then proceeding to correct their false ideas concerning the Messiah's mission.

h. Challenged the highest in men

Jesus always challenged the best in people. When He told the disciples that He must suffer and die, He challenged them to take up their crosses. Dr. Wyckoff says that while benefit associations and insurance methods made a direct appeal to self-interest,

"the Church is committed to the spirit of self-sacrifice and service. . . It believes in moral and spiritual progress and refuses to accept human nature as it is, as the highest achievement of the human soul. Its task is sublimation

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1. Cf. C. R. Zahniser: Casework Evangelism, p. 86.
Cf. Mark 4: 28.

of the ego. It throws out its challenge to the higher nature of man, and is constantly surprised by the responses which it receives. Jesus had no hesitation in making His choice. He believed in, and appealed unreservedly to, the highest in man."¹

i. Led people to express their beliefs

After the Jews had done their worst to stir up religious doubts in the mind of the blind man whose sight had been restored, Jesus came to him and led him to express his faith. Martha's "great confession," as well as Peter's, were in response to His questioning as to their belief about Him.

4. Principles Learned from Jesus' Methods

We must always remember that Jesus was the Son of God and as such He understood men and women as we never can. However, there are many ways in which we can follow His example and the more we love people as He did, the better we shall be able to understand them. There are certain principles that can be drawn from a study of Jesus' methods, which should be kept in mind by visitors:

(1) The reality of one's own Christian experience is of first and foremost importance.

(2) Genuine interest in people is essential.

(3) Christians should be concerned about people's bodies as well as their souls, but should not be content to help them merely in a physical way.

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1. Wyckoff, op. cit., p. 161.

(4) Even the worst sinner has an inner yearning for a better life.

(5) The sinner should not be condemned but led to a conviction of sin and a desire awakened within him for a new life.

(6) It is well to recognize and to commend the good in people.

(7) Visitors should respect human personality and be careful never to assume a "holier-than-thou" attitude.

(8) Best results are obtained by beginning with people at the point of their interests.

(9) People will be convinced by conviction more readily than by argument.

(10) Visitors should be natural and talk in terms familiar to the prospect.

(11) The purpose of one's visit should be kept in mind and the conversation directed to that end.

(12) Every individual soul is important. Time spent with one person is never wasted.

(13) It is better to judge people by their possibilities rather than by what they are.

(14) Decisions become meaningful when acted upon.

(15) People need help along the Christian way once they have started. They must be led step by step to higher levels.

(16) Appealing to the highest in people is better

than merely appealing to self-interest.

(17) People should be led to express their beliefs rather than their doubts.

D. Summary

In this chapter we have found that the people visitors may expect to find in the homes to which they will go can be grouped into the following classes: Indifferent, Searchers for the Truth, Acute or Chronic Unbelievers, and Super-believers. Among these we find that maladjustment or problem situations are due to an improper balance of thought, feeling, and will in their experiences.

Although individuals differ greatly from one another, there are certain elements in human nature which all have in common upon which an appeal for the Christian life can be based. These common elements make it possible to lay down certain principles that will be applicable to all cases. There is in everyone the urge to confide in people whom one trusts. Therefore, friendly Christian people usually receive a friendly welcome from the unchurched. There is the urge toward wholeness or for a unifying center, the urge to feel significant, the urge for security, the sense of right and wrong, a consciousness of the Divine. A desire for power beyond oneself causes people to pray. Through the ages there has been a desire on the part of men for a mediator to make possible a more satisfactory

relationship with the Divine. We have found that Jesus Christ is this Mediator and He satisfies the psychological needs of men for God because He not only reveals God's law, but His love, and He makes God's power available.

A study of some of the contacts of Jesus with people has revealed His attitudes and techniques which we can try to practice in our dealings with people. He met the same types of people we meet. His great love for people, His understanding, and His sympathy made them come to Him. He knew what was in their hearts and satisfied their longings. He was concerned about their material as well as their spiritual welfare. He recognized the worth of each individual. He adapted His approach to the individual. He met people at their own level and considered their interests first. He led them step by step and challenged them to live at their best.

Out of this study of His methods seventeen principles were evolved that can be followed by any visitor in this present day and give him the equipment he needs to meet modern problems.

CHAPTER IV

EXPERIMENTS IN VISITATION EVANGELISM

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A. Introduction

Christ has given His commandment: "Go and make disciples." "The field is white unto the harvest," and the method of Visitation Evangelism has been suggested to meet present day needs. It is the purpose of this chapter to find out what has been done along this line and with what results, and to examine and evaluate the literature that is available on "Visitation Evangelism." We shall tell of an actual experiment carried on under the Board of Social Missions of the United Lutheran Church in America by some of the churches in the Bronx, New York City.

Books written on the experiences of Thomas Chalmers and A. E. Kernahan will be used. The materials to be examined are those published by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and of four denominations which are promoting Visitation Evangelism in their churches throughout the country. A chart will accompany this chapter to help in an examination of these materials. The "recent experiment" is one in which the writer participated and therefore the information is first hand.

B. Individual Achievements in the Past

Although working with individuals was the favorite method of both Jesus and His disciples, when the church became fairly well established not so much emphasis was given to this method. More and more the responsibility of spreading the Gospel was left to professional leaders and they worked with the groups of people that came to the churches collectively rather than individually. When persecution drove the Wesleys out of the Church of England, however, in the eighteenth century, they resorted to field preaching and the "field" was so large that they began to use lay preachers in order to meet the need. These, no doubt, did much personal work. They were so carefully and rigorously trained by John Wesley himself that they could not long be called "unlearned," and they were soon devoting all their time to the work.¹ Although we might learn much from a careful study of the methods used by the Wesleys, we shall consider in detail rather the work of Thomas Chalmers, who did what resembles more closely the present day method called "Visitation Evangelism." His efforts were confined to one church at a time while the Wesleys and their itinerant preachers covered a much wider territory. His lay helpers, moreover, did not become preachers, but continued their regular employment and did only visitation work for the church.

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1. Cf. J. Wesley Bready: This Freedom--Whence? pp. 127-137.

In 1910 a fine and typical book on Evangelism devoted one page to personal visitation. In 1912 a new book on Evangelism gave one paragraph to Visitation Evangelism. In 1922 a leader in Evangelism referred to the success of a Rev. Constance L. Goodell seventy-five years before; since 1922 there has been emphasis on pastoral evangelism; and gradually it came to be anticipated that lay people could do a great deal. As late as 1923 a prominent book on Evangelism still stressed only the methods that were of a public nature.¹

In this country Guy H. Black, A. E. Kernahan and Raymond Cooper were among the first to promote Visitation Evangelism as a method that could be used effectively in all churches.

1. Thomas Chalmers

"The principle of carrying religious instruction to every man's door, of bringing its teachers into personal contact with all, the most unwilling to be taught, of persuading, entreating them to hear, by every charm of human lovingkindness and brotherliness--this was the inspiration of Chalmers' life."²

In the early part of the nineteenth century Thomas Chalmers had a vision of what could be done by the method of "Visitation Evangelism" although he did not call it by that name. In the midst of popularity such as no other preacher in Scotland enjoyed, with crowds listening breath-

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1. Cf. Raymond W. Cooper: Modern Evangelism, pp. 76-78.
2. Mrs. M. O. W. Oliphant: Thomas Chalmers, p. 189.

lessly every time he spoke, the famous minister in the Tron Kirk in Glasgow was discontented.

"It irked him to his very soul to be spending his strength, almost ornamentally, as it were, making the sound of one who played cunningly upon an instrument to add an additional pleasure to the well-off and prosperous, while his true charge, his real object, lay untouched."¹

Within the range of what he considered his parish, Thomas Chalmers knew that there were the laboring men and women who would never come to the church but who would listen to the foolish teaching of any demagogue and to impossible schemes of revolution, and whose children were growing up untaught, people who did not realize their own need and who made no attempt themselves to better their conditions.

A sermon on the text "It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables,"² resulted in having some of his secular work taken off his shoulders by laymen who were inspired and guided by their brilliant and earnest minister. This gave him more time to go about among these people for whose welfare he had such great concern. He was received most cordially, but he sensed that in some cases there seemed to be the hope that he probably would have some influence in the distribution of charities. He soon made it clear that his sole purpose was that of giving religious instruction and he testified that "the cordiality of the

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1. Oliphant, op. cit., p. 97.
2. Acts 6: 2.

people was not only enhanced but very much refined."¹

He began to devote his afternoons to visiting in all these homes, inquiring as to its religious habits, of which he found little, inquiring after the children, and extending a friendly invitation to a meeting to be held in some room nearby in the evening. In this way he would gather from a hundred to a hundred twenty-five hearers.

He found great satisfaction in this work, but felt that more could be done if he could enlist the help of laymen. Before his second year in Glasgow he had inspired a group of his elders, young men like himself, with the idea, and had made them aware of their responsibility to the poor. This, he emphasized, consisted not just in helping them financially, but in showing them how to help themselves. Before very long a Sunday School was started to which twenty-eight pupils had agreed to come.

After four years in Glasgow Chalmers was assigned to a new parish where he was more free to carry out his schemes of reaching the poor with the Gospel of salvation, and incidentally of getting rid of all public charity.

Toward the close of his life, after having been active and influential both in church and state affairs, he once more took possession of a district where people were poor, depraved, and uncared for, and made it his parish. Once

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1. Oliphant, op. cit., pp. 100-101.

more he organized his lay workers to help him to bring these people to a new life such as they themselves did not realize was possible. It was characteristic of Dr. Chalmers to be impatient and often impetuous, but with his fellow workers he exercised the utmost patience constantly encouraging them and keeping them from despair. This work was begun in 1843 and by 1847 a church had been built in which "three hundred sittings were at once let to the surrounding families," and one hundred communicants attended the first Communion Service.

It is evident that the success of laymen under the direction of Thomas Chalmers was largely due to his own untiring efforts and to his ability to inspire and encourage them. It can not be emphasized too strongly that faith in and personal enthusiasm for every phase of the program of Visitation Evangelism on the part of the local pastor is an absolute essential to success.

2. A. Earl Kernahan

It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that the method that was so prominent in the early Church and which Thomas Chalmers had used with some success in Scotland was brought to the attention of religious leaders in America. Dr. A. Earl Kernahan was one of the pioneers in this field. He was born in the Middle West and began his evangelistic work at the age of sixteen, using the method of mass evangelism which was the accepted

method in the Methodist Episcopal Church which he served.

On checking up, however, he found that when he had planned a series of meetings for the express purpose of winning those whom he did not get through the regular work of the church, 96% of those attending were already Christians. These people seemed to enjoy the meetings, but felt no responsibility themselves for getting others.

When Dr. Kernahan came to New England in 1913 he found that people there were less emotional and were questioning the method of mass evangelism, but had not found a satisfactory substitute.

After three years in New England he went to New York City for a year and while there helped in setting up district prayer meetings to accompany a Billy Sunday campaign. He made a careful study of the results of the campaign. He found its chief value to be in making the people more militant in their Christian convictions. In other respects it was discouraging. Many of the cards signed were by people who were already church members. Others not of this type, were people who were wrought up emotionally, but who did not make an intelligent clear-cut acceptance of Jesus as their Saviour. Determined to find a method that was more effective, Dr. Kernahan set about to discover just what Jesus did and found that every outstanding convert was won by personal contact. In studying the Acts of the Apostles he found that although Peter won thousands by preaching,

at the same time the other disciples were busily inviting individuals to become followers of Jesus.

The plan that Dr. Kernahan formulated is very much the same as that which is still used today by those who follow this method. There is one week of Intensive Visitation, beginning on Sunday, when preliminary instruction is given and visitors are sent out immediately before the evening meeting. Visitors have supper together every evening. This is followed by reports of visits made and by further instruction and prayer; then all go out again. Usually this is done every evening, Monday through Thursday. On Friday evening plans are made for a permanent visitation evangelism program for the church.

At the Wesleyan Methodist Church in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where plans were made for a permanent organization after the week of intensive visitation, while 115 people had been won during the five days of the campaign, at the end of the Conference year a total of 227 had been won into the church membership.

In the year 1928 when a campaign was conducted in New York City, 152 churches won 10,109 people to decisions for Christ and church membership. Dr. Daniel A. Poling, at the close of this campaign said, "This is the only way to capture New York City for Jesus Christ."¹

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1. A. E. Kernahan: Adventures in Visitation Evangelism, p.38.

The General Synod of the Reformed Church in America reported an increase of 10,000 in membership during the year that this Visitation Evangelism campaign was held. This was the largest yearly increase ever reported by this denomination.

A Spanish Church of 350 members, which did not have even a worship room of its own, and in which every word of instruction was given through an interpreter, sent out 50 visitors and at the end of the week reported 541 decisions. A colored church, in which a campaign of Mass Evangelism by one of their ablest evangelists won 87, secured by the Visitation Evangelism campaign 203 decisions.

A newspaper reporter who went along with a lay evangelist in order to get first hand information on the campaign said,

"The response he met with in every case surprised me and convinced me of the soundness and practicability of Visitation Evangelism. Housewives who opened their doors to our knocks with faces cold and suspicious, welcomed us with cordial friendliness when informed of the purpose of the visit. They seemed deeply impressed and grateful that church members, motivated by no desire for material reward, but solely by a spirit of Christian fellowship, had voluntarily called to invite them into the church and to present the case for the Christian way of life."¹

Dr. Kernahan says this method can be used with equal success in any locality:

"Whether the Church sent these 'Modern Disciples' out

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1. Kernahan, op. cit., p. 20.

into the homes and streets of the Bowery, Greenwich Village, or Riverside Drive and Fifth Avenue Sections of the City of New York, Christ kept up the marvelous average in conquest. Christ is irresistible when He goes calling in our personalities. If this nation and the world is Christianized, He must use our equipment."¹

Before directing a campaign among the students at Brown University, Dr. Kernahan was warned that the students might be inattentive. He found that the students were not enthusiastic about a religious service but were interested in the suggestion that the Christian religion be made a definite adventure in the lives of those who believed that Christ's teachings were adequate principles in all industrial, national, and international problems. He secured fourteen men, trained them, and sent them among the students. In four days they had won seventy-two fellow students to confessions of faith in Christ and membership in the churches of their choice.

Dr. Kernahan is convinced that this method is more effective than that of mass evangelism. He says it meets a need in the life of the laymen because every person as soon as he has been won for Jesus wants to go and win someone else. It clarifies the Christian faith for the person who goes as a visitor. Many lay people are unable to state clearly just why they are followers of Christ, but

"when sent out to win others, where the decision depends upon their conversation, all non-essential statements drop away. They find themselves talking about the one

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1. Kernahan, op. cit., p. 27.

essential thing at the heart of the Christian religion, the Personality and Saviourhood of Christ."¹

C. Present Denominational and Interdenominational Efforts

It has been only in recent years that denominations have begun to publish materials and to advocate that this method be used in their local churches. The Methodist Church pioneered in this field, having in its constituency Dr. Guy H. Black, who was among the first to experiment in Visitation Evangelism.

1. The Methodist Church

At about the same time that Dr. Kernahan felt the need for a method other than mass evangelism to win people to Christ, he met Dr. Guy H. Black, who was also experimenting with Visitation Evangelism. In putting their ideas together, they found they had come to many of the same conclusions. They worked together for several weeks on a campaign in the City of Chicago and were convinced of the efficacy of this method.

In twenty-five years Dr. Black has seen 450,000 decisions won by laymen. He is at the present time serving the General Commission on Evangelism of the Methodist Church as one of its associate secretaries. Besides conducting many Visitation Evangelism campaigns himself, Dr. Black has a planned

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1. Kernahan, op. cit., p. 34.

program for the training of selected ministers to conduct campaigns in different areas, thus conserving time and money and accomplishing more.

2. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America

Dr. Oliver K. Black, a son of Dr. Guy H. Black, was until just recently, the Field Secretary of the Department of Evangelism of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.¹ Literature is sent upon request from this department and the services of Dr. Black for the conducting of programs throughout the country are available. The "Visitation Evangelism Manual" prepared by this department is the most comprehensive single pamphlet of all materials published on the subject. It covers all the details of organization, gives instruction for visitors to enable them to meet almost any situation, and besides suggesting a program for a local church, it tells how to organize an interchurch program.

3. The American Baptist Home Mission Society

Dr. Walter E. Woodbury, Secretary of Evangelism of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, makes use of various pamphlets written by Dr. Guy H. Black, and in addition has compiled a syllabus on "A Method of Home Visitation Evangelism" for use particularly in the churches associated

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1. Dr. Black has recently resigned this position and no one has as yet been appointed to take his place.

with this Board. Dr. Woodbury's personal testimony to the effectiveness of this method is as follows:

"In fifty cities from Providence, Rhode Island, to Oakland and Los Angeles in California, I have tested the effectiveness of an intelligent, Christlike approach to thousands of people in their homes. The plan used follows closely the method of the Master Himself in sending out the seventy, two by two, after brief and definite instruction.

I believe in all legitimate forms of evangelism, including the revival meeting, but I know of no procedure that will reach so many for Christ and the Church from among the tens of thousands of those who were instructed in the Gospel in their youth, but who have been lost by the churches and the Sunday Schools. Everywhere we go the results are limited only by the number of workers that can be thrust forth into the ripened harvest. One hundred trained workers can win 100 in three or four nights. Six hundred workers will win six times as many in the same length of time. This is why the American Baptist Home Mission Society has recently asked four pastors who have been successful in this type of evangelism to give their full time to training other pastors and laymen in Home Visitation, with our slogan 'Every pastor an effective leader of his own laymen in soul-winning.'"

The Baptist Board keeps the local churches informed of new suggestions and new literature by means of a bi-monthly publication called "Pastors' Round Table." Materials on Visitation Evangelism are not sent out unless requested.

4. The United Lutheran Church in America

The Board of Social Missions of the United Lutheran Church of America has as its Director of Evangelism, Dr. Oscar W. Carlson, whose primary task for the past two years has been

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1. Personal Letter to the Writer, December 29, 1944.

the promotion of Visitation Evangelism. This has taken him into fourteen states of the United States and two provinces in Canada. Complete reports on campaigns are not available, but a sample of what can be done is given in the following report from Springfield, Ohio:

Churches cooperating	12
Number of workers	233
Prospects listed for visitation	917
Members received	184
Second prospect list	920
Members received in follow up	182
Total members received	366

This Board keeps its local churches informed of new materials as they are published and makes the services of Dr. Carlson available for directing a Visitation program.

5. The Presbyterian Church U. S. A.

The Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church U. S. A. has recently appointed Dr. George Sweazey as its Secretary for Evangelism. Visitation Evangelism campaigns are being planned for the coming year. Various materials have been published to stimulate local churches to do this kind of work.

D. Comparison and Evaluation of Materials of Various Boards

A study of the materials of the various boards has been made to find out what is available along this line, to note what features of the program are considered es-

COMPARISON OF AVAILABLE MATERIAL

	GENERAL COMMISSION ON EVANGELISM THE METHODIST CHURCH	DEPARTMENT OF EVANGELISM FEDERAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AMERICA	AMERICAN BAPTIST
AIM	To extend the invitation of Christ and the Church to every man, woman, and child.	To commit people to Christ and enlist them in Church membership.	To obtain a Christ and
AVAILABLE LITERATURE	"Home Visitation Evangelism" (1) Preparation & Organization (2) Instruction for Evangelistic Workers "Assimilating New Members"	"Visitation Evangelism Manual"	"A Method o Use of Dr. (Methodis
PREPARATION <u>Prospects</u> Sources	Parents of children in Sunday School and other organizations Non-church members in S. S. Visitors at church services Non-church members in church organizations Unreached members of church families Non-resident members of other churches not attending anywhere Weddings, funerals, dinner club and other friendship contacts People in community having no church connections	Unchurched parents of Sunday School children Sunday School youth Visitors at services, meetings Unchurched members of church organizations Unreached members of church families Weddings, funerals, baptisms, other community contacts of minister /bers Friends and relatives of mem-	Visitors at Members of members of Relatives in bers of ch Pastor's re and wedding Friends of
Classi- fication	Specials - outstanding persons 1st class - S.S. parents, letter transfers, children, youth, young married couples 2nd class - people married ten years and no children, people over 45, single men beyond 20, husbands disinterested long time 3rd class - difficult cases	Class A - most likely to be receptive--parents, attendants at services, active members of organizations Class B - more difficult all others	
Keeping Records	Pastor should have plan of checking assignments	Prospect and Assignment Card	Assignment Master Lis
<u>Preparing Congrega- tion</u>			Mobilize pr weeks befo (1) Home P (2) Prayer
<u>Visitors Selec- tion</u>	80% men, 20% women Teams of men or husbands and wives	60% men, 40% women Key laymen of church Leaders in organizations Members of church boards S.S. teachers and officers Officers of young people's societies	80% men, 20

MATERIALS ON "VISITATION EVANGELISM"

N BAPTIST HOME MISSION SOCIETY	BOARD OF SOCIAL MISSIONS UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA	BOARD OF NATIONAL MISSIONS PRESBYTERIAN, U.S.A.
in a decision for and the Church. od of Home Visitation Evangelism" Dr. Black's pamphlets odist) suggested	To secure commitment to the Christian life and Church membership. "Building and Cultivating the Prospect Roll" "Selecting Lay Evangelists" "Training the Lay Evangelist" "Reaching for Them" Poster	To win people to Christ and His Church "Two and Two" "The Ministry of Personal Work" "The Personal Worker" "The Invitation Committee"
s at church of church groups not s of church es in families of mem- f church, S.S., etc. s records of funerals dings of members	Families of Church School pupils Teen age youth Visitors Parents of unbaptized children Young married couples New residential sections "Watch the moving van" Friends, relatives, neighbors attending special programs Funerals, weddings Community contacts of pastor Hospital acquaintances People in need (welfare work)	Church School Rolls--new adult members and parents of pupils Visitors at church New families moving into neighborhood Prayer Card suggested to obtain prospects: "Will you join with me in prayer that the following may be won for Christ?"
		Assign easier prospects first, more difficult after visitors have had experience
ent Cards - Make List for Church office	"Prospect Roll" in journal, loose-leaf book, or on cards	Someone should keep definite records
e prayer support six before-- ne Prayer Meetings ayer Partners	Everyone in congregation must have a place and task. Secure help of congregation in making prospect list. Special sermons	Send letter to every member ask- ing to sign "Prayer Fellowship" Card. Sermons on "Need of Savior," "Saving Power of Christ," "Value of Human Personality in Kingdom of God."
, 20% women	Pray for guidance in selecting Qualifications: active, consis- tent Christians, merciful in judgment, know Bibles, positive Lutherans, witnesses not preach- ers, cooperative, sure of Christ's power to change men, of Holy Spirit's convicting of sin, God using people to win men Include people from all walks of life and all ages	Choose as workers men and women "of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" "Invitation Committee"---"select group of men and women who have both the willingness and the ability to do personal work"

<u>Visitors</u> Sele- ction	80% men, 20% women Teams of men or husbands and wives	60% men, 40% women Key laymen of church Leaders in organizations Members of church boards S.S. teachers and officers Officers of young people's societies	80% men, 20
Enlist- ment	3 weeks before Visitation Week Personal interview by pastor Draftees rather than volunteers Use "Visitation Agreement Card"	1 month before Visitation Week Personal invitation by minister Draft visitors--a call for volunteers will not get most talented workers Use "Visitation Agreement Card" Deal with Visitor's excuses	3 weeks bef Personal in Use "Visita Cards"
Personal Prepara- tion			
Instruc- tion	During Visitation Week--Sun.P.M., Supper meetings Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs. evenings. 25 minutes for instruction. Begin calling 7:05.	During Visitation Week--Sun.P.M., Supper meetings Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs. evenings. 25 minutes for instruction. Begin calling 7:15.	During Visit Supper meet Wed., Thurs. for instruc
Sub- jects	How to Conduct an Interview Ten Effective Talking Points Securing the Decision	Outline of a Visit The Friendly Approach The Progressive Appeal Securing the Decision After Securing the Decision Principles of Persuasion Proposals that Secure Results Church Letter Transfer Excuses Problem Attitudes	The Basic Ap Techniques a of Efficie Getting chur Dealing with Grading our Problem Case Program of A Continuati
ASSIMILATION OF CONVERTS	Pastor's Spiritual Guidance Visit emphasizing prayer, church attendance, gifts to church, service Pastor's Instruction Class for Children and Young People "Fellowship Friend" To stand by new Christian for six months and help him feel at home Give helpful literature Take capable men as teammates on evangelistic visits Follow-up Visit after Membership Sunday. Membership Anniversary call by pastor (1st year)	Pastor's Instruction Visit emphasizing personal prayer, family worship, Bible reading; secure pledge to church atten- dance as a regular habit "Fellowship Friend" Visitors help newcomers to establish church attendance habit Cultivate interest in educa- tion, service and fellowship organizations in the church	Pastor's Ins Pastor's Ins for Childre "Sponsors" o Friends" Meeting of h ments and c assign new Pastor take evening of calling dur of membersh
PERMANENT ORGANIZATION	No special instructions given, but in one of pamphlets we read	Form of Organization Led by minister him- self	Finish up pr

	Special sermons	Saving Power of Christ, "Value of Human Personality in Kingdom of God."
en	Pray for guidance in selecting Qualifications: active, consistent Christians, merciful in judgment, know Bibles, positive Lutherans, witnesses not preachers, cooperative, sure of Christ's power to change men, of Holy Spirit's convicting of sin, God using people to win men Include people from all walks of life and all ages	Choose as workers men and women "of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" "Invitation Committee"--"select group of men and women who have both the willingness and the ability to do personal work"
crusade ew by pastor	Pastor interview personally Draft visitors - "Ye have not chosen me--I have chosen you." (John 15: 16)	Some will volunteer, others must be drafted
Enrollment	Visitor's excuses--2 Tim.1: 6.	
	Learn to share own experience by doing; cultivate personal spiritual life; memorize key scripture; group study from syllabus "Reaching for Them"	Know doctrines and gov't of church Read "Studies on Conversion," "Personal Workers," "Selected Bible Statements for Personal Workers" Attend midweek meetings on "Jesus and Personal Work" Daily Bible study; Prayer Groups
Week--Sun.P.V., Mon., Tues., ngs. 30 minutes and prayer.	During Visitation Week--Sun.P.M., Supper meetings every evening, 6 to 7:30. Visit from 7:30 to 10:00 p.m.	Supper meetings every Monday (four week program) with talk by pastor. Meet Thursday evenings for reports.
h inciples terviewing tters ses ach lation and	Topics in Syllabus including Conducting an Interview Five Points in the Art of Interviewing Reasons which urge Prospect to a Commitment Answers to Excuses and Problems	"Interviews of Jesus"
on Visit	Pastor's Class on "The Christian Way of Truth and Life"	Instruction classes for new members stressing doctrines and government of church, attendance at services, contributions, organization
on Class		
lowship	Appoint "Friendly Sponsor"	Visitors take responsibility for introducing new into whole life of church members assigned to meet session for spiritual oversight.
f depart- groups to s' names ed men on listic rst month	Offer to call for or have someone else call first Sunday or for first class meeting Get suggestions of persons he would like you to visit or visit with you Find place of service	

Sub- jects	How to Conduct an Interview Ten Effective Talking Points Securing the Decision	Outline of a Visit The Friendly Approach The Progressive Appeal Securing the Decision After Securing the Decision Principles of Persuasion Proposals that Secure Results Church Letter Transfer Excuses Problem Attitudes	The Basic Techniques of Effic Getting ch Dealing wi Grading ou Problem Ca Program of Continua
ASSIMILATION OF CONVERTS	Pastor's Spiritual Guidance Visit emphasizing prayer, church attendance, gifts to church, service Pastor's Instruction Class for Children and Young People "Fellowship Friend" To stand by new Christian for six months and help him feel at home Give helpful literature Take capable men as teammates on evangelistic visits Follow-up Visit after Membership Sunday. Membership Anniversary call by pastor (1st year)	Pastor's Instruction Visit emphasizing personal prayer, family worship, Bible reading; secure pledge to church atten- dance as a regular habit "Fellowship Friend" Visitors help newcomers to establish church attendance habit Cultivate interest in educa- tion, service and fellowship organizations in the church	Pastor's I Pastor's I for Child "Sponsors" Friends" Meeting of ments and assign ne Pastor tak evening o calling d of member
PERMANENT ORGANIZATION	No special instructions given, but in one of pamphlets we read, "The most satisfactory results are obtained by a short intensive campaign which will be followed with a permanent organization for quiet continuous work."	Form of Organization Led by minister himself Visitation Evangelism Chairman or Standing Committee Board of Evangelism Duties of Leadership Maintain Live Prospect List Train Additional Visitors Plan Definite Program for Whole Year	Finish up Form "Fell Meet twic Sponsors Build larg Have regul gelistic Get worker this work
ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS	<u>Leadership Training Schools</u> Training competent pastors so they may direct campaigns for local groups of churches. Instruction given to pastors at eight o'clock breakfasts; they in turn instruct visi- tors at supper meetings in respective districts.	<u>How to Organize an Inter- church Program</u> Sponsorship Ministerial Association or a council of churches President and General Committee Responsibilities of General Committee: Enlist churches, correspond with Department of Evangelism, arrange schedule of meetings for advance visit of Field Secretary, arrange for and supervise interdenominational aspects, schedule Director's time during Visitation Week, arrange for breakfast meeting of ministers to discuss perman- ent organization and assimila- tion program, districting area.	

Instruction and prayer.	Visit from 7:30 to 10:00 p.m.	by pastor - most evenings for reports.
Basic Approach Techniques and Principles Efficient Interviewing Writing church letters Dealing with Excuses Presenting our Approach Common Cases Plan of Assimilation and Continuation	Topics in Syllabus including Conducting an Interview Five Points in the Art of Interviewing Reasons which urge Prospect to a Commitment Answers to Excuses and Problems	"Interviews of Jesus"
Pastor's Instruction Visit Pastor's Instruction Class Children Sponsors or "Fellowship Friends" Meeting of heads of depart- ments and church groups to sign new members' names Pastor take talented men on writing of evangelistic writing during first month membership	Pastor's Class on "The Chris- tian Way of Truth and Life" Appoint "Friendly Sponsor" Offer to call for or have some- one else call first Sunday or for first class meeting Get suggestions of persons he would like you to visit or visit with you Find place of service	Instruction classes for new members stressing doctrines and government of church, attendance at services, con- tributions, organization Visitors take responsibility for introducing new into whole life of church members assigned to meet session for spiritual oversight.
Show up present job "Fellowship of Evangelism" Meet twice a month Sponsors Build large prospect list Regular night for evan- gelistic visiting Workers to pledge to do their work	Revise Prospect List Have intensive Visitation Program once, twice, three or four times a year as necessary	Organize those who have served as workers into permanent per- sonal workers' group Enlist worthy new recruits from year to year

sentia1, and to discover the emphases of each one in particular. The accompanying chart has helped us to compare these materials. It is concerned mainly with the organization of the program.

1. Aims

The aims are necessarily brief, leaving it to the pastor to clarify and enlarge upon them for his particular church. In each case, the decision to be secured is "for Christ and the Church"--not one or the other, but both. This is important. Anyone who makes a sincere decision for Christ will naturally want to associate himself with other Christians and fellowship with them will help him to grow. There is, furthermore, the need for worship. On the other hand, as is particularly emphasized in the Lutheran materials, we do not want merely church members. Our aim should be to lead men to Christ.

2. Preparation

The success of the program will depend largely upon the preparation for it; this will require much time and thought, including making up the prospect list, preparing the congregation, selecting, enlisting and preparing the visitors for this work.

a. Prospect List

The sources given by each for the prospect list are very much the same. None consider it advisable to go from

door to door, but rather to go to those with whom the church already has some contact. Parents of Sunday School children will usually form a large number of the prospects. The Lutheran materials deal at length with the matter of having the members of the congregation constantly on the outlook for prospects. The Federal Council and Methodist materials classify the prospects, mainly for the purpose of separating the more difficult from the less difficult. These two and the Presbyterian materials all make the suggestion that the easier ones be visited first, thus giving the visitors courage to go to the more difficult ones after they have had some experience. They do not, however, give any special help on meeting difficult cases.

All recognize the importance of keeping accurate records. The Baptist materials give the excellent suggestion of having two sets of Prospect Cards, one for the church office and the other for the use of the visitors.

b. Preparing the Congregation

In the Lutheran materials we find the statement that "everyone in the congregation must have a place and task," and "the lay evangelists require the enthusiastic, constant prayerful support of the entire active membership." The Presbyterians give the most specific plans for enlisting the support of the entire congregation. They suggest the "Prayer Card" to be used to obtain prospects. They further recommend that a letter be sent to every member enclosing a

"Prayer Fellowship" pledge card to be signed and returned to the pastor, and a follow-up letter to arouse further interest and sense of responsibility. They list sermon subjects that may be used and give suggestions for midweek services on "Jesus and Personal Work." The emphasis on prayer is significant in these suggestions. The Baptist materials recognize the need for prayer and advise home prayer meetings and prayer partners.

c. Selecting and Enlisting Visitors

The Lutherans lay great stress on the spiritual qualifications of the visitors chosen, stating that the selecting of lay evangelists should be made a matter of earnest prayer. We remember that Jesus chose His disciples after a night spent in prayer. The selecting, enlisting, and instructing of visitors is given detailed attention by each Board.

It is interesting to note that the consensus of opinion is that the majority of the visitors should be men. Dr. Guy Black says, "They make better use of salesmanship principles, hold to their subject and secure a larger percentage of decisions." In view of the fact that so many congregations in New York City consist largely of women, people will be further impressed to know that there are men in the churches who consider this work important. The Lutherans say that visitors should be selected from all walks of life. The Federal Council adds that young people

should be enlisted to win other young people.

It is emphasized that visitors should be enlisted three or four weeks in advance, according to the Methodist, Federal Council, and Baptist materials, to avoid having other engagements interfere with the work during Visitation Week.

All except the Presbyterian materials make a special point of the fact that it is better to draft visitors than to ask them to volunteer, and that the pastor should invite them personally--not by letter or telephone, but by personal contact. The Federal Council, Baptists, and Methodists have the visitors sign a card on which they agree to do this work and to come regularly to the instruction meetings.

d. Preparation of Visitors

In view of the principle that "the reality of one's own Christian experience is of first and foremost importance,"¹ the emphasis placed upon personal and spiritual preparation by the Lutherans and Presbyterians can be well taken. The Lutheran booklet, "Reaching for Them," gives a series of topics for group study preceding the visitation. In their leaflet, "Training the Lay Evangelist," a section is devoted to Personal Preparation which points out the necessity for cultivating one's own personal spiritual life, sharing ex-

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1. Ante, p. 75.

periences, and memorizing key scripture verses. The Presbyterian Board advises visitors to acquaint themselves with the doctrines and government of the church as given in "The Communicant Member," and to attend the midweek meetings on "Jesus and Personal Work."

Literature for the personal use of the visitor is provided by each Board and visitors are further instructed regarding techniques at the supper meetings held during Visitation Evangelism Week.

3. Carrying Out of Program

The Presbyterian materials suggest that the intensive campaign be held for four consecutive weeks, while the Methodist Board thinks the most satisfactory results are obtained by a short intensive campaign followed with a permanent organization for quiet continuous work. Dr. Black says that "business men will agree to give Sunday afternoon and four evenings to evangelistic visitation when they will not agree to give their evenings for several weeks." The others all suggest one week of intensive visitation.

a. Supper Meetings for Instruction

Preliminary instructions are advocated to be given on Sunday afternoon and further instructions at the supper meetings held every evening before the actual visiting is done.

b. The Conduct of an Interview

The Federal Council, Baptist, Methodist and Lutheran

materials give detailed instructions on the conduct of interviews, including methods of approach, principles of interviewing, appeals to use, how to deal with excuses, and how to secure decisions. The Presbyterian materials are less specific about techniques for visitors although suggestions on approaches and dealing with excuses are given in their pamphlets for the use of visitors. For the instruction they suggest pastor's talks on "Interviews of Jesus." The Baptists are the only ones who give attention to special problems that may be faced and that very briefly.

(1) Methods of Approach

In conducting the interview, the essential of genuine ¹friendliness is constantly stressed. In every instance it is suggested that a friendly atmosphere be created as visitors enter the home. This is done by taking an interest in the prospect's interests--²a picture on the table, children playing on the floor, or whatever may call for comment. The visitor is advised next to find out the religious background of the prospect by asking questions that can be answered positively rather than negatively, and by ³assuming the best in the person. For instance, the Lutheran materials suggest that instead of saying, "I never see you in Church," one should say, "You go to Church occasionally, no doubt." The Federal Council suggests that the visitor

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| 1. | Ante, p. 75, Principle | 2. |
| 2. | " p. 76, " | 8. |
| 3. | " p. 76, " | 6. |

say, "You probably are already a Christian and a member of a church somewhere." This preliminary conversation will bring out their past religious experience and often their attitudes toward religion on which the appeals can then be built.

(2) Principles of Interviewing

In discussing the principles for successful interviewing the need for genuine friendliness is again emphasized, as well as the need for sincerity, for "listening,"¹ but at the same time directing the conversation,² for teamwork on the part of visitors. The Lutheran materials warn against assenting to false statements such as "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you live right," or "All the church is interested in is getting one's money."³ The Baptists emphasize that one of the first essentials is real dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Jesus impressed this upon the disciples when He⁴ sent them out.

Some "don'ts" are given: don't get discouraged, don't rush decision, don't decide matters of moral conduct which should be left to the individual conscience,⁵ don't argue.

(3) Appeals to Use

All the materials state several appeals that can be

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1. Ante, p. 60, Principle 4.
2. " p. 76, " 11.
3. " p. 73.
4. Cf. Matthew 10: 19-20.
5. Ante, p. 76, Principle 9.

made in the effort to secure a decision. The appeals for a Christian home, for service to mankind, for the bettering of world conditions are emphasized. Since many of the people to be visited are parents of Sunday School, the appeal for a Christian home is in the line of their interests.¹ The appeal for service is particularly effective, according to the Methodist materials, "for youth, young married people, and modern business men, who have a vision of community service." This appeal is based upon the urge to feel significant² which often manifests itself in service. Present world conditions are of immediate interest to everyone in these days, and our own convictions³ that they can be improved upon through vital Christianity on the part of individuals will impress upon prospects the necessity for their personal commitment.

The appeals to conscience, the need for salvation and spiritual resources are suggested, recognizing people's sense of right and wrong⁴ and their feelings of inadequacy without God. Dr. Guy Black says, "The visitor's task with most prospects is to persuade them to do what they confess they should do." Dr. Oliver Black recognizes the psychological fact that "A sense of guilt is disturbing to the emotions, depressing to the mind, and detrimental to all

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1. Ante, p. 76, Principle 8.
2. " p. 51.
3. " p. 76, Principle 9.
4. " p. 52.

of life." He stresses the need for Christ as the life center when he says, "Christianity is a way of organizing life around Christ."

(4) Dealing with Excuses

All except the Methodist materials devote much space to the handling of excuses. In getting church membership transfers the most common excuses are, "I don't know how long I'll stay here," and "I don't want to leave the old home church." The other excuses have to do mainly with an unwillingness to commit themselves to support the church by their attendance and contributions. People can not give any good reason for not being Christians. Dr. Woodbury says, "Talk Christ and the Christian home before church membership. When Christ is welcomed into the heart of a man often there is no church membership problem. But church membership without Christ we do not want." The visitor's problem is not to give the answer to the excuse, but to answer without arguing or becoming vindictive.

(5) Use of Decision Card

The use of a "Decision Card" is recommended by the Methodists, Baptists, and Federal Council, who all use the same card, and by the Lutherans whose card is for use in Lutheran Churches only. The former contains three decisions-- for the Christian life, church membership, and transfer of church letter. The card used by the Lutherans contains

several statements, one side being for use with those who have never confessed Christ, the other for those who wish to join the local church. There is so much printing on the card that it would be likely to cause confusion in the mind of the prospect. The purpose of the signing of the card is to get the prospect to act on the decision he has¹ made and to give the pastor a record of that decision.

4. Plans for Assimilation and Permanent Program

All the materials go extensively into the matter of follow-up work, emphasizing the importance of this part of the program. This is based on the principle that people need to be helped along the Christian way once they have² started. The Federal Council, Methodist, and Baptist materials recommend an instruction class for children, but only an "instruction visit" by the pastor for adults. The Lutherans and Presbyterians advise a pastor's class for the instruction of adults, the latter, however, suggesting it to be done after the converts have joined the church. The Presbyterians mention instruction in doctrine and government of the church, while the others tend to emphasize prayer, worship, habit of church attendance. In view of³ the principle of leading people step by step, the writer

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1. Ante, p. 76, Principle 14.
2. " " " 15.
3. Ibid.

feels that the Lutheran idea of having a class for instruction for a six week period at the end of which time an opportunity is given to declare faith in Christ publicly by uniting with the church, would be the best policy to follow. There are so many things to be clarified for the new Christian that one visit would hardly be enough time; furthermore, it would conserve the time of the pastor if he could teach several people at once. Personal interviews could be arranged if necessary.

The Methodist Board issues a whole pamphlet on the subject of "Assimilating New Members" which gives many helpful suggestions, including the use of devotional literature which is not mentioned by the others. All feel that it is necessary to intrust the new member to some old member and in this way get him integrated into the whole life of the church. The "Fellowship Friend" idea will give an important share in the work to some of those in the congregation who have not been able to do the calling.

All deem it important that a permanent organization for the purpose of continuing the visitation program be formed and give instructions for the same.

The Methodists give special instructions for Leadership Training Schools and the Federal Council gives suggestions on organizing an inter-church program.

E. A Recent Experiment

It was the writer's privilege to participate in a program of Visitation Evangelism conducted by Dr. Carlson of the Board of Social Missions of the United Lutheran Church in America during the week beginning October 1, 1944, and acting as one of the visitors for the St. Thomas Evangelical Lutheran Church, which was one of the five Lutheran Churches in the Bronx, New York, participating in this program.

1. Preparation

The Rev. John H. Munnich, pastor of the St. Thomas Evangelical Lutheran Church, had a vision of what could be done in this way after a conversation with a relative of his who had been one of the lay visitors in her church and who was very enthusiastic about the work. Pastor Munnich's first move was to get in touch with the Board of Social Missions and after informing himself in regard to Visitation Evangelism he arranged for Dr. Carlson to meet with all the pastors of the United Lutheran Churches in the Bronx. Only four of the pastors responded, but these four, together with Dr. Carlson and Pastor Munnich, made plans to try a program of this kind in the Bronx, extending once more an invitation to all the pastors who were not represented at the first meeting. In a letter inviting these other pastors to a meeting for preliminary organization for

the fall, Pastor Munnich says, (in regard to the first meeting)

"All of us agreed that the value of visitation evangelism was not reflected merely in the number of new members received, but perhaps even more in the fine spirit aroused in the workers who, at long last, are able intelligently and effectively to get down to the real work of the Christian--winning others for Christ."¹

In a personal letter to the writer, Pastor Munnich says,

"Visitation, it seems to me, is getting back as nearly as possible today to the thing Jesus did--seeking people, one by one, where they are--helping them to understand the possibilities and importance of their souls--the good will, the redemptive love and the power of God. It seems to me that when the church membership can once again return to something like visitation evangelism, the power of the Spirit will return to the church."²

Another letter was sent to the interested pastors on September 15, outlining the plan of procedure, when and where instruction meetings were to be held, and suggested as preparation on the part of the pastors:

"(1) Preach on the major importance of evangelism.
(2) Work up a large list of prospects to be visited.
(3) Plan and publicize course of instruction to be offered to prospects in preparation for church membership. (4) Enlist your most capable laymen and women as a permanent committee."³

On September 22 Pastor Munnich wrote a letter to those whom he had chosen to be visitors for his church, telling them that they were among the twenty-four people in the church whom he felt were best qualified to be the visitors

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1. Letter, June 21, 1944.
2. " " "
3. " September 15, 1944.

in this campaign, giving them the purpose of the plan, and inviting them to a meeting in which further details would be discussed. At this preliminary meeting two members from another church which had had such a program in which they had participated, were present to tell of their personal experiences.

2. Carrying out the Program

Visitation Evangelism Week was begun with a meeting on Sunday afternoon, October 5, at which Dr. Carlson gave preliminary instruction. The plan was that visitors would go out by twos on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and further instruction was to be given on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Reports of visits were to be made on Wednesday evening. Instruction was given on how to conduct an interview, how to gain entrance to a home, what appeals to make, and principles for successful visitation. Each visitor was given a copy of the pamphlet, "Reaching for Them." Dr. Carlson stressed the need for prayer and the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the value of personal testimony.

Members of the five churches attended some or all of the joint meetings held for instruction, but when the time for reports on Wednesday evening came, it was found that very few had gone out on the date specified. In some cases this was due to the failure to clear the docket of all other meetings. Visitors for the St. Thomas Church

went out on other evenings of the week which were convenient for them and brought in their reports of visits at a meeting the following Monday.

3. Results

Of the five churches which decided to carry out a program of Visitation Evangelism only three actually went ahead with their plans immediately. Two of them decided to wait until the pre-Lenten period. One of the others received twenty-two new members. The pastor of this church was very enthusiastic about it and was planning to do it again in January. The pastor of another church which tried it was not enthusiastic and apparently the program did not prove a success. The St. Thomas Church had forty new members publicly confessing their faith in Jesus Christ as a result of the Visitation Campaign. It is interesting to note that the churches whose pastors were themselves enthusiastic about the program had the best results.

The active membership of the St. Thomas Church totals approximately one hundred seventy-five so that forty new members in proportion to the congregation would be considered a goodly number. Over half of the prospects visited became members, which is a good percentage, according to the director of the program. The visitors themselves were most enthusiastic. It made them happy to see those whom they visited join their church and gave them a new interest in the church. They took it upon themselves to check up on

people on whom they had called when they did not attend the class or church services.

The pastor's class for instruction was not as well attended as it was hoped, making it evident that careful follow-up work would be necessary. The pastor and visitors planned another program of visitation for the pre-Lenten period.

F. Summary

In the present chapter we made a study of what has been done in the field of Visitation Evangelism. We found that the method so effectively used in the early Church fell into disuse, and only in recent years have definite programs been set up to motivate lay people to do personal work.

Thomas Chalmers used the method in the early part of the nineteenth century in Scotland when he conceived the idea of reaching the unreached in his parish by house to house visitation and realizing the magnitude of his task he enlisted the help of his most consecrated laymen. The parish in which he first started this work resembles many churches in New York City today where most of the parishioners come from a distance while the people living near the church are unaware of the message it has which they so sorely need and which they probably never will receive until people from the Church go to them in their homes.

A. Earl Kernahan was among the first to actively promote Visitation Evangelism in America. He conducted a successful campaign in New York City in 1928. Dr. Kernahan started out as an evangelistic preacher, but felt that mass evangelism alone did not reach many outside the Church. After experimenting with Visitation Evangelism he was convinced of its effectiveness and did much not only in directing campaigns but in stimulating interest by writing and publishing books on the subject.

Guy H. Black has written less, but probably has directed as many campaigns as Dr. Kernahan, these two men having begun their experiments along this line at about the same time and working together for a time. He is at present serving the Methodist Church as its Secretary of Evangelism and has written several pamphlets for use in that denomination.

In recent years the Federal Council of Churches, the United Lutheran Church, the American Baptist Home Mission Society, and the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. have all published materials on Visitation Evangelism to be used in their local churches. The accompanying chart shows wherein their programs differ and what essentials are emphasized by all.

Five Lutheran churches in the Bronx cooperated on a program directed by Dr. Oscar Carlson, the Secretary of Evangelism for the United Lutheran Church. The campaign

was successful insofar as it was carried out according to instructions. The church whose pastor first proposed it was most successful, perhaps largely because its leader was so enthusiastic about it himself.

This chapter shows us that Visitation Evangelism wherever it has been tried has proven to be an effective method of winning souls for Christ and for the Church in proportion to the enthusiasm and effort put into it by the soul-winners.

CHAPTER V

A SUGGESTED PROGRAM OF VISITATION EVANGELISM

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A SUGGESTED PROGRAM OF VISITATION EVANGELISM

A. Introduction

In the light of the findings of foregoing chapters, it is the purpose of this chapter to suggest a program that can be used in a local church. The writer has had in mind particularly situations as found in New York City, but with slight variations the program can be adapted for use in churches located elsewhere.

The program will be based on the principles arrived at in Chapter III. Helpful suggestions have been gleaned from the materials studied in Chapter IV, as well as from books written by men who have had experience in Visitation Evangelism. Books on personal evangelism and work with individuals have also been drawn upon.

B. Statement of Purpose

Every successful teacher has in her mind certain very definite aims toward which her teaching will be directed. These are of two kinds, general and specific. The general aims usually cover the whole series of lessons and have to do with ultimate goals, while the specific aims are confined to a particular lesson.

Every successful pastor, likewise, will have definite

aims for his church which he will have in his mind in building his church program. Visitation Evangelism is, of course, only one part of that program, but since the congregation plays such an important part in it, they, too, must have it put clearly before them what the purpose is.

In suggesting a Visitation Evangelism program we shall assume that the general aim of the Church is to inspire faith in God as Creator and Father, in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and only Saviour of the world and of each individual, in the Holy Spirit as the Guide and Power of every Christian, and to nurture that faith to the end that it will produce Christlike living in those who profess it.

What, then, should be our specific aim in making evangelistic calls? We shall want to share with those whom we visit our Christian faith to the end that they will want to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour and surrender their lives to Him, to share our Christian fellowship as members of the Christian Church, and, consequently, to help also in bringing the Gospel to others.

How much can be accomplished in one visit will vary according to the nature of the prospect, his religious background, his present attitude, as well as on what the visitor expects to accomplish. There were times when Jesus did not win people immediately, and some who followed gladly at first later turned away; but He was not a defeatist. He had faith in people and by constant

association with Him they were changed. Jesus spent much time with the disciples; carefully and painstakingly He trained them; yet when He was arrested they all forsook Him. But they came back and with them the Church began and grew rapidly because of their enthusiastic witnessing. So we must be patient with people and not think our task is completed when we have made one visit.

We cannot expect people with no religious background to be able to understand immediately all the theology that it has taken us years to acquire. Dr. Shoemaker tells of his experience with a young man who felt that all he could believe about Christ at the present time was that he felt Him to be the best man that ever was. Dr. Shoemaker told him he thought that was a very good place to start:

"It was where the first apostles started when He called them away from the lakeside to become fishers of men. They knew nothing then of His divinity, all they knew was that they were irresistibly attracted by Him, felt He was unanswerably right about life, and were willing to drop everything to spread His way of life. As time wore on, their vision enlarged, their experience deepened, and they saw the whole Christ."²

So this man agreed to "surrender as much of himself as he could, to as much of Christ as he understood." When this man was baptized a few months later, he said, "I believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ is my Saviour."

Rather than lose them altogether on the one hand, or

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1. Cf. S. M. Shoemaker: Children of the Second Birth, pp. 24-27.
2. Ibid., p. 24.

have them make a decision for Christ which they do not understand on the other hand, let us lead them to an acceptance of as much of Christ as they do understand, then hold them to that much and help them to act on the decision¹ they have made.

C. Preparation

Careful preparation will need to be made several weeks in advance so that the program may be carried out in an orderly and thorough way and problems anticipated.

1. Enlisting Support of Congregation

Not only the pastor and church officials and the lay visitors are to be prepared, but the entire congregation must prepare to make this an all-out effort. It will need the support of every member because as Bishop John Moore has said,

"It is the Christian Church and not any one individual that is the real evangelist. Unless the Church has the evangelistic passion the spokesman has no carrying voice."²

a. Prayer

One advocate of Visitation Evangelism says,

"Work without prayer is liable to be mere movement; prayer without work is pious laziness; but usually one who gets at the work of Evangelism came to it by the way of sincere prayer."³

When Jesus got the vision of the "plenteous harvest," the

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1. Ante, p. 76, Principle 14.
2. Pamphlet, "The Invitation Committee," Board of National Missions, p. 9.
3. Cooper, op. cit., p. 134.

first thing He did was to urge His disciples to pray that the Lord would send forth laborers into His harvest fields.¹ So the pastor who gets a vision of the "harvest" waiting to be gathered in round about his church will want to make this a subject for earnest prayer and get his church officials and then his whole congregation to pray for laborers. Prayer by groups of twos and threes should be stimulated as well as the larger group prayer meetings. In this respect, even the sick, shut-ins, and the aged can feel that they have a very definite part.² Everyone will in this way become conscious of his dependence upon God for the success of this undertaking.

b. Sermons

The Pastor's part, of course, is of supreme importance. Unless he himself is a personal worker he can not inspire his people to do this work. "His enthusiasm for winning souls should be contagious."³ His Sunday sermons can be directed to arouse a desire to engage in this all-important work of soul-winning. He will need first to open the eyes of his people to the need for Christ in their immediate community. A graphic presentation of the needs evident from present world conditions caused by godlessness and selfish-⁴

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1. Cf. Matthew 9: 36-38.
2. Cf. Pamphlet, "Forward in Evangelism," American Baptist Home Mission Society.
3. A. W. Blackwood: Evangelism in the Home Church, p. 106.
4. Ante, pp. 16-25.

ness ought to arouse a slumbering congregation. He will need to awaken them to their personal responsibility to heed the command of Jesus to "Go and make disciples." At least four sermons might be preached for the express purpose of stimulating people to action and to bring them to the point where they would feel with Paul, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel."¹

c. Midweek Meetings

"Personal Interviews of Jesus" might well be the subject for several midweek meetings preceding the effort in evangelism. This will be an interesting study for the entire congregation and will at the same time be good preparation for those who are going to do the calling.

2. Making the Prospect List

One of the first things to be done by way of organization is to build a prospect list, which should include all those for whom the church considers itself responsible. Non-Christian parents of Sunday School pupils should be among the first to be contacted for Christ and the Church. Unchurched parents of children connected with other organizations such as the Scouts and young people's groups will be prospects. The Church Guest Book will have names of people for whom the church should be responsible. Friends,

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1. 1 Corinthians 9: 16b.

relatives and unreached members of church families will be on the prospect list. The pastor will make various contacts through funerals, weddings, and baptisms that should be followed up. There will be those living in the community who belong to other churches, but might prefer to transfer their church membership to the church near which they live. In some localities it might be advisable to make a religious survey prior to the Visitation program to determine the church affiliation of people and to decide whether they should be called upon. In New York City this would involve much waste of time and effort, and most churches will find all the prospects they are able to assimilate among those with whom they already have some contact.

Prayer cards with the words, "Will you join with me in prayer that the following may be won for Christ?" should be distributed among the members of the congregation to get their help in building the prospect list. The name and address of the prospect and any other information that will help the visitor when calling should be given.

Two cards should be filled out for each prospect, one to be given to the visitor, the other to be kept on file in the church office. One person should be appointed to keep an accurate record of all prospects. The following

form is suggested:

<u>Prospect and Assignment Card</u>	
Name	_____
Address	_____
Reason for being on our responsibility list:	

Other information:	

Called on by	_____ Date _____
Report and Follow-up Recommendations:	

3. Setting the Date

The date for the Visitation Evangelism Program should be set at least two months in advance to allow ample time for preparation. The ideal way is to have a week of intensive visitation, but in New York City where working hours are so varied and many people attend evening school, it might be necessary to extend it over a longer period. The pastor should make sure that there will be no other church meetings on the evenings specified for visitation. The time in the Church Year that is most suitable for such a program is in the beginning of October and just after the beginning of the New Year or shortly before the Lenten period begins.

4. Selecting and Enlisting Visitors

The pastor will select those who will serve as visitors

and talk it over with each one personally. His confidence in them will usually bring a favorable response. Jesus called each of His disciples personally. No two of them were alike. Cartwright suggests that various types of personalities be selected because of the variety of types¹ of personalities to be won. Jesus chose them from various vocations also. Business men can best talk to other business men. Young people should be enlisted to call on other young people.

The visitors chosen should have certain qualifications² that fit them for this work. It has been rightly said that "we cannot bring people any nearer to Christ than we are ourselves." The more vital an experience with Christ a personal worker has himself, the more successful he will be in winning others. The man or woman who can sincerely say,³ "For me to live is Christ," will be a real soul-winner.

A strong conviction that men everywhere need to be "born again" and that there is no salvation outside of Jesus Christ will make this work of first importance to the visitor.

People who naturally like to be with people and who find it easy to carry on a conversation will make the best visitors. A genuine love for people is essential and this⁴

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1. Cf. Cartwright, op. cit., p. 106.
2. Cf. Ante, p. 75, Principle 1.
3. Philippians 1: 21.
4. Ante, p. 75, Principle 2.

love should include both their souls and their bodies.¹
They should be interested in prospects not just because they are potential members for their church, but because they need Christ.

The ability to understand people, especially those whose environment and religious background is very different from our own, needs to be cultivated. We must look beneath what they are to discover the causes for their actions, and beyond what they are to what they may become through Christ. Visitors must be sympathetic, not condoning the faults of others, but "as having obtained mercy they must be merciful in their judgments of those whom they are to win."²

The visitor must be able to keep confidences, not talking over the personal affairs of any prospect, except possibly with the pastor who will be able to help where help is needed.

A knowledge of the Bible is a great asset. There may be times when visitors may find it advisable to quote from it or to read from it. Prospects may ask questions about something in the Bible. A knowledge of its teachings in the background of our thinking as we talk with people is of real value. This should not, however, be a deciding factor

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1. Ante, p. 75, Principle 3.
2. Pamphlet, "Selecting Lay Evangelists," Board of Social Missions.

as there are some whose knowledge of the Bible is very limited and yet they have other qualifications that make them very good "witnesses."

The visitors should be enthusiastic about the program in which they are having a part and cooperate in every respect with the pastor and other leaders as well as with their team-mates.

It is not necessary that the visitor feel himself qualified for this work. The person who feels most inadequate will sometimes be most successful, perhaps because he is so dependent upon the working of the Holy Spirit within him. Sometimes the very fact that the visitor is nervous impresses the prospect because he sees this is difficult for the visitor and senses his sincerity and earnest purpose¹ to be of help.

Visitors should be enlisted from six to four weeks in advance so that they will not have conflicting engagements when the time comes.

5. Plan for Instruction of Visitors

As soon as possible after the visitors have consented to do this work, a meeting should be called to give them the details of the plan. It would be well to have some lay per-

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1. Cf. Cooper, op. cit., p. 156.

son there who has experienced this kind of work to cite actual cases. The visitors will be asked to attend the midweek meetings at which "Personal Interviews of Jesus" will be discussed. Principles will be learned from these that can be applied in their own work. The instruction on special techniques will be given during Visitation Week. The plan of instruction during that week will be somewhat as follows (this may be adapted to the local situation):

Sunday, 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. - Instruction on
"The Evangelistic Visit"
"Reasons for Decision"
"Principles of Interviewing"
"Use of the Bible and
Other Literature"

Supper Meetings, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and
Thursday evenings:

6:30 to 7:00 p.m. - Supper and reports of
calls made
7:00 to 7:20 p.m. - Instruction
7:20 to 7:30 p.m. - Prayer
7:30 to 9:00 p.m. - Visiting

"More Principles of Interviewing" can be given on Monday, "Dealing with Excuses" on Tuesday, "Special Problems," on Wednesday, and whatever needs special attention on Thursday. This instruction should be given by someone who has had experience in this work, preferably the pastor himself because he knows best the situation in his own parish and the problems that will be met.

D. Subjects for Instruction of Visitors

It must be borne in mind that because every individual

is different the approach must be adapted to the individual¹ and no set of techniques can be given that will get results in every case. The instructions can not be followed in exact detail. Visitors should have it impressed upon them that the important thing to be remembered is that they go out at the command of Christ, "Go and make disciples," that they are His witnesses, and have His promise, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you." They must allow the Holy Spirit to work through them and to guide them in all they say.

1. The Evangelistic Visit

a. Since visitors will go out two by two, they should decide before entering a home which one will do most of the talking.

b. It is suggested that visitors pray for wisdom and guidance as they ring the doorbell.

c. It is wise to have all available information about the prospect well in mind before making the call.

d. When the door is opened, visitors can make sure they are calling on the right person by saying the person's name, "Mrs. J---?" then introducing themselves and giving the name of the church for which they are calling.

e. A friendly atmosphere can be created as they enter the room and are getting seated by some casual remark about the weather or about some object in the room.

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1. Ante, p. 60, Principle 1.

A natural attitude should be assumed.¹ In these days there are often pictures of service men in the room; reference to such makes a good opening wedge and leads very naturally to the subject of the war and the present need for Christ. If there are children, visitors will do well to pay special attention to them. This may lead to the appeal for a Christian home.

f. As soon as can naturally be done, the conversation should be directed toward the purpose of the visit. The reason for calling on this particular person will be given on the Prospect and Assignment Card.

g. There will be different ways of discovering the religious background of the prospects. Assuming the best in them will gain their confidence. If they are Sunday School parents, they can be commended² for sending their children to Sunday School. It can then be suggested that the entire family make this church their church home. It is better to assume that they are Christians and probably members of some other church than to take a negative attitude by saying, "I never see you in church." These opening remarks will bring out their past associations with the church and their attitudes toward it. Visitors should talk in a natural way about religion and give their personal testimony wherever possible--telling what Christ

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1. Ante, p. 76, Principle 10.
2. " " " 6.

means to them, why they go to church. Whatever is most real to them will be most convincing to their prospects. Conviction carries weight.¹ Theological terms are often unfamiliar to prospects and they should be avoided.

h. It is more important to secure a decision for Christ than merely to get people to join the Church. Those "Reasons for Decision"² which are most appropriate for the particular case will be used. If the prospect is brought to the point where he is willing to admit that he should at least give the matter of becoming a Christian further consideration, he can be asked to agree to come to the midweek meetings for instruction. The following card is suggested for use in getting the prospect to take a definite step³ toward the commitment of his life to Jesus Christ:

I agree to be present, if possible, for instruction on "What it Means to be a Christian" at the following group meetings:	
<hr/>	
(Dates, Time, Place)	
Date	Name <hr/>
<hr/>	Address <hr/>

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1. Ante, p. 76, Principle 9.
2. Post, pp.
3. Ante, p. 76, Principle 15.

If the prospect is unable to attend these meetings, a time should be arranged for the pastor to come to give private instruction. Visitors should make it clear that this will prepare the prospect for church membership, but that it will not place him under obligation to unite with the church.

If the prospect is ready now to accept Christ as his Saviour and wants to unite with the church, the opposite side of the card, which will read as follows, can be used:

I wish to publicly declare my faith in Jesus Christ as my Saviour and would like to unite with the	
_____ Church	
on Membership Sunday, _____.	
For letter of transfer, write to	

Date _____	Name _____
_____	Address _____

Those who sign the above, however, should also agree to attend the class for instruction.

Where there are several members in the family, a card should be handed to each adult member who has never made a decision for Christ. A few moments of silence will give prospects time and opportunity to make a decision and to sign the card, and visitors will be praying silently

for them. The visitor may feel led to offer a prayer before leaving, perhaps preceding it with a short passage of Scripture, and concluding with the Lord's Prayer in which all will be invited to join. Cards should be left in the hands of the prospects until after the prayer and taken when the visitors rise to go. Some prospects may sign the card after the prayer.

i. As visitors leave, they may thank the prospects for the visit, express pleasure at having become acquainted, express joy if a favorable decision has been made, offer to call for them the following Sunday or have someone else call, or whatever else may seem most appropriate.

2. Reasons for Decision

Visitors can go to people with the firm conviction that their mission is of vital importance, both to the individual concerned and to the world. There are various reasons why people should make a decision for Christ and the Church, which visitors can use when making their appeals to the prospects.

a. Importance of Obeying One's Conscience¹

Many prospects will admit that they ought to be Christians, that they ought to go to church. Whether they admit it or not, we know that every person has a sense of right and wrong.² If they do make the admission, visitors

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1. Ante, p. 60, Principle 3.

2. " " " 2.

should use that and build upon it, getting them to act upon what they know to be right.¹ Sometimes all that is needed to keep people from continued drifting is just to have someone help them to realize the necessity of making a decision.

b. Universal Need of Salvation

The Bible says, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."² Human experience exemplifies the truth of Paul's statement, "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not that I do."³ We all know how easy it is to let good intentions slip by without our acting upon them. There is no real peace in the heart of the unregenerated man because there are constantly conflicting desires until Christ becomes the center of one's life. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God," and this rebirth can take place only through an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour.

c. Influence of the Home upon Children

The appeal for a Christian home is particularly effective where there are children because children are for most parents their first concern.⁴ The father of a family of five sturdy boys made his decision when someone said to him,

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1. Ante, p. 60, Principle 2.
2. Romans 3: 23.
3. Romans 7: 19.
4. Ante, p. 76, Principle 8.

"You have at least five impelling reasons why you should give your heart to Christ."¹ Parents must be made aware of their responsibility to their children. They are giving them the best that secular education offers. They are very careful of their physical wellbeing. They should be just as concerned about their spiritual growth. The church school can not take all the responsibility. Parents must set the example of Christian living and create a Christian home atmosphere. This should be an effective appeal because as Dr. Carlson says,

"Parents understand some of the fundamentals of child psychology. First impressions are decisive. What sunshine is to physical health Christ is to the child's personality. A Christlike home is the family's greatest blessing."²

The need for companionship with their children can also be stressed:

"Boys will go to church with their fathers, but may resent going for their fathers. . . Whatever can be done together is done with double enthusiasm and lasting impression."³

d. Spiritual Resources needed for Daily Living

Everybody needs and wants power beyond himself to meet the problems and tasks of everyday living. Every person at times is faced with difficulties that only God can help him to face victoriously. Sometimes people will tell

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1. Cartwright, op. cit., p. 115.
2. Pamphlet, "Reaching for Them," Board of Social Missions, p. 13.
3. Pamphlet, "Visitation Evangelism Manual," Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, pp. 31-2.

their problems to visitors. This is an opportunity to show them that Christ has an answer for every problem. If a personal testimony can be given at this point, the appeal will be doubly effective. One should never leave the impression, however, that Christ is a cure-all for every trouble. People must always be willing to do their part and that involves letting God have His way in their lives rather than getting their own way.

e. Opportunity for Greater Service

Everyone wants to feel that he is needed.¹ The Church needs people who are willing to serve. We enjoy the benefits of living in a community where there are churches, hospitals, and schools, which are the products of Christianity. The Church is still the greatest organization for the purpose of service to humanity. No one ought to be content to reap the benefits of living in a good social environment without helping to create it. If no one confessed Christ nor joined the Church, we would not have these blessings. The appeal to service can be especially strong for young people and to people who are fairly successful in life and feel no need of God. Jesus challenged² those whom He called to service and to hard tasks; yet they followed Him.

f. Participation in World Improvement

Present world conditions are having a sobering in-

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1. Ante, p. 51.

2. " p. 68.

fluence upon many in these days. The only way to a peaceful world is through individuals who have the Spirit of Christ within them. Present tragic conditions are the result of sin, of people's disobedience and failure to live up to God's laws, of the failure of those who have called themselves Christians to spread the Gospel or to feel any responsibility for other people. "None of us¹ liveth to himself. ." We stand or fall together. We must work together in our fight against sin and evil in the world. We must each live at our best and make this country worth fighting and dying for. Christ and the Church hold up the highest standard for living.

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g. Assurance of Eternal Life

Dr. Buttrick says that present-day congregations which have passed, "if only by proxy, through the poison-gas, slime, and blood of the trenches," are not troubled by pictures of hell fire and eternal torment.³ But in times like these when life is cheap and for some life on earth holds little joy, the hope of immortality and a time when wrongs will be righted does have its appeal. This appeal can best be used when the death of a loved one has recently made the hereafter seem very near. At such times

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1. Romans 14: 7.
2. Ante, p. 52.
3. Buttrick, op. cit., p. 21.

the soul is particularly concerned about the future life and wants the assurance that through faith in Christ he can be sure of meeting the loved one again. We need not wait, however, for the joy of eternal life until after death. Eternal life--abundant life here and now--is promised by Christ to all who will put their trust in Him.

h. Christ the Answer to Men's Deepest Longings

As we noted in Chapter III, Christ satisfies all the psychological needs of men.¹ He alone can give the peace and joy that every soul craves. He makes possible communion with God and makes available the power of His Holy Spirit.

i. The Joys of Christian Friendship

Everyone craves friendships that elevate and enrich life. Surely the friendship of Jesus Christ and of others who follow Him is to be coveted. The friendship of those who bring out the highest and best within us is one of life's greatest treasures. The appeal to unite with the church can also be based on this. Not only is it hard to be a Christian alone, but we can do more to propagate our religion if we unite our efforts with those of other Christians.

3. Principles of Interviewing

One or more periods of instruction should be devoted

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1. Ante, p. 57.

to discussing the principles discovered in Chapter III. To some extent this will be a review of some of the principles that will have been discovered in the midweek services on the "Personal Interviews of Jesus."

4. Dealing with Excuses

There are no valid reasons for not becoming a Christian and most of the excuses given are against church attendance or membership. Excuses are not hard to answer, but it is often hard to answer them tactfully and kindly, in such a way that we do not antagonize the prospect.

Dr. William S. Meyer says, regarding excuses,

"A slight examination reveals their artificiality and shallowness. The ultimate question is that of dedication and loyalty to the personality of Christ . . . A thoughtful and wise discussion of the surface excuse may be an avenue of approach for you to arrive at the deeper question."¹

Those excuses most often encountered will now be considered:

"We work on Sundays and cannot come to church."

There are other meetings besides the Sunday morning worship service. Church attendance is important, but to be a Christian means more than merely being a church member and attending regularly. It is essential that one accepts Christ and learns to know Him better. Prayer and Bible reading in the home will be of great help. (Here

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1. Pamphlet, "The Personal Worker," Board of National Missions, p. 14.

the visitor can give the prospect a devotional guide or other literature that will stimulate the personal devotional life.)

"None of my friends go and they will laugh at me."

Jesus called those "blessed" who were persecuted for His sake. He said their reward would be great. When a person really begins to follow Christ he will know a joy he never knew was possible. There will be new friends who share this joy. Old friends may want to become Christians because of the change they see in him.

"I'd like to think it over."

"Things put off never get done."¹ Now is the time to take at least the first step in becoming a Christian. There will be time to think it over before a public confession is made. Some may say they will do it voluntarily when they are ready. Someone who has had much experience in working with people says, "That sounds good, but if people did do that, we would not need to invite them and encourage them."² They do not come without help."

"I can be a Christian without belonging to the church."

The church helps us to be better Christians. It is hard to be a Christian by ourselves, and only by uniting

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1. Pamphlet, "A Method of Home Visitation Evangelism," The American Baptist Home Mission Society, p. 8.
2. Cooper, op. cit., p. 172.

and doing things together can we spread the Gospel. If nobody belonged to the church, there would not be any.

Everybody recognizes the value of a church in a community. Children learn better in school than outside it; people render greater service through an organization than outside of it. So it is logical that people can be better through the help they get from the church when associated with it than outside of it.¹

"I am just as good as some people I know who attend church regularly."

We do not attend church because we are good, but because we recognize that we are sinners and the church can help us to live as we ought. We can not judge ourselves by what other people do, but only by the standard of Christ. We are not responsible for the sins of other people, but we do have to give an account of our own actions. "Every one of us shall give an account of himself."²

"I do not feel like it."

We do some things because we know it is our duty and after the thing is done we feel better. Mr. Cooper once said to a farmer who used this excuse, "Do you ever wake up at four o'clock in the morning and feel like not getting up

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1. Cf. Pamphlet, "Visitation Evangelism Manual," Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, p. 34.
2. Romans 14: 12.

to milk the cows?" "About every morning," he answered, "but it is my duty, and I get up." Mr. Cooper suggested that he use the same logic in regard to accepting Christ and entering the church. The farmer then and there made¹ his decision.

"I work all week, and have to sleep Sunday morning."

Jesus was a very busy man too. He worked far into the night to heal people, but in the morning He rose early to go to a desert place to pray.² If we care about Him and His people we will want to do what He wants us to do. The more tired a person is, the more he needs the spiritual refreshment that the Church can help him to get.

"I had too much religion when I was young."

The high ideals which many unchurched people have are products of the early training which they now belittle. Their parents did the best they knew. They should do the same for their children. There is as much danger of getting "too little" as "too much." Woodbury humorously suggests one might say, "You didn't turn out so bad after all, did you?"³

"A minister once did something I didn't like."

Many people harbor old grudges or prejudices against the church. One woman whom the writer visited had no use

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1. Cf. Cooper, op. cit., p. 171.
2. Cf. Mark 1: 32-35.
3. Pamphlet, "A Method of Home Visitation Evangelism," op. cit., p. 13.

for the church because the priest in the church she attended as a child was often intoxicated. We can not judge all church leaders by the mistakes of one. We must forgive if we would be forgiven. In the Lord's prayer we pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." When Jesus gave this prayer to the disciples, He added, "For if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses."¹ Rather than criticizing the church, we should become a part of it and make it a better church.

"The lodge is sufficient for me."

The lodge is not a good substitute. It is a secret organization not open to all. It does not offer religious instruction, nor does it try to bring the Gospel to the unreached.

"I can not live up to the ideals of Jesus Christ."

We are not expected to do this alone. When a person accepts Christ, a new life begins in that person. Things he once thought were very important to his happiness no longer appeal to him. Christ changes his wrong desires. He gives him strength to live up to his responsibilities.

"I want to have a good time."

Perhaps the lie that being a Christian takes all the joy out of life is one of the greatest that Satan has

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1. Matthew 6: 12.

managed to get across to many people. Most Christians would be able to reply to this excuse with a testimony somewhat like the following which was given by a girl who resisted the Spirit for a long time simply because she wanted to have a good time:

"'Well,' said my friend, challengingly, 'and what do you do now for fun?'--'now' being since I discovered a brand-new way of life.

That night in my prayers, her challenge came back to my mind and then this answer: 'Thank God, I no longer have to do anything for fun.' Actually, my whole life smashed on the rocks as the result of setting my sails toward the Port of Fun. Having fun was my goal, and excitement was the breath of life.

It came to me there, in that time of meditation, that everything I do now is fun. . .no, it is better than that--it is joy. Opening my heart to Christ and my will to God to follow His guidance--this has brought me an entirely new zest for life. I no longer have to do anything to get fun, for I have something that makes interesting things gloriously exhilarating, routine things adventurous and dull things at least passable. ."

5. Use of the Bible and Other Literature

Someone may ask the question, "How much use should visitors make of the Bible?" This may depend on how much knowledge of the Bible the visitor himself has. The more saturated a visitor is with the truth of God's Word, the better qualified he is to deal with non-Christians. But it may not always be wise for him to use this knowledge by

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1. Elizabeth L. Mc Teigue: "Meeting Via the Printed Page," The Evangel, November, 1944.

quoting from the Bible whenever he thinks of a verse pertaining to the subject discussed. It is told of Henry Clay Trumbull that he once had as his traveling companion a young man who, as soon as Dr. Trumbull sat down beside him, offered him a drink. Dr. Trumbull might have said to him, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging," or some such appropriate words of Scripture. Instead he politely refused, and resumed the reading of his paper. But he was watching for an opportunity. Later the young man spoke again, "Well, I guess you think I'm a pretty rough fellow." Dr. Trumbull used one of Jesus' principles of first commending and said, "I think you're a very generous-hearted fellow, but," he added, "I don't think your whiskey-drinking is the best thing about you." This led to a further conversation in which Dr. Trumbull urged the young man to give his life to Christ.¹ Dr. Trumbull's son, who tells this story, says further:

"Our work with them (the people we would win) is not complete until we have brought them to a recognition of the Bible which shall give it the same unique place in their lives that it has in ours. But this leading of men to the Bible is to be accomplished, as a rule, by wisely recognizing that those whom we would win to Christ are probably not interested in the Bible to begin with: that their attitude is more likely to be indifferent or even antagonistic to it at the start."²

We often find this to be true of the people on our prospect

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1. Cf. Trumbull, op. cit., pp. 112 and 80-83.
2. Ibid., p. 121.

list. Jesus did use the Scriptures a great deal with those who were familiar with it, as Dr. Trumbull also recognized, and he gives an instance of the use of the Scriptures to help a young rationalist, who knew his Bible, to overcome his doubts.¹

The use of the Bible in this work of Visitation Evangelism requires more knowledge and skill than most lay people possess and with the average New Yorker personal testimony will be the more effective tool, until an interest in the Bible has been aroused. Helpful suggestions, however, on the use of the Bible can be found in books on personal evangelism. P. E. Burroughs' book on How to Win to Christ, chapter VII, would be helpful to the personal soul winner, and R. A. Torrey's How to Bring Men to Christ gives ways of dealing with various types of people and puts much emphasis on the use of the Scriptures.

Visitors should carry with them some literature that can be left in the home, such as devotional guides, Gospel portions, tracts, and church bulletins or calendars giving some information about the church represented. There are any number of tracts being published today that might be used, but they should be carefully chosen by the pastor himself so that they will give a true representation of the beliefs and practices of the church from which they go

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1. Cf. Trumbull, op. cit., pp. 115-121.

out. Visitors should be thoroughly acquainted with the contents of the tracts they give out. Usually more can be accomplished by the spoken word as it is difficult to find tracts to fit every type of individual. However, where it is difficult to get an immediate decision a tract might stimulate further thought and give the visitor something¹ upon which to build when he returns for a second visit.

6. Special Problems

Visitors will, undoubtedly, go into some homes where there are problems, or meet individuals who are definitely

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1. The following tracts are attractive and can be used to good advantage:

For non-Christians:

*"How to become a Christian," American Baptist Home Mission Society.

"I Choose Christ," American Baptist Home Mission Society.

"An Offer of Love," American Tract Society.

*"Seven Red Soldiers Go Singing to Heaven," American Tract Society.

*"I am not Ashamed," Board of National Missions.

*"Steps that lead to God," Board of National Missions.

"Does it Pay?" Good News Publishing Company.

On church membership:

*"Why Join the Church," Commission on Evangelism.

*"An Invitation without Apology," Lutheran Press.

To stimulate family worship:

*"The Christian Home," American Lutheran Publishing Bureau.

*"Family Worship," American Lutheran Publishing Bureau.

"Before the Ending of the Day," Board of National Missions.

For new Christians:

"How to Succeed in your Christian Life," Good News Publishing Company.

*Recommended by Jacob Enz in his thesis, "Selection and Evaluation of Tracts with Special Reference to their Use in the General Conference Mennonite Churches."

problem cases. The inexperienced visitor should not try to handle situations that are for specialists in the psychiatric field or that require the help of the pastor himself. However, sometimes we are face to face with a problem that demands some attention immediately and can not be easily passed on to another than the one to whom it is presented. For this reason visitors should have some knowledge of the nature of individuals and be able to understand some of the reasons why they act as they do. There is one thing that a visitor can do in every instance and that is to listen sympathetically if a person is in the mood to tell his troubles. One should be careful, however, not to accept the prospect's story as always being the whole truth, remembering that people have a tendency to rationalize. One should never pass judgment upon an absent party.

The problem may be the very thing that will make it possible for the visitor to get the prospect to make a decision. Dr. Shoemaker says,

"If we have succeeded in making friends, and if we have caught the imagination of the person we want to help, there will come a day when he will want to talk personally and intimately. There is no telling when this may come. Convictions boil up in people at times which may not be convenient for us, but we had better be ready to strike while the iron is hot."¹

Some of the cases mentioned in Chapter III, which present

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1. S. M. Shoemaker: How to Help People, p. 43.

special problems, will be considered.

a. Unhappy Marriages

¹
Case No. 3 is an example of a marriage which is unhappy because of religious differences. At the time of marriage people so often do not feel that religious creeds are important enough to make any difference, but trouble arises when the question of their children's religious education comes up. It can readily be seen that the emphasis of both the husband and wife in this case has been upon church affiliation rather than vital relationship to Christ. Each one needs to be brought to realize his or her own sins. They both want to have their own way, which would bring disharmony even if they were of the same faith. The visitor will need to be sympathetic, but at the same time not take sides with either one in the absence of the other. The emphasis in this case ought to be upon the need for a decision for Christ and cultivation of the spiritual life by personal and family devotions rather than church attendance or membership. If the first is taken care of, the latter will work out by itself. The Protestant wife will never win her husband to Protestantism by arguing with him about it. The only thing that will convince him will be genuine Christianity on her part. These parents should also be made to realize that a Christian home atmosphere will do

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1. Ante, p. 38.

more for their children than the education they get in either church. They should be encouraged to pray together concerning God's will for their children.

b. Acute Unbelievers

The case of Helen (Case No. 6)¹ impresses upon us again the need for parents to take responsibility for the welfare of their children. Where parents are divorced, the children do not have a fair chance. Helen has not seen any real Christianity in her own home, and the lack of love there has made it hard for her to conceive of a loving God. This does not excuse her for being willful and selfish, but it helps us to understand why she is this way. The real reason for her doubts is her unwillingness to let God have His way in her life. She should not be encouraged in feeling sorry for herself although real Christian friendship and contact with people in whose lives Christ is real will help to bring her to a confession of her sins and surrender of her will to God.

Sometimes unbelievers concentrate too much upon what they do not believe. Visitors may be able to help them to think more about the things they do believe. Jesus led men to express what they believed.² "Bushnell suggested that people who doubt should pray to the dim God, confessing the

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1. Ante, p. 41.

2. Ante, p. 75.

dimness for honesty's sake."¹ The book entitled, The Case for Christianity, by C. S. Lewis is recommended for use with those who have doubts.

c. Chronic Unbelievers

Chronic unbelievers are the most difficult to deal with because they have rationalized so long that they are no longer distressed over their doubts. Since they admire intellect, someone who can match them intellectually will be best qualified to talk to them. They must be shown that there are many people as well educated and as highly cultured as they who are believers. They will probably not care particularly for our friendship or interest and yet a real concern for them may still arouse a hardened conscience.

²
Betty (Case No. 7) is evidently an extremely self-willed person and her unbelief, like Helen's, is a moral rather than an intellectual matter. The fact that she likes to ridicule religion, however, indicates that it is still a problem with her. If she were approached by a visitor on the subject of her own spiritual life, she would probably start an argument and delight in confusing the visitor on some theological issue. It would take a skillful visitor to avoid argument and point out spiritual truths that she would be unable to deny or that would go beyond her knowledge, as Jesus did with Nicodemus. She, too, needs to be

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1. Quoted by Shoemaker, op. cit., p. 28.
2. Ante, p. 42.

born again and learn the importance of humility and trust such as a little child has in order to enter the Kingdom of God.

d. Super-believers

Not very much can be done for the super-believer who does not want to see things differently. Torrey says, "There is no hope of bringing a man out of his delusion, unless he desires to know the truth."¹ Since the moral and intellectual requirements of the cults are not as exacting as those of the Christian standard, it follows that super-believers have had their wills and their intellects weakened. They have become dependent upon others to help them to make their decisions. They must be made to make their own decisions, and to face the facts of life. Sometimes one particular belief is emphasized as if that were the only truth worth knowing, as in the case of Mrs. L---,² whose great emphasis is on spiritual healing. She should be led to think of some of the other great Bible truths that should have a place in the thoughts of every Christian.

E. Follow-up

What is done after Visitation Evangelism Week is the

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1. R. A. Torrey: How to Bring Men to Christ, p. 93.
2. Ante, p. 44.

most important of all.¹ Some prospects will not be won in the first visit and will have to be seen again. Dr. Pratt says,

"If an impenitent man comes to feel that you are ceaselessly anxious about his spiritual condition, he can not avoid becoming anxious about himself."²

New converts must be nurtured in the Christian life. They must be instructed as to what it means to be a Christian and given help in establishing habits that will cause their spiritual growth. They must also be taken into the Church fellowship so they will soon feel at home in the group.

1. The Pastor's Class

The pastor's class or group meetings for instruction on "What it Means to be a Christian" should begin the week following the Visitation program. The instruction given will depend largely upon the pastor. It should include the practical aspects of living the Christian life, such as the need for personal and family prayer and Bible reading, for public worship, and since it is preparatory to church membership some teaching on the doctrinal standards and essential beliefs. The Bible itself will be the best textbook and the use of it in the class will give people a sense of its impor-

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1. Ante, p. 76, Principle 15.
2. Pratt, op. cit., p. 61.

tance and arouse an interest in it. A book such as Why Be¹
a Christian? might be followed and a copy given to each
member for private study.

This class could take the place of the regular midweek service for six weeks as a review of the essentials of the Christian faith and practice would be helpful to old members as well as prospective members. Some time should also be given for prayer and testimony. If visitors and other church members also attended the class, it would give them all an opportunity to become acquainted more easily than they would at the regular church services.

2. "Fellowship Friends"

Dr. Guy Black gives some very good suggestions on the "Fellowship Friend." He says the pastor should appoint a "Fellowship Friend" for each new convert or a family for each new family.² This "Fellowship Friend" would help the new person in whatever way seemed most advisable. Perhaps he might call to take him to church the first Sunday or to the first meeting of the pastor's class. He should make him feel at home at the services and introduce him to other members. He should find out his interests, what organizations he is interested in and arrange for him to be invited into those groups.

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1. Why Be a Christian? The Forward Movement Commission.
2. Cf. Pamphlet, "Assimilating New Members," General Commission on Evangelism, The Methodist Church.

3. Follow-up Visits by the Pastor

A personal call by the pastor is always appreciated, but sometimes it is too much to expect. The pastor should make time, however, and extend the invitation to any who wish to have a private interview with him to make an appointment. Dr. Black suggests a "follow-up visit after Membership Sunday to give whatever personal guidance is needed," and recommends a "Membership Anniversary" one year after new members are received, when the pastor will call and talk over the experiences of the first year.¹

4. Opportunities for Service

Fellowship Friends and Pastor alike will take notice of special talents and special interests of new members. They must be given a place to serve according to their ability. Some may make good evangelists and might be taken with the pastor or other trained visitor to make an evangelistic call. A word of warning is given to avoid giving responsibility to people for which they are not yet ready. An instance occurs to the writer's mind of a girl who was elected to the office of president of a certain group shortly after her conversion. She had never been in such a group before, had very little idea as to what should be

.

1. Cf. Pamphlet, "Assimilating New Members," General Commission on Evangelism, The Methodist Church.

done and lost the respect of the other girls as a result.

5. Literature

Help should be given the new Christian in using the Bible in his personal devotions. A "Pocket Prayer Book" by Bishop Ralph S. Cushman might be an appropriate gift to each adult new member.¹ A committee can be appointed to find helpful books and magazines that can be given to new Christians.

F. The Permanent Organization

On Friday evening of Visitation Evangelism Week or some evening the following week, a permanent Committee for Evangelism should be formed. The visitors will be enthusiastic and want to keep right on visiting, so that this is the psychological time to plan to do visitation evangelism throughout the year at regular times.

The Committee for Evangelism should meet regularly in order that they may have Christian fellowship and prayer together and encourage one another. There will have to be a regular time for the visiting to be done, for reports on visits made, for receiving new assignments. They should pray together for those who have been won and those who are difficult to win. Some definite plan and organization is

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1. Cf. Pamphlet, "Assimilating New Members," loc. cit.

necessary and the details will have to be worked out by the local parish.

The prospect list must be kept growing. New converts will have friends who are still outside. Dr. Oliver Black says many of the visitors will probably find their own prospects. Once they have started talking with people about Christ they will do it in their daily contacts with people.¹

G. Summary

This chapter has outlined a program that may be used in a local church. In it was noted the importance of having a definite purpose in mind and then making careful preparation for the attainment of that purpose. This was seen to involve the pastor's efforts to enlist the support of the congregation by means of sermons at the Sunday services and by means of talks at the midweek services that will make the people conscious of the great need and of their responsibility and opportunity to meet it. The importance of prayer and dependence upon the power of the Holy Spirit was also stressed. The preparation was seen to include making the prospect list, setting the date for the Visitation Evangelism program, selecting and enlisting the

.

1. Cf. Pamphlet, "Visitation Evangelism Manual," loc. cit.

visitors, and making plans for the instruction of these visitors.

The subjects on which visitors will need instruction were listed as the procedure in making an evangelistic visit, the reasons why a prospect should make a decision for Christ, the principles of interviewing, the handling of excuses, the use of the Bible and other literature, and the way to deal with special problem cases.

The follow-up work was set up as one of the most important phases of the program because new Christians need the help of more mature Christians in acquiring new habits and ways that are consistent with the Christian profession. Various forms of follow-up were suggested: The pastor's class will give new Christians the beliefs and practices of the Christian faith, and "Fellowship Friends" can help them to act upon the things learned and to become active members of the church. Both the pastor and the members of the church will need to take a sincere interest in each new convert to help him to grow spiritually. He should be given opportunities to serve and to take part in organizations which appeal to his special interests. He can also be helped to develop his personal devotional life by means of recommended literature and by being shown how to use his Bible.

A permanent organization for evangelism in the church program was suggested as easily and naturally growing out of

the intensive program. There will always be new prospects to be visited and once church members have caught the vision of what can be done, they will want to continue this work. Visitors should plan to meet regularly for prayer and fellowship together.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It has been the purpose of this thesis to make a study of Visitation Evangelism as a method of meeting the spiritual needs of contemporary life.

To that end we gave some thought, first of all, to present conditions both within and without the Church in the United States. We found that there are millions of people in our own country not affiliated with any religious organization and that among those who are so affiliated, many are lax in their attendance and in the fulfillment of their obligations. The consequences of such churchless and Christless living are only too evident in the distressing situation the present war has brought upon us and in the social evils that we find around us. We found weaknesses within the Church that have hindered her growth and power, but also encouragement in the fact that religious leaders are awakening to the Church's present responsibility and opportunity. The need for evangelism was found being constantly emphasized in current books and magazines.

Since social conditions are caused by the actions of the individuals that make up society, it is through the changing of individuals that society can be changed. The need is, therefore, for a method of evangelism that will

touch individual lives. In order to arrive at principles upon which a program that involves work with individuals can be based, we analyzed typical cases that would be met. This revealed differences in individuals that would need to be considered as well as common urges in human nature upon which appeals for the Christian life could be based. It was seen that Jesus Christ meets the psychological needs of men and that, therefore, He has the solution to the problems that confront us. From a study of the contacts of Jesus with people as found in the Gospels, we were able to deduce seventeen principles which can be applied to present-day efforts in evangelism.

We deemed it advisable to investigate what had been done in the field of Visitation Evangelism in the past and what various denominations are doing along this line at the present time. It was found that the need for such a program was felt when leaders realized the tremendous task before them and had a vision of the possibilities for the growth of the Kingdom with the help of lay people. There was also the feeling that this was the only way that some people would ever be reached. Among the pioneers who worked successfully in this field were Thomas Chalmers, A. Earl Kernahan, and Guy H. Black. The latter two were the first ones to experiment with Visitation Evangelism as a definitely planned program in the churches in America. Today the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and

four denominations issue program materials for local churches. These materials were compared and analyzed and it was found that the aspects of the program that were given particular attention were the preparation, including extensive suggestions for the instruction of visitors, and for the follow-up work that would need to be done.

On the basis of the needs presented in the second chapter, the principles given in the third chapter, the past experiences of leaders in this field as related in the fourth chapter, and upon the writer's limited personal experiences, in chapter five a program was suggested which could be used in a local church.

The preceding study has convinced the writer that Visitation Evangelism is a method that can be used most effectively at the present time. Some of the specific values of this method are:

1. It reaches people who are not reached by any other method.
2. It is the most natural way of bringing people into the Kingdom of Christ.
3. It appeals not merely to the emotions, but takes into account the other aspects of a well rounded experience--thought and will.
4. It gives Christians a definite plan to follow in responding to Christ's command to "Go and make disciples."

5. Because it is unprofessional, prospects sense the sincerity of those who come to visit them.

6. Those who participate grow spiritually, and it becomes natural for them to talk about their personal religious experiences and about Christ and the Church in their ordinary contacts with other people.

7. It concentrates on getting decisions from adults.

8. Converts won in this way are more likely to be kept in the Church because the entire congregation has helped to bring them in and will feel a responsibility for their nurture.

9. Success is not due to a single individual, but requires the cooperation of the entire congregation.

10. It can be combined with other methods of evangelism in the Church's program.

The following things contribute to the success of a program of Visitation Evangelism:

1. Enthusiasm and efficiency of the leader.
2. Good organization and thorough preparation.
3. Cooperation of the entire congregation.
4. Consecration of the pastor and of the visitors.
5. Dependence upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
6. Prayer support.

7. Goal set and faith in its attainment.

8. Proper follow-up work and assimilation of those won into the fellowship of the Church.

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