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The Advance Advocate

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Put Your Men To Work

REV. KARL H. A. REST

In a meeting of representatives from church and industry which was held shortly after World War II, the thought was expressed that it was necessary to put 60,000,000 people to work, if our national economy were not to break down. One of the great industrialists of Detroit regarded the idea as fantastic, saying there were not that many jobs available and the backlog of unemployed must of necessity be rather large. Today we have actually exceeded that figure and, in light of this achievement, the early prediction looks quaint. The watchword in industry is now: full production—full employment.

In our church circles we need a similar watchword for we have too many unemployed Christians. True enough, they have jobs to earn their bread and butter; but, because they fail to realize adequately that man does not live by bread alone, they do not work at their faith. They are spiritually unemployed. They regard their faith purely as a matter between the soul and God; a private luxury in which they can indulge their personal feelings.

However, Christian faith is never a private affair between the soul and God. Though it is personal, it is always a social responsibility in which man must express a concern for his neighbor as he seeks contact with his God. A test of the vitality of our faith is the willingness wherewith we are ready to take others along with us. Jesus said, "Ye shall be my witnesses."

And Christians have been his witnesses from that day to this. Today, it is estimated, there are 700,000,000 Christians in the

world. This means that wherever you may go in this world, one person out of every three you meet is a Christian. There is nothing comparable to the Christian movement in history, whether you measure it by the standards of sheer magnitude or persistent vitality.

Even more astonishing is the manner in which these people became Christians. How were they won? Through great mass demonstrations? Sometimes. Through big revival movements? Occasionally. But more often these people have been won for Christ and his cause in a much less spectacular and dramatic way. They have been

place. These people may be won for Christ and his church, if there are some who will take a personal interest in them and bear some evidence of the faith that is in them. A man, like Joseph R. Walker, has said: "The supreme task of our age is to evangelize the shifting, unchurched masses of a highly mobile society." And so it is.

Furthermore, it can be done. If only we would put some of our spiritually unemployed men and women in our churches to work. Send them out to bear witness to the faith that is in them. Some of our people will hesitate, saying they can't possibly do that. However, a number of our people have done it. Often these same people thought at first that they could not do it, but they ventured forth in faith and surprised themselves that they were actually able to do it.

Last year we made a spot test of gains in church membership in our Michigan-Indiana Synod. It was found that 20.6% of all people won for the church came in through the efforts of lay men and women. That is definitely a beginning. What has been done by some, can be done by others.

The Commission on Evangelism is challenging the members of the Evangelical and Reformed Church to organize these sporadic efforts in evangelism into a persistent effort. It has set up a goal of 210,000 members by the end of 1950. To reach such a large number it will be necessary to put many of our lay men and women to work. The Commission on Evangelism thinks it is not too much to put 10% of the membership, or 70,000 people, at work to do this specific job.

won, one by one, as some Christian here or there gave his testimony to a friend. And that is as true on the mission field as it is on the home front.

There is a great need for just such work today. Almost one-half of our population is unchurched. Great shifts of population have taken place during the last war and its aftermath. As a result of these movements, many Christians have lost their connection with the church as they go from place to

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Executive Secretary

The Minister and Evangelism

(An excerpt from an address delivered by Rt. Reverend Stephen Neill
at the biennial session of the Federal Council, Cincinnati,
December 3, 1948)

THE LENTEN OUTREACH

America needs Christ. That is a trite statement, but it is becoming increasingly more true every day. One does not need to paint in bold strokes and lurid detail the low moral and spiritual status of the nation and the concomitant ills which afflict its communal life to discern its need of the regenerative and redemptive power of Christ. In none other is salvation to be found, and what is more, "He can save to the uttermost."

In the light of this undoubted and undeniable truth, the call to evangelize falls with resounding emphasis on the ears of the Church. There is no better time for an effective Gospel impact than the period of Lent and no better method of reaching and winning others to Christ and His Church in our time than lay visitation evangelism.

The individual is still the unit of society. People, one by one, must be confronted by the claims of Christ and won into the fellowship of His Church if this nation is to be brought under the Lordship of Christ. To that end Christians must be challenged to share their faith with friend and neighbor. They must be enlisted, trained and used as personal evangelists. Every Christian must be led to a realization of his evangelistic privilege and responsibility, for each is included in the mandate of the Master, who said, "Ye shall be my witnesses."

So, in this Lenten season inaugurate and carry out an effective program of visitation evangelism in your parish and community. Build up your responsibility roll. Select carefully a corps of workers. Train them in the tech-

"It is not permitted for any minister to say 'I am not an evangelist.' It is, I believe true, that God gives different excellences to different people. One is at his best as a teacher or pastor or administrator, and is less gifted for the work of an evangelist. There are in every generation a few people who have supremely the gift of bringing their hearers to the point at which a personal decision to follow Christ is made. But, granted all that, it still remains true that the minister is ordained for the purpose of bringing men and women to Christ; if he is not doing it, it is questionable whether he ought to be in the ministry at all. To say 'I have no special gift' is no excuse. Is not this rather a gift of the Spirit than a gift of nature? If it is naturally lacking, should it not be claimed in faith, as one of the gifts and graces that God is

niques of efficient visiting and then, as the Reverend Mr. Rest suggests, "PUT THEM TO WORK." Laymen can "do the work of an evangelist." Give them a chance to share their evangelical experience, to deepen and enrich their own faith through witnessing and the total life of your congregation will be spiritually empowered and blessed.

"COMING EVENTS CAST—" WORKSHOP IN EVANGELISM

Preparatory to the launching of the UNITED EVANGELISTIC ADVANCE (October 2, 1949-1950) the Commission on Evangelism is conducting a *Workshop in Evangelism* in Cincinnati, Ohio, February 15, 16 and 17. Twenty-two E & R plus two C.C. churches, at this writing, are serving as host to 29 representatives of Synodical Committees on Evangelism. Seminars will be held in the forenoon and a lay visitation effort is to be made in the evening of each day. Synodical representatives have been assigned to the participating local congregations to serve as

willing to supply to those who are commissioned to do His work? It may be that the greater part of a minister's time has to be spent as preacher, teacher or administrator. But for the sake of his success in any or all of these, it is essential that he should be also an evangelist. The greater danger in the work of the ministry is professionalism, reliance on techniques and abilities. Face to face with men and women in their real needs, the minister is driven back on a consciousness of his own utter inadequacy and insufficiency. It is only the Holy Spirit who can bring about the miracle of conversion; man's learning and eloquence are unavailing, unless man is so emptied of himself that God can work. It is in evangelism that we are driven back on God, and brought back to the foot of the cross, the only place where we are safe."

guest leaders and instructors of the lay workers.

A rich spiritual feast is in store for those attending the seminar periods. Rev. Roland Pantermuehl of Seguin, Texas, will deliver three lectures on *The Theology of Evangelism*; Dr. Aaron N. Meckel of St. Petersburg, Florida, will deliver two lectures, one on *A Spiritually Reborn Church* and the other on *Pulpit and Personal Evangelism*; Dr. H. H. McConnell of New York, New York, will give three lectures on *The Techniques of Lay Visitation Evangelism*; and the executive secretary of our Commission will present the total program of the UNITED EVANGELISTIC ADVANCE. Rev. J. Paul Goebel of Newport, Ky., is chairman of the Cincinnati Committee on Arrangements. More about this *Workshop* in the next issue of THE ADVOCATE.

Remember our Workshop and all participants in your prayers.

Enroll in the Fellowship of Devotion. Brethren, let us remember one another in prayer each Saturday evening.

News From The Field

By the time you receive and read this issue of THE ADVANCE ADVOCATE the first of what we hope will be a series of Youth Retreats will have been held in Indianapolis, Indiana, January 28, 29 and 30. The retreat was projected jointly by the Youth Fellowship and Commission on Evangelism, with the Indianapolis E &

R Youth Fellowship serving as host and participant. The retreat began with a commitment service Friday evening, carried through three sessions on Saturday, and closed with a commissioning service Sunday afternoon. Principal speakers were the Reverends John A. Biegeleisen, Jefferson Rogers, and Mr. Donald

L. Berry. Four study and discussion periods were held with the Reverends A. Wilson Cheek and Fred C. Schweinfurth serving as resource leaders. The Chimes Hour Group of Van Wert, Ohio, Rev. V. P. Wierwille, director, and Indianapolis talent furnished the musical setting for the sessions. Miss Evelyn Ruth Piel was chairman of local Committee on Arrangements ably assisted by Rev. R. E. Briggeman, Youth Advisor, and a corps of faithful co-workers.

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Redeemer Evangelical and Reformed Church, Zuehl, Texas, Rev. O. P. Schroerluke, pastor, held a Preaching Mission each Thursday night over a period of four weeks. The general theme was *My Church*. Guest preachers delivered sermons on "The Meaning of Membership," "The Grace of Stewardship," "The Larger Fellowship," and "The Values of Worship." There is no copyright on this type of program. Try it in your parish sometime.

* * * * *

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Baltimore, Md., Rev. W. Kochheim, pastor, is conducting a series of *Evangel Weeks*. The second week of the months October through February is preempted for this significant project, the primary purpose of which is a "stirring of the hearts of the people leading to a more meaningful Christian decision, and act of faith and obedience." A guest preacher is engaged for each *Evangel Week*, the following having already served as missionaries: October—Dr. Albert E. Day of Baltimore, Md.; November—Dr. Melvin C. Beck of North Canton, Ohio, and December—Rev. Fred C. Schweinfurth. The week opens with an inspiring hymn sing on Sunday evening, followed by preaching services on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. A most impressive part of the service is a period of intercessory prayer, when, on invitation of the pastor, people move forward and kneel about the altar with the pastor, who gives audible expression to

HAMILTON, OHIO, CHURCHES HAVE THEIR EYES OPENED

Twenty-two Protestant Churches of Hamilton have just recently closed the finest week of evangelistic advance the city has ever known. Under the combined direction of the International Council of Religious Education and the Federal Council of Churches the National Christian Teaching Mission program was carried out Oct. 21-27. In case you are unfamiliar with the program, it is a program of self study, fellowship cultivation, program enlargement, and a city-wide religious census. Each participating church invites a guest leader who comes to that church to work with the pastor in studying the present program of the church, the evangelistic potential of that church and then laying plans for advance. On Friday night the officers and leaders of the church and its organizations sat down with the guest leader to study the program as it is being carried on now. By filling in a questionnaire which has been prepared for just this purpose we had our eyes opened to our weaknesses and our strength. Redeemer Church, the church of the writer, found itself strong in fellowship, about average in churchmanship and service, but rather weak in worship and education. It was like holding a mirror in front of oneself and seeing oneself as he really is. On Sunday, Oct. 24th, there was a city-wide religious census taken by nearly 1000 volunteers. The following figures have been compiled as a result of that census. Of the total population of the city 25.48% is Roman Catholic, 20% is Baptist, 10% is Methodist and 8% is Evangelical and Reformed. Only 3% of the population has no church preference. In the case of Redeemer Church, a neighborhood church of 300 members, it meant this: 700 people can be listed as the responsibility of our church; first of all there are the members, next there are those who attend, but are not members, next there are a large group of people who prefer Redeemer by virtue of the fact that their children attend Sunday School or use the church gymnasium, and lastly there are those who have no church preference but who live close to our church. These facts were eye openers to all of us and set before the membership of the church the picture of "the field ripe for the harvest." Names of people who need to be cultivated by love and friendship and thus won for Christ and His church have been given to various groups whose responsibility it is to visit and invite these people to a fuller participation in the fellowship of the church. It was a great week which has opened up great responsibilities for the future. Three of the four Evangelical and Reformed Churches of Hamilton—First, Rev. C. Gebhart; St. Paul's, without a pastor; and Redeemer, Rev. V. Schoen—participated in this effort and would commend it to others who would have such an opportunity.

Reported by:

REV. VICTOR H. SCHOEN,
Pastor of Redeemer E. & R. Church.

the thoughts of their hearts, the unexpressed desires and aspirations of their lives.

This is a type of mission sorely needed in our Evangelical and Reformed Churches. One comes away from such an experience personally enriched and convinced of the fact that Christianity has become more meaningful to certain hearts. The editor of THE ADVOCATE heartily recommends that others of our pastors and congregations experiment with and explore the spiritual possibilities of an *Evangel Week*.

* * * * *

New Orleans Protestantism conducted a religious census and visitation crusade, the former October 10 and the latter November 7-11, 1948, under the direction of Dr. Guy Black. Several of our E and R churches actively participated in both phases of the project. We quote from the *New Orleans States*:

"While more than 99 per cent of the people surveyed named some church preference, the survey revealed that as many as 124,888 white Protestants (so-called) were unaffiliated with any of the local churches. This is a tremendous opportunity."

A more recent report from New Orleans is to the effect that our E and R churches received large responsibility rolls and are now at work in carrying out the visitation phase of the total community project. We await with interest the results of the latter effort in terms of accessions to our E and R churches, more so, the spiritual enrichment and impetus in outreach given to the participating congregations.

* * * * *

Here's another interesting item! A letter from Kansas City, Mo., tells of an evangelistic crusade put on unitedly by the Baptists. It states:

"Ninety-one churches cooperated in the campaign including four conventions, namely: North, South, National Convention of America, National Convention of U.S.A., Inc. Additions to the Baptist communion were by baptism 1297 and by transfer of letter 717. There were 205 known additions to other denominations and fifteen

young people pledged their lives to full time Christian service.

A report like the above ought to stir up the evangelistic flame of our E and R churches on a community denominational level, or better still, encourage our churches to actively participate in an interdenominational project, if and when such a project is proposed and open to them in the community.

* * * * *

Recently the Episcopalians of the diocese of greater New York conducted a nine day evangelistic mission, the successful reverberations of which are resounding

WHEN YOU COME OVER

(A Primer for New Protestants)

The above is the title and sub-head of a very valuable pamphlet to put into the hands of people who are being received into our Churches from the Roman Catholic Church. It helps them to become oriented in our Protestant faith and polity, thus making for proper assimilation and integration in the Protestant fellowship.

The pamphlet may be secured from the **Federal Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York. Price — 15 cents per copy.**

throughout the nation. The mission was held in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine with Rev. Bryan Green of England as missionary. Dr. Samuel M. Shoemaker of Calvary Church, New York, in writing up the "Story of the Mission" says:

"A very well-known Roman Catholic layman and editor called me up one morning during the past week and said, 'I hear a miracle has been taking place in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine this past week.' The same morning came a call from Dr. Bader, head of the department of evangelism of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, saying, 'A miracle has certainly taken place in New York.' People tell me they hear the Diocesan Mission spoken of in all sorts of

places, in busses and subways, in offices and hair-dresser shops. One of our clergy wrote me this week, 'Our people speak of little else.'

Nothing like this has ever come to New York. There have been great religious gatherings in some of the larger churches, and even Madison Square Garden; but they did not reach so many outside the churches, they were not sustained over so long a period of time, nor did they leave such a lasting impression. From the first Sunday night, when far more people crowded in than we could possibly have imagined, through Monday (when there was an inevitable drop), through Tuesday when the numbers began climbing again, all through the week till the last Sunday, when every chair that could be got into the Cathedral and the crypt was filled and many could not get in, and Tuesday night, when we had the great service of thanksgiving, vast crowds have filled our Cathedral to hear a simple, powerful message about Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The whole experience has inspired us, and given us new heart for the days to come. It has also surprised us, surprised the Bishops and clergy and people, surprised the missionary himself who tells me he has never in his long experience known anything like it.

We have discovered that the people of New York are spiritually hungry and ready for the Christian message. Our crowds at the Cathedral were representative American crowds, an average cross-section of our people. They came, not to marvel, but to seek. Many of them sought and found Christ. The personal interviews (and there were hundreds of them) revealed great need and great openness to the whole claim of our Lord upon the people. The expectation of the missionary that something would happen to the people began to fill the minds of all who had anything to do with the mission. And, with prayer, it did happen, and goes on happening, as many fresh requests for interviews this week testify."

Surely, the tides of evangelism are coming in. The Holy Spirit is at work leading people, young and old, to Christ who alone can give meaning to and satisfy the deepest needs of their life.