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The making of an evangelist

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Meal times are not only a great time for food tasting, but also a fine vehicle for fellowship and outreach.

The text below gives an idea of the types of meals which have been used greatly by God, for the saving and developing of souls.

**Ladies' Luncheon**

These are especially slanted to reach the outstanding women leaders in the community. For example, lady headmistresses, mayoress, or wife of the Shire Chairman, plus Presidents of business women's groups, church women's group leaders, and other types of social work leaders. The Yellow Pages of the Telecom phone books in Australia or the equivalent in other parts of the world will give names and addresses.

The aim is to reach the women's leadership in a given city or Shire area. Additional invitations can be sent to women's groups of church in your area also.

The speaker should be someone who is able to communicate the Gospel in a special way, and who is a man or woman who is extremely well-known for their ability to reach such a gathering with a message which will create great interest, or who has had a remarkable conversion experience.

The program should be varied with music, films, video, ........... items and the like. Make sure that who you invite will adorn the doctrine of Christ, and give a 'first class' effort in whatever they are asked to do. Remember, only the best is good enough for God.

**Dinners (for adults of all ages and both sexes)**

While this meeting is specifically designed to reach all ages, if children are to be aimed for, there should be a separate area, with a skilled children's worker looking after the program. Make sure the adults dinner, and the children's program are not in close proximity, so that there will be no clash of meetings to interrupt either program.

If you do not wish to have a children's program to cater for, the children of parents invited to the dinner, either a creche, or private arrangements for baby sitters to look after children should be used. There are a variety of ways this problem can be overcome, with a little amount of concentrated thought in the matter. Some up to 14 years old may need to have homework supervised.

For adult dinners - teenagers from about 15 years upward, youth groups, parents, adults who are single. Think carefully about the topic or type of program which can be like the women's luncheon mentioned above, or by some other method you feel would be of great help.

Your aim should be to do something which will die in the wide age range so that there is a real unity sensed in the meeting. This means that whatever you do, there should be thought given as to how to reach the needs of all who come to the dinner.
Be careful that your program is not such a pot pourri as to defeat your main aim, to reach all ages with the Gospel.

In choosing your speaker, film or program, set to it that it meets the basic needs of those which are your audience for this special occasion.

Young people in early to mid-teens seem to have a feeling of admiration for those who are heroes. Thought could be given to getting a speaker who is a Karate champion, a sportsman or someone who has been decorated for bravery. Each one of these and any others like them just be a fine Christian. Perhaps a missionary who has lived in a country where there has been great danger (for example, Rev. Tom Dent, Methodist Minister of church once attended was a missionary in Solomon Islands when there were head-hunters). Or perhaps someone who can tell what it is like to live as a Christian in a hostile environment (for example, Moslem, Chinese communism, or some similar situation).

ÚÚ”Men’s dinners•œ

These can be moulded along the lines of service clubs such as Rotary or Lions. They would be held in a local restaurant or hall.

When addressing these, I have found that men are very interested in the future of the world. A message such as where in the world are we going showing the following would be suitable for this kind of audience:

(a) The needs.
(b) The non-Christian 'cures' (such as education, science, politics, materialism, etc.).
(c) While there is much good in some of these, they can never be a cure for the world's ill.
(d) The trouble is in the heart.
(e) One day Christ will come, and then the world will see what can happen when the Prince of Peace takes charge.

ÚÚ”Men's breakfasts•œ

These would be held in a church hall or at a place like McDonalds (in which case you would require a sectioned off area).

Now to expend further how to use meal evangelism, I will set out some methods used successfully.

ÚÚ”General methods•œ

Besides hints given above, here are some other general methods.

A basic program can be worked out for all the ideas above, leaving space for modifications necessary to meet the express needs of time, place, guests, interests, etc.

The type of message will need to be one of the express needs just spoken about to meet the needs of the guests interested in time and place, and other special needs.
Because of the views held by some guests, Bible reading and prayer should be kept to a minimum, but does not mean to say that it is thought unimportant. However, on the prayer side particularly, there should be intense prayer behind the scenes. The New Testament shows, in Acts 17, when Paul was at Athens, an example of what I mean. From verses 15-34 the account seems to suggest that there was no prayer and Bible reading before speaking to the people. The reason would be the same as it was in two or more meetings we had in our ministry where there were Roman Catholics and an atheist (who objected to a meeting being opened in prayer, because he only came as an interested citizen). The Roman Catholics in quite a number of my meetings, were not supposed to be at those meetings, because at that time, they were forbidden to attend protestant meetings. This has been altered in some areas now.

In 1 Corinthians 10:32,33 it says, 'Give no offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the gentiles, nor to the church of God. But the profit of many, that they may be saved'. Second Corinthians 6:3 could possibly be used as a backing text for this action. It reads, 'Giving no offence in anything that the ministry be not blamed'.

Just as one does not get honey by kicking the beehive over, in planning to reach the antagonists and the disinterested in religions, it sometimes requires a different line of approach. Different fish have to be caught by different approaches, so when fishing for the souls of men and women we need to use different approaches.

Cooking with an Asian flavour

In this section of the chapter, ideas will be given to reach both Australian and ethnic people, with the Gospel of Christ. This section is based on some experiments which actually have been worked with very encouraging results, and have caused a great amount of interest. May God bless you when and if you see fit to use them.

During my travels in another Australian State, in a university centre I was shown a very wonderful way of reaching Asian people with the Gospel of Christ.

Every Sunday afternoon, a university lecturer and his wife (who were devout Christians) opened their home to Asian students, primarily so that they could use their kitchen for the cooking of Asian meals, which were very much missed by the students. It seemed that they could all come whether Buddhists, Hindus or whatever, on the understanding that there would be a Christian meeting later on, where the Gospel of Christ would be presented.

Those afternoons were very strategic ones, for it meant that future leaders of Asian countries were exposed to the Christian Gospel.

It was not in one of their Christian meetings, although I saw them in action at the cooking section and there were many food aromas floating around in the air. It seems to be that this method could be used to contact homesick and lonely people from other countries who would no doubt love to meet others and share their meals. It's certainly worth thinking about.
• Tables with an ethnic food plateø

This is about a mid-western town in my own State of Queensland, Australia. The ladies' of the church where I was holding a crusade decided to put on an international (or ethnic) meal for Australians and any ethnic people who would come.

They did a very wise thing and hired an empty shop (which was neutral ground and non-threatening to those who would have strict religious reasons for not attending some church property of another denomination).

The meal was wonderful, with its foods of various nations with a small flag of the nation it represented standing with the food on the plate. The advertising had been carefully planned, and people were invited with a warmth which must have made them feel very welcome.

The little shop was packed to the doors and beyond with some people sitting outside the entrance, on specially provided chairs on the footpath. They felt part of it and could see, hear and partake of all that was going on. There were so many packing the ground level shop that I volunteered to join the footpath participants and I didn't feel one little bit out of it at all. These ladies who ran the morning planned well, prepared well, prayed well, and participated in most encouraging results.

Ú Ùø"• The local church with an ethnic view•ø

In part one of this book, there is a story of the Silkstone Baptist Church in Ipswich, Queensland. In the time I pastored the church, among other special outreach nights, we held one night called an 'International Night'. This was to seek to develop the local church view of reaching ethnic people.

To develop more fully what was done, I am setting out in more detail what was planned.

The aim of the program was to reach out with a friendly hand to 'strangers' who had come from other countries. To use a biblical expression - the strangers within thy gates. Some of these people were lonely and felt non-accepted by some Australians, because of culture and language barriers. So our church decided we would like to make them feel at home, and so this 'International Night' was planned.

The program used singers and a choir from other countries. The hymns were chosen because they featured hymn writers of other countries such as Martin Luther. We tried to get as widespread a choice as possible.

The hymns chosen were well known to Australian and ethnic audiences, and as Germans sing in German; Australians in English; other nations in their own tongues, we tried in some small way to express the oneness of believers. singing the praises of the Lamb in heaven. To overcome language barriers, when planning, seek to get other ethnic leaders to get the hymn books of their own nation so that everyone could have a real part in the singing. Tunes and knowledge of the hymns should be checked too, so that we may obtain the best effect.
In one instance, a Dutch father and son sang 'Abide with Me' in Dutch and the whole congregation joined in in English and whatever tongue they were familiar with.

The advertising actually fell on 'Immigration Sunday' in Australia, although this was indeed the planning of God, as our church was unaware at the time that there was this special Sunday.

A local TV station heard of our advertising and came 25 miles to televise the program - free of charge to us.

The auditorium was packed to the doors and beyond. People sat behind the organ, and the pulpit, filled the porch, down the aisles. Every conceivable area was packed with people.

Musical instruments of other nations besides those used in Australia appeared. The Russian Balalaika(?), and some of the favourite instruments of other countries were used.

The planning needs to be spread around, and done very thoroughly, but there is marvellous scope for reaching people if we use solid thinking.

Co-operation by local ethnic authorities, and consuls and committees helped, as did tourist agencies and airlines. Flags, posters, materials on various countries helped inform Australians of the customs and life abroad in some of the countries represented.

A great opportunity was given to the preacher who spoke on 'The International Jew', and tracts in various languages suitable for use by the visitors and their friends. There was no charge for this literature, and it could be freely taken by Christians of other nations. Bible Societies and Scripture Gift Mission and those working among other nations can help supply.

The supper afterwards gave us an opportunity by using English-speaking ethnics who could interpret for their groups what was being said. The people who attended were most enthusiastic and God blessed. They also tried to show the love of Christ for people of other nations, in a way Christ would have done.

It was hard work to arrange it. Yes! But just as David said, 'I will not render unto the Lord, that which costs me nothing'.

Musical evangelism in your home

Invite those interested in music and seek 'top line music'. Seek variety using the beautiful tunes of some older and some more modern Gospel songs.

Give some stories of how the music came about such as the stories of famous hymns. See Christian book stores for these stories in book form.

The message to be given should be Gospel with a musical flavour such as 'In tune with God', or 'Hitting the right note for the future', or 'Take a rest note with God', or 'In harmony with heaven'.
The supper given (or afternoon tea) could have cakes with musical notes made in the icing, etc.

Make sure there is much prayer for the planning and the meeting, and take care to use some of the methods used in this chapter earlier on regarding appeal, follow-up, etc.

God will help you plan, and will be with you as you work with Him.