

Need-orientated

Part 2 - A New Way

Need Orientated Evangelism (NOE) builds upon the love, compassion and caring of ordinary believers who show their concern for their unchurched neighbours in practical ways.

Need Orientated Evangelism (NOE) is a course of action whereby the resources of the church are used to meet needs in the community. NOE provides the means of establishing bridgeheads between the church and secular society. It would, however, be unwise to put too much emphasis upon the bridgeheads rather than the meeting of needs in the community. The danger lies in regarding NOE as a kind of ploy for trapping unwary needy people into making ill-considered confessions of faith.

An Expression of Love

NOE is a genuine outreach by committed Christians determined to use the resources which God has given them to meet needs in the community which are not being met by other agencies. It is therefore an expression of the love of Christ through people who care. It is a means of creatively channelling God given resources where they are most needed. That is the basic principle of NOE. In actual practice, it has been discovered that where such a programme of action is put into practice it results in establishing bridgeheads of communication with people who are normally beyond the reach of regular church activities.

Building Bridgeheads

18 Bridgeheads, by definition, are simply links which provide opportunities for communication. As in warfare or in exploration, bridgeheads between one territory and another have to be crossed if there is to be an advance into the new territory. NOE establishes the bridgehead through caring ministries and in so doing provides 'natural' opportunities for faith sharing. These opportunities are not contrived, they simply occur as Christians carry out their caring ministries or work alongside others in the community.

Beginning Where People Are

Need Orientated Evangelism is based upon the principle of beginning where people are. In order to do this we have to know where people really are -

not where we think they are, or where we would like them to be, or where we hope they will be one day, but where they really are! For a successful programme of Need Orientated Evangelism there are several essential steps. These are:

- 1 Discover needs in the community
- 2 Review available resources in the community
- 3 Review the resources of the church
- 4 Discover ways in which resources may be matched to meet needs
- 5 Initiate a practical programme for meeting community needs
- 6 Provide basic faith sharing training for all Christian workers
- 7 Provide follow-up for those who respond to the gospel.



Looking at Community

Need Orientated Evangelism is a new way of looking at the community in which the local church is set. It is, in fact, the most natural form of evangelism since it builds upon the love, compassion and caring of ordinary believers who are showing their concern for their neighbours by using their practical gifts, skills and abilities to help others.

Sharing Faith

NOE recognises that it is a fallacy to expect every believer to be an evangelist. On the other hand it recognises that every believer has the ability to love others and to show that love in some kind of practical way according to their giftings. It also recognises that every believer has the potential ability to express their faith in the Lord Jesus as their personal Lord and

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of Meeting the Task

Saviour. Many believers may never have verbalised their faith but they have the ability to do so when they are taught how to overcome shyness by practising with other believers and learning how to express their faith in a very simple form of words.

Bridging the Gap

NOE not only recognises the links which members of the church already have with members of their families, friends, colleagues in the workplace, but also recognises the local community as its mission field. In so doing, it also recognises the need to understand the mission field and the need for Christians to earn the right to be heard. The gap between Church and secular society is now so wide that we have forfeited any divine right to be heard.

Problems in Britain

In a nation claiming to be Christian and where biblical principles are recognised as the foundation of personal and corporate morality the Christian witness would usually be heard. That situation no longer exists in Britain today where the media are more eager to ridicule the gospel than to publish anything that would promote biblical values.

The Openness of Society

It is, nevertheless, true that the mission field in Britain is more open today than it has been at any time since the middle of the nineteenth century. Evangelicals then were highly active in social programmes to alleviate poverty and distress and politically to campaign for legislation to counter the exploitation of children and workers in industry. The reason why the mission field is so receptive today is not because we have a repeat of the kind of social conditions which existed in the mid nineteenth century but because the personal needs of people have never been greater for 150 years. This is due, not to poverty, industrial exploitation or the denial of basic human rights, but to the immense suffering caused by the breakdown of family life. This is the major social issue of our day which is offering to the church a great opportunity of serving the nation through helping people facing high levels of personal stress and suffering. These are the issues which will be examined in the next chapter

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For Discussion:

- 1 We have listed a number of reasons why so many churches are in decline and why Christians are not seeing results from their efforts to evangelise. can you list any more?
- 2 How deeply do you care about the spiritual life of those who are outside the church?
- 3 Do you believe that your church truly has a message that will be understood by those outside?
- 4 Can you define what evangelism is?
- 5 Do you agree that the major social issue in Britain today is the breakdown of the family?
- 6 How can this apparent weakness be used to be built into a strength?

Test Your Church:

How do you and your church score on the following questions?

- 1 How much time does your leader spend ministering to those outside the church?
- 2 How much time do you spend with non-believers talking about your faith?
- 3 Do those outside value your church's witness?
- 4 How many non-Christian Friends do you have?
- 5 How many new believers came to Christ in your church in the past twelve months?
- 6 Which of the following applies to your church
faithful weak strong outgoing
- 7 Which of the following applies to you
thoughtful concerned committed too busy
- 8 How many broken families have you in your church?
- 9 How easily do members find it to share their faith?

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