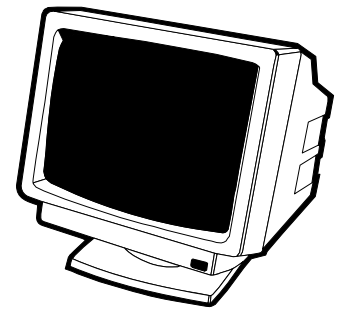


# GOSPEL OUTREACH

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There are approximately 600 million Roman Catholics in the world today. About 60 million of these live in the United States. They make up roughly one-fourth of the total U.S. population.

Of the five Christian organizations to evangelize U.S. Catholics, only two are east of the Mississippi River, where most of the Catholic population is located. One of them is Gospel Outreach in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Frank Eberhardt, a former Roman Catholic seminarian, is the founder/director of Gospel Outreach. Since he was saved from the tradition and errors of the Catholic Church, it has been his vision to evangelize Roman Catholics “to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light” (Acts 26:18).

Eberhardt spent the first twenty years of his life in Catholicism, all of that time attending Roman Catholic schools. He started serving as an altar boy when he was in the fourth grade. As a sixth grader in the Resurrection of Our Lord Catholic School in Philadelphia, he first felt an urge to enter the priesthood.

Being a devout and pious student, he was easily influenced by the lectures of Father McCaffery, a diocesan priest in Philadelphia. After studying, praying, seeking advice from Father McCaffery, and writing and visiting several different orders, Eberhardt decided to join the Order of St. Vincent DePaul.



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The Vincentians are a missionary order famous for their unity, fellowship, and extreme devotion to Mary. They operate the Vincentian Seminary near Princeton, New Jersey.

Eberhardt entered the seminary in 1968 and for the next four years attended classes six days a week, studying for the priesthood and preparing, unwittingly, for God’s true ministry. As he listened to the priest, he began to discover

problems in many of their teachings. “One doctrine would contradict with the other or add to or take away from the Word of God,” he recalled. “I began to question.”

By the summer of his third year at the seminary, Eberhardt’s questioning had become serious. He was actively searching for answers. He prayed, read his Bible, and questioned the priests, but to no avail. His introduction to group Bible study began that summer when he attended a Jehovah’s Witness Bible study with his parents, who were also beginning to question Catholicism.

One characteristic of Eberhardt then and now, is his refusal to make hasty decisions. He returned to the seminary and continued to read, study, and compare Catholic doctrine with God’s Word. “I wasn’t sure in my own mind what to do,” he said, “so I just kept reading, studying the Bible, questioning and thinking.”

On January 16, 1972, still unsaved, Eberhardt made a crucial decision. He telephoned his parents and told them he was leaving the seminary and wanted them to find “a good college that teaches the Bible.”

Through a series of events his parents contacted Alex Dunlap, director of the Conversion Center, at the time the only mission to Catholics in Philadelphia. As a result, both of his parents were saved the next day.

When Eberhardt returned home February 2, 1972, he was referred to Reverend Paul Parr of the Cedar Grove Church in Philadelphia. For eight hours he listened intently as Pastor Parr answered his questions, presented the Gospel and pointed out the errors of Catholicism.

Still not convinced but under deep conviction, he spent the next several hours studying the verses Parr had used. He found them to be an irrefutable repudiation of Catholic doctrine. That night he accepted Christ as his personal Saviour.

Not wanting to waste an entire year of academic credits, Eberhardt returned to the seminary after making a public profession of faith at Cedar Grove Church. He completed the remaining two months of education at the seminary and began making plans to enroll in Bob Jones University that fall.

Eberhardt does not think his years in Roman Catholicism were wasted. While he was at the seminary, “the Lord taught me to speak, to question, to understand, to reason, and to go to the Scriptures for my answers,” he explained. He is a firm believer in the truth of Romans 8:28-“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.”

It was in his junior year at Bob Jones University that Eberhardt first saw the vision of a mission work designed specifically for the evangelization of Roman Catholics. He spent three summers working with Alex Dunlap at the Conversion Center, "learning and growing" and laying the groundwork for the founding of Gospel Outreach, which he began in 1976.

Today Eberhardt is on the road six months of the year, presenting the work of Gospel Outreach, educating believers about Catholicism, and evangelizing Roman Catholic people. He conducts forty preaching meetings and speaks in about eight Bible Colleges or Mission training schools each year.

During the remaining part of the year, Eberhardt assumes the leadership of five Bible study programs in Philadelphia and prepares various materials for the ministry. He also produces a weekly radio broadcast called Keys of the Kingdom.

The ministry distributes approximately 200,000 pieces of literature every year. This part of the ministry is handled primarily by his wife Kim and by Frances Eberhardt Frank's mother. Most of the tracts and booklets distributed are bulk requests from pastors of fundamental churches to whom the work of Gospel Outreach has been presented.



**EBERHARDT IS ON THE ROAD 6 MONTHS OF THE YEAR, PRESENTING THE WORK OF GOSPEL OUTREACH INC, EDUCATING BELIEVERS ABOUT CATHOLICISM, AND EVANGELIZING CATHOLIC PEOPLE**

Kim frequently travels with her husband as he ministers in churches around the nation. She has added new dimensions to the work: while Frank ministers to the adults and teenagers, she conducts children's classes. She also helps in the devotional work and "provides pastor's wives with an outlet, acting as their confidante."

When asked about his greatest blessings since founding Gospel Outreach, Eberhardt quickly gave two widely different examples. He recounted how he had spent four years witnessing in South Philadelphia, which is 98% Italian Roman Catholic. He spent over six months knocking on doors before a single soul was saved and the Lord began to bless the work. Eberhardt recalls that among the first converts was Dominic, he was a tremendous blessing and went on to become Eberhardt's Assistant Pastor and later to pastor his own church in South West Philadelphia.

Not everything, however, has been so difficult. During a missionary trip to Puerto Rico, which is also heavily Roman Catholic, Eberhardt often witnessed and preached from the early hours of the morning. Preaching services

were from 7 p.m. until 11 p.m. and the people still wanted to hear more of the Gospel. Although he had to speak through an interpreter, over two hundred souls were led to the Lord during that visit.

Those who know Frank best characterize him as enthusiastic, exuberant and warm. He is a dedicated, hard-working, and soul-conscious minister. He sometimes gets so immersed in the work, however, that his associates become concerned for his health. But those closest to him support the claim that "no matter what happens, he never complains."

Pastors who have had Eberhardt in their churches agree that his background makes him a very convincing speaker. Reverend Norman Holtz, pastor of the Upper Perkiomen Baptist Church in East Greenville, Pennsylvania, has had Eberhardt there twice. He is quick to state that Eberhardt "has been an impetus to our church" and praises Frank's gift of teaching.

The biggest disappointments the ministry has experienced have come, unfortunately, from fellow Christians. Some pastors have been unable to discern the need for such a ministry. Some Christians do not give to financially support Gospel Outreach because of apathy or misinformation. Many simply view Catholics as "mixed up Christians" who go about their worship in a little different manner from most other Christians.

Looking ahead, Eberhardt would like one day to establish a home for saved former priests and nuns. When a priest or nun leaves the church, he loses everything from financial security and shelter to the very cloths on his body. Everything he has had belonged to the Catholic Church. Such individuals need a haven and a center to train them in the Word of God until they are grounded and able to support themselves. Eberhardt believes that if there were such a place that we would see many more converts among priests and nuns today.

Roman Catholics comprise a mission field with great need and great potential. Gospel Outreach, with Frank Eberhardt, is working to meet that need-to "open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light."



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