

Newspaper Evangelism

Rev. Albertus Pieters

Issued by
The Association for Newspaper Evangelism

NEWSPAPER AND CORRESPONDENCE EVANGELISTIC WORK

WHAT IS IT?

AS successfully carried on at Oita, Japan, since February, 1911, it consists of securing space, at advertising rates, in the ordinary secular press, utilizing this to put the elementary truths of the Christian religion before the public, soliciting further inquiry, following up such inquiry carefully to the end of individual conversion, and establishing numerous groups of such converts in places where there is neither missionary nor Japanese evangelist.

WHY IS IT NEEDED?

Because evangelization by the ordinary methods is slow and local, reaching only the places where missionaries or Japanese evangelists live or which they can frequently visit, and then only those people in such places who can be induced to attend the meetings. The newspapers, on the contrary, go everywhere; to places too far off to be accessible, to every village in every section of the country, to lepers, sick folk, inmates of houses of ill fame, mothers kept at home by family duties, and others who for various circumstances cannot attend meetings. They also go into the homes of numberless people who could attend but, by reason of indifference or prejudice, never do.

In the Province or Prefecture of Oita, with nine hundred thousand people and over two thousand square miles of territory, one of the most backward portions of Japan, the newspapers go to one-fourth or one-fifth of all the homes. More than seven thousand five hundred applications for information with respect to the gospel have been received, one hundred and twenty persons have been led by this method to make public profession of faith in Christ, many striking instances of conversion have occurred, and six or seven groups of these newly gained believers have been led to hold regular services on the Lord's Day without the presence of any minister.

These results have attracted much attention from students of missionary problems in Japan, China and America, and are recognized to be very significant. A Japanese township is only one-fourth as large as a township in America, covering only nine square miles. Yet of the 257 townships in Oita Prefecture, there is not one from which applications for Christian literature have not been received, and in the average township there are from fifteen to twenty homes in which the gospel has thus been laid down in printed form at the request of the people themselves. There is no longer such a thing as an inaccessible hamlet in Oita Prefecture, and there need not be one in Japan, if there were only funds enough to extend this system to the entire Empire.

In addition to being the most rapid evangelistic method, and the one that scatters the seed the most widely, the newspaper method is also the most economical. It is nearly ten times cheaper than tract distribution, the next cheapest method, and much more effectual. In short, it offers at present our best hope of rapidly, effectively, economically, and simultaneously bringing the gospel to the Japanese public. One-fourth to one-fifth of

the population is directly accessible, and this one-fourth is so distributed and so influential that to reach it is practically to reach the entire people.

HOW MUCH WOULD IT COST?

So far as we can calculate, the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year would enable us fairly to cover the whole of Japan, although twice that sum could be profitably used. The natural organization would be to have the main offices in two or three of the largest cities, with a branch office in every Prefecture to take care of the follow-up work.

If so large a sum as two hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year cannot be had, a work from one center that would be felt throughout the Empire could be organized for a minimum of fifty thousand dollars a year. With less than that, it would not be wise to undertake any movement that would have a national character, but for almost any sum less than fifty thousand dollars a year a useful local work can be done.

Such a work must of necessity be an interdenominational one. Whatever organization makes the elementary facts and truths of the Christian religion known to the public at large, arouses interest, and dispels prejudice, is doing a work of great value for all churches that have missionary work in the country. It is reasonable that all should join in the support of the work, the results of which no one would desire to limit to one denomination, and which could not be so limited, no matter how much one might try to do it.

Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year, large as the sum is, represents only ten per cent. advance upon the present expendi-

ture for Protestant missionary and church work in Japan, of which the Japanese themselves pay one-fifth. An increase of ten per cent. spent in publicity work would certainly benefit all of the existing work. One responsible observer, a Lutheran missionary of long experience, estimates the increase in efficiency of any missionary who is able to employ these publicity methods as considerably over three hundred per cent.

Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year is no more than the advertising rate charged for four or five pages of advertising in twelve issues by some of our most popular American magazines. It is considerably less than the gross income of the prostitute quarters of the city of Tokyo for two months, as given in the "Christian Movement in Japan," issue for 1919. The writer of the article in which this statement appears says truly, "How can we fight so great an evil with a few hundred dollars a year."

HOW CAN I HELP?

First: By joining at once the ASSOCIATION FOR NEWSPAPER EVANGELISM. Read carefully the Provisional Organization given below. If you become a member, make a contribution at once to the expenses of the Association itself, that is, to the immediate needs of the movement for printing, postage, office rent, travelling expenses, etc., required to raise at least fifty thousand dollars for the first year's work. Then make up your mind how much you will be able to send in to your denominational Board for the work abroad next year, at any time that suits your convenience, prior to December 1, 1920. Of course, the sooner the better, as the success or failure of this effort must be determined by the amount of actual cash in hand at that date. Let us know how much you propose

to send, so we can know what progress we are making.

Secondly: By soliciting memberships among your friends. Ten times one is ten. Every membership secured by such personal solicitation saves that much on administration expenses, and hastens the completion of the enterprise.

Thirdly: If you cannot afford yourself to contribute so much as is necessary to personal membership, get your church or C. E. Society to make an offering and join in that to the best of your ability.

Fourthly: Join with many missionaries and Christians in Japan in frequent and earnest prayer for the Lord's blessing upon the work.

PROVISIONAL ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR NEWSPAPER EVANGELISM

ARTICLE I.—PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Association is to promote the use of newspaper publicity and correspondence as methods of evangelistic work in non-Christian lands, along the lines already in successful operation at Oita, Japan, and described in the pamphlet entitled: "SEVEN YEARS OF NEWSPAPER EVANGELISM IN JAPAN"; and especially to labor for the realization of the plans set forth on pages 39-41 of the said pamphlet.

ARTICLE II.—MEMBERSHIP.

Every person who contributes five dollars or more to the work of this Association shall be registered as a member. The pastor of any church or the president of any organization that contributes twenty-five dollars or more shall be a member "Ex-officio."

The name of any member will be removed from the list upon receipt of a request from him or her to that effect.

Membership involves no duties or obligations beyond such voluntary financial or other aid towards the realization of the purposes of the Association as any member feels able and willing to give.

Any Board or Executive Committee of Foreign Missions may appoint a representative to be a member of this Association; and such official members, if they number five or more, shall, with the President of this Association, constitute an Executive Council, which shall have entire control of the business of this Association. The President of the Association shall be "ex-officio" the chairman of the Executive Council.

ARTICLE III.—OFFICERS.

Until December 1, 1920, Dr. William Bancroft Hill, of Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, shall be President, and the Rev. Albertus Pieters, of Holland, Michigan, Secretary-Treasurer of this Association.

ARTICLE IV.—FUNDS.

Contributions shall be solicited by this Association for two purposes, as follows:

(1) For the expenses connected with the work of the Association itself.

(2) For the carrying on of newspaper and correspondence evangelism in Japan.

Funds for the former purpose are to be paid to the Secretary-Treasurer and expended by him under the direction of the President, who shall audit his accounts.

Funds for the latter purpose are to be sent to the Board of Foreign Missions of the denomination to which the donor belongs, to be by such Board forwarded to the agency organized on the field for the carrying on of the work. If such contributions are received by the officers of this Association, they shall be promptly forwarded by them to the said Boards whenever the denominational affiliation of the contributor is known.

Should such affiliation be lacking or unknown, or should the denomination in question have no Board or Committee, willing to receive and forward such designated funds, they shall be sent directly to the field.

ARTICLE V.—FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.

In order to avoid the possibility of debt and to make sure that the work financed with funds collected by this Association shall not be expended more rapidly than is justified by the ability and willingness of the contributing public to finance the same, solicitation of funds by this Association shall proceed

upon the understanding that all gifts received for the latter of the two purposes stated in Article IV., prior to December 1, 1920, shall be made available for the expenses of news paper and correspondence work in Japan for the first working year; that all contributions received during the first year shall be employed for the second year, and so on.

ARTICLE VI.—PERMANENT ORGANIZATION.

If, prior to December 1, 1920, the total cash in hand available for newspaper and correspondence work shall amount to fifty thousand dollars or more, it is understood that an interdenominational agency for the purpose of administering the work on the field shall be established either in Tokyo or in some other of the chief cities of Japan; with such a form of government as may be approved by the several Boards holding funds for that purpose.

In such a case the President of this Association shall submit to the members a plan for a permanent organization.

If the total sum amounts to less than fifty thousand dollars, it is understood that each Board holding such funds shall have power to appropriate the sum so held by itself to any agency doing newspaper and correspondence evangelistic work, at its discretion, whether the same be denominational or interdenominational.

In such a case the President of this Association shall have authority, at his discretion, either to dissolve this Association or to effect a permanent organization. In the event of dissolution, all funds remaining in the hands of the Secretary-Treasurer after the settlement of accounts shall be sent to the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America for use in newspaper and correspondence evangelistic work in connection with the Japan Mission of that church.

The minimum contribution of five dollars, necessary to registration as a member, may be given for administration expenses, or for the work on the field, or may be divided between the two, in proportions designated by the donor.

This is not five dollars a year, but five dollars in one contribution. Members will be kept informed of the progress of the work, and we believe that those who contribute once will be so pleased with what is accomplished that they will gladly contribute again, but we ask for no pledges. Make the amount for the work on the field as large as you can, but not so large that you could not repeat it from year to year, if you are satisfied that it is well spent.

It will be noted that the method of financial administration proposed in Article V. furnishes an effective guarantee against debt, as the budget for each year will be based upon the amount of money in hand at the end of the previous year. Grants in aid appropriated by the regular Boards of Missions, however, may be counted as equivalent to cash. Should the amount at the end of any year be so small that the work cannot be continued, it must be suspended. The fact that little or nothing is invested in plant makes it possible to do this without serious financial loss.

By comparing the provisions of Articles IV. and VI., it will be seen that if the interdenominational agency can be established, all funds contributed for its work in America will pass through the hands of the regular Boards, that they will have the ultimate control through their right to determine the form of government and that if it should be found impossible to secure the amount needed to establish such an interdenominational agency, each Board will benefit in its own work by the amount collected, unless it combines with other Boards to establish an interdenominational work on a limited scale.

EXPRESSIONS OF APPROVAL.

Resolutions adopted by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America, October 8, 1919.

"Whereas: The Rev. A. Pieters has for seven years conducted at Oita, Japan, in connection with and under supervision of the Japan Mission, a newspaper and correspondence evangelistic enterprise that has received the unqualified appreciation of his Mission, and is regarded by this Board as yielding valuable evangelistic results not attained by any other form of missionary work, and

"Whereas: Mr. Pieters, with the endorsement of his Mission and with the approval of numerous fellow missionaries belonging to various churches, proposes to establish in Japan an interdenominational agency that shall do a similar work for the entire Empire of Japan, therefore

"Resolved. (1) That this Board hereby expresses approval of this plan in general, as set forth on pages 35-37 of the pamphlet entitled, 'SEVEN YEARS OF NEWSPAPER EVANGELISM IN JAPAN,' issued under the auspices of the Association for the Promotion of Newspaper Evangelism.

"(2) That this Board authorizes Mr. Pieters to devote to the prosecution of this enterprise such a portion of his time and strength while on furlough as may be necessary to that end.

"(3) That this Board commends Mr. Pieters and his plans to the confidence of the Boards, Churches, and individuals whom he may approach in connection with this matter."

Extract from a Resolution adopted by the Lutheran Mission in Japan.

"That we heartily approve of his (Mr. Pieters') plans to make this a nation-wide activity.

"That we urge our home Boards to receive the Rev. A. Pieters when on furlough with

sympathy, and to facilitate his plans of appealing to Christian business men to furnish funds for this very important work."

Extracts from Resolutions adopted by the Japan Mission of the Reformed Church in America.

"That the Mission hereby expresses its unqualified appreciation of the work done by Mr. Pieters and his staff of Japanese workers through the 'EISEI KWAN' in the field of Newspaper Evangelism. . . .

"That the Mission expresses also its opinion that the kind of work done by the 'EISEI KWAN,' in all its various phases, is of very great value as an evangelistic agency in promoting a wide knowledge of the Christian message, in providing a means for nourishing individual inquirers and Christians and groups of them, who have not ready access to any other Christian workers, and—though perhaps to a less degree—in supplementing and invigorating the work and activities of the local churches and evangelists.

"That the Mission hereby endorses in general the plan, as set forth by Mr. Pieters on pages 35-37 of his pamphlet on Newspaper Evangelism. . . ."

Action of the Conference of Federated Missions in Japan. Taken at the Annual Conference at Karuizawa, August, 1919.

"Whereas: During the past few years, in various cities in Japan, the newspapers have been utilized by a number of missionaries, with marked satisfaction, for purposes of evangelization, and

"Whereas: The experience already collected goes to show that this same method may be wisely pursued on a wider scale and in a more systematic manner,

"Resolved: (1) That the Conference of Federated Missions commend this method to its

constituent Missions as one likely to be productive of good results, urging them to set aside such forces in men and money as will give it a fair trial.

“(2) That a Sub-committee on Newspaper Evangelism be appointed, to consist of nine members, three of whom shall retire each year, whose duties shall be

a. To gather, classify, and put at the disposal of such individuals or Missions as wish to make use of this method such information as will be useful to them in carrying out this purpose.

b. To assemble material suitable to the prosecution of the work.

c. To serve as a clearing house for the dissemination of information as to the method, and of material for publication, and also for the supply of Japanese assistants suitable to the work.

d. To carry on in one or two centers practical demonstration of the best way of conducting such an enterprise.

“(3) That we commend this Committee to the Missions for such grants in aid as their circumstances and interest in this form of work indicate as suitable, and that we approve of the Committee soliciting funds in the United States of America, Canada, and England, in so far as such solicitation does not conflict with the policies of the home Boards and societies; especially from parties not at present extensively contributing to existing forms of work.”

Extract from a letter written by Dr. John R. Mott, addressed to the Rev. A. Pieters, October 17, 1919.

“Dear Mr. Pieters:

“I have looked over with deepest interest your document, ‘Seven Years of Newspaper Evangelism in Japan,’ and congratulate you on the splendid results which have attended you and those associated with you in this

fruitful piece of evangelistic work. It has been my opportunity to keep in touch with what you have been doing during these recent years through the reports which you have sent me from time to time and in other ways. In my judgment, you have carried the enterprise well past the experimental stage and have demonstrated the practical utility and spiritual fruitfulness of the method. It is my hope, therefore, that the plans may be enlarged so as to make this method more widely operative throughout Japan. . . . ”

Dr. Robert E. Speer, November 18, 1919.

“I have believed thoroughly in this work from the beginning, and I think that the churches working in Japan should unite in some such plan as you have worked out to utilize this method of evangelization and religious education to the utmost. I trust the support of the missionary cause by the churches may make it possible for the Boards to provide the full fund that would be required to send some knowledge of the gospel through this valuable and effective agency into every hamlet and into every reading home in Japan.”

Dr. B. B. Warfield, October 27, 1919.

“Now that it has been brought to my attention I am astonished that it has not been made long ago an essential part of mission work in every land of a newspaper reading public.”

From an official letter from Dr. C. L. Brown, Corresponding Secretary for Japan of the Board of Foreign Missions of the United Lutheran Church in America, December 29, 1919.

“You are authorized to say to any members of the Lutheran Church with whom you may come into contact, that the Mission in Japan

of the United Lutheran Church and the Board of Foreign Missions in America look with favor on Newspaper Evangelism as explained by our Mission and yourself, as a very effective method for Christian propaganda among the Japanese."

Resolution of the Japan Mission of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, January 1, 1920.

"Voted: To express our high appreciation of the work done by Mr. Pieters in the line of newspaper evangelism, and to approve heartily of the plan, as worked out by his Association, to make this a nation-wide activity."

Mr. Wm. Merrell Vories, founder of the Omi Mission, Japan, December 20, 1919.

"As far as I know, all who have tried it are enthusiastic over newspaper evangelism."

Mission of the Christian Convention, December 1, 1919.

"Voted: That we cordially approve launching a nation-wide campaign of newspaper evangelism."

Canadian Methodist Mission, April, 1919.

"We desire to place on record our conviction as to the great value of newspaper evangelism, and our faith in the possibility of the development of this method of work until practically our whole field is reached and influenced by it."

Japan Mission of the Presbyterian Church in U. S. A., January 14, 1920.

"Resolved. That the Board be requested to give, as far as possible, such assistance to the work of Newspaper Evangelism as was approved by the Conference of Federated Missions at its last Annual Meeting."

Foreign Missions Conference of North America, January 15, 1920.

“Resolved: That this Conference place itself on record as heartily approving Newspaper Evangelism as an effective method for Christian propaganda.”

The Committee of Reference and Counsel, February 18, 1920.

“Resolved: That we heartily endorse the judgment of the Foreign Missions Conference and other missionary organizations, favoring, as a most important method of approach to the people in mission lands, what is known as Newspaper Evangelism.”

The Inter-Church World Movement.

The Standing Committee on Newspaper Evangelism of the Conference of Federated Missions in Japan prepared an estimate of the amount of money that it was desirable to use for a five-year programme of Newspaper Evangelism in that country. The total amount was \$325,450, which was cut down to \$575,000 by the Board of Review of the Inter-Church World Movement. Of this sum, \$75,000 was assigned for the expenses of the first working year. This sum is a part of the budget recommended by the Inter-Church World Movement to the various missionary boards for adoption.

Correspondence should be addressed to

REV. ALBERTUS PIETERS

25 East 22d Street, New York