

# THE EVANGELIZED WILL EVANGELIZE: THE ROLE OF LAY MISSIONARIES TODAY

## 1. What moves me to be a Lay-Missionary?

Who am I?



Michael Papenkordt – German – Married – two Kids + 1 Grandchild – Live in Germany – since 1986. We belong to what is now called “The institute for World evangelisation” or short “ICPE Mission”

**2. What does ICPE do?** We are a lay missionary organization. The ICPE Mission is an International Association of Christ’s faithful with Pontifical Right (and is the missionary expression of the Glory of God International Covenant Community.)

Today we run different ministries in a few different countries.

But it all began with a 4-months School of Evangelisation. These programs we still run today in New Zealand and India.

Today there are many different/similar programs, but then we were among the first.

- Mostly young people from all over the world
- Lectures in the morning – practical work in the afternoon
- Communal and private prayer times, liturgy and mass
- Small groups and sharing partners – shared rooms
- Aim: not so much a bright mind but a changed person with a burning heart

## 3. What moved me/ moves me to be a lay missionary?

- Testimony of two catholic lay men, who talked to me about Jesus, even in a pub and even with a beer
- Lecture during an ICPE-School Rome 86
- Grace of God and His calling
- I guess if you do what you do for any other reason than God’s calling you will either have a very hard time or just do your own thing.

## 4. How do I evangelize youths?

I would like to share a few things, I think we learned or discovered along the way.

### 4.1. A foundational building block

Evangelizing youths is not about changing them, but changing **us/me** (not just something on the outside, not just something I do ... but my heart)

We do not like it!

We prefer to change structures, programs and others.

### 4.2. A foundational building block of our schools

Schools changed then and now. They are different in NZ and India, but basic characteristics remain.

Finally, the person who has been **evangelized** goes on to **evangelize** others. Here lies the **test of truth**, the touchstone of evangelization: it is **unthinkable** that a person should accept the Word and

give himself to the kingdom without becoming a person who bears **witness** to it and **proclaims** it in his turn. Evangelii Nuntiandi 24

It says “evangelized”. It does not say “sacramentalized” or “catechized” or “trained to do many good things”!

The world in two halves: the ones that evangelize and those who need to be evangelized.

Everyone knows instantly which of the two halves is his.

“Test of truth – touchstone” – A Touchstone is a piece of fine-grained dark schist or jasper formerly used for testing alloys of gold by observing the colour of the mark which they made on it.

The one who accepts the Word becomes a person who bears witness and proclaims!

Here lies the key. We witnessed it again and again

“Person” not only ordained priests and theologians!

The problem we have in the church is not so much, that the church does not evangelize, but rather that people evangelize who have not been evangelized themselves.

#### **4.3. Philip “evangelized” – Witness or Reporter**

Then Philip began to speak, and starting with the scripture he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus εὐηγγελίσαστο αὐτῷ τὸν Ἰησοῦν evangelizavit illi Iesum Act 8,35

It is not the good news “about” Jesus, but Jesus it’s the good news in person “He evangelizes Jesus to him”.

Evangelizing is not telling a story or speaking about something or someone. Evangelizing is an event and an encounter.

The good news everyone can read and talk about it to others. But to evangelize Jesus to someone you can only after you encountered him.

Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction. (Deus Caritas est 1)

Evangelizing is not proclaiming something, but someone!

Do you know what a vaccination is?

If someone goes out to evangelize without having experienced his own Pentecost and his own Damascus he will vaccinate the people with “hear say” and opinions against the actual gospel.

... and you will be my witnesses Act 1:8

We are called to be witnesses not reporters. A reporter cannot evangelize. He can only talk about the gospel.

I had met many reporters of the gospel. Schoolteachers, Relatives and even some priests. People with good hearts and good intentions. But my life changed, when I met witnesses.

You will be NOT you should be! (→ the evangelized will evangelize!)

A witness is only a witness when he witnesses i. e. Speaks. (EN 24 ... bear witness AND proclaims)

#### **4.4. The personal Testimony is key and core**

Not the structure, the plans and methods (they change like fashions)

Generation X (born 1965 – 1980) → Gen Y (1980 – 2000) → G Z (1995 – 2010)

My grandfather, my father, me, my son and my grandson – different generations – born with the same basic hearts desire: to know and to love God (I. The life of man – to know and love God K<sup>3</sup> 1)

While man looks for better methods God looks for better man

The personal testimony involves you. But it involves you not the way the hen is involved in the egg production. It involves you like the pig is involved in the ham production: the pig dies. We need to die to ourselves so Christ can live in us.

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me Gal 2:20

Jesus never asks a lot of us – never! He always asks everything!

We are not called to be Postmen! The postman delivers messages he neither knows nor experiences.

Testimony is always personal!

Not about others and what I heard or read

Woman: “I have no testimony”

#### 4.5. Get close – πρόσελθε καὶ κολλήθητι

Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' πρόσελθε καὶ κολλήθητι Act 8,29

κολλάομαι → To join, connect, become one, get in touch, get involved

Not: get a specialist – give him a book – invite him to a youth event ...

Evangelize! You! Now!

Not only youth evangelize youth!

→ Ingeborg an older lady (70+) meeting 6 teenagers weekly and forming them, disciplining them

#### 4.6. Kerygma! Not Catechesis!

Catechesis is important and beautiful. Our church has a wonderful great and rich treasure!

But Kerygma must always come first and even a lot of wonderful Catechesis can never replace or substitute Kerygma

If start with catechesis the kerygma has no place and you will find people trying ... but without the New Life Jesus talks about to Nicodemus.

People who have been sacramentalized but not evangelized will give catechesis – only.

#### 4.7. Follishness and Power

For the message of the cross is foolishness (μωρία) to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power (δύναμις) of God.

God decided, through the foolishness (μωρίας) of our proclamation (κηρύγματος), to save those who believe. 1 Cor 1:18, 21

Foolishness! Might be easier for the lay than for the studied.

But the one who wrote this was highly trained!

We need to be bold enough to NOT enhance the Logos of the cross with our wisdom. It drains it of its δύναμις – its power

Truth has its own inner beauty!

He is the Word and we are the voice

Fr. Francis Martin: "Be the carpet on which the Word can walk right into the heart ..."

The Word "happens", it is performative not just informative.

the performative character of the word (Verbum Domini 53)

#### 4.8. Content of the Kerygma

This is a very, very compressed form.

1. God's unconditional Love
2. My need for salvation and my inability to save myself.
3. Accept the only savior: **Jesus**, who saved me by His **Death, Resurrection and Glorification**.
4. Respond personally with faith and conversion – confess Him as YOUR savior YOUR Lord
5. Ask and receive from Jesus a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will seal the evangelizing process.
6. To join an evangelized and evangelizing community to continue the process of growth.

#### ***Make youths evangelize - Emmaus***

You don't – I don't!

You can't – I can't!

If you try, you will end up pulling and dragging ... and reminding ...

It has to be Jesus – Emmaus

Tell the youths about your Emmaus encounter

#### 4.9. Koinonia

Koinonia is not an institution but a reality that is part of the New Life.

They will not do, what you do not do.

If you are not excited, they will never be.

They will not live, what you do not live – in your heart!

For your heart teaches louder than your words and your actions.

Your heart always wins the teaching contest.

For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Mt 12:34

That's where the redeeming power wants to reach you – Today!

Salvation, redemption and healing is a package deal! (σωξω see dictionary)

It is hard work, very challenging, it is not efficient. But it is without alternative, it is God's design it remains

- the greatest tool of evangelization and
- a wonderful tool to find out how much the gospel really reached us.

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. J 13,35

Do you want the youth to know that you are His disciples?

Do you REALLY want the youth to know that you are His disciples?

We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. 1 Jn 3:16

Here we see and discover what is actually meant by “love”:

Jesus laid down his life – we lay down our life (ideas, dreams, desires, etc.) for one another.

Koinonia does not just happen, when people live under one roof.

“But I do not have the time ...”

We are so busy ... With what actually?

Not the church of Christ has a mission, – meaning: we are busy maintaining the church and if time and energy permit we also include evangelisation ... –

but the mission of Christ has a church

We need to move from maintenance to mission

#### 4.10. One way to learn how to evangelize

To evangelize you learn (only) by evangelizing – not by thinking, reading or talking about it

So take them to evangelize.

Teach them how to give testimony and how to pass on the kerygma.

If you want to grow in your faith share it!

If you want the youth to grow in their faith, help them share it!

Jesus is the rock! Don't make him a pebble!

Youth appreciate challenge, truth and a radical life.

Give them something to admire and to aspire to!

#### 4.11. Beginners, Disciples and Apostles

We are beginners!

The theologian realizes that, the deeper he enters into the mystery of God

Teach as beginners! Not as masters

Attitude and heart

Always a disciple! Even as a mature and experienced apostle, one is always a disciple!

Take my yoke upon you, and **learn** from me (μάθετε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ) Mt 11:29

**4.12. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.

And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Mt 28, 19-20

Jesus did not say: “Go and evangelize!”

He said: “Go and make disciples!” Teach them to become what you are: disciples – evangelized and evangelizing

Not because we have to!

For the love of Christ urges us on ... ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς 2 Cor 5:14

“Yes, yes ... but we need something for now, something quick ... something we can organize and delegate and set in motion ... and remain the way we are.”

Do you really think the tree will grow faster only because you need him urgently?

Either the love of Christ “urges us on” or Christ will try to work on us and our communities until we are there – clay in the hands of the potter.

If we want the youth to be evangelized we will need our hearts to be changed – or everything remains the way it is – with new structures and efforts but same results.

Ultimately there is only one thing that keeps us from evangelizing and really being clay in the potter's hand – today: our pride – my pride.

Allow me to finish with the last verse of John 17, where Jesus in a way summarizes his mission – the mission he passed on to us:

I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them. John 17:2