

SPREADING THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST FROM HOUSEHOLD TO  
HOUSEHOLD - IS IT BEING DONE?

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When Prof. Behn suggested the paper which later was assigned to him, one basic problem seems to have been bothering him: How can we lead our pastors to a ministry of vigorous personal evangelism? He observed that many of the national workers looked upon their position as ministers of the Gospel as administrators of congregations, content to lead their congregations by conducting worship services and teaching classes, but having little responsibility beyond that. Prof. Behn felt that the spirit of St. Paul evidenced by his initiating services in the homes of people to whom he had witnessed privately was not at all evident in the attitudes and activity of the workers in Hong Kong. Aggressive personal evangelism was not evident, in fact, there seemed to be antagonism toward it.

The argument of the national pastors and evangelists in Hong Kong seems to go like this: The Chinese distrust each other and will not open their doors to Chinese males. They trust "Europeans" and women, but not their own people. Hence groups like the Mormons have a fair amount of apparent success in personal, house to house witnessing. The solution for our church, the Chinese counter, is to hire women to do the witnessing. While this argument seemed to hold some water, it began leaking when the suggestion was made to have the ministers call on families with whom we had an open door because their sons and daughters attended Immanuel English Middle School, and the Chinese men showed little enthusiasm or effort to accomplish this. The C.E.C. was brought up on the idea of women mission callers, and while the Chinese are impressed with the apparent success of its former leader (now a prosperous businessman in the U.S. an ultimate goal of many Chinese, it is claimed) the expatriate staff contends that his successes were much more apparent than they were real.

Assuming that expatriate staff is correct when it contends that there are ways for the Chinese to do personal, household witnessing, and that the Chinese are not doing it because they do not want to do it, is there any advice and guidance that our seminary leaders could offer to us in pursuing this problem. Are the accusations that I have heard by expatriate staff like, "They are lazy," or "They lack faith," or "They lack love and concern for their fellowman," actually handy catch-alls for a failure on our part to instruct, by word and deed, our seminarians and our workers in the work of evangelism. I can readily understand that if one does something badly, or fears that he will do it badly, that factor would be a tremendous hindrance both to his faith and love, as well as his ambition. This seems to have been a big part of Moses' problem when he

UNWITTINGLY, I HAVE BEEN THE SWIFT FROM THE SEMINARY - UNWITTINGLY

resisted the call of the Lord Himself in the Land of Midian. I see this attitude evident also in the parable of the talents, and it seems to me that as brothers in faith, we ought to do everything in our power to encourage each other to use the gift of witnessing no matter how poorly we fear we might do in it.

In suggesting the topic, Pastor Behn assumed that other here struggle with similar problems, or at least have some proven solutions, or at least have some possible solutions to our problem. We fear that we don't have the answers we need.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Do you consider lack of witnessing zeal to be a universal problem among the clergy of the Lutheran Churches you serve?
  2. Do you feel our seminaries ought to consider this to be their problem, and therefore ought to adjust their curriculum accordingly?
  3. Do you consider the materials produced by our Synod to be adequate for evangelism training? Do you have other suggested materials?
  4. Do you have proven methods for leading students to vigorous and effective evangelism efforts?
  5. What do you consider are the qualifications for an effective instructor in evangelism?
  6. Do you feel that a shortcoming of our evangelism instruction is a lack of qualified instructors?
  7. Do you believe that one can excuse men from among our clergy from evangelism activity on the grounds that they lack the personality for this type of activity?
  8. If individuals or groups apparently lack enthusiasm for personal evangelism, can you suggest methods by which that enthusiasm can be generated?
- Are we considering private or semi-private worship in the homes of our members as a method of establishing congregations, and gearing our instruction accordingly?

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