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Structuring a Youth-to-Youth Visitation Program

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SHORT TITLE

YOUTH EVANGELISM

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by
Marvin Bergman

June 1939

Approved by:

Arthur W. ...
...

STRUCTURING A YOUTH-TO-YOUTH

VISITATION PROGRAM

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Arthur M. Vincent
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CHAPTER I

THE NEED FOR STRUCTURING A YOUTH-TO-YOUTH VISITATION PROGRAM

Howard Ellis notes that the evangelistic spotlight is upon youth evangelism.¹ Several observations can substantiate this view. One may note youth departments of many denominations producing materials on youth evangelism, Protestant churches throughout the country promoting city-wide youth-to-youth visitation programs, individual youth groups adopting evangelism programs as projects, and pastors and youth directors reporting a new interest in youth evangelism.

This interest in youth evangelism is due to several factors. The number of unchurched youth in the United States is a factor. Though it is difficult to obtain reliable figures on the youth population, Ellis reports that the difference between the number of youth enrolled in church activities and the youth population of America amounts to 19,328,000 teen-agers.² This means that three out of four young people are outside the church.³

¹Howard Ellis, Evangelism For Teen-Agers (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 4.

²Ibid., p. 8.

³Ibid.

Authorities also estimate that for every young person attending church on Sunday morning, there is one nominal member not in church. For every active and inactive young person associated with the church, there are two teen-agers who do not belong to the church. Only one out of four young people in the United States takes his Christian convictions seriously enough to attend church regularly.⁴ The most conservatively estimated figure is that one half of our young people have a relationship with the church.⁵ The field of youth evangelism is surely "white unto harvest."

In addition, the problem grows worse.⁶ The census figures for 1955 reveal that 16.3 million teen-agers today will be 24.3 million by 1965. The 7.6 million in high school today will be 12.2 million by 1965. Almost five million children are in each of the lower grades, and the estimate is that each year, for at least the next ten years, there will be five million or more youngsters enrolled in the first grade of school. If the church is not doing an adequate job of reaching the teen-ager today, how will it confront these additional millions in the future?

⁴"Youth Share Their Faith" (Elgin, Illinois: Church of the Brethren, 1958), p. 2.

⁵Richard Gilbert, "Winning Friends" (New York: Division of Evangelism, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., n.d.), p. 12.

⁶Ibid., pp. 6-7.

Another source of concern is the heavy loss sustained by the church among young people. For example, it is noted that 75% of the children who have enrolled in a Sunday School are no longer enrolled in a Sunday School at the age of 16 years. George Sweazey quotes Bishop Praetorius as stating that,

of every 100 pupils in American Protestant church schools, 75 drop away from the church. Fifteen of these will later be rewon, so the final loss is 60 per cent. These lost 60 represent the church's most shocking failure in evangelism.⁷

The problem of the unchurched youth and the loss of youth within the church is a gigantic problem for the church. But the church may also have part of the answer to this problem within its own ranks: its youth. In the minds of many people, the missing link between the unchurched youth and the church is the Christian youth. The teen-age Christian is believed to be the best instrument for bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to other teen-agers.⁸ Though this paper will not attempt to validate this statement, the experiences of many people active in youth work seem to warrant this assumption. If the teen-ager is the most effective witness to other youth, the church is able to draw upon a vast resource of manpower.

⁷George Sweazey, Effective Evangelism (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), p. 190.

⁸Gilbert, op. cit., p. 12.

The 105,000 members of the youth fellowship of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, the Walther League, offer a mighty force for the cause of Christ. Some 42,000 thirteen to fourteen year olds who are added yearly to the communicant membership list of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod assure a tremendous source of manpower.⁹ The pools of manpower which stand ready to be tapped for the greatest work in the world are vast.

Another cause of concern for Youth Evangelism is the increasing recognition of "youth time as decision time." Sweazey estimates that 90% of those who join the church do so by the time they are twenty-one years old, and 95% by the time they are twenty-four.¹⁰ Jesse Bader notes that "generally speaking, about one fourth of our members make decisions before they are thirteen; about one half between twelve and twenty one years of age; and about one fourth after they are twenty one."¹¹ Comparatively speaking, few people are won to Christ and for the church after they are twenty one years of age.

⁹Oscar Feucht, "The Functional Nature of Group Bible Study," American Lutheran, XLII, No. 1 (January, 1959), 11.

¹⁰Sweazey, op. cit., p. 190.

¹¹Jesse Bader, Evangelism in a Changing America, (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1957), p. 77.

An awareness of the spiritual and moral needs of youth also points up a place for youth evangelism. Religious polls among youth show that youth are concerned with such questions as: (1) Why are we born and of what use is life? (2) Is there a God? (3) What happens after death? At age eighteen, over 43% of youth want help with such religious problems.¹² Surveys also indicate that the consciences of many teen-age boys and girls are bothering them. Boys are bothered by such problems as "swearing too much, bad habits, and being interested in 'dirty jokes.'" Girls indicate that they are bothered more often by "mistakes they have made, making use of their talents, life after death, questions of honesty, group morals, and the inconsistency between what people consider right and what they actually do."¹³ The solving of these problems is important for youth. Youth experts note that "sixteen is probably the most favorable age for the beginning of atheistic or agnostic tendencies" and that at about mid-adolescence youth with religious training often begin either to value their faith or to harbor serious doubts about the

¹²Raymond Mueller, "Principles For Winning Unchurched High School Youth For Christ" (unpublished B.D. thesis, Pritzlaff Library, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1954), p. 30.

¹³Ibid., p. 32.

Christian beliefs.¹⁴ Youth who are faced with weighty problems are a ready target for the witness of young Christians.

Additional interest in youth evangelism stems from a recognition of the amount of time needed for a layman to become an effective Christian witness. Bryan Green notes that time is a most serious difficulty in the recruitment of adult lay workers, for the "kind of man whom the Church needs will be the very man who takes his daily work seriously, and, therefore, may genuinely be too tired or feel disinclined for the discipline of Christian training." For this reason, he suggests that the training of young people as witnesses of the Gospel begin as soon as possible.¹⁵ If laymen need considerable training in becoming an effective Christian witness, why not train these Christians to witness when a youth?

If the above observations are true, youth evangelism has a right to be considered as a vital part of the work of the church. And yet, statistics and observations of youth work in some churches do not indicate a great concern for youth evangelism. Statistics of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod show that 1100 congregations confirmed no

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 28

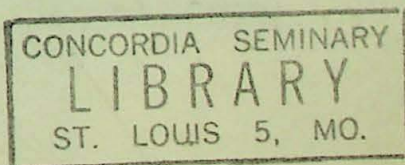
¹⁵ Bryon Green, The Practice of Evangelism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), p. 256.

youth in 1957, and that 1700 congregations in this same body confirmed two or fewer youth in the same year.¹⁶ This means that more than one-half of the churches of this body have brought two or less young people to Christ during an entire year. The Youth Survey Report, an analysis of the program of the Walther League published in 1957, does not mention the work of evangelism in its evaluation of the Walther League's program.

This does not mean that youth leaders and youth fellowships of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod are not concerned about youth evangelism. The "Big M" program of the Walther League featured a membership mission as the first of its three-step program. The Walther League's "Youth Evangelism Service" project of 1953-54 points to additional concern for the place of youth evangelism. Concern for youth evangelism within our church is apparent. But there is evidence to suggest that the youth groups of our church may not be utilizing a great portion of its potential for the cause of youth evangelism.

Failure to use youth in winning other youth for Christ is due to many factors. To be sure, the primary cause of failure to witness is a spiritual problem. But another factor

¹⁶ O. A. Waech, (unpublished class notes taken from lecture at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1959, in possession of writer).



becomes apparent when one who has felt the urgency of youth evangelism in a Christian congregation begins to structure a youth-to-youth visitation program. How does one initiate an evangelistic program for youth? How does one train youth visitors? How does one enlist youth visitors? How does one introduce unchurched youth to the church? How does one confront the importance of "decision" in making an evangelistic call? Is the lack of knowing how to undertake a youth-to-youth visitation program a possible stumbling block to youth evangelism?

Lack of "know-how" in promoting youth evangelism in the church is voiced in several corners. Pastor H. Hartner states, "We have programs for adults and children in evangelism, but we have done little or nothing in winning the teen-agers."¹⁷

Mueller, in compiling information for his Bachelor of Divinity thesis, "Principles For Winning Unchurched High School Youth For Christ," states that he "found no book which dealt specifically with the problem of winning high school youth."¹⁸ The same author notes that the Walther League's first organized effort for winning unchurched youth, the "Youth Evangelism Service," is helpful, but that

¹⁷ Mueller, op. cit., p. 3

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 5.

it "lacks a study of the methods of presenting Christ to unchurched youth on the basis of their own life needs."¹⁹

His research found that,

there was much material available which dealt with methods of winning adults and children for the church, but very little material was available on the specific problems of witnessing to, and winning, youth of high school age,

and that, "only a few short magazine articles could be found which dealt directly with programs of witnessing to high school youth."²⁰

A study of Mueller's thesis shows that this work essentially consists of a description of the psychological factors involved in an approach to unchurched youth, a section on methods pastors and youth counselors can utilize as individuals to reach unchurched youth, suggestions of opportunities for witness in non-structured situations, an outline of a youth evangelism program for the parish, hints in getting and holding prospects, and a treatment on preparing the unchurched teen-ager for confirmation. Mueller's findings are of great aid to one interested in youth evangelism. But his emphasis upon clarification of the principles of winning unchurched youth rather than upon methods leaves room for a more explicit treatment of structuring a youth-to-youth visitation program.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 4.

²⁰Ibid., p. 2.

One work published subsequent to Mueller's thesis is a pamphlet published by the Walther League entitled, "Make Disciples." This pamphlet is of value in that it points up mission work as the responsibility of every society; alerts one to various mission opportunities; offers suggestions for planning and organizing mission work in the youth society; stresses the advantages of witnessing where one is; speaks of ways of witnessing with the printed word; offers hints in conducting a canvass; and urges that youth carry on evangelism through community service. But this pamphlet does not present a concrete approach to structuring a youth-to-youth visitation program.

It is recognized that methods are not a "cure-all" in any promotion of youth evangelism. Methods cannot, for instance, replace such an important factor as motivation in conducting a youth visitation program. Methods are considered to be a means to an end. And yet, methods are important. Green states that methods need to be discussed "because they are something that the Christian Church has to employ in carrying out the task that God has appointed her."²¹ In addition, doesn't the best "Message" deserve the best methods?

²¹Green, op. cit., p. 165.

In retrospect, these factors seem to point up a need for structuring a youth-to-youth visitation program: (1) The staggering number of unchurched youth in the United States; (2) The heavy losses of young people sustained yearly by the church; (3) The availability of youth to serve as a line between Christ and the unchurched youth; (4) Recognition of youth time as decision time; (5) The religious and moral needs of youth; (6) The advantages of training Christians to witness when a youth; (7) The lack of concern for youth evangelism in some quarters of the church; (8) A lack of materials dealing with youth evangelism available to members of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod; (9) The belief that methods are important in structuring a youth-to-youth visitation program.

It is the aim of this paper to structure a youth-to-youth visitation program from beginning to end. The age-bracket of teen-agers qualified to do youth visitation work envisioned in this study approximates the 16-23 year old group. Youth-to-youth visitation is thought of as a formally structured program in which Christian young people confront unchurched youth with the person of Jesus Christ through personal testimony for the purpose of being the instruments through which the unchurched youth come to declare Jesus Christ as personal Savior. The Walther League Society is considered to be a most appropriate setting for a youth-to-youth visitation program.

Materials for this study are confined to an investigation of the most important books, pamphlets, and tracts dealing with visitation evangelism in general; to youth evangelism materials published by the Walter League; to pertinent articles published in periodicals of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; and to books, pamphlets, and tracts made available by the youth departments of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., the Presbyterian Church in the U.S., the Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the United Lutheran Church, The Augustana Lutheran Church, the Luther League Federation, the United Christian Youth Movement, the Church of the United Brethren, and other independent publishers.

However, the guidance required in a youth visitation program nearly demands a group of motivated adult youth leaders. An appropriate group which may spearhead a youth evangelism program is the youth committee of the congregation. This committee needs to be highly motivated. One approach to motivating the group is to point up the need for youth evangelism in the local youth group. The leader who is able to cite the number of unchurched youth in the community, to vividly portray Christ's desire for every Christian to witness for Him, to enthusiastically describe

¹Frank Roberts, director of the Orlando, Florida, City-Wide Christian Youth Mission, 1956.

CHAPTER II

PREPARING FOR YOUTH EVANGELISM

Preparing Adult Leaders

The need for youth evangelism will compel many leaders of youth to want to act. The role of the adult leaders in an evangelism program for youth is vital. For the thrust needed to structure a youth-to-youth visitation program will need to spring from adult counselors and leaders. Often, one enthusiastic adult can supply the source of inspiration needed to undertake a youth evangelism program. In fact, one individual has been known to spark an entire city-wide youth visitation program.¹

However, the guidance required in a youth visitation program nearly demands a group of motivated adult youth leaders. An appropriate group which may spearhead a youth evangelism program is the youth committee of the congregation. This committee needs to be highly motivated. One approach to motivating the group is to point up the need for youth evangelism in the local youth group. The leader who is able to cite the number of unchurched youth in the community, to vividly portray Christ's desire for every Christian to witness for Him, to enthusiastically describe

¹Frank Roberts, director of the Orlando, Florida, City-Wide Christian Youth Mission, 1958.

the privilege of youth witnessing for Christ will often move a group to see the need for youth evangelism.

If youth evangelism is felt to be a distinct need in the particular youth fellowship, this may be followed by a discussion of "how" the unchurched youth of the community can be reached. The pooling of ideas presented may show that an organized course of action is the best method of procedure. At this time, a more complete elaboration upon the aims and methods of a youth-to-youth visitation program may be presented. Examples of what other youth groups have done in this field can be cited with profit. Application of each of these points to the local situation will help motivate the group to action. This entire discussion will then need to be climaxed by a decision. If the group decides affirmatively, it will need to realize that the success of any youth evangelism program is dependent to a large degree upon the solid backing of adult leaders-- a backing not only indicated by resolutions, but by a willingness to give time, energy, and money to the visitation program.

Preparing Youth

The first essential factor in the preparation of youth for an evangelism program is motivation. Motivation is considered to be the foundation of a youth visitation program. Of course, a correct understanding of motivation is necessary.

Motivation in this context is not a mere arousal of the emotions. Instead, motivation is here interpreted to mean a stirring of the will by the Spirit of God within the individual.

Since this motivation can only be supplied by the Means of Grace, it is important for each Christian witness to remain in close contact with the Word of God and the Sacraments. For example, when one goes deeper into the Word of God, he will go farther as a Witness for Christ.² So that the Holy Spirit will become more alive in the heart of the individual, this first meeting planned to prepare youth for Christian witness centers upon a Bible study of the work of evangelism.

Approaches to a Biblical study of the work of evangelism are manifold. The following are some suggestions for a study of several concepts vital to evangelism:

1. A study of the first concept is intended to answer the question, "Who am I as a Christian?" This study may center upon any of several portions of I Peter 2-4 or Ephesians 4-6 which point up the calling of a Christian. Recognizing oneself to be one who has been redeemed by Christ for service to Him is the goal of these passages.
2. The second concept describes the number of Christians God expects to serve Him through witnessing. A study of I Peter 2:9-10, Luke 24:47-48, or Acts 1:6-9 will show that every Christian is to be a witness for Christ.

²"Effective Biblical Evangelism in the Local Congregation" (St. Louis: Evangelism Department, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, n.d.), p. 3.

3. A third concept helpful to a Biblical understanding of evangelism is an awareness of Christ's and His apostles' approach to soul-winning. A study of John 1:35-51 or John 3:1-22 will indicate that Christ and His apostles relied largely upon the personal approach.
4. A fourth concept which is part of the Bible's treatment of evangelism is the example of Christ's method of organizing an evangelism program. A study of Luke 10 with an emphasis upon verses 1, 2, 17, 18 will enable youth to see Christ's method of sending out witnesses two by two.³

Through any of several techniques which enable youth to participate in the Bible study, these passages can alert youth to four basic concepts: (1) A recognition of their uniqueness as a believer in Christ; (2) An awareness of the responsibility of personal witness; (3) A vision of the personal approach which Christ and His apostles used; (4) An understanding of Christ's organization of an evangelism program. Such a study of the Holy Scriptures is important. For the Scriptures are a means through which the Holy Spirit moves people to action.

The second phase of this first meeting intended to prepare youth for the work of evangelism is an analysis of the group's evangelistic record. The object of this study is to enable youth to see how closely they are able to match their evangelistic activities with the goals of

³Arthur Vincent, (unpublished class notes taken from lecture at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1959, in possession of writer).

Scripture. A simple score sheet may be prepared which will readily point up both the individual's and the group's accomplishments in evangelism during the past year.

The leader of the discussion may introduce this subject and then distribute a score sheet entitled, "What are we doing in evangelism?" to each member of the group. He is to state the purpose of the study clearly and to emphasize the value of each person's taking an honest look at himself and the group. This survey can be scored on the basis of points, such as: Altogether True--3 points; Largely True--2points; Partly True--1 point; Not True--0.⁴

A sample score sheet is here outlined:

1. I have found many opportunities to witness for Christ. _____
2. I often speak to my friends about Christ. _____
3. I have brought an unchurched friend to the youth fellowship. _____
4. I like to make new friends and help them find Christ. _____
5. I like to welcome strangers into our group. _____
6. Our group is sharing the Gospel with other youth. _____
7. Our group is doing as much as it can to bring other youth to Christ. _____
8. It is easy for a new person to become part of our group. _____

⁴Harry Munro, Fellowship Evangelism (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1951), p. 48.

After obtaining a picture of "What are we doing?", the leader may then supplement this material with a prepared analysis of "How do we look?" The leader can describe this picture by sharing these statistics with the group:⁵

1. Ages of youngest and oldest member. _____
2. Number of enrolled members. _____
3. Average attendance in meetings of last year. _____
4. Number of teachers, sponsors, or leaders. _____
5. New members added during the past year. _____
6. Percent of members who had no active relation to our church one year ago. _____
7. Number of unchurched youth on our responsibility list. _____
8. Number of irregular members we are following up faithfully. _____
9. Members dropped during the past year. _____
10. Number of people our plan for discovering unchurched people has added to the prospect list during past year. _____

At this point, the role of the leader is vital. A sharp analysis of what the youth have been doing in evangelism presented in capsule form can be an important factor in motivating youth to action. Introduction of concrete figures

⁵"Evangelistic Score Sheet" (Nashville: Tidings, n.d.), p 2.

of unchurched youth in the immediate community is a further stimulus. A reminder of the Bible study which pointed to Christ's wish for every Christian to be an active witness for Him will add to the urgency of taking action. When these factors have been pointed up sharply by the leader, he is then in position to ask the youth, "What can we do?" A full dependence upon youth to supply the answer to this question will give youth a greater opportunity to make a group decision. Due attention needs to be given to each suggestion made by youth, and opportunity for a thorough exploration of the problem will be a help. Youth can be trusted to give the work of evangelism their most serious consideration. Whether youth decide for or against an organized plan of action is not important to the adult leader or leaders at this point. What is important is that youth honestly face a comparison of their activities in evangelism with the will of Christ. Youth need the opportunity to react and begin to resolve the dilemma (if any) before them. It seems safe to predict that adult leaders who rely upon youth for the making of such a vital decision will see youth express a desire for an organized plan of action. If the youth agree upon an organized plan of youth evangelism, the leader may then ask, "Where do we begin?" Here again, youth can be trusted to recognize that a record of the names and addresses of unchurched youth are a "must" for a youth

evangelism program. The youths' decision to begin work on compiling a responsibility list on a specific date and time terminates this first important meeting.

Youth who have decided where to begin are ready to seek to identify by name, address, and previous religious background the lost or stray sheep in the community.¹ The goal of this second meeting is to give youth an opportunity to find unchurched youth through several different avenues. Youth can be asked to:

1. Check the roll of their own group. Are there some young people on the roll who are not attending and who are indifferent?
2. Check the church membership roll. How many young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are on the church roll, but have no connection with the youth group?
3. List the names of their unchurched relatives and friends?²
4. Check the public school rolls for the religious preferences of enrollment. (This is a valuable source of obtaining the names of prospects. Religious preference cards of Orlando, Florida, high schools revealed the names of approximately 2000 unchurched high school youth. Most school principals will cooperate if they understand why this information is wanted.)³

¹George Deane, *The Church's Singular Task* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), p. 52.

²George Swasey, *Effective Evangelism* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1934), p. 73.

³"Here's How" (Evanston: The Methodist Publishing House, 1947), p. 17.

CHAPTER III

GETTING STARTED

Finding Prospects

Youth who have decided where to begin are ready to seek to identify by name, address, and previous religious background the lost or stray sheep in the community.¹ The goal of this second meeting is to give youth an opportunity to find unchurched youth through several different avenues.

Youth can be asked to:

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¹Oscar Carlson, The Church's Singular Task (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1950), p. 82.

²George Sweazey, Effective Evangelism (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), p. 75.

³"Here's How" (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1949), p. 17.

5. Ask the pastor or youth counselors about young people whom they know to be unchurched;⁴
6. Obtain the names of youth who have visited the youth Bible class or Sunday School;
7. Find the names of those youth who attended Sunday School, but were not confirmed;⁵

This group project will in all probability reveal a list of unchurched youth which may even amaze a skeptic. If a large number of unchurched youth has been uncovered, the group may decide that its prospect list is adequate.

But if the group realizes that its prospect list is scanty, the adult leader may point out the worth of a religious census. Two approaches to a religious census are possible. One approach is a house-to-house survey of teenagers only. The young people need only ask, "Do you have any teen-agers here? Where do they attend church?" A Topeka, Kansas, church reports finding 315 prospects in one week through this method.⁶

A second approach is a religious survey of the entire community. Of course, a complete religious survey is a

⁴Robert Jones, "That They May Know" (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1950), p. 12.

⁵Raymond Mueller, "Principles For Winning Unchurched High School Youth For Christ" (unpublished B.D. thesis, Pritzlaff Library, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1954), p. 53.

⁶Howard Ellis, Evangelism For Teen-Agers (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 4.

matter for the entire church. But a youth group can take the lead in proposing a survey and in furnishing workers for the task. There even may be occasion for the youth group to do the whole job from start to finish.⁷

Planning A Survey

1. First, decide on the area to survey. This area may be the church's immediate neighborhood, a new housing development, a community which has not been surveyed recently, communities where no church seems to have a particular responsibility, or rural areas.⁸
2. Set the time for the survey. Make sure that your survey will not conflict with some other church or community program being promoted in the community. A weekday after school is sometimes convenient for youth, although Sunday afternoons are probably best for the group.⁹
3. Recruit the workers. If the youth leaders have been working within a democratic framework in which youth themselves have made the vital decisions, adult leaders should give every youth opportunity to volunteer his services. Leaders are to assume that every member of the group will be part of the religious survey.
4. Map out the area to be canvassed. The area may be divided into various districts, so that canvassers can be divided into as many groups as there are districts.¹⁰

⁷"Here's How," op. cit., p. 18.

⁸Ibid., p. 19.

⁹Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁰"A Guide To Canvassing" (Chicago: Walther League, 1952), p. 3.

5. Obtain such necessary supplies as maps of the census area, census cards, assignment envelopes and pencils.¹¹ Arrangements for transportation can also be made at this time.
6. Decide upon a date and schedule. A schedule for a Sunday afternoon census might look something like this:¹²

1:00 p.m.	Instructions
1:30	Assignments and dismissal with prayer
1:30 - 5:00	Census taking
5:00	Cards are returned and sorted
Monday evening	Return calls made at addresses where no one was at home

Conducting A Religious Census

Between thirty and sixty minutes of instruction on the afternoon of the canvass may be needed for the preparation of callers. The leader can at this time emphasize the unusual importance of this work. Each called needs to realize that another person's opportunity to gain life eternal may hinge upon information obtained in the survey. The leader can also describe the technique of making a

¹¹ Sweazey, op. cit., p. 82.

¹² Ibid., p. 81.

canvass call by giving attention to these items:¹³

1. The caller's concept of his role as an ambassador of Christ should impress him with the importance of obtaining the desired information.
2. Two short rings or an unusual knock at the door will usually bring the occupant to the door.
3. As the door opens, a half-step backward may induce the person to open the door wider.
4. Greeting the occupant with a friendly smile and a request for help will aid in establishing rapport.
5. With pencil and card in hand, the caller's conversation may proceed along these lines.¹⁴
 - a. "Hello, our church is taking a religious survey this afternoon. We have a card with three or four questions, and we would appreciate it if you could take a minute to help us with it."
 - b. "How many children below fourteen years are in this family? And how many teen-agers? Do they go to Sunday School regularly? Which Sunday School?"
 - c. "Where does the father of the family go to church? Is he a regular member or does he just go once in a while?"
 - d. "Where do you go to church? Are you a regular member, or do you go once in a while? What is your minister's name?"
 - e. "What's the family name? The initials? Oh, yes, those children and teens--what are their ages?"

¹³"Here's How," op. cit., p. 22.

¹⁴Louis Henze, "A Word About Canvassing," Manual of Practical Church Work, (New York: Lutheran Press, 1943), p. 56.

6. After obtaining the desired information, be sure to thank the party.
7. Also write a full comment on the back of the card, giving an impression of the party's relation to the church.

Other suggestions which may be of help to youth are:

- (1) It is better not to go into the house unless the weather is bad or the person you are visiting insists on your coming in. People are happy to conclude business in a few minutes at the door.¹⁵
- (2) If the party asks, "Who wants to know?", the canvasser may answer this question with the remark, "I'm taking a church census and am wondering if you would help me."
- (3) In cases of absolute refusal, the canvasser will check the space provided on the card.
- (4) If a child answers, the canvasser should ask for the father or mother.
- (5) If a family is not at home, the canvasser should not seek information from a neighbor.¹⁶

Most of the above data can be gathered on this census card (see page 27) which requires only checkmarks:¹⁷

After the leader has answered any questions posed by the group, he may desire to describe the program for the afternoon. He should also remind the canvassers of the time

¹⁵"Here's How," op. cit., p. 23.

¹⁶"A Guide To Canvassing," op. cit., p. 4

¹⁷Henze, op. cit., p. 57.

ADDRESS

FAMILY NAME

SUNDAY SCHOOL PROSPECTS: HOW MANY? AGES?

TEEN-AGERS: HOW MANY? AGES?

Not at Home

Vacant House

Refused

Regular
Member

Attends

(Not a
member)Unchurched
(Former
Member)Regular
Member

Attends

(Not a
member)Unchurched
(Former
Member)

DENOMINATION

M E N

W O M E N

Lutheran:
--Our SynodLutheran
--Other Synods

Baptist

Catholic

Congregational

Episcopal

Evangelical

Jewish

Methodist

Presbyterian

Other Sects:

Canvassers:

(use other side for notations)

by which they are to return to the church, regardless of the number of calls which have not been made. The session may then be terminated by a few inspirational words by the pastor and a prayer for the guidance and blessing of God upon this work. As the canvassers file out of church, captains can hand out assignments and canvass cards.

When the canvassers return to the home base, they or the captains are to give all cards to the person who is to do the filing.¹⁸ If time is available, the cards may be sorted into piles marked for each major denomination and for such categories as "combination" (religiously divided households), "miscellaneous" (denominations with no local church), "no preference," and "declined to give information."¹⁹ Though sorting the cards may seem to be anti-climactic, this clerical work is most important. For a disordered mass of census information needs to be changed into a clear guide for action.²⁰

Members of the youth group who may not have desired to participate in the census can render a valuable service to their Lord and to their fellow Kingdom workers by preparing

¹⁸"A Guide To Canvassing," op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁹Sweazey, op. cit., p. 85.

²⁰Ibid., p. 86

and serving a lunch when the canvassers have returned.²¹ Such a meal gives youth an opportunity to share their experiences and enthusiasm so that the entire group becomes more solidified and united in its cause. This setting will also enable the group to express thanksgiving to God and to make petitions for His blessing upon its work in a brief worship service.

Since a census card is not a mere card, but a representation of a person for whom Christ has died, much care needs to be given to the cards.²² One person should assume responsibility for the handling of the census cards and the structure and maintenance of a responsibility file. The appointment of a "Soul Responsibility" secretary will help to emphasize the sacred nature of this responsibility. Since cards are often mislaid or lost, it is desirable to arrange cards in duplicate. One scheme may use white and colored cards: the white card is to be used by the callers, while the colored card never is to be removed from the soul-responsibility file. All information should be included on both cards.²³ Cards

²¹"A Guide To Canvassing," op. cit., p. 4.

²²"Christ Is the Good News" (New York: The Board of Social Missions, The United Lutheran Church in America, c.1958), p. 14.

²³"Effective Biblical Evangelism in the Local Congregation," op. cit., pp. 5-6.

may be filed alphabetically and classified under such headings as:

Good, (unchurched youth, youth who are new in the community)

Fair, (those who show little concern or interest in the church)

Poor, (those who have repeatedly refused invitations to attend church or the youth fellowship meetings).²⁴

Organizing The Program

Christian youth canvassers who have met and talked to other youth not acquainted with Christ and His Church will be moved to act; for these youth have seen friends and neighbors in the community who are in need of the precious Gospel of Jesus Christ. Organizing a plan for action is the primary purpose of the third organizational meeting.

Counselors' briefing

Counselors will profit by holding a planning session of their own. If possible, these leaders will need to meet at least one week prior to the youth planning session. At

²⁴ Sweazey, op. cit., p. 86.

least four adult counselors are needed. These could include the regular youth counselors, the pastor, and possibly a deacon or deacons. An important question which needs to be considered by the adult leaders is, "How can we get the entire youth group involved in planning a visitation program?" Adult leaders can easily plan to impose a course of action upon the youth group as an answer to the problem. But this would be a mistake, for the democratic approach, though not the easiest, is by far the most efficient method of group action.²⁵ Efficiency does not mean the saving of time and energy, but it means producing the desired results--youth reaching youth for Christ. If the democratic approach is chosen, it is vital that the leaders agree upon a definite plan of action, and that they feel secure in the plan which they adopt. Adult leaders can also aid the total program by finding a means of making a spirited announcement of the planning session to both youth and adults of the congregation.²⁶ The leaders' pledge to pray earnestly for the youth planning session and the visitation program will prepare the way for the next important step of the visitation program.

²⁵Par Roa, "We Plan Our Witness" (Minneapolis: Evangelical Lutheran Church, n.d.), p. 1.

²⁶Ibid., p. 1.

Youths' planning session

Since ninety minutes will probably be needed for this session, extended business may well be eliminated from the program. Materials needed for this session include a blackboard, chalk, erasers, pencils, and paper. Chairs may be arranged in a semi-circle, facing the blackboard.²⁷

A good song leader and an inspirational song can give the meeting a lively start. Such hymns as "Take My Life" and "I Love To Tell The Story" are appropriate for youth. The devotional leader may briefly meditate upon Acts 1:6-8 in the light of the imminent danger of a hydrogen bomb attack upon our own country. He can show that even though both the Lord's first disciples and we today have reason to fear, it is the power of the Holy Spirit which thrusts us out into the open to live and give for Him. The Holy Spirit is the motivating power which moves us to announce the forgiveness of sins to all we meet that they, too, might have life abundant here and life eternal hereafter. The devotional leader can also show that it is Christ's desire for us to witness for Him "at Jerusalem" (at home) and unto "the end of the earth." Each believer is to be a witness where he is. "How?" This is what we want to answer together at this time.²⁸

²⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 2.

The leader may then ask the group to form groups of six to "buzz" for three minutes on the subject, "What do we want to accomplish in this youth-to-youth visitation program?" The object of this procedure is to "warm up" the whole group to the process of sharing ideas effectively. This also leads to an agreement upon the goal. After three minutes have elapsed, one reporter from each buzz group is to relate its findings as the leader notes them on the blackboard. Though there may be many variations in the expression of the goal or goals, a double purpose is often noted: (1) To introduce our friends to Christ; and (2) To strengthen our fellowship in Christ. When the group's decisions have been pointed up, a second three-minute buzz session can attempt to state the purpose of the visitation program in a challenging theme.²⁹ Adult counselors may help with such suggestions as "Won to Win," "Christian Youth Witness," "Sharing Christ," etc.

After the group has decided upon a theme, the leader may divide the assembly into cells once again. Chairs placed in a circle are essential, and separate rooms are helpful. Each cell needs: (1) An adult counselor; (2) A recorder who will summarize findings for the entire group later; (3) An awareness of the purpose of the discussion. Keeping the group focused upon the point at issue is one of the main

²⁹Ibid., p. 2.

responsibilities of the counselor. He helps the group to avoid "batting the breeze" unproductively, and yet, he does not intrude dictatorially and stifle free expression.³⁰

The first question which the cells will discuss is, "What are the basic elements of a youth-to-youth visitation program? What do we need to put a planned program of youth evangelism into action?" Although the leaders at their briefing session decided upon several basic elements essential to a youth visitation program, it is important for youth to become involved in the planning of the program. In addition, it is possible for youth to suggest elements which may have been overlooked previously. After fifteen to twenty minutes have been allowed for discussion, the cells may be asked to report their findings to the group. The presiding leader is to jot down the most pertinent decisions and problems reported by each cell.³¹

In all probability, youth and adult counselors will point to at least eight areas of responsibility essential to a youth-to-youth visitation program. These are: (1) worship, (2) program, (3) maps, (4) teams, (5) transportation, (6) assignment cards, (7) publicity, (8) food.³²

³⁰Ibid., p. 2.

³¹Ibid., p. 5.

³²Materials printed by Steering Committee of the Orlando, Florida, City-Wide Christian Youth Mission, 1958.

The next buzz session will center upon the problem of putting each of these areas of responsibility into action. Each cell is assigned an area of responsibility and is asked to discuss and propose possible plans of action. Problems which will require the cooperation of the entire group also are to be pointed up. If the group and the number of calls to be made are not large, some of these areas of responsibility may be combined.

Cell I: Prospect Cards. Do we have an accurate, useful list of all our prospects? Have we checked all possibilities? How many prospects are on the lists? Are the names in duplicate? How will these cards be assigned to visitors?

Cell II: Teams. Who should be teamed with whom? Who are the most experienced youth visitors? Should close friends be teamed together? Who will make the final decision in setting up teams? How many teams will there be?

Cell III: Worship. Who will lead the worship? How often will we want to have devotions? Do we want to make prayer a part of every activity? What varieties of prayer can we use?³³ How can we remember to pray daily for our leaders, lapsed members, unchurched friends, and each other? Would it help to ask the entire congregation to pray for our

³³Roa, op. cit., p. 5.

visitation program? Can prayer groups meet on the day of visitation? How can we encourage the use of prayer lists? Will we want to climax our visitation program with a special worship service? Could we invite a guest minister for a youth rally?

Cell IV: Program. Can we have a special "Friendship Night"? What kind of a program would be appropriate? What sort of recreation would the group enjoy? In what other ways can we introduce new youth to our youth fellowship?

Cell V: Maps. Where can we obtain enough maps for each team? Or will we need to draw our own maps? How many maps will be needed? How can the maps be marked most clearly?

Cell VI: Transportation. How many cars will be needed? Who will drive the cars? Should the driving be done by adults only? Can we invite parents to help provide the transportation?³⁴

Cell VII: Publicity. How can we best publicize the visitation program? Is it possible to use the church bulletin, newspaper articles, posters, letters, and the telephone? Is it better to do a few of these well than many of them poorly? Which ones?

Cell VIII: Food. Is it possible for us to prepare meals for the youth visitors? If so, how often will we

³⁴Ibid., p. 4.

want to serve food? Who can help prepare the food? Who should pay for the meals?

After the cells have had sufficient time to discuss these topics, the leader may ask for a report of the individual cells. These reports will no doubt suggest several courses of action which can then be discussed. Problems which confront the entire group may also receive attention at this time. When the chief areas of responsibility have been outlined by the group, the leader may ask for volunteers who will hammer these suggestions into a realistic plan of action.

If possible, it is advantageous for this "Steering Committee" to meet during the same evening, since the members will still be "warmed up." This committee is responsible for: (1) Accepting volunteers for the chairmanship of each area of responsibility; (2) Placing a sufficient number of members on the standing committee; (3) Preparing a timing chart for the visitation program; (4) Electing a chairman for the visitation program from among the youth; (5) Recommending a budget for the program.³⁵ In some instances, the group may desire to seek financial assistance.

Another item that needs to be decided at this planning session is the date of the visitation program. Is it more

³⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

advantageous to make calls in the evening during the week or on the weekend? Or, does the group want to make calls on Saturday and Sunday afternoons? Consideration should be given to the time of year, the program of the church, and to events in the local high schools. To avoid confusion and delay, prior consideration will have been given to this point by the adult leaders. The date which is selected should provide at least three weeks for preparation.

At this point, the leader may pose one final question, "Who will go and tell?" Previous to this, the adult leaders should have discussed the relative merits of asking for volunteers or enlisting the services of the most qualified youth. A few words in reference to the use of volunteers versus enlisted laymen may be in order. Though many good points can be cited in favor of each approach, the structure of this visitation program hardly permits any restriction of youth who desire to serve. For a democratic approach within a Christian group seeks the participation of each and every member. In addition to this point, the successes of lay visitors who had been described to be "unqualified and undesirable" shows the fallibility of human judgment. A number of evangelists prefer the voluntary method. Robert F. Jones states that "Experience has suggested that volunteers be used. It has been found that young people who are not deeply serious about the project usually do not volunteer

to be a visitor."³⁶ A. C. Archibald writes,

I believe in the voluntary method of securing our workers. I have tried the method of selection, but have always found the voluntary system more fruitful. No leader can know who is capable of doing this work. Culture, social position, and facility of speech are no guarantee of effectiveness."³⁷

Even though one presupposes that every member of the group will volunteer his service, it is helpful to allow youth to sign a card pledging their intent to attend a training session for youth visitors. An example of such a card is shown here:³⁸

YOUTH PARTICIPATION PLEDGE

I agree to participate in the program of Youth-to-Youth Evangelism.

I will attend the Training Classes, unless prevented by circumstances beyond my control.

I am willing to help wherever needed in this program either by calling or some other assignment.

Name _____

Address _____

³⁶Robert Jones, "That They May Know" (Richmond: Department of Youth Work, Presbyterian Church, U.S., 1950), p.12.

³⁷Arthur Archibald, New Testament Evangelism (Chicago: The Judson Press, 1946), p. 82.

³⁸"Youth Participation Pledge" card (Richmond: Office of Youth Work, Presbyterian Church, U.S., n.d.).

After the young people have made their pledge, the group can then decide upon a date for the first training session.

Importance of Training

Charles Wesley noted that "it is impossible to overstate the importance of proper training for those who are to engage in visitation evangelism."¹ Of course, there is the danger of stressing "technique beyond its due importance,"² and yet, it is recognized that success in visitation evangelism is not the result of a hit or miss procedure. It is the result of well-planned and well-oriented methods of training and visitation.³ Wesley notes that,

The use of improperly trained visitors is one of the worst errors, and must disappear short this. Preaching is essential for even the "great" point to the church will make his full share of the faithful disciples. The most experienced visitor will continue to visit many of the things he should be doing until he has been shown to him.⁴

The same writer points out that, "There are matters of common sense which are obvious only after they have been pointed out."⁵ Many have doubts whether "satisfactory

¹Charles Wesley, *Essentials for Christian Work* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 59.

²Carl Struwers, "Personal Evangelism" (unpublished S.T.M. thesis, Westminster Library, Westminster Seminary, St. Louis, 1951), p. 88.

³James Bryan, *Building Church Membership Through Evangelism* (Madison: Abingdon Press, 1963), p. 98.

⁴George Wesley, *Methods of Evangelism* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 100.

⁵Ibid., p. 100.

CHAPTER IV

TRAINING THE VISITORS

Importance of Training

Charles Templeton states that "it is impossible to overstress the importance of proper training for those who are to engage in visitation evangelism."¹ Of course, there is the danger of stressing "technique beyond its due importance."² And yet, it is recognized that success in visitation evangelism is not the result of a hit or miss procedure. It is the result of well-planned and well-executed methods of training and visitation.³ Sweazey notes that,

The use of improperly trained visitors is one of the most common, and most disastrous short cuts. Training is essential for even the 'greatest' saint in the church will make his full share of the familiar mistakes. The most experienced caller will continue to omit many of the things he should be doing until these are shown to him.⁴

The same writer points out that, "There are matters of common sense which are obvious only after they have been pointed out."⁵ Bryon Green doubts whether "satisfactory

¹Charles Templeton, Evangelism for Tomorrow (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 59.

²Carl Streufert, "Personal Evangelism" (unpublished S.T.M. thesis, Pritzlaff Library, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1951), p. 88.

³Dawson Bryan, Building Church Membership Through Evangelism (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1942), p. 96.

⁴George Sweazey, Effective Evangelism (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), p. 108.

⁵Ibid., p. 109.

attention has been paid to this question of training laymen for Christian witness."⁶ He cites the example of the Communist party, which puts in the "forefront of their policy the training of their members. The new recruit must undergo at least a nine-months' weekly course of disciplined instruction."⁷ Dawson Bryon notes that Christ Himself took three years to train the twelve disciples.⁸

Aim of Training

The aim of the training session is not to make every caller a copy of the teacher. He can show what is to be said, but he cannot show how to say it. The caller must put his free, spontaneous personality into the call. This will be stifled by any "canned call."⁹ The one aim of the training session is to present an outline of the essential steps of an evangelistic call. A knowledge of the essentials of a call will enable the caller to visit more confidently and more efficiently.

⁶Bryan Green, The Practice of Evangelism (New York: Charles Scribner's Son, 1955), p. 247.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Dawson Bryan, A Workable Plan of Evangelism (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1945), p. 76.

⁹Sweazey, op. cit., p. 110.

The Training Session

After the training session has begun with worship, the adult leader is able quickly to point up the necessity of training by asking a few pertinent questions. He may ask, "If you were talking to an unchurched youth tonight, how would you find out if he is a Christian? How would you witness to him? And what is witness?" The necessity of knowing the answers to such questions will move youth to pay strict attention to the leader.

What is witnessing?

One of the first questions which needs to be answered is, "What is the aim of your visit?" "Yes, to witness. But what is witnessing?" The leader may give youth an opportunity to find an answer to this question. What youth omit or fail to understand can then be supplied by the leader. The basic components of the Christian's witness may be described in several ways. Arthur Vincent describes witness as "a total process involving being, doing, and saying."¹⁰ Being is having the life of God in and through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. Doing is exhibiting and putting this life of God into action in one's daily life. Saying is speaking and testifying of the meaning of Christ's

¹⁰ Arthur Vincent (unpublished class notes taken from lecture at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1959, in possession of writer).

death upon the cross to another. The Christian witness is complete only when one speaks of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For it is through the Word that the Holy Spirit has "opportunity to make Jesus mean to others what He already means to the witness."¹¹ Richard Caemmerer describes the mechanisms of the Christian witness in terms of life, love, and speech. Life is "the exercise of God and His Spirit in the heart of man."¹² Love is described as "the demonstration of Life and, therefore, of the power of God in Christ in the heart of him who loves. Love is the will to help a person in need even when he is hostile or distasteful, at the sacrifice of self."¹³ Speech is thought of as the message of repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus. This message is essential, for "to witness, the Christian must ultimately talk about Jesus Christ as Redeemer of the world."¹⁴ The same writer notes that none of these elements can exist independently of the other. "Love and speech must emerge from Life; the speech must be in love; without Life and love the speech is hypocrisy; without the speech the meaning and purpose of Life

¹¹Ibid.

¹² Richard Caemmerer (unpublished class notes taken from lecture at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1953, in possession of writer).

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

and love do not reach the next individual."¹⁵ Either of these two approaches will enable youth to visualize the basic elements and goals of the Christian's witness.

Qualifications of a visitor

A second question which may be appropriately discussed at this time is, "What kind of a person will be an effective witness? If youth mention a variety of personality characteristics as marks of an effective witness, one may agree that these traits are helpful in witnessing. But which qualification is the most important to a Christian witness? Theodore Raedeke declares that "to be filled with the Spirit is the foremost quality of the Christian witness."¹⁶ This speaker cited the presence of the Holy Spirit as that which made the difference in Peter's behavior at Christ's trial and his mighty proclamation of the Gospel on Pentecost. A Christian is to desire such fruits of the Spirit as: (1) a frequent use of the Word and Sacrament, (2) a deep prayer life, (3) a sense of humility, (4) joy in service, (5) a life consecrated to God, (6) a passion for souls, (7) an enthusiasm for the work of evangelism, (8) a love for Christ.¹⁷ Earl Schmiesing adds that the qualities of "a conviction of

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Theodore Raedeke (unpublished class notes taken from lecture at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1959, in possession of writer).

¹⁷Ibid.

truth, a Christian life, persistency, and tactfulness are important to the Christian witness."¹⁸ Though no Christian possesses as many of these traits as he desires, every Christian witness needs the Spirit of God.

Important steps of an evangelistic call

At this time, the leader may desire to direct the group's attention to the visit itself. Here are some suggestions for describing the important steps of a call.

A. Prayer. "If the church is to move forward, it is to move forward on its knees."¹⁹ Basic to the youth visitation program, too, is prayer. Prayer is to saturate the entire lives of the youth, and it may serve a four-fold use for the youth visitors:²⁰

1. The worker prays that God would keep him alert and sympathetic to the needs and problems of those with whom he comes into contact;
2. The worker raises a prayer that God would accompany the words which he speaks during the conversation;
3. After the visit, the caller prays that the Word spoken to the person visited will not lie on fallow ground, but that it will take root according to the promise of God;

¹⁸Earl Schmiesing, "The Approach to the Unchurched" (unpublished B.D. thesis, Pritzlaff Library, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1946), p. 32.

¹⁹Raedeke, op. cit.

²⁰Streufert, op. cit., pp. 55-56.

4. The caller also speaks a prayer of thanksgiving to God for permitting him to bring the Good News to another.

B. Before Knocking. First, you will be assigned a partner. When Christ sent out His seventy disciples to witness, He sent them out in pairs. In general, visiting two-by-two is still the best way. The sharing of responsibility gives confidence to the visitors. They can also help each other in the conversation and combine their thinking. Two young people will make a better impression in a home than one, while three may seem to exert pressure.²¹

After locating the friend's home, the most important thing to do is to pray. Pray in your car or at the door. You may forget some of the instructions, but remember this first step, "Don't forget to pray." Pray for yourselves: "Father, help us to be good witnesses." Pray for others: "Father, open their hearts and minds to see Christ."²²

Before entering the home, decide who is to take the lead in the conversation. One person may decide to make the introductions at the door, while the other can lead the conversation after entering the home. If someone tries to start a conversation with the one who is not to lead, he may

²¹"Instructions for Youth Visitors" (Minneapolis: Luther League Federation, n.d.), p. 2.

²²Howard Ellis, Evangelism For Teen-Agers (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 4.

answer with only a courteous "Yes" or "No" in order that everyone's attention may focus on one conversation.²³

Be sure to know the first and last names of the prospect. A quick review of the prospect's past relationship with the church, his approximate age, his school grade, and other information will be of help in later conversation.²⁴ After the card has been reviewed, it is best to place the card out of sight.²⁵

C. At The Door. The conversation at the door is important. If the person whom you want to visit comes to the door first, a conversation something like this might follow: "Hello Bob; we are from the youth fellowship of _____ Lutheran Church. May we come in and talk to you for a couple of minutes?" If someone else in the family opens the door, the conversation might begin like this: "Hello Mrs. Smith; we are from the youth fellowship of the _____ Lutheran Church. Is Bob home?" If he is not there, you may ask when he will be home and arrange to come again. If the people have guests, or if they are _____

²³Robert Jones, "That They May Know" (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1950), p. 32.

²⁴"Christ is the Good News" (New York: The Board of Social Missions, The United Lutheran Church in America, c.1958), p. 14.

²⁵"Visiting For Commitment" (New York: Division of Evangelism, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., n.d.), p. 3.

going out, do not stay, but set a time for a second visit.²⁶

D. Inside The Home. Once in the home, the first thing to do is to try to "break the ice" by talking easily and naturally. You may do this by talking about that which you have in common or about a subject near at hand. Your friend's school, his work, any obvious hobbies, his brothers and sisters are all good lead-off topics. Talking about a common subject will enable both you and your friend to relax and enjoy the call. This will also prepare the way for a more serious note later in the conversation. Try to talk in an atmosphere that is free from distraction. Don't try to compete with the radio or TV or with a crowd. If conditions are not favorable, you can try to get the radio or TV turned off by lowering your voice so that you cannot be heard. Or you can ask to talk in another room.²⁷

E. Stating the Purpose. After a fairly comfortable relationship has been established between you and your friend, it is important to tell him why you have come. Since you can't afford to talk about the weather all evening, be sure to come to the purpose of the visit rather

²⁶Jones, op. cit., p. 31.

²⁷Edward Ziegler, "Sharing Christ With Other Youth" (Elgin, Illinois: Church of the Brethren, n.d.), p. 21.

early in the visit. You may explain that "this week a number of youth from our church are calling on friends to talk to them about the Christian faith and life."²⁸ Such a statement as this will prepare the way for the main purpose of the visit.

F. Inquiring. At this point, it is important to discover your friend's present relationship and attitude toward the church. This is important, for "People are first of all interested in themselves. They are preoccupied with their own comfort, health, problems, and needs. If we are to reach them we need to get their point of view. In addition, people are impressed with the person who has taken the trouble to find out his experiences and tastes."²⁹ You may prepare for finding out your friend's attitude and relation to the church by briefly telling what the church means to you. You can talk about the blessings which have come to you through the church, such as the blessings of meeting other fine young Christians, of studying the Bible with other young people, of worshipping with your friends. And then you may ask your friend about his relation and attitude towards the church by saying, "Bill, you, no doubt, have

²⁸ Materials printed by Steering Committee of the Orlando Florida, City-Wide Christian Youth Mission, 1958.

²⁹ Sidney Powell, Where Are The People? (Nashville: Abingdon, 1942), p. 160.

gone to church and have participated in church activities. Would you share with us what your experience with the church has been?"³⁰ By asking this question, you are giving your friend an opportunity to tell you how he feels toward the church. His answer to this question may enable you to determine whether his attitude toward the church is negative, apathetic, or positive. You may also learn if he is attending any church or if he has attended a church. If this question is asked in a genuinely sincere manner, your friend will be happy to relate his experiences with the church.

G. The Message. After your friend has indicated his feelings and relationship with the church, you are ready to come to the heart of the visit. For speaking only about the church is not witnessing. Talking about the church and not about Christ is witnessing to a "headless wonder."³¹ The message of the visitor is not the church, but it is the person of Jesus Christ. The person and work of Jesus Christ is the essential message of your visit. One possible approach to speaking this message is to tell your friend what Christ means to you personally. No one can tell you how to tell another what Christ means to you. But you can testify of

³⁰Materials from the Orlando, Florida, City-Wide Christian Youth Mission, op. cit.

³¹Vincent, op. cit.

the joys and blessings of faith in Christ without any fear. For it is impossible to refute or contradict personal testimony. Telling someone else what Christ has done for you and what He means to you is "inside information," unique to you. A radiant testimony cannot be refuted.³² In addition, you have the assurance that the Holy Spirit has opportunity of working through your testimony. After you have personally testified of your relation to Christ, you have paved the way for your friend to think about his relation to Christ. You may lead him to express his feelings toward Christ by asking him, "Bill, would you share with us what Christ means to you?"³² This is personal, but the success of your visit depends on guiding your friend to speak about his relation to Christ. If your friend expresses a negative attitude about his relation to Christ, you may through a sympathetic attitude find out why he feels as he does. Does your friend react negatively to Christ because of some unhappy relationship with people in the church? Or, what other block is standing between him and Christ? If your friend relates his source of difficulty, you may tell him that you understand the situation. And then you may talk once more about

³²Orville Walters, You Can Win Others (Winona Lake, Indiana: Light and Life Press, 1951), p. 42.

³³Materials from the Orlando, Florida, City-Wide Christian Youth Mission, op. cit.

the blessings which Christ offers. After talking about the blessings available through faith in Christ Jesus, you may ask your friend, "Bill, would you like to receive these blessings of Christ?" If your friend shows some hesitation, if he indicates that he may consider the person of Christ in his life, or if he says that he desires to be a believer in Christ, you are ready for the next step. If your friend indicates a negative response, you may then find some help by looking at the section entitled "Excuses."

H. Commitment. The many discussions regarding the place of decision in the work of evangelism seem to warrant interrupting with a few observations regarding the place of decision in visitation evangelism. The charge is sometimes made that "evangelistic appeals, inasmuch as they call upon the sinner to do something which he cannot do, are contrary to the spirit of true Lutheranism."³⁴ Carlson notes that the "basic Lutheran theological conceptions prevent us from using the idea of a decision day. For 'men do not decide by their own reason or strength' to accept Christ; 'they are called by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel.'³⁵

In defense of the first objection, the writer replies

³⁴Editorial in Today, III (May, 1948), pp. 16-17.

³⁵Oscar Carlson, The Church's Singular Task (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1950), p. 86.

that,

When Paul commanded the jailer of Philippi, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,' . . . he was asking the jailer to do something, which, as far as his natural powers were concerned, he was utterly unable to do; but the invitation itself, being a part of God's gracious Gospel revelation, carried with it the power to do the thing commanded.³⁶

Carlsen sees decision in the same light when he writes that,

To discharge our singular task of bringing people to newness of life in Christ, we need to develop the art of setting up 'the confrontation' when people to whom we have witnessed and whose interest we have cultivated will be prompted to say, 'Yes, I believe, help my unbelief.'³⁷

In this writer's judgment, giving one who has been confronted with the Gospel an opportunity to express his response to Christ is scriptural and evangelical. He also believes that laymen should be trained to expect such a response.³⁸

Werner Elert in Christliche Glaube expresses the same thoughts when he speaks of the Gospel in terms of report and address. He states that a mere historical description of Jesus Christ as Son of God may cause a hearer not to apply the truth to himself. The hortatory content of the Apostolic proclamation adds something to the report--it gives significance to the message by alerting the hearer to the need to react to that which is heard. Asking the hearer to make a decision

³⁶Editorial in Today, op. cit.

³⁷Carlsen, op. cit., p. 86.

³⁸Ibid., p. 87.

is leading him to recognize his own personal involvement.³⁹ Elmer Homrighausen writes in his study of decision and commitment in Christian personality that "A traditionally conditioned person, or one who merely assents to theological creeds, needs something more--he needs personal commitment to Christ."⁴⁰ The writer of this paper shares the position that it is necessary and helpful for one who has been motivated by the power of the Holy Spirit to express his reaction to the Gospel of Christ.

It is recognized that "most of those outside the church today are not able to make an intelligent decision for Christ Jesus. For many of those outside the church know little of what they are doing."⁴¹ The consensus of opinion among several writers in the field of youth evangelism seems to indicate that youth should not be expected to bring others to a final decision to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. One writer notes that "Many young people do not yet have sufficient spiritual experience nor knowledge of the Bible and Christian beliefs to answer questions which may naturally arise, or to lead another young person to an intelligent and final decision."⁴²

³⁹Herbert Bouman, (unpublished class notes taken from lecture at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1959, in possession of writer)

⁴⁰Elmer Homrighausen, Choose Ye This Day (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1943), p. 17.

⁴¹Sweazey, op. cit., p. 184.

⁴²Jones, op. cit., p. 27.

Although the conflict between attaching value to a decision and being aware of the difficulties encountered in seeking a decision is recognized, a possible solution to this dilemma may lie in a statement known as "Declaration of Intent."⁴³ The significance of this declaration is to declare one's intent to be a follower of Jesus Christ. The next step presupposed for one who has expressed a desire to be a follower of Jesus Christ is to attend a youth membership class in order to study the cardinal tenets of the Christian faith for the purpose of learning to know Christ as Savior. This declaration enables youth visitors to seek a decision which is within the capacity of the unchurched youth.

Since the place of decision has been defined, the discussion will now return to the training session. If the friend acknowledges a faith in Christ or expresses an interest in learning to know Christ, you may at this time prepare to show him a card entitled, "Declaration of Intent." This card need only state:⁴⁴

DECLARATION OF INTENT

I desire to be a follower of Jesus Christ. As expressions of this desire:

I will attend the Church Membership Class.
 I will be an active member of the youth fellowship.
 (Name) _____

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴"Record of Purpose" card, (Atlanta, Ga.: Division of Evangelism, Presbyterian Church in the U.S., n.d.).

You may hand this card to your friend and say, "Bill, is this what you mean to say?" If he agrees, give him a pencil, asking him to record his name.

In addition to seeking a "Declaration of Intent," you can also speak about opportunities for Christian fellowship. A special "Friendship Night" may be planned as part of the youth visitation program. One can talk about this as a get-acquainted night when it will be easy to meet many other young Christians. You are to invite unchurched youth to this activity and arrange to pick them up at a specific time. If a special fellowship hour has not been planned, you may invite prospects to the youth Bible Class and the Sunday worship service. A lively Bible Class adapted to the needs of youth is an excellent opportunity for new friends to be introduced to the youth group and the church. Regardless of the nature of the function planned to introduce new youth to the youth fellowship and church, youth visitors are to be sure to secure a definite answer to their invitation.⁴⁵

I. Excuses. Youth will profit by being alerted to the difficulties, excuses, and refusals which may be encountered. The leader may challenge youth by asking the youth to cite some of the possible objections. He may also desire to ask, "How can one best handle these excuses and

⁴⁵"Youth Share Their Faith" (Elgin, Illinois: Church of the Brethren, c.1958), p. 20.

objections?"

When several suggestions have been offered, the leader may offer this advice: (1) It is a mistake to spend too much time with the excuses young people give, for the excuses are often not the real reason for the objection. (2) When an objection comes, do not rush to answer too soon. Let the person talk and encourage him to continue to talk by listening sympathetically.⁴⁶ (3) Seize upon the excuse as an opportunity to find out more about your friend's position. Knowing more about the problem will help you in dealing with your friend's problem.⁴⁷ (4) Be sure not to argue or try to argue anyone into your point of view. Luther said, "Since we ourselves have not become believers as a result of rational argument, we ought not to expect to persuade other men by lengthy and learned disputations. In that way little can be accomplished."⁴⁸ (5) Pray for him as he talks. Pray that God's Spirit would lead you.⁴⁹ (6) In general, you may rely upon one of three strategies for handling objections:⁵⁰ (a) You may ignore the objection by not taking time out to answer

⁴⁶Vincent, op. cit.

⁴⁷"Christ Is the Good News," op. cit., p. 39.

⁴⁸Siegbert Becker, "Luther's Apologetics," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXIX (October, 1958), 747.

⁴⁹Vincent, op. cit.

⁵⁰Ibid.

the excuse. "Aside from this point, do you have any real reason for not accepting Christ as your Savior?", "I don't know the answer to that, but I do know this," or "But this is what God says about you and me" are possible ways of ignoring the objection; (b) You may express an understanding of your friend's problem by restating the excuse as you understood it. This will sometimes show the foolishness of the excuse, or it will show that you understand your friend; (c) You may side-step the objection with a "yes. . . but" technique. "I can't answer that point now, but I'll find out for you," "I can see how you feel that way, but have you ever thought of this," "What you and I think is not too important, but what God thinks is important" are possible answers. (7) You may give a direct answer to the best of your ability directed by the Spirit of God. You may answer from common sense, with what you have seen and heard and experienced, with examples from lives of other Christians you know, or you may answer for God and from God by using Bible stories or Bible passages.⁵¹ Sometimes, excuses may be a genuine barrier, and answering these objections in a simple, direct way is often a help.⁵²

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Jones, op. cit., p. 33.

J. The Close. After a declaration has been obtained, or after your friend has shown that he is not ready for a declaration of any type, then begin to leave. If a decision of any type is made, speaking a short prayer is most appropriate. Also thank your friend and all who are in the home for the time and opportunity to visit with them. Be sure to leave in a friendly atmosphere, so that the door is kept open for a future call. If your friend has refused your invitations, let him know that the blessings of Christ and the fellowship of the youth group is waiting for him, and that you will be happy to see him at any time.⁵³ As you leave, rejoice that God has given you this opportunity to speak of the Gospel of Christ.

⁵³C. A. Waech, "How to Witness" (St. Louis: Board for Missions, n.d.), p. 7.

CHAPTER V

MAKING THE VISIT

Schedules

The heart of a youth-to-youth visitation program used by many churches is a weekend devoted entirely to youth evangelism.¹ However, other schedules may be chosen as the most appropriate time for the visitation program.

Weekend schedule²

Friday

4:00 P.M.	training session
5:30	fellowship supper
6:00	assignment of calls
6:30	brief devotional talk
7:00	visitation
9:00	sharing period
9:30	worship

or

7:30	training session
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Saturday

8:30 A.M.	briefing
8:45	devotion

¹Howard Ellis, Evangelism For Teen-Agers (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 4.

²Materials printed by Steering Committee of the Orlando, Florida, City-Wide Christian Youth Mission, 1958.

Saturday (continued)

9:00 A.M.	visitation
12:00	sharing period
12:30 P.M.	lunch
1:30	briefing
2:00	visitation
5:00	sharing period
7:30	fellowship

Sunday

9:30 A.M.	youth Bible Class
10:30	worship
1:30 P.M.	visitation
4:30	sharing period
5:00	fellowship supper
6:00	youth rally

Evening Schedule³

5:30 P.M.	fellowship supper
6:00	briefing
6:30	assignment of calls
6:45	devotion
7:00	visitation
9:00	sharing period
9:30	worship

³"Manual for Preaching Teaching Reaching Mission" (St. Louis: Evangelism Department, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod), p. 6.

Sunday Afternoon Schedule⁴

9:30 A.M.	youth Bible Class
10:30	worship
1:30 P.M.	briefing
2:00	visitation
5:00	sharing period
5:30	fellowship supper
6:30	youth rally

One may notice that the weekend schedule makes provision for a second intensive training session. This second training session is important, and one who uses another schedule will probably desire to hold a second training session.

Second Training Session

The basic elements of making a call have been covered during the first training session. Questions which were unanswered at that time or which have arisen during the interim can be answered in detail at this second session.

Ellis notes that there are three basic ways of learning how to witness:⁵ (1) from listening or reading, (2) from what one sees others do, (3) from what one does himself. During the first session, youth listened and read. Now,

⁴"Here's How" (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1949), p. 26.

⁵Howard Ellis, op. cit., p. 76.

youth are ready to learn by watching others in what may be called dramatization or role playing. Role playing helps one to step into another person's situation, and it allows the entire group to take part in the solving of problems that arise in visitation evangelism. The purpose of role playing is to make a situation, idea, or problem seem real. The situation or problem then becomes easier for one to understand and discuss.⁶ Although role playing is not a magic formula, many testify of its usefulness. Donald Deffner cites role playing as the technique which was to a large degree responsible for creating a new interest in evangelism among his young adults.⁷ Ellis values role playing as something like the rehearsal of a play.⁸

Role playing

Here are some suggestions for the use of role playing as a discussion stimulator and problem-solving guide. One caution:⁹ Don't use role playing to parody a situation. There is no need to show folks what NOT to do. The effective unrehearsed drama searches for a real solution to a real problem people are facing in their lives.

⁶Ibid., p. 82.

⁷Donald Deffner, "Teaching Young Folks How to Witness" Today, V (October, 1950), 11-15.

⁸Ellis, op. cit., p. 77.

⁹Ibid., p. 83.

- (1) Select your problem. Let suggestions of problems come from the group and list them on a blackboard. You may choose the problem that the youth are most interested in. Be sure that it is a realistic problem.¹⁰
- (2) Set your stage. Let your group work out a specific real life situation which will illustrate the problem. Let them determine the reactions of the youth who is visited. What are his attitudes and what kind of a personality should he have? What are his chief objections? What outcome will the visitors seek? What commitment should the visitors try for in this case? Another approach is to provide a role for a mother or father, or both. Decide how many people are needed to act out the roles. Five should be the maximum number--two visitors, the prospect, and the parents.¹¹
- (3) Assign observers for each role. An observer watching one particular person may be able to perceive more of what is happening than if he were watching the entire scene. If the group is large, you may divide the group into "buzz groups" of five and ask a member of each cell to serve as an observer.¹²
- (4) Enact the situation. Assign specific names--other than real names of the actors--to each player. Encourage each person to express the attitudes which the group assigns to each player. Let the drama go on until the basic trend of the interview is worked out and the relationships and probable outcomes are established. Usually five or ten minutes are enough.¹³
- (5) Get the reactions of your cast. Let each person tell how he feels being in the other person's shoes. Relating how one feels in a certain situation provides valuable insight for others into the nature of the problem.¹⁴

¹⁰Ibid., p. 83.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p. 84.

¹⁴Ibid.

- (6) Get the reactions of your observers and let them evaluate this experience. If the goal of the callers was reached, how did this happen? What steps did they follow? These points may be listed on the blackboard and discussed. If the objective was not reached, what mistakes were made? Other questions for discussion are: "What suggestions for improving the action can be made? What would be the probable long-range outcome of their action? What points did the actors handle well? What mistakes or omissions did they make?"¹⁵

Though it is not easy to guide the learning of witnessing, the leader who is interested in adequate preparation of youth visitors may find much help in the use of role playing.

Excuse Clinic

Though the subject of excuses was treated in the first training session, the leader may feel a need for giving more attention to this area. Suggestions for possible excuses and objections from the group may indicate difficulties which are being anticipated by youth. Or, the group may be challenged to answer specific excuses posed by the leader. Role playing may be used at this point with profit. In addition, outlining the basic approaches to the handling of excuses and objections (discussed in a previous section) on a blackboard can aid the learning process considerably.

Making The Visit

On the morning, afternoon, or evening of the visitation, attention can be given to five factors essential to a visitation

¹⁵ Ibid.

program.

Inspiration. Inspiration supplied by the leader immediately before the visit will mean much to youth. Believing that the most powerful motivator is the power of the Holy Spirit, the source of inspiration is the Word of God. A pertinent portion of Scripture, such as Luke 15:3-10, and a brief meditation based upon the Word can remind youth that the work of evangelism is the work of Christ. One may also point out that the opportunity to bring a lost soul to Christ is an exhilarating experience for any Christian.¹⁶

Education. A brief review of what the visitors are to do is appropriate at this time. If the majority of the callers have attended the training sessions faithfully, the leader may not desire to describe the essential steps of a visit. On the other hand, he may feel that a brief review of the fundamentals may profit.¹⁷

Assignments. Lists of teams, arrangement of prospect cards, a sufficient number of maps, transportation arrangements, will need to be taken care of previously. If these details have been worked out carefully, the assignment of

¹⁶Guido Merkens, Organized for Action (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), p. 61.

¹⁷Ibid.

teams and distribution of prospect cards can proceed smoothly. The leader will need the cooperation of the group in order to carry out this task efficiently.¹⁸

Prayer. A brief meditation concluded by the Benediction may well serve as a springboard for the visitation.¹⁹

Sharing Period. It is best to make provision for one person to handle the incoming cards and to compile an overall report as quickly as possible. After the group has reassembled, the leader may ask for individuals to share any unusual or exciting experiences. Youth are eager to relate their experiences to others. Such experiences will edify the group and help to buoy up any member who may have suffered a bit of discouragement during the visitation. If the leader is able to climax this sharing period with a report of the number of people visited, the number of prospects obtained, the number of youth who indicated a preference for the Lutheran Church, the number of youth who made a "Declaration of Intent," youth will be spurred on to greater heights of attainment for their Lord.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Roy Moeller, (unpublished class notes taken from lecture at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1959, in possession of writer).

new members to feel left out in a group which is clannish. "Unless a new member of the Youth Fellowship becomes active in some way within thirty to sixty days after coming into the group, the fire and enthusiasm which has been generated will soon die out."⁵

Evangelistic leaders often note that there are "too many holes in the sack."⁶ Some churches reportedly lose nearly 40% of the converts after seven years. Sweazey reports that one out of two converts is lost.⁷ Although no figures are available to show the number of youth lost in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, statistics show that 65,000 adults were gained by this Church in 1957, but that 47,000 were dropped from the Church membership lists.⁸

Integrating Youth

Integration of new members in the youth fellowship does not depend upon human strength and resources alone. But the Means of Grace are the vehicles through which the Holy

⁵Ibid.

⁶Arthur Vincent. (unpublished class notes taken from lecture at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1959, in possession of writer).

⁷George Sweazey, Effective Evangelism (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), p. 206.

⁸Vincent, op. cit.

Spirit strengthens the bonds of fellowship. This is shown by the example of the Christians who were converted on Pentecost Sunday. Those who received the Word of God through Peter on this day were baptized. Then they devoted themselves to the "apostle's teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer."⁹ Notice that the Scriptures do not say, "And they took them in and gave them a job."¹⁰ But the Word and the Sacraments were placed first. The assimilation of new members into a Christian group and the church is a work of the Holy Spirit through these channels.

Hence, the greatest effort of the youth group will center in helping those who are interested to find a firm faith. Youth can be helped by understanding from the very beginning that the prime interest of the youth fellowship and of the church is spiritual in nature. More important, youth need to see the centrality of Christ in the Word of God. Opportunities for studying the Christian faith and for committing oneself to Christ as Lord and Savior are present in several areas.

A church membership class which will probably be taught by the pastor is an integral part of the total program. The

⁹"Effective Biblical Evangelism in the Local Congregation" (St. Louis: Evangelism Department, Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, n.d.), p. 13.

¹⁰Ibid.

"Declaration of Intent" card which unchurched youth sign involves attendance at the church membership class. This class is the pastor's opportunity to give instruction in the meaning of the Christian faith and of church membership, and it thus provides a foundation for any young person's decision to accept Christ.¹¹ In this class, youth can learn that the Christian faith begins and ends with Christ. Here, youth can come to believe and trust that life with God is through faith in Christ Jesus. Here, youth can begin to understand that one's faith is dynamic in that it regulates his entire living.¹² The membership class is also open to members of the youth fellowship who want to study again the basic tenets of the Christian faith. In fact, the presence of some who are already members of the church will be of great aid in breaking down the distinction between the new and the older members of the fellowship.¹³

The Youth Bible Class is another vital part of assimilation into the Christian fellowship. Here, youth has more opportunity to see how the Christian faith is related to such problems as: getting along with others, getting along

¹¹Jones, op. cit., p. 16.

¹²Ellis, op. cit., p. 87.

¹³Jones, op. cit., p. 16.

with parents, understanding the other sex, preparing and looking ahead for marriage, and developing a Christian character. A Bible class which gives much attention to the problems of youth and is not only concerned with doctrinal dissertations is an excellent opportunity for Christian nurture. In addition, youth at this time have the opportunity to meet and to make friends with other Christian youth. Care given to the introduction of new members is important.

Assisting youth to worship regularly at the Sunday morning service is another important part of integrating new members. At the morning worship service, great care needs to be taken to keep the young people who come for the first time from feeling self-conscious.¹⁴ Members of the youth fellowship who make it a point to greet youth at the church and to sit with them will help greatly. In addition, their willingness to assist in following the order of worship and to explain any question that the youth may have is beneficial.

Youth may also be helped in their adjustment to the youth group and the church through planned personal attention. This personal attention may center in several areas:¹⁴

- (1) Welcome the new young person to the church services, church school, youth meetings, or other congregational activities. Open your circle of friendship immediately

¹⁴Beckstron, op. cit., p. 10.

to include him. For if one does not feel a part of the group at once, he may be reluctant to return.

- (2) Assign a sponsor for each new member. That way it is somebody's special job to be responsible to see that the new member feels at home. This person can make a special effort to see that his new friend attends the youth Bible Class, the church worship service, the youth meetings, parties, and other special events. The "Friendship Friend" can be assigned by the pastor or adult adviser in consultation with a representative of the youth group.
- (3) Discover his interests and abilities. Find out where he can fit in best into the active program of the league and church. If possible, give him a job to do so that he feels himself an important part in the life of your church.
- (4) Help the new member begin his family devotional life. Make suggestions that will guide him in establishing family and personal worship in the home. The devotional booklet, "The Uniting Word," written especially for youth, is most valuable.
- (5) Help him catch the spirit of evangelism. Encourage him to tell others about his "new find." Evangelism can help one to grow spiritually, and one who is "on fire" with the Gospel can be a most effective witness of Christ.

Besides personal attention, the entire youth fellowship can be of great service in assimilating youth. Some suggestions are:

- (1) The planning of a "New Friends" night will pay rich dividends.¹⁵ Recreation, singing, eating, and sharing in a well-planned program can help youth to forget themselves and become a part of the group quickly. At this time, the youth program and some of the future activities can be explained and new friends invited and urged to attend.

¹⁵"Youth Share Their Faith" (Elgin, Illinois: Church of the Brethren, c.1958), p. 20.

- (2) A fellowship banquet can be used as a welcome to the young people who have been visited and as an introduction of these new young people to the entire youth fellowship. Much effort can be made to surround the new members with friendly interest and to encourage them to share in the fellowship of the whole group.¹⁶
- (3) If a special "New Friends" night or a fellowship banquet is not feasible, newcomers may be invited to the regular youth fellowship meal or meeting. A program which has been well planned and which meets the needs of youth can serve as an excellent introduction for the new youth.¹⁷
- (4) Bring their parents into the picture. Parents can be alerted to the purpose of the youth fellowship program at a parent-youth night. The value of Christian education in the lives of their children can also be stressed during such a parent-youth night.¹⁸
- (5) If the new member has members of his family who are not yet a part of the Christian fellowship, continue to work on them. It is important that his environment be such that it will help him grow in the Christian faith.¹⁹
- (6) Send a letter of welcome. The chairman of the Welcome Committee and the pastor may desire to send a letter to the young person who has indicated interest in the youth group and church. If personally written, such a letter can have a great effect upon youth.²⁰
- (7) Give them challenging tasks to do, and find out about their interests and skills. A new Christian who is able to express his faith through experience will be built up in his faith.²¹
- (8) Continue to follow through. One may not get the young people he is trying to reach on the first try. But try again, for second and third visits are often more

¹⁶Jones, op. cit., p. 16.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ellis, op. cit., p. 87.

¹⁹"Here's How" (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1949), p. 52.

²⁰Jones, op. cit., p. 18.

²¹Ellis, op. cit., p. 91.

productive than the first attempt.²²

- (9) Organize your visiting on a permanent basis. Two-by-two visitation is an essential part of any growing fellowship and church. Witnessing is not something that happens only on a weekend of stepped-up activities, but it is to be a vital part of the youth program. Setting aside one night a month or one night a week for visitation keeps witnessing on people's minds and hearts.²³
- (10) Call them up. The telephone line can be an excellent means of helping to keep youth tied to the group and church. Calling other young people a few hours before a meeting or other youth activities has been found to be very effective.²⁴
- (11) Don't get discouraged. Witnessing is hard work. For one can't always be successful. In fact, one doesn't have to be successful.²⁵ For the job which God assigns to His witnesses is to bear testimony, and not to convert.
- (12) Draw up a "prayer list." Each "Friendship Friend" can make his new friend a special subject of his prayers in addition to asking other youth to pray. Such prayer lists have resulted in "An amazing growth, not only in the number of souls won for Christ, but also in the prayer life of those already members."²⁶

In addition to integrating youth through the efforts of individuals and specially planned activities, the youth group itself will be largely responsible for retaining the young people who have been won. Mueller quotes Dr. Erdmann Frenk who states that "the secret of integration of new

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., p. 92.

²⁴Ibid., p. 93.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Raymond Mueller, "Principles For Winning Unchurched High School Youth For Christ" (unpublished B.D. thesis, Pritzlaff Library, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1954), p. 55.

members and of those being instructed for membership is Christian fellowship."²⁷ Integration through fellowship can take place in worship, work, evangelism, recreation, and education. Hence, an essential part of any evangelism program lies in offering a church program as helpful and interesting to young people as possible. This is fundamental. For no amount of personal evangelism will do much good if the program of the youth group is neglected. Young people can be reached--only to be lost again in six months.

What is a good church program for young people?

Though this is difficult to define, the following concepts may partially describe the essentials of a successful youth program:²⁸

- (1) Young people need a youth fellowship program which they feel is their very own. This does not exclude proper guidance from adult counselors, but it does exclude an authoritarian approach and attitude on the part of counselors.
- (2) Discussions, Bible studies, topics should really count by being built around problems that perplex youth daily. The number of problems facing young people is legion.²⁹
- (3) There should be provision for happy, wholesome, good times. Leaders who are alert to the forms

²⁷Ibid., p. 76.

²⁸"Helping Other Young People To Be Christian" (Chicago: United Christian Youth Movement, 1953), p. 17.

²⁹Ibid.

of recreation enjoyed by youth and who recognize the many opportunities for wholesome Christian fun will spark a youth fellowship group.³⁰

- (4) The worship programs of the fellowship group cannot be stereotyped, but the forms of worship should be within the teen-agers frame of reference.³¹
- (5) Service projects cannot be of "the stamp-licking variety," but they are to be genuinely worthwhile projects which challenge youth to worthwhile causes.
- (6) A sympathetic, cooperative attitude on the part of the adults of the church needs to be present.³² Adults need not be over-indulgent, but neither can adults afford to show an apathetic and listless attitude.
- (7) Leaders and counselors who show a sympathetic and understanding attitude are most important. For example, counselors who possess these qualities can revitalize an inactive youth group.

These are some essentials of the youth program which can be counted upon to hold the young people the group already has, and slowly but surely to reach some of the unreached--and hold them too. This is not the fastest method, but it is the surest.³³ And it is most important, for "If they're worth getting, they're worth keeping"--for Christ.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The need for youth evangelism is great. A staggering number of unchurched youth in the United States, the heavy losses of young people sustained by the church, the effectiveness of youth witnessing to youth, the number of youth available for the work of evangelism, and the recognition of "youth time as decision time" are some factors which move leaders of youth to a concern for youth-to-youth visitation programs.

Before a youth group initiates a visitation program, much attention needs to be given to motivation. A Biblical study of the work of evangelism is believed to be the most desirable means of motivating young people to action. Another important facet of motivation is to confront both the individual and the group with a record of their work in evangelism.

Unchurched youth in the community can be located through several avenues. A religious survey of the entire community will provide the names of many prospects. When Christian youth meet youth who do not know Christ as Savior, they will be moved to act. Although youth need the guidance of adult leaders, it is essential for youth to play a major role in the planning of the visitation program.

Adequate training for every youth visitor is imperative. No youth visitor is to be trained as a "carbon copy." However, every youth needs to understand clearly the purpose of his visit, the essence of the Gospel message, and the essential steps which lead an individual to a confrontation with the Person of Jesus Christ.

The heart of many youth-to-youth visitation programs is a weekend devoted entirely to youth evangelism. At this time, adult leaders can devote attention to additional training, inspiration, and prayer. Opportunity for youth to share unusual and exciting experiences after each visitation is another feature of the program.

When unchurched youth respond to the invitations of Christian youth, the youth group is to be prepared to receive new youth into fellowship. A church membership class which provides opportunity for studying the Christian faith and for committing oneself to Christ as Lord and Savior is vital in the integration of new youth. New members also deserve the special attention of both individuals and the group. For if youth "are worth getting, they're worth keeping"--for Christ.

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