

Church Program Discussion Wednesday 8:00 P.M. July 22, 1964

Subject for Discussion is point #1. EVALUATE THE BUS PROGRAM.

Mark: What are the factors as you see them that we ought to bring into focus tonight?

Resp: 1. Value in relation to expense.
2. What is our responsibility to these children we have been bringing to our Sunday School for years?
3. Possible intensified program. (We need to try to get into the homes of the S.S. children)
4. How well do we serve these families.
5. Is this present method a good way to evangelize?

Mark: How long has this church been running the bus across the river?

Resp: The first bus was bought in 1950 and was run to Guilds Lake.

Mark: Was this beneficial?

Resp: Then we had about 50 children located mostly in a housing development. We could pick up a large number in a small area. About 1955 we picked up around 45 children. In 1964 we pick up an average of 15 children on the bus and there is a possibility of 21 children. With the stationwagon we pick up about 4 children with a possibility of 6. Out of these 27 possibilities, about half of the parents attend church elsewhere. The bus drives about 10 miles round trip and the stationwagon about 20 miles. In 1963 we spent \$332.50 for bus transportation and upkeep. The budget for 1964 allows \$400.00.

Mark: How many of these children's parents attend church here outside of Bible School and Christmas programs?

Resp: None.

Did we make an attempt to reach the parents?

Mark: What are the positive factors about the bus program today?

Resp: In the past a number of these children had become members and this was a means of getting them here.

Resp: We're doing it now simply because we have always done it.

Resp: On various occasions I have invited the parents of some of my S.S. children to come and bring their children as they were dissatisfied with the behavior on the bus but they prefer not to come.

Resp: I've always had the feeling that when visitors come to our church we may introduce ourselves but we fail to really make people feel at home.

Resp: Are we being a little naive to think we can even draw the parents of Negro children over here?

Resp: The unit has no problem drawing children from their community.

Mark: Is it a sound approach to try to work with people from a distance like this? If what we're doing now doesn't make sense then we ought to drop it.

Resp: I say it isn't. The bus drove about 3 miles in this area for Bible School and picked up about 15 children and this wasn't an intensified program.

Resp: If we get children from this area, how many church families are going to spend extra time here working with these children?

Resp: I feel we ought to work with the families in the area of the church but we still have a responsibility to our neighbors first, regardless of the type of outreach we choose.

Mark: We have to admit we haven't done much with the families across the river. Our present method is not a good way to evangelize. None of you would be very offensive about discontinuing the bus if we managed to take care of these children in some other way.
(Members indicated agreement)

- Mark: When these children reach the teenage level they stop coming.
- Resp: When we pinpointed the S.S. children on the map many of them are located close to the unit. The unit is located where they can work most effectively with the children we have been hauling.
- Resp: Would it be fair for us to ask the unit to seriously consider the possibility of starting a Sunday School and possibly a church in their community?
- Resp: Would it be fair for us to ask them to do this unless this church would be willing to help? (Because of their changeover in personnel)
- Mark: They would consider what extra help they need when the time comes.
- Resp: Maybe we should ask the parents if they wish for us to start a work in their community.
- Mark: We should contact all these families about their feelings.
- Resp: There is one important matter about the stationwagon route that we haven't mentioned yet and that is transportation for the Skidmore boys.
- Resp: Could we contact these families in N.E. Portland before our next meeting?
- Resp: I feel we should approach the unit right away.

Motion: That the Portland Mennonite congregation request that the Voluntary Service Unit explore the possibilities of developing a church in the northeast area.
 Seconded.
 Carried.

Mark will be in charge of organizing efforts to contact the families in this area before our next meeting.

Present were: Reuben and Phyllis Miller
 Allen Snyder
 Harold and Eileen Weaver
 Marty Miller
 Mary Jo Hargreaves
 Dorothy Schantz
 Ida Louise Gingerich
 Delmar and Jo Hamilton
 Maurice and Joan Imhoff
 Alvin and Mary Beachy
 Lyle and Lois Weaver
 Philip Hostetler
 Eugene Kreiser
 Dan and Cathy Shenk