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DEVELOPING A CONTEXTUAL CROSS-CULTURAL EVANGELISM  
AND CHURCH GROWTH STRATEGY FOR THE  
INTERNATIONAL BIBLE CHURCH,  
HAMPTON, GEORGIA

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

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by  
Sam Reyes Evangelista  
December 2012

**APPROVAL SHEET**

DEVELOPING A CONTEXTUAL CROSS-CULTURAL EVANGELISM  
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In memory of my wife,  
Virginia,  
whose passion and enthusiasm  
in the ministry motivated me through the years.  
To my four precious daughters,  
my joy and inspiration in life:  
Grace, Faith, Ruth, and Rachel.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE .....	viii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Purpose .....	1
Goals .....	1
Ministry Context .....	2
Rationale .....	10
Definitions and Limitations .....	12
Research Methodology .....	13
2. THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL EVANGELISM .....	15
Biblical Foundations for Cross-Cultural Evangelism .....	16
Old Testament Cross-Cultural Evangelism .....	16
New Testament Cross-Cultural Evangelism .....	24
Theological Foundations for Cross-Cultural Missions .....	33
The Love of God .....	33
The Command of Jesus .....	36
The Growth of the Church .....	40
The Sinfulness of Mankind .....	43
Conclusion .....	46
3. THEORETICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION .....	49
Theoretical Foundations of Cross-Cultural Communication .....	49

Chapter	Page
The Culture of the People .....	49
The History of the People .....	52
The Language of the People .....	54
Sociological Foundations of Cultural Communication .....	55
The Society of the People .....	55
The Hierarchy of the People .....	57
The Religion of the People .....	58
Contextualized Cross-Cultural Communication .....	60
The Filipino People .....	61
The European Immigrants .....	69
The African Americans .....	74
Conclusion .....	80
4. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT .....	83
Orientations .....	83
Session 1: The Leaders' Orientation .....	84
Session 2: The Participants' Orientation .....	86
Personal Evangelism .....	87
Session 3: Introduction to Personal Evangelism .....	87
Session 4: Preparation for Personal Evangelism .....	89
Session 5: Strategies of Personal Evangelism .....	91
Session 6: Practicum of Personal Evangelism .....	92
Cross-Cultural Evangelism .....	95
Session 7: Cross-Cultural Evangelism among Anglos .....	95
Session 8: Cross-Cultural Evangelism among African Americans ...	96
Session 9: Cross-Cultural Evangelism among Filipinos .....	98
Session 10: Cross Cultural Evangelism Strategy .....	99

Chapter	Page
The Functions of the Church and Church Growth .....	101
Session 11: Discipleship and Church Growth .....	101
Session 12: Fellowship and Church Growth .....	103
Session 13: Ministry and Church Growth .....	105
Session 14: Worship and Church Growth .....	106
Session 15: Celebration Worship Service .....	108
Conclusion .....	109
5. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT .....	110
Evaluation of Purpose .....	110
Evaluation of Goals .....	111
Evaluation of Methodology .....	115
Effectiveness of the Project .....	116
The Questionnaire .....	116
The Participant's Evaluation .....	118
The Participant's Change of Attitude .....	119
Strengths of the Project .....	122
Weaknesses of the Project .....	122
Reflections of the Project .....	123
Theological Reflection .....	123
Personal Reflection .....	124
Conclusion .....	125
Appendix	
1. SESSION 1: THE LEADERS' ORIENTATION, MARCH 4, 2012 .....	127
2. SESSION 2: THE PARTICIPANTS' ORIENTATION, MARCH 11, 2012 .....	129
3. SESSION 3: INTRODUCTION TO PERSONAL EVANGELISM, MARCH 18, 2012 .....	130

Appendix	Page
4. SESSION 4: PREPARATION FOR PERSONAL EVANGELISM, MARCH 25, 2012 .....	132
5. SESSION 5: STRATEGIES OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM, APRIL 1, 2012 .....	134
6. SESSION 6: PRACTICUM OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM, APRIL 7, 2012 .....	136
7. SESSION 7: CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AMONG ANGLOS .....	138
8. SESSION 8: CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AMONG AFRICAN AMERICANS .....	140
9. SESSION 9: CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AMONG FILIPINOS .....	142
10. SESSION 10: STRATEGY FOR CROSS-CULTURAL EVANGELISM .....	144
11. SESSION 11: DISCIPLESHIP AND CHURCH GROWTH, MAY 20, 2012 .....	146
12. SESSION 12: FELLOWSHIP AND CHURCH GROWTH, MAY 27, 2012 .....	149
13. SESSION 13: MINISTRY AND CHURCH GROWTH, JUNE 3, 2012 ....	151
14. SESSION 14: WORSHIP AND CHURCH GROWTH, JUNE 10, 2012 ...	153
15. SESSION 15: CELEBRATION WORSHIP SERVICE, JUNE 17, 2012 ...	155
16. CELEBRATION WORSHIP SERVICE SERMON, JUNE 17, 2012 .....	156
17. APPRECIATION PROGRAM, JUNE 17, 2012 .....	158
18. OUTLINE OF THE TRAINING SESSIONS .....	159
19. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS .....	160
20. ONE-VERSE EVANGELISM .....	165
21. EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE .....	167
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	168



## PREFACE

This project was made possible primarily through God's divine empowerment, without which I would not even be in the ministry that led me to pursue my doctoral degree. God used my parents' example to instill in me the passion to minister. They faithfully served God as church planters in the northern Philippines. Their influence was enhanced by my siblings who also faithfully served God in various capacities. The desire to follow God on a full-time basis came true in 1985 when my mentor, Dr. Jaime Prieto, challenged me to respond to God's call. He assisted me in becoming a lay church leader, a lay preacher, and encouraged me to earn my Master of Divinity degree.

Pursuing a doctoral degree was off the radar of my life. I probably would not have begun the process had it not been for the encouragement and assistance of my friend, partner in the ministry, and faculty supervisor, Dr. An Van Pham. He walked with me from day one. He even went the extra miles many times to assist and encourage me and my fellow laborers to press on with our doctoral course when we felt like giving up. His persistent labor of love has come to fruition in my life, as it has in the lives of many of my fellow ethnic pastors.

The writing of my project would have been more frustrating had it not been for the many hours my friend, Dr. Benny Pate, and his staff, patiently invested in it. His cheerful and willing spirit to assist me, even in his most hectic schedule, greatly convinced me that I could make it through. My gratitude includes other staff members of the Georgia Baptist Convention. I was also assisted by the staff and some of my fellow-pastors at the Henry Baptist Association. Their encouragement and insight contributed to the development and effectiveness of this project. The experiential advice of Dr. Grover Tyner, who invested many years as a seminary president and professor in the Philippines,

increased the effectiveness of this project.

The leaders and members of International Bible Church were gracious enough to let me pursue my doctoral degree. For the past eleven years, they faithfully served with me, their pastor, to carry on the ministry and mission God has given us. Their faithful partnership and cooperation in the implementation of this project brought great encouragement and helped me to transform this thesis from just a mere theory to a reality.

Finally, I thank God for my wife, who faithfully served the Lord with me for almost twenty years. She compensated for my weaknesses and touched many people's lives with her hospitality, cheerfulness, and friendliness. In 2006, Virgie went to be with the Lord after twenty-five years of marriage. The memories of her faithfulness linger, inspiring me and others who were touched by her life to carry on with the ministry. She would have been so proud and exceedingly joyful to see me finally achieve my doctoral degree. Our children are a great consolation for me, as they help fill the gap of my wife's absence. They faithfully served God with their parents at an early age. Their words of encouragement and assistance have inspired me to press on with my doctoral studies. Thank you so much, Grace, Faith, Ruth, and Rachel, for all your love and support in the ministry through the years. I love you all!

Sam Reyes Evangelista

McDonough, Georgia

December 2012

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to develop a contextual cross-cultural evangelism and church growth strategy for the International Bible Church in Hampton, Georgia.

#### **Goals**

Four goals determined the effectiveness of this project. The first goal was to educate the church members regarding the different cultural backgrounds of African-Americans, Caucasians, and Filipinos. Church members learned to contextualize the presentation of the gospel according to their audience's culture. They learned to be sensitive to the cultural heritage of the people in order to initiate a rapport and relationship with them. The members also learned to establish some degree of commonality for an effective evangelistic breakthrough.

The second goal was to train the church members to evangelize with a systematic and cross-cultural presentation of the gospel message. Part of their evangelism training included spiritual disciplines to prepare them for evangelism. This training was followed by actual evangelistic activities. The participants paired up to practice their evangelism skills. Then, they went out together to present the gospel. These witnesses approached their friends first, before sharing the gospel with strangers. They kept a journal of their experiences for future reference.

The third goal was that the participants learned methods of discipleship for new believers. The witnesses taught the new believers about their assurance of salvation

and spiritual growth. The ultimate objective for discipling new believers was to nurture and assimilate them into the church with the intent of helping them develop their faith and utilize their gifts.

The fourth goal was a personal goal. I aimed to grow with my people as I improved my own strategy of cross-cultural evangelism. As the pastor, I aimed to be more effective in teaching and evangelism among other cultures. I also sharpened my leadership skills as I coordinated and supervised the implementation of the project. I intended to learn from the strengths and weaknesses of this task and the constructive criticisms of the members.

### **Ministry Context**

The International Bible Church (IBC) is located in a suburban area about thirty-five miles south of downtown Atlanta, Georgia. The church is approximately one mile from downtown Hampton, a small town of Henry County, which is next to Clayton County. The church location is bounded by Interstate 75 to the east and Highway 19/41 to the west. Atlanta Motor Speedway is about two miles away from the church. The congregation meets in an old house that is next to a subdivision comprised of African-American, Caucasian, and Asian residents.

### **Growth of the Area**

The church will benefit from looking at population growth patterns within Clayton County and Henry County that the IBC considers as its primary mission field. Based on the United States census conducted in 2000, Clayton County has a Caucasian population of 41,934, while Henry County has 110,262. The African-American population is 164,011 in Clayton County, which is almost four times the Caucasian population.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Georgia Baptist Convention Research Services, "Population Data," population data based on 2000 (US Census Bureau, 6 November 2008).

In Henry County, the African-American population is 63,509. Asians have a population of 12,504 in Clayton County and 5,329 in Henry County. By the year 2013, the Caucasian population will have a projected increase of 9 percent in Clayton County and 49 percent in Henry County. The African-American population will have a 61 percent increase in Clayton County and 37 percent in Henry County. The Asian population will have an increase of 4 percent in Clayton County and a 3 percent in Henry County.<sup>2</sup>

The Filipino population in the United States has been experiencing an unprecedented growth. The US Census Bureau estimates that there is a total population of 3.05 million Filipinos in the United States as of the end of 2007.<sup>3</sup> Philippine Consul General Raoul Donato claims that “there are approximately 15,000 to 20,000 Filipinos living in Georgia. . . . There are over twenty-five Filipino organizations in the Metropolitan Atlanta area that includes business, cultural, social and professional alumni associations.”<sup>4</sup>

In 1994, a Filipino medical doctor, moved with his family to Atlanta from New York City to work at Jonesboro Pediatric Clinic in Clayton County. When he began his work, ten Filipinos were employed. Today, the clinic has thirty Filipino workers. His wife observes,

The Filipino population growth is evident in work place everywhere such as stores, government offices, and schools. Many of them work in hospitals as nurses, physical therapists, and medical technicians. You can also observe the rise of the different Filipino organizations. There is a strong presence of the Filipinos in

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>IMDiversity.com, “Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month: May 2009” [on-line]; accessed 29 September 2010; available from [http://www.imdiversity.com/villages/asian/reference/census\\_asian\\_pacific\\_american\\_heritage\\_2009.asp](http://www.imdiversity.com/villages/asian/reference/census_asian_pacific_american_heritage_2009.asp); Internet.

<sup>4</sup>Raoul “Ray” Donato, Philippine Consul General for the Southeast Region of the United States, “Georgia Asia Times: Filipino American Community in Georgia: Striving to Preserve Cultural Identity” [on-line]; accessed 15 September 2010; available from [http://www.gasiantimes.com/July\\_09/community.filipino.html](http://www.gasiantimes.com/July_09/community.filipino.html); Internet.

Clayton and Henry now and we definitely felt the need of growing churches to minister to them.<sup>5</sup>

A local Filipino business owner says that the Filipino population will continue to go up with the influx of more immigrants arriving from the Philippines due to more working visas being granted, especially in the medical fields. Filipino growth in Clayton and Henry Counties is increasing because of job-related reason. Most of the newcomers come directly from the Philippines.<sup>6</sup>

There is also a steady arrival of family members petitioned by their relatives. I have personally experienced this because of the recent arrival of my own sister and brother with his wife who were petitioned twenty-three years ago.

A current Filipino community leader came to the United States in 1987 as petitioned by his mother. When he first joined Saint Philip Benizi Roman Catholic Church in Clayton County there were about fifty Filipino members. Today, he claims that there are about 200 members.<sup>7</sup> The same figures were affirmed by an IBC church leader, who moved to Atlanta from Texas in 1985 for job-related reasons. She and her husband were active community leaders and choir members of Saint Philip Catholic Church.<sup>8</sup>

In 1979, another current church leader arrived in the United States from the Philippines and worked as a registered nurse in Chicago. She and her family moved to Clayton County in 1992 to retreat from the cold weather and frequent sickness they were experiencing. She believes that there were about 1,000 Filipinos in Clayton County when they first arrived. Today, she claims that there are about 5,000. She further claims that there were about 500 Filipinos in Henry County, but that has gone up to 3,000.<sup>9</sup> Filipino

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<sup>5</sup>Filipino Community Member 1, interview by author, Jonesboro, GA, 21 August 2010.

<sup>6</sup>Filipino Business Owner, interview by author, Riverdale, GA, 1 August 2010.

<sup>7</sup>Filipino Community Member, interview by author, Jonesboro, GA, 2 August 2010.

<sup>8</sup>Church Leader 1, interview by author, Stockbridge, GA, 27 July 2010.

<sup>9</sup>Church Leader 2, interview by author, Hampton, GA, 1 August 2010.

population has gone up both nationally and locally. From that 1980s to the present, the Filipino population has gone up several thousands more.

The Census Bureau indicated that the largest age segment of the overall population of these two counties is adults between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-four. The second largest group is adults between twenty-five and thirty-four. This age trend is true for both Clayton and Henry Counties. The average age is 33.5.<sup>10</sup> The majority of the population is people with siblings between the ages of one through late twenties. These demographics open a vast opportunity of reaching out to children, youth, young adults, and young couples. The projected increase in population offers great opportunities for ministering to the lost. IBC does well to adopt ministries designed to meet the particular needs of these age brackets.

### **History of the Church**

In 2000, the Philippine International Bible Church of Clarkston, Georgia, created four cell groups. One of them was in South Atlanta. After several months of conducting visitation and Bible study fellowships, the vision to have another Filipino congregation began to evolve. A series of consultation and planning meetings took place with church leaders. Assistance also came from the Language Mission Department of the Georgia Baptist Convention, South Metro Baptist Association, and the First Baptist Church of Jonesboro. A publicity blitz was conducted in that same month in Jonesboro and in the surrounding cities.

The mission congregation was officially launched with a concert by a famous Filipino born-again singer. Some prominent Filipino community leaders attended the event. The first official worship service was held on October 7, 2001, in the old chapel of First Baptist Church of Jonesboro. In March 2002, the group moved to the facilities of

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<sup>10</sup>The Georgia Baptist Convention Research Services, "Population Data."

Poston Road Baptist Church with a core group of about thirty individuals. A year later, they moved to Mount Zion Baptist Church of Jonesboro.

The ministry became known in the Filipino community by word of mouth. Together with some of its leaders, the mission congregation was asked to participate in Filipino community gatherings. I was frequently asked to give invocations and brief speeches, as well as serve as an event coordinator. Through established friendships and relationships, home and hospitals visitations, mailing and e-mailing, the congregation tried to minister to the material, physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the community. Members conducted home Bible studies with their relatives and friends, sometimes in conjunction with special family events. Backyard Bible clubs were held in the summer time. People began to visit the church, join worship services, and participate in special church activities. Some of the activities were the church anniversary, Valentines party, Mother's and Father's day, Easter Sunday, Christmas musical, potluck fellowships, birthday celebrations, house blessing, ball games, bowling tournaments, recreational parks picnic fellowships, family camps, youth camps, church walkathons, and Spring festival.

Sunday school classes catered to the needs of the different age groups of members. Various committees were created to assist with the distinct needs of the members as the church grew in number from a humble beginning of thirty to ninety five in 2005. In the fall of 2006, with God's miraculous divine providence, the church was able to purchase 5.75 acres of land with an old house in Hampton, Georgia. In December of that year, the church officially incorporated and registered in the state of Georgia. IBC was officially constituted on April 5, 2008. It is affiliated with the Henry Baptist Association of Georgia.

Through the years, God molded this congregation into a multi-ethnic church composed of Filipinos, Caucasians, African-Americans, and Hispanics. The church is located in a strategic place of Metro Atlanta where many of the aforementioned races



live. God must have a plan as to why he started and molded this church with different kinds of people. Because of this belief, this project aimed to equip the congregation to reach out to the international community, inasmuch as God has blessed the congregation with members of various cultural backgrounds. First, however, the congregation must better understand the respective historical, cultural, and religious backgrounds of the people mentioned and be able to contextualize the presentation of the gospel as members reach out to the community.

### **Growth Patterns**

IBC grew numerically from a membership of thirty to ninety-five people between 2002 and 2005. The average worship service attendance increased from twenty-eight to eighty-four individuals. However, many challenges, conflicts, problems, and trials arose that the church body had to face and overcome. Many of the problems concerned interpersonal relationships among the members. The congregation experienced various storms of church life together.

The church paid a dear price for these disturbances. Personal and church testimonies to the community were marred. Some members became disgruntled and left the church with ill feelings. Those members who were affected and decided to stay became lethargic in their spiritual life and church involvement. Some families stopped attending because of the distance they had to travel when the church relocated. The faithful ones were left alone, struggling to keep the church alive and functioning.

### **Church Evaluation**

The strengths of the congregation are friendliness, hospitality, and a family atmosphere. These have contributed to its membership surge in 2005. These qualities became the trademark of the congregation, especially among the Caucasian and African-Americans. They love the informality and comfortable feeling during home Bible studies or other special gatherings.

The church's weakness developed when individuals became more concerned about fun, fellowship, and food when they were together instead of spiritual growth. Members who had been faithfully bringing food became worn-out and tired, especially when they discovered that many members were not doing the same. Due to the lack of cooperation, relationships, fellowships, the members were affected. The ripple effect has undermined the numerical and spiritual growth of the congregation. Members were satisfied to socialize without the desire for discipleship and evangelism.

Another weakness was the members' accumulation of scriptural knowledge without the intention or desire of applying it to their own personal lives. Some of them were involved in teaching God's Word, but others gradually recognized the discrepancy between teaching the Word and living the Word in the lives of the teachers. The members did not see modifications in their lifestyle and behavior. As a result, they became indifferent toward their attendance of discipleship classes.

Sunday school classes and home Bible studies became academic and resulted in anemic believers. Members were more concerned with socializing at the expense of neglecting or totally ignoring the church's vision and mission. Internally focused church activities dulled the evangelistic passion of the members. Recreational church activities replaced striving for spiritual growth and ministry. Spiritual apathy sedated their spiritual sensitivity.

The indifference of the IBC members is similar to the Mission Station Approach (MSA) Ministry as described by Donald McGavran. He writes that those in the MSA gradually became so comfortable with their life inside the compound of the missionaries that they failed to socially and spiritually connect with their friends, families, and clans. As a result, they had no rapport or relationships built for sharing the gospel. Furthermore, church members functioning in the role of an MSA were content with a simple maintenance of the status quo of the group, trading security for effectiveness, and neglecting their responsibility to reach out to the surrounding villages

in order to spread the gospel.<sup>11</sup> The congregation will do well to avoid this kind of a ministry pattern.

Chuck Lawless highlights the enemy's strategies for undermining the church mission of worshiping and exalting God. He explains, "The Enemy's subtle way to direct us away from genuine worship is to focus us on our own needs."<sup>12</sup> In the same manner, Satan diverts people from the church's mission to temporal and insignificant things.

Church members were unknowingly deceived by the devil to yield to the satanic enticement of focusing on selfish desires, and not on God. Thom Rainer speaks of this self-centered behavior as "koinonitis." It is an unhealthy fellowship of members who are friendly among themselves, yet unfriendly to outsiders. Their relationship and friendliness are restricted to their own group.<sup>13</sup> IBC has gradually deteriorated into koinonitis and self-centered needs at the expense of its mission.

### **The Pastor's Role**

I have established the role of servant leadership. I was willing to be transparent, vulnerable, down-to-earth, and honest with my humanity as I identified with the congregation's heartache and pain. I attempted to be the embodiment of my Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God-incarnate. Jesus dwelt, lived, and suffered with his disciples. My teachings and preaching of God's Word in a friendly, sympathetic, caring, relevant, and culturally-oriented manner contributed to strengthening the church-family relationship. I tried to influence people's lives as I appealed to the many cultures, values,

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<sup>11</sup>Donald McGavran, *The Bridges of God: A Study in the Strategy of Missions* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2005), 101.

<sup>12</sup>Chuck Lawless, *Disciplined Warriors: Growing Healthy Churches that are Equipped for Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 67.

<sup>13</sup>Thom Rainer and Chuck Lawless, *Eating the Elephant: Leading the Established Church to Growth* (Louisville: Pinnacle, 2003), 18.

sentiments, emotions, and life situations. It was for the ultimate objective of soliciting a positive response to God's Word. According to Thom Rainer, one of the common pitfalls of change is a lack of communication.<sup>14</sup> I wanted to be expository in my teaching and preaching, but also take all of the above into consideration to be effective in communicating God's Word as well.

Effecting change in individuals' lives through God's Word necessitates a communication that they can best understand according to their own backgrounds. The right premise for the life-giving church-growth principles as discussed by Gary McIntosh is to adhere to the infallibility and authority of God's Word, with the intention of knowing and doing it.<sup>15</sup> McIntosh's conviction is affirmed by Thom Rainer who mentions that the pulpit is still the primary evangelistic tool. Rainer claims that 90 percent of the churches he surveyed give credit to the power of God's Word when it is clearly taught and implemented.<sup>16</sup>

### **Rationale**

The possibilities of the accomplishments and lasting effects of this project became more exciting as it was envisioned. For several years, this church seemed to have been in a revolving cycle of members coming and leaving. Members were attracted because of fun, fellowship, friendship, and food. But, because of the lack of involvement in a systematic and intentional cross-cultural evangelism, they soon left. Others stopped coming because of personality conflicts or because they could not have control.

The first reason for the church to implement this project was that it moved

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 7.

<sup>15</sup>Gary McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth: How You Can Work with God to Build a Faithful Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 36.

<sup>16</sup>Thom Rainer, *Effective Evangelistic Churches: Successful Churches Reveal What Works and What Doesn't* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996), 49.

members to evangelize and not just simply socialize. The church leaders intended to divert the member's energy and time from gossip, apathy, trivialities, and personality conflicts as they participate in training and evangelism. Members discovered the necessity and urgency of evangelism. Through the project, the church leaders motivated the members to give priority to evangelism over socializing.

The second reason for the church to participate in this project was to help members overcome their attitude of seasonal evangelism. Church leaders guided members to share their faith as part of their daily lifestyle. The leaders taught that recreational activities and other church programs are not substitutes for the members' actual participation of cross-cultural evangelism. The project lasted fifteen weeks and was intended to help members establish a habit of sharing the gospel. Their passion should not be motivated by obligation but by their compassion for lost souls and their fervent and spontaneous desire to obey the Great Commission.

The third reason for the church to implement the project was to help the members shed their habit of treating evangelism training as simply a theoretical and educational activity. The church leaders taught the members how to progress from being academic and anemic to being enthusiastic and evangelistic believers. The ultimate objective was not to accomplish a doctoral ministry project, a church project, or church activity. Instead, it was meant to establish and develop a spiritual discipline of personal evangelism. Members learned to overcome their timidity and fear of sharing the gospel as they shared the gospel with people of different nationalities.

The fourth reason was to help church leaders educate members about the cultural and religious backgrounds of the three major racial components of the IBC: Caucasians, African-Americans, and Filipinos. The church members learned about the different customs, behaviors, and taboos of these races. This knowledge taught the members to be tactful and respectful in dealing with different cultures as they contextualize their approach in sharing the gospel. The participants studied, discussed, and emulated

Bible characters who were involved in cross-cultural evangelism.

The fifth reason the church implemented this project was in order to have radical change and reverse the deteriorating trend of the congregation. Intentionality and consistency were needed in leading the flock to get out of the four walls of the church and engage the community with the gospel message. It was my responsibility to spearhead this endeavor of bringing an evangelistic and spiritual breakthrough in the ministry of the church.

### **Definitions and Limitations**

Two words need clarification based on the context of this project. First, cross-cultural evangelism is “evangelizing and planting new churches among people groups culturally different from the evangelizing Christians.”<sup>17</sup> The ultimate objective is to present the gospel in a way that can be fully understood by any culture. Paul wrote, “I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means, I might save some” (1 Cor 9:22).<sup>18</sup> Paul established common ground and thus, made people feel accepted and appreciated. He attempted to be sensitive to their diversity of needs and concerns. He strived to have this attitude as he shared the gospel without compromise.

Second, the term “evangelism” is defined by John Mark Terry as “presenting Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit so that people will become his disciples.”<sup>19</sup> In preparation for the actual sharing of the gospel, however, the witness would do well to build rapport and relationships with people for better communication and reception of the message. This included different ministries that prepared the hearts and minds of the

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<sup>17</sup>Panya Baba, “Cross-Cultural Evangelism,” in *Proclaim Christ Until He Comes*, ed. J. J. Douglas (Minneapolis: World Wide, 1990), 170.

<sup>18</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.

<sup>19</sup>John Mark Terry, *Church Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997), 4.

people to receive the gospel. Training sessions equipped church members to contextualize the gospel presentation by understanding the many cultural and religious backgrounds of the people within the diverse community.

Most of the members live in Clayton County and Henry County, Georgia. The implementation of the project was limited to the population studies of these two counties. The project was conducted during a period of fifteen weeks. However, the lasting effect went beyond the duration of this project and cannot be included in this paper.

### **Research Methodology**

The project was designed to help the members of the IBC understand, affirm, and become personally involved in the implementation of five functions of the church: evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and worship. Materials and information for the project came from a combination of resources that include books, journals, articles, statistical data, internet sites, surveys, personal conversations, and observations.

The implementation of this project consisted of a fifteen-week seminar. It was preceded by two Sunday afternoon orientations. The first orientation was conducted for the project leaders with two objectives. The leaders were given an orientation of the overall plan of the project and then they went through the detailed logistics of the implementation of the project to prepare the leaders to lead and facilitate their respective groups. The second Sunday was an orientation for all the participants in order to present an overview of the project. The staff thoroughly presented and explained the project's composition and objective. There was a question and answer time before the end of the preliminary meeting. A pre-project survey was distributed and explained to secure input, data, and feedback from the participants. Attendees took the forms home to fill out during the week and returned them at the next session. Results of the survey were used to make necessary adjustments and modifications to the format and implementation of the project.

Following the preliminary meetings, the participants studied LifeWay's "Share

Jesus without Fear” evangelism strategy, for three consecutive Sunday afternoons. This was followed by three consecutive Sunday afternoons of seminars on cross-cultural evangelism among Filipinos, African-Americans, and Caucasians. Guest lecturers came from the North American Mission Board and Georgia Baptist Convention. A series of seminars on Bible characters and cross-cultural evangelism for two consecutive Sunday afternoons followed. The last five Sunday afternoons was a series of lessons on the five functions of the church in relationship to church growth.

The participants split up into groups after each session. Each group had time to meet together to discuss the lesson and to strategize concerning their evangelism approaches. These meetings were under the supervision of their respective leaders. Each group member was sent out with another member each week, on any day of their choosing, for ten consecutive weeks. The pair shared the gospel with their relatives and friends.

To ensure the success of the planning stage and the implementation that followed, I met with the leaders on a weekly basis. It was a time for questions and answers, evaluation, and modification of their cross-cultural evangelism strategies. There was a fellowship for mutual encouragement from the Word of God and prayer together as the church continued to solidify its commitment to the implementation of the project.

The participants received a survey questionnaire before the implementation of the project. At the end of the project, they filled out the survey form again. The coordinators were asked to give their opinion of the presentation of each session and the actual implementation of the project. The survey consisted of open-ended questions with answer options consistent with the Likert Scale from “don’t agree” to “fully agree” as the response format. The responses on the post-project survey revealed if there were changes in attitudes, convictions, and lifestyles of the participants. The leaders gave evaluation reports on their respective groups’ performance from their group sessions and their field training.



## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL EVANGELISM

The world has become a global village because of unprecedented technological progress, mobility, and communication. Individuals all over the world are more familiar with one another's culture than ever before. Cultural barriers are being torn down. This has caused a great change in trade and commerce and geopolitical relationships, in addition to interracial marriages and intermigration. As a result of these factors, more countries turn into often-called melting pots.

Patty Lane, however, prefers to describe it like a stew, rather than a melting pot:

In a stew pot the potatoes look like potatoes and taste like potatoes, but with the added savor of carrots, onions and beef. Each ingredient takes on some of the flavor of the other ingredients, without becoming invisible. Thus, the entire dish is more delicious and each ingredient is enhanced. The United States is like a stew. The individual cultures are recognizable, yet they influence each other and the flavors mix together.<sup>1</sup>

The church of Jesus Christ is not exempted from the ramifications of all these occurrences. These changes spotlight the imperative of the Christian effort to implement the Great Commission. Believers must realize the urgency and necessity of making disciples. Richard Baxter deals with this thought and explains, "The matters of salvation are not to be thought of in the same manner as ordinary trivial business, but with seriousness befitting their importance."<sup>2</sup> This is applicable to both those who receive and those who share the gospel message. Christians must seize every opportunity to evangelize people of different nationalities through cross-cultural mission works.

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<sup>1</sup>Patty Lane, *Crossing Cultures* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 16.

<sup>2</sup>Timothy K. Beougher, *Richard Baxter and Conversion* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2007), 85.

## **Biblical Foundations for Cross-Cultural Evangelism**

The foundation of this divine injunction of bringing the gospel message through cross-cultural ministry finds its genesis in the Word of God. He implemented his redemptive plan through the ages: in the Old Testament, beginning with Abraham, and continuing with Moses and the prophets. Cross-cultural missions are magnified in the New Testament with the advent of the Messiah. The message was carried on by the early believers and the apostles. It reaches its final glorious culmination in the book of Revelation when a great multitude of people from every nation will worship the Lamb of God. According to the words of John,

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” (Rev 7:9-10)

Preaching the gospel to all nations is intended to defy all geographical, political, and cultural barriers. It is unthinkable, however, that Christians glamorize missionaries going to other countries at the expense of neglecting, let alone rejecting, people of other nations coming to the doorsteps of their churches. It is a divine injunction for all genuine believers to obey the Great Commission in the Holy Spirit’s power—be it across the ocean, across the state line, across the street, or across the hall. It is the command of Jesus Christ that cannot be ignored nor compromised.

### **Old Testament Cross-Cultural Evangelism**

The biblical basis for cross-cultural ministry reverts all the way back to the Old Testament. God called and commissioned Abraham: “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you” (Gen 12:1). The Lord was responding to a series of crises that had beset his creation. One of which was Adam and Eve who disobeyed him by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree (Gen 3:6).

Later God had destroyed all earthly mortals, except for the eight individuals who were in Noah’s ark, with a global flood (Gen 7). The people had attempted to reach

heaven by building the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9), but God came down and confused their language so that they could not communicate with each other. The building of the tower stopped as God scattered them all over the world. God's love, however, prevailed over all the sinfulness of mankind. He made a way to redeem mankind from sin and damnation.

**Abraham and cross-cultural evangelism.** In Genesis 12, the Lord called and commissioned Abraham with a covenant. It was a covenant of God to Abraham with a promise:

The Lord said to Abram, "leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Gen 12:2, 3)

God's covenant with Abraham was preceded with the command to leave his country, his people, and his father's household. This is followed by a four-fold promise: "I will make you a great nation. . . . I will bless you. . . . I will make your name great. . . . You will be a blessing." God tested Abraham's faith by asking him to sacrifice his son, Isaac. God reiterated his promise to Abraham (Gen 22:17-18). God's promise to Abraham was handed down to his son, Isaac (Gen 26:4-5). God reaffirmed his promise to Isaac's son, Jacob (Gen 28:14-15).

The fourth promise was also a commission: "You will be a blessing" (Gen 18:18b). Walter C. Kaiser claims,

The blessing of God given to Abraham was intended to reach smaller people groups as well as the political groupings of nations . . . that God's gift of a blessing through the instrumentality of Abraham was to be experienced by nations, clans, tribes, people, groups and individuals. It would be for every size of group, from the smallest people group to the greatest nation.<sup>3</sup>

An Van Pham writes, "The simplest explanation of 'all families of the earth' (Gen 12:3

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<sup>3</sup>Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Mission in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 19.

AV) is that they are all people of all nations in all ages. . . . It denotes families of ethnic groups. How else are ‘all families of the earth’ to be blessed unless Abraham shares with them the name of the Lord?”<sup>4</sup>

Abraham got involved in cross-cultural ministry as he shared God’s blessings to all people. Paul Enns writes,

The descendants of Abraham will be the mediators of God’s will on earth, and it is through these people, Israel, that Messiah will come and establish His kingdom. Thus, God promised blessing through the descendants of Abraham—a blessing that later would include forgiveness of sins (Jer 31:34).<sup>5</sup>

John R. W. Stott underscores the universality of this blessing and the mandate given to all God’s children to preach the gospel to all people. He explains, “If God has promised to bless ‘all the families of the earth,’ he (sic) has promised to do so ‘through Abraham’s seed’ (Gen 12:3; 22:18). Now we are Abraham’s seed by faith, and the earth’s families will be blessed only if we go to them with the gospel.”<sup>6</sup>

God’s promised blessing given to Abraham and all who became the children of God through faith in Jesus Christ carries with it a divine injunction of sharing the gospel with all the families of the earth. Stott writes, “We need to become global Christians with a global vision, for we have a global God.”<sup>7</sup> Cross-cultural mission, therefore, is a God-given mandate not only for Abraham but to all children of God. It is a command embedded in the Great Commission given by Jesus Christ to his followers.

**Jonah and cross-cultural evangelism.** The story about Jonah can be easily

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<sup>4</sup>An Van Pham, “Establishing a Language-Culture Congregation in the Savannah Baptist Association” (D.Min. project, The Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1990), 26.

<sup>5</sup>Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago: Moody, 1989), 51.

<sup>6</sup>John R. W. Stott, “The Living God is a Missionary God,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 18.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

remembered for being associated with a big fish that swallowed him. He survived after three days and three nights inside the fish. He can also be remembered for being a “run-away prophet.” The narrative tells that God commanded him to go to Nineveh. He was to warn the people of an impending divine judgment unless they repented from their wickedness within forty days (Jonah 3:4). Wiersbe describes their vicious violence:

They impaled live victims on sharp poles, leaving them to roast to death in the desert sun; they beheaded people by the thousands and stacked their skulls up in pile by the city gates; and they even skinned people alive. They respected neither age nor sex and followed a policy of killing babies and young children so they wouldn't have to care for them (Nah 3:10).<sup>8</sup>

God had called on Jonah as his messenger to show them the way to escape God's wrath.

Jonah, however, ran away from God's call and headed for Tarshish: “Jonah forgot that the will of God is the expression of the love of God (Ps 33:11), and that God called him to Nineveh because He loved both Jonah and the Ninevites.”<sup>9</sup> God pursued him by sending a storm that caused the sailors to throw him overboard. A big fish swallowed him, and after three days of repentance and prayer inside, “The Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land” (2:10).

In spite of the wayward attitude of this missionary, God was at work in the lives of the sailors as they struggled with what to do with Jonah. Before they threw him into the ocean, they took time to pray and to ask for forgiveness! Then, “at this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him” (1:16). It is interesting to note that in spite of Jonah's rebellious attitude and even before he reached Nineveh, God engaged in a cross-cultural ministry through the prophet's situation. James Montgomery concludes that these heathen “sailors were converted through their experience with Jonah. In an ironic way God was already accomplishing

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<sup>8</sup>Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Amazed: An Old Testament Study—Selected Minor Prophets* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1996), 85.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 72.

His purposes in spite of the prophet's stubborn rebellion."<sup>10</sup> Their conversion began with the unintended testimony of Jonah: "I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land," which caused them to be terrified. Then, they turned their prayer from their god to the God of Jonah (1:9-10, 14).

Jonah proceeded to Nineveh and proclaimed God's message: "Nineveh believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth" (3:5). Jonah proclaimed the Word of God cross-culturally among the people of Nineveh and they responded in repentance.

In chapter 4, the Scriptures state that Jonah ran away from God's command at first, not because of fear or difficulties, but because he knew that God is a "gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity" (4:2b). This is taken from the Israelite's ancient liturgy that the people knew so well and recited as part of their worship (Exod 34:6; Pss 86:15; 103:8; 145:8). However, Johannes Verkuyl points out, "Jonah cannot stand to think that this liturgy is true not only for Jerusalem, the location of God's temple, but for other rescues. Jerusalem's God is Nineveh's as well. Unlike Jonah, He has no 'Gentile complex.'"<sup>11</sup> God's love and patience are further attested by Peter as he writes that "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet 3:9).

While Jonah was resting under a shade outside the city, God grew a vine to cover his head. The following day, a worm caused the eventual death of the plant. That made Jonah angry. God scolded him for being so concerned for the plant, but not for the

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<sup>10</sup>James M. Montgomery, *The Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1986), 225.

<sup>11</sup>Johannes Verkuyl, "The Biblical Foundation for the Worldwide Mission Mandate," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 43.

more than 120,000 people in Nineveh. In line with this, Charles L. Feinberg writes,

God was saying to Jonah: “If you became so attached to the gourd, because it served you and gratified your desires—a gourd upon which you expended no thought, no labor, no toil, no sacrifice, no care, no planting, no watering, no tending, no pruning, a gourd of short duration which grows up quickly and as hastily passes away—shall I not permit My love and pity to flow forth unstintingly to multitudes of My creatures?”<sup>12</sup>

The story closed with God’s profound rhetorical question: “But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?” (4:11). This question implies his passion for cross-cultural ministry. It was a question that probably shook and changed Jonah’s attitude toward the former heathen and sinful Ninevites. Wiersbe points out the lessons that Jonah learned:

In chapter 1, he learned the lesson of *God’s providence and patience*, that you can’t run away from God. In chapter 2, he learned the lesson of *God’s pardon*, that God forgives those who call upon Him. In chapter 3, he learned the lesson of *God’s power* as he saw a whole city humble itself before the Lord. Now (chapter 4) he had to learn the lesson of *God’s pity*, that God has compassion for lost sinners like the Ninevites; and His servants must also have compassion. It seems incredible, but Jonah brought a whole city to faith in the Lord and *yet he didn’t love the people he was preaching to!*<sup>13</sup>

The persistent passion of God for cross-cultural ministry found its way through the life of Jonah in spite of his defiant attitude. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. explains,

Even though God’s servant was more than reluctant and became very “down-in-the-mouth” and had a “whale-on-an experience” (literally) before he finally preached to dirty Gentiles who massacred Jews, the city came to know the Lord in grand proportion because Jonah *did* preach. Even then, he hoped this was one sermon in which no one would come forward.<sup>14</sup>

**Daniel and cross-cultural evangelism.** Daniel was not specifically called by God to Babylon. He was taken captive as a teenager along with other Hebrews. Warren

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<sup>12</sup>Charles L. Feinberg, *The Minor Prophets* (Chicago: Moody, 1990), 151.

<sup>13</sup>Wiersbe, *Be Amazed*, 91.

<sup>14</sup>Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “Israel’s Missionary Call,” in *Perspective on the World Christian Movement* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 26.

Wiersbe states,

It was the practice of Babylon to deport the finest of the citizens and train them for service in their own government. He held several important positions and was promoted greatly because of his character and wisdom, and because the blessing of God was upon him. Nebuchadnezzar named him chief of the wise men and ruler of the land (2:48), a position similar to a modern prime minister. Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, Belshazzar, called Daniel out of retirement and, because he explained the handwriting on the wall, made Daniel third ruler in the land (5:29). Darius named him leader over the whole realm (6:1-3). For at least seventy-five years, Daniel was God's faithful witness in a wicked and idolatrous kingdom.<sup>15</sup>

This did not happen until after he had proven the power of God before the Babylonians in the king's palace.

He and his three friends were required to eat the food prescribed by the king: "But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way" (Dan 1:8). Instead, they opted for vegetables and for water to drink: "At the end of ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food" (Dan 1:15). Daniel and his friends determined not to compromise their faith in God.

When King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that he could not even remember, Daniel was called upon not only to interpret the dream but to relate to the king what he dreamed about! Daniel boldly declared before this pagan king: "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries" (Dan 2:27). In chapter 4, the king once again had a dream. But this time, he remembered what it was. Daniel gave the meaning of the dream and told the king, "You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seventy times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men" (Dan 4:25). This happened to the king as described by Daniel.

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<sup>15</sup>Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1993), 550.



When his sanity was restored, his kingdom and honor were restored as well. Then he glorified the God of Daniel: “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble” (Dan 4:37).

As Daniel and his friends climbed the ladder of excellence and prominence, they also created envy and enemies from among the king’s administrators and advisers. They convinced the king to make a decree that no one in his kingdom could pray to any god except to the king. Daniel disobeyed the law and he was punished by being thrown into the lions’ den. God miraculously saved him from the roaring and hungry lions. The king was overwhelmed with exceeding joy and wrote a decree:

To all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land: “people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.” (Dan 6:26)

Stephen Miller points out, “Miracles are not wrought by God to ‘show off’ but to demonstrate to a lost world that he is the true God and should be honored. Neither was Daniel delivered primarily for his own benefit but so that the Lord could manifest to a lost king and a lost world his reality and power.”<sup>16</sup> The miracles performed by God demand that people submit with all humility to his sovereignty and prominence. Paul M. Lederach writes,

In this story, as in earlier stories, humans who claim greatness, power, and authority are confronted by the God to whom the faithful bear witness. As a result of this witness, powerful leaders come face-to-face with the power of Daniel’s God. The confrontation leads the pagan kings, in turn, to call all the peoples of earth to *tremble and fear* before the living God. The whole world must hear about the living God. The tract to the nations brings truths about this God effectively to *all peoples, nations, and languages*.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, The New American Commentary, vol. 18 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 189.

<sup>17</sup>Paul M. Lederach, *Daniel*, Believers Church Bible Commentary (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1994), 138.

His friends best articulated the courage of Daniel when they responded to a furious and raging king:

O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up. (Dan 3:16-18)

Daniel and his friends were used by God to testify of him among the pagans. John McArthur asserts, “Daniel’s influence was responsible for the wise men who came from the East centuries later at the birth of Christ. God gave him the influence that eventually led the wise men to crown the King who was born in Bethlehem.”<sup>18</sup>

### **New Testament Cross-Cultural Evangelism**

The New Testament proclamation of the message begins with John the Baptist calling on people to “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matt 3:12). As Christ stood up in a synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth, he proclaimed that he was the fulfillment of a prophecy written by Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor” (Luke 4:18). This verse shows the triune God working together for the redemption of mankind. Bruce Demarest presses this point:

The rich biblical data indicate that salvation is a work of the triune God involving an authentic response on the part of the individual person. On God’s side, Scripture depicts the *Father* as the ultimate source, planner, and initiator of salvation. Second, *Christ the Son* provided complete redemption through his obedient life and atoning death. Finally, the *Holy Spirit* applies, makes effective, and preserves the redemption Christ bought to those who believe.<sup>19</sup>

The four gospels announce and explain that Jesus is the prophesied Messiah who has come into the world. Jesus had to undergo three adjustments in his life to fulfill his mission. First, it was a geographical adjustment as he left his majestic throne in

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<sup>18</sup>John McArthur, *John McArthur’s Bible Studies: An Uncompromising Life* (Panorama City, CA: Word of Grace, 1988), 61-62, 111.

<sup>19</sup>Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 44.

heaven to become a human being to suffer and die on the cross. Second, it was a cultural adjustment as he lived, mingled, and ministered with all kinds of people. Third, before he was arrested, tortured, and crucified, he had to undergo a volitional adjustment as he was about to pay for the ultimate price of mankind's redemption through his death on the cross. He set aside his will and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42). The gospel message is about the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor 15:1-4). This gospel is the embodiment of his mission. It is the message of his followers in obedience to the Great Commission of going into all the world to preach the gospel.

**Jesus' cross-cultural evangelism.** Jesus broke cultural barriers as he exemplified before his disciples a cross-cultural ministry among the Samaritans and Gentiles. He took an out-of-the-way route to minister to a Samaritan woman by Jacob's well (John 4:3-5). After his ministry in Samaria, he went back to Galilee and ministered to a Roman centurion by healing his sick son. As a result, this Gentile, together with his whole family believed in Jesus (John 4:46-53). John Mark Terry points out, "Jesus touched people of every race and social class. Jesus demonstrated to his disciples that the gospel was meant for everyone."<sup>20</sup>

Luke narrates the healing of a Roman centurion's slave who was on the verge of death. The centurion recognized his unworthiness to welcome Jesus into his house, but being an officer who has authority, he was confident that Jesus could heal from a distance by simply saying the word. Jesus highly commended this Gentile's extraordinary faith: "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith" (Matt 8:10).

Albert Barnes claims,

The word "faith" here, means "confidence" or belief that Christ had power to heal

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<sup>20</sup>John Mark Terry, *Evangelism: A Concise History* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 7.

his servant. It does not “of necessity” imply that he had saving faith; though, from the connection and the spirit manifested, it seems probable that he had. If this was so, then he was the first Gentile convert to Christianity, and was a very early illustration of what was more clearly revealed afterward—that the heathen were to be brought to the knowledge of the truth.<sup>21</sup>

Matthew went further, recording the words of Jesus:

I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt 8:11-12)

The apostle Mark records that Jesus went to the vicinity of Tyre and ministered to a Greek woman by healing her demon-possessed daughter (Mark 7:25-30). Christ met ten lepers as he was on his way to Jerusalem traveling along the border between Samaria and Galilee. Jesus instructed them to show themselves to the priests. They were instantly healed while they were on their way to the priests. Only one went back to Jesus and thanked him. He was a foreigner, a non-Jew.

Luke’s account tells that when this Samaritan “saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him” (v. 15). Jesus’ reaction was in the form of series of penetrating questions: “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” (Luke 17:11-18). Jesus seems to underscore the foreignness of this Samaritan as he compares him to the nine Jews who did not return to express their gratitude. This indicates that the Kingdom of God is open to all people, even as Jesus declares to this Samaritan man: “Rise and go; your faith has made you well” (v. 19).

At the end of his ministry, after he had set an example and taught his disciples how to do cross-cultural ministry, Jesus commissioned them to carry on what he had begun. The Jews were expecting that the blessing given by God through the promised Messiah would be confined to them. However, Michael J. Wilkins points out, “Jesus

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<sup>21</sup>Albert Barnes, *The Gospels, Barnes’ Notes Commentary*, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 85.

broke down the partition wall, and commissioned his disciples to go everywhere, and bring the ‘world’ to the knowledge of himself.”<sup>22</sup> The blessing that was promised to them was intended for all mankind. They were called upon to be God’s channel of his blessing for all people.

Jesus introduced the Great Commission to his disciples with a great claim declaring, “all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him.” During his earthly ministry, he had authority as the Son of Man to forgive sin (Matt 9:6); to raise people from the dead (John 11:25, 43-44); to stop storms (Matt 8:23-27); drive out demons, and heal the sick ones (Matt 4:23-24). Wilkins clarifies, nonetheless, that the exercise of his authority “was restricted to his incarnate consciousness. In his risen state he exercised his absolute supremacy throughout all heaven and earth.”<sup>23</sup> When Jesus gave the Great Commission to his disciples, they were given the authority to go and preach the gospel and make disciples to all nations because of his supreme authority. Jesus assured his followers that he would be with them “even to the very end of the age” (Matt 28:20).

Jesus went on with his Great Commission, saying that the object of making disciples must not be confined to the Jews only, but to “all nations.” Again, Wilkins points out,

People of every nation are to receive the opportunity to become Jesus’ disciples. When we read the Commission here in the light of Luke’s Gospel, that “repentance and forgiveness of sins be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47), we understand that Jesus’ ministry in Israel was the beginning point of a universal offer of salvation to all the peoples of the earth.<sup>24</sup>

**Peter’s cross-cultural evangelism.** The early believers were instructed to go back to Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Spirit’s coming after Jesus returned to heaven.

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<sup>22</sup>Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 323.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 951.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 952-53.

On the day of Pentecost, they spoke in different languages following the Holy Spirit's descent. Individuals from various parts of the world understood what the early believers were saying. They included "Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs" (Acts 2: 5-11). Nolan B. Harmon claims, "The list of the people is intended to cover every nation under heaven."<sup>25</sup> This was the kickoff rally for launching the Great Commission's implementation.

The angels instructed the early believers to wait in Jerusalem until the coming of the Holy Spirit, who would empower them to share the gospel message as Jesus had promised in Acts 1:8. It was a divinely ordained, strategic time and place because the world had come to Jerusalem for the celebration of the Feast of Pentecost. The preaching of the gospel finally had a breakthrough from out of the cocoon of the Jewish community into the outside Gentile world—into all the world! They did not even have to go into all the world: God brought the world to them. They seized the moment! Hence, from a humble beginning of 120, "About three thousand were added to their number that day" after the preaching of Peter (Acts 2:41). The early believers continued to share the gospel and opened their doors to all people who were from varied cultural backgrounds.

The Jews and the Gentiles were in a cultural clash when the church was born. The Jews were against the Romans. They had racial prejudices against the Samaritans specifically and Gentiles in general. The Jewish Christians had to struggle with their acceptance of the Samaritans and the Gentiles into their fellowship. God had to do something drastic for them to get out of their cultural comfort zones and prejudices to reach the outside world.

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<sup>25</sup>G. H. C. MacGregor, "The Acts of the Apostles," in vol. 9 of *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987), 40.

Intense persecutions, beginning with Stephen's martyrdom, accompanied the unprecedented numerical increase that ushered more Gentiles into the fold. Under Saul's leadership, a great persecution eventually led to the dispersion of many of the believers. The new believers continued to share the gospel as they were scattered to Judea and Samaria. Philip went to Samaria to preach among the half-blooded Jews. His evangelistic efforts were supported by numerous miraculous signs that caused great rejoicing among the people (Acts 8:5-8).

Luke continued his report in Acts 10 concerning ways that the early Christians reached out to the Gentiles with the Lord's divine enlightenment and leadership in fulfillment of the Great Commission. Peter saw a vision of a large sheet which contained all kinds of four-footed animals, reptiles, and birds—coming from heaven. He heard a voice directing him to kill the animals and eat them. Peter, with his Jewish background, rejected this by saying that he had never eaten anything impure or unclean. Again a voice said: "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean" (Acts 10:14-15). R. Kent Hughes explains,

God was confronting Peter's prejudice. Peter had bound all the peoples of the world, except for his own race, into one loathsome bundle. God used a vision to bring a radical change in the attitude of the leading apostle of the early church, and it is a good thing he did. Otherwise, Christianity would have been reduced to a narrow sect of Judaism, and you and I would have never heard the good news.<sup>26</sup>

While Peter was trying to determine the meaning of his vision, three men were looking for him. They requested that Peter accompany them to the house of a Gentile named Cornelius. He was a centurion and a righteous and God-fearing man (v. 22). Peter went with the three men to share his vision to Cornelius and his family.

Cornelius, in turn, shared his vision of being divinely instructed to send some men asking Peter to come. Peter then responded: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is

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<sup>26</sup>R. Kent Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1996), 149.

right” (Acts 10:34-35). Apparently, Peter had to undergo an intense struggle within to overcome his Jewish prejudices against the Gentiles.

Don Richardson describes Peter’s ordeal:

What a trauma it was even for Spirit-filled Peter to try to convert a Roman! A vision intended to purge Peter of his anti-Gentile biases had to be repeated three times, but Peter got the point (Acts 10:9-23). His subsequent meeting with Cornelius is a poignant study of human prejudice gradually melting down through the sheer goodness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>27</sup>

As he proceeded to relate the story of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, to the astonishment of the Jewish believers, descended on all who heard the message. Peter experienced the joy of baptizing those who accepted his message regarding the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Paul’s cross-cultural evangelism.** Paul’s conversion and his eventual involvement in the ministry spearheaded and enhanced the Great Commission’s fulfillment to all nations. His three missionary journeys were instrumental in the establishment of churches in the Gentile world. Faced with rejection by the Jewish community, Paul and Barnabas announced that they were turning to the Gentiles as the Lord had commanded them. To support that decision, they quoted a well-known messianic prophecy from Isaiah 49:6: “I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles that you should bring salvation to the end of the earth.”<sup>28</sup>

In his writing to the Christians in Rome, Paul writes, “I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish” (Rom 1:14). In the King James Version, the phrase “I am obligated” is rendered “I am debtor.” Pham claims that Paul’s idea of [cross-cultural] mission is “a debt to be paid for all people. . . . Paul perceived that

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<sup>27</sup>Don Richardson, “The Hidden Message of Acts,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 92-93.

<sup>28</sup>John MacArthur, *Acts 13-28, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1996), 38.



he was a debtor because of his ‘receivings’ and ‘calling from God.’”<sup>29</sup> Pham quotes Herschel H. Hobbs who writes, “Paul was not a debtor because of anything he had received from them. It was because of what he had received from God in Christ. He was, therefore, under obligation to declare the gospel to others. He singles out Greeks and Barbarians because he was the apostle to the Gentiles.”<sup>30</sup>

MacArthur further points out,

Paul was under obligation in at least two ways. First, he was under obligation to God on behalf of the Gentiles. Because God had appointed him as a unique apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; Rom 1:5), he was under divine obligation to minister the gospel to them. Second, he had an obligation, or debt, to the Roman believers, because of their spiritual need. Because unbelieving Gentiles, like unbelieving Jews, face spiritual death, Paul was obligated to help rescue them through the gospel.<sup>31</sup>

Paul consistently practiced what he preached, especially in his cross-cultural ministry to the Gentiles. He cautiously and tactfully walked on a tight-rope, being careful not to offend the Gentiles or the Jews without necessarily compromising his convictions. “Because of his evangelistic policy to be ‘all to all people’ with respect to spiritually indifferent matters of custom, Paul had Timothy circumcised.”<sup>32</sup> Paul was willing to do whatever it took to reach out to other people:

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. (1 Cor 9:19-20)

Due to Paul’s intense desire to minister to all kinds of people, “he has forfeited his freedom for the sake of all, that by all these means some may be saved.”<sup>33</sup> Paul had

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<sup>29</sup>Pham, “Establishing a Language-Culture Congregation,” 50.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 51.

<sup>31</sup>MacArthur, *John MacArthur’s Bible Studies*, 46.

<sup>32</sup>Walter A. Elwell and Philip W. Comfort, eds., *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), 286-87.

<sup>33</sup>W. Harold Mare, *1 Corinthians*, Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 634.

voluntarily put himself into this condition, a condition making it necessary for him to suit himself to the opinion, prejudices, caprices, and feelings of all people, so far as he could do it with a good conscience, in order that he might save them.

MacArthur further describes Paul's willingness to sacrifice for a fruitful cross-cultural ministry: "Paul identified as closely as possible with Gentile customs. He ate what they ate, went where they went, and dressed as they dressed. The purpose again was to win the Gentiles to Christ."<sup>34</sup> Nowhere else in the Bible can one find a person who had enthusiastically and exhaustively articulated his passion and willingness to adjust to all kinds of people "that he may save some." Arthur F. Glasser writes, "We cannot trace the Apostle Paul's missionary career without being impressed again and again with the fact that his whole life was marked by suffering. When the Lord Jesus called him, he said: 'I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name' (Acts 9:16)."<sup>35</sup>

Paul summarized all the sufferings that he had to endure for the sake of the gospel when he wrote to the Christians in Corinth (2 Cor 6:3-10; 11:23-33). This included his humiliating experience in Damascus when he was smuggled out of the city in a basket and lowered over the wall. He wrote this letter before he was arrested in Jerusalem and subsequently shipped to Rome. In Acts 20, he gave his last farewell to the elders from Ephesus:

I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace. (Acts 20:21-24)

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<sup>34</sup>John MacArthur, *Acts 13-28, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1984), 213.

<sup>35</sup>Arthur F. Glasser, "The Apostle Paul and the Missionary Task," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 111.

Paul made up his mind once and for all to reach out to the Gentiles with the gospel. He utilized every circumstance of his life for the advancement of the gospel.

### **Theological Foundations for Cross-Cultural Missions**

The theological basis for cross-cultural church ministry courses through the Old Testament and the New Testament. The curse that affected Adam and Eve because of their disobedience, mankind's destruction by a global deluge, and the human confusion with diverse languages due to the construction of the Tower of Babel led the Lord to call upon God-fearing men and women to establish a holy nation—a people belonging to God, who would declare his praises (1 Pet 2:9).

### **The Love of God**

The first theological rationale of cross-cultural evangelism is the love of God for all people. Following the Fall, the Lord searched for Adam after he ran away and hid from him. God assumed the initiative for seeking his creatures. Gerald L. Borchert says,

God is the initiator and principal actor in salvation, and we should never think that salvation originated with us (1 John 4:9-10). . . . God's purpose in sending Jesus was not to condemn but to build the bridge in reconciling sacrifice (1 John 4:10) for human beings. God's goal always has been the salvation or wholeness of the world (John 3:17).<sup>36</sup>

God's plan for the redemption of mankind did not only originate from sin, but it has been a plan from the very beginning. James M. Boice writes,

We must not think that the entrance of sin into the world through Adam and Eve was an event that somehow caught God by surprise or that it caused God to begin to ponder what he should do to correct it. God knew all from the beginning. Consequently, before he even set the universe in motion, before he created us, he had determined to send Jesus Christ to die for the salvation of our race.<sup>37</sup>

The Israelites were to be missionaries, who were supposed to introduce people

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<sup>36</sup>Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11*, The New American Commentary, vol. 25A (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996), 184.

<sup>37</sup>James M. Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 288.

to the knowledge and understanding of the Lord. The prophets came along to continue to carry out God's mission. With rampant stubbornness and disobedience, however, Israel failed to implement the Lord's calling for the nation. Long before the birth of Jesus, however, God was actively at work in preparing the world for his arrival. Wiersbe observes, "From the historical point of view, the Roman empire itself helped prepare the world for the birth of the Savior. Roads connected city with city, and all cities ultimately with Rome. Roman laws protected the rights of citizens, and Roman soldiers guarded the peace."<sup>38</sup> And in the fullness of time, God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to carry out the Lord's mission of redemption and salvation (Gal 4:4).

God's love for mankind is best articulated by Jesus in his conversation with Nicodemus: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). One can never fully appreciate the depth of God's love for mankind, unless he is made aware of the distance between God's holiness and man's sinfulness. God is love, but he is also holy. His holiness and love for mankind required the suffering and death of his blameless and spotless Son, Jesus Christ. As a holy God, he cannot condone sin. However, as a loving God, he has to make a way for mankind to escape eternal death.

Millard J. Erickson's conviction is in consonant with this:

Love in the biblical sense, then, is not merely to indulge someone near at hand. Rather, it inherently involves justice as well. This means there will be a concern for the ultimate welfare of all mankind, a passion to do what is right, and enforcement of appropriate consequences for wrong action.

Actually love and justice have worked together in God's dealing with man. God's justice requires that there be payment of the penalty for sin. God's love, however, desires man to be restored to fellowship with him. The offer of Jesus Christ as the atonement for sin means that both the justice and the love of God have been maintained.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Warren Wiersbe, *Be Free—Caution: This Book may be Hazardous to Your Ideas of Christian Living!* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1975), 90.

<sup>39</sup>Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 1:298.

Paul asserts God's love as he writes, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8). He further says, "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved" (Eph 2:4). Wiersbe points out, "the greatest expression of God's love is in the death of His Son. The sending of Christ into the world and His death on the cross were not prompted by man's love for God. They were prompted by His love for man. The world's attitude toward God is anything but love!"<sup>40</sup>

As he underscores the greatness of God's love, Charles C. Ryrie asks,

Why should God want to save sinners? Why should He bear the pain of giving His only begotten Son to die for people who had rebelled against His goodness? . . . This was the greatest and most concrete demonstration of the love of God. His good gifts in nature and through His providential care (great as they are) do not hold a candle to the gift of His son to be our Savior.<sup>41</sup>

God's love was manifested when we were yet unworthy and unlovable.

This divine love that caused God to send his only son had always been in the heart of God even before Adam and Eve sinned. J. Herbert Kane explains that Christian mission "originated in the heart of God. It is His work, not man's; and it grows out of His essential character. If God were any other kind of God, there would be no Christian mission."<sup>42</sup> God's passion was to redeem mankind from the beginning. This love that he bestowed through Jesus Christ is intended not only for the Israelites, but for all people. Barnes states, "It does not mean any particular part of the world, but man as man—the race that had rebelled and that deserved to die (John 6:33). He tasted death for every man (Heb 2:9). He died for all (2 Cor 5:15). He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole

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<sup>40</sup>Warren Wiersbe, *Be Real* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1972), 142.

<sup>41</sup>Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Victor), 277.

<sup>42</sup>J. Herbert Kane, *Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), 141.

world (1 John 2:2).”<sup>43</sup> Herschel H. Hobbs further notes, “The crucifixion of Jesus was not the execution of a criminal, the death of a martyr, or a divine example. It was the expression of divine love (1 John 4:8-10).”<sup>44</sup>

The greatness of God’s love is manifested not only with what cost him. It is great because all the people in the world can avail of his love and saving grace through faith in the death of his son on the cross. Reaching out to all the nations, however, does require cross-cultural evangelism. The love of God has to be presented and explained according to the cultural background of the people. But foremost of all, God’s love has to be communicated not only verbally, but practically. Delos Miles explains,

This wonderful love of God for us and for the world motivates us to love the world with deeds of love, justice, and mercy. Love is meeting the needs of persons. We cannot love adequately with only words. The key to evangelistic success is our willingness to plunge our hands into those hurts and love those neighbors with the *agape* love which comes from the God who is *love*.<sup>45</sup>

As the old adage goes, “people don’t really care how much you know, until they know how much you care.” Christian love in action paves the way for people to listen to the message of God’s love through Jesus Christ.

### **The Command of Jesus**

The second theological rationale of cross-cultural evangelism is the command of Jesus. His command is commonly known as the Great Commission. John MacArthur writes, “The Great Commission is a command to bring unbelievers throughout the world to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.”<sup>46</sup> MacArthur reiterates, “The church is not to wait

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<sup>43</sup>Barnes, *The Gospels*, 207.

<sup>44</sup>Herschel H. Hobbs, *New Testament Evangelism* (Nashville: Convention, 1960), 22.

<sup>45</sup>Delos Miles, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman, 1983), 118-19.

<sup>46</sup>John MacArthur, Jr., *Matthew 24-28, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1989), 341.

for the world to come to its doors but that it is to go to the world.”<sup>47</sup>

Right before he went back to heaven, Jesus told his disciples,

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go 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 I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matt 28:18-20)

Jesus’ command was recorded by Mark: “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15-16). Jesus, the son of God commissioned his followers to go into all the world based on his claims that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him.

MacArthur points out that in using the transitional word ‘therefore’ Jesus was saying, “because I am sovereign Lord of the universe, I have both the authority to command you to be My witnesses and the power to enable you to obey that command.”<sup>48</sup>

Kane further explains,

[the Great Commission] is based on the supremacy and sovereignty of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who in the Incarnation became the Son of Man, that through His death and resurrection He might become the Savior and Sovereign of the world. He is not only the Head of the church and the Lord of the harvest; He is also the Lord of history, the King of the nations, and the Arbiter of human destiny. Sooner or later all men must come to terms with Him. He and He alone has the right to demand universal allegiance.<sup>49</sup>

Jesus has established his divine authority to give the command to his followers. This “sovereign authority given to Jesus by His heavenly Father is absolute and universal.”<sup>50</sup>

As the Son of God and creator of the universe, he has the absolute supremacy over all his creations. Paul attests to the absolute supremacy of Jesus as he writes,

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 342.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 341.

<sup>49</sup>Kane, *Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective*, 149.

<sup>50</sup>MacArthur, *Matthew 24-28*, 339.

invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together . . . so that in everything he might have the supremacy. (Col 1:16-18)

This supreme power that was bestowed upon him by his heavenly Father was manifested and proven during his three years of earthly ministry. He demonstrated it with his power to heal different kinds of diseases (Matt 4:23); to raise people from the dead (John 11:43-44); to cast out demons (Matt 8:14-26); to stop the raging storm (Luke 8:22-25); and to give power to his followers to perform miracles (Luke 9:1-2).

In the conclusion of his narration of Jesus' life, John writes, "Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written" (John 21:25). As one therefore who has absolute and supreme authority, Jesus gave his command to his followers. They were his disciples who followed him for three consecutive years as he trained and prepared them to carry on the mission.

His early followers did well in obeying Jesus' command as they learned to rely not on their own power, wisdom, and strength, but the power and authority of their master. Long before Jesus came to earth, Zechariah records, "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty" (Zech 4:6). Jesus told his disciples as he prepared them for his arrest and crucifixion that apart from him they could do nothing (John 15:5).

Right before Jesus went back to heaven, he promised his disciples, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). It was the Holy Spirit who came upon these haggard and mostly uneducated followers of Jesus that empowered and emboldened them to "preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles" (1 Cor 1:23).

When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost he said, "God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnessed of the fact. . . . Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:32, 36). The gospel message convicted the listeners of their sins and led them to repentance and



salvation. When the religious leaders threatened and commanded Peter and John not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus, they replied, “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19-20). John records in his first epistles,

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:1, 3)

Mark records Jesus’ command this way: “Go into all the world, and preach the gospel . . .” (Mark 16:15AV). Paul is explicit about the gospel message as he writes the believers in the city of Corinth:

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to Scriptures. (1 Cor 15:1-4)

The message is the gospel, which is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

MacArthur points out that “the early apostles and present-day missionaries share the same message: Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor 2:2). The missionary does not invent his message. He is not even called on to defend it. His task is to proclaim it.”<sup>51</sup> It is imperative to be mindful, however, that to obey Jesus’ command carries with it the responsibility to protect and preserve the purity of his message.

Paul has a stern warning to those who water down or corrupt the pure gospel, or preach a different gospel. He writes to the Galatian believers: “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned. If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned” (Gal 1:8-9). Paul is bold and firm as he stands

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 341.

for the true and pure gospel without apology, hesitancy, or timidity whatsoever: “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile” (Rom 1:16).

### **The Growth of the Church**

The third theological rationale of cross-cultural evangelism is the growth of the church. Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do you say I am?” and Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:16). Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matt 16:17-18). Peter’s name in Greek is *petros*, which means a small stone. However, the word “rock” in Greek is *petra*, which is a large rock that refers to Peter’s confession.

Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, is the foundation on which the church is built. Jesus said, “and on this rock I will build my church.” The word “church” in Greek is *ekklesia*, which means “a called out assembly.” Wiersbe claims that “in this first use of *ekklesia*, it seems likely that Jesus had the whole church in mind. He was not just building a local assembly, but a universal church composed of all who make the same confession of faith that Peter made.”<sup>52</sup> Jesus implied that they were to go and preach the gospel beyond the borders of Palestine to have the church be a universal one. Expanding this thought, Wiersbe explains that the keys of the kingdom of heaven given by Jesus to Peter refers to his

privilege of opening “the door of faith” to the Jews at Pentecost (Acts 2), to the Samaritans (Acts 8:14ff), and to the Gentiles (Acts 10). But the other apostles shared this authority (Matt 18:18), and Paul had the privilege of ‘opening the door of faith’ to the Gentiles outside of Palestine (Acts 14:27).<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Warren Wiersbe, *Be Loyal: Discover the Excitement of Knowing and Serving the King of Glory* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1980), 111.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 113.

The early believers did not realize the magnitude of the Great Commission when they first heard it. In their discussion of “Breaking the Missional Code,” Ed Stetzer and David Putman elaborate the intended coverage of the Great Commission:

When we hear (or read) Jesus’ command to ‘go to all nations,’ we think countries. But when Jesus spoke those words, there were no countries as we understand them today. The nation-state is an invention of the modern era. In Jesus’ day there were groups of people, and there were empires. Jesus’ instructions mean that we must go to all the people groups in the world. The Jewish disciples of that day knew that Jesus was speaking about the Gentiles. The gospel was to go beyond the Jewish nation. It meant to go to all the different kinds of people that existed.<sup>54</sup>

As an all-knowing one, Jesus had promised the early believers of his presence, as well as the coming of the Holy Spirit to empower them to go into all the world.

After Jesus had gone back to heaven, the disciples went back to Jerusalem and waited for the promised coming of the Holy Spirit. It was during the Feast of Pentecost when the Spirit came. Peter preached the gospel message before a crowd of diverse cultures that came from all over the known world. God miraculously used Peter’s message to do cross-cultural evangelism without leaving Jerusalem as he declared the gospel to those who came to celebrate the day of Pentecost. As a result, “those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand souls were added to their number that day” (Acts 2:41).

The early believers “continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people” (Acts 2:46-47). Jesus’ command, however, was not for them to just be together and enjoy their fellowship daily. They were commissioned to reach out to the world. Robert Coleman points out, “Despite the disciples’ hesitancy in making the application to the non-Jewish community, persecution forced them to put feet to their faith.”<sup>55</sup> Under severe persecution, believers were scattered outside Jerusalem to

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<sup>54</sup>Ed Stetzer and David Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 34.

<sup>55</sup>Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Discipleship* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1990), 33.

Judea and Samaria. Philip ministered to the Samaritans and then to an Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8). Peter went to Caesarea to minister to Cornelius following his vision (Acts 10).

The cross-cultural gospel preaching rapidly proceeded abroad with the conversion and participation of Paul. Numerous Gentiles were saved and churches were established as a result of his missionary journeys to many of the provinces of the Roman Empire. However, Coleman clarifies,

Paul was by no means the only crusading missionary in the first generation. Though apostles were slow in leaving Jerusalem, it appears that they, too, became ambassadors of Christ to distant places. Peter likely preached in Rome. John and Philip evangelized across Asia Minor. If we can believe church tradition, Andrew and Bartholomew went to the Black Sea area; Thaddeus preached in Persia; Matthew and Matthias got to Ethiopia; James reached Egypt; and Thomas is thought to have traveled as far as India. We dare not overlook also, the thousands of nameless Christians who faithfully bore their witness for Christ as they went about their business across the civilized world.<sup>56</sup>

Had it not been for the intervention of Paul and Barnabas, the momentum of church growth to the non-Jewish world would have been hampered by the Judaizers. In Acts 15, the Council of Jerusalem took place with regard to the circumcision issue. Some Judean believers went to Antioch, teaching the believers that “unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved” (v. 1). Paul and Barnabas were appointed to go to Jerusalem to settle the matter with the other believers once and for all.

After much discussion, Peter pointed out that God had purified and accepted the Gentiles, just as he had the Jews. Peter said, “God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:8-9). Barnabas and Paul gave the supporting statements as they testified “about the miraculous signs and wonders God has done among the Gentiles through them” (v. 12). James, the half-brother of Jesus gave the concluding remarks: “It is my judgment, therefore, that we

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 34.

should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God” (v. 19).

The church grew by leaps and bounds because the early believers were driven out of their comfort zone. Their dispersion, due to severe persecution, was a blessing in disguise for the expansion of the gospel. As they were scattered abroad, they ultimately complied to Jesus’ command to go into all the world. Toughened by adversities, and emboldened by the Holy Spirit, the early Christians preached the good news of salvation message wherever they went.

Kane asserts that it was the power of the Holy Spirit that convicted and converted the heathens from their paganistic beliefs and sinful lifestyle. He writes, “Conversion is a very costly business in many parts of the mission field. The price is more than most people are prepared to pay. Only the power of the Holy Spirit can move the heart of a Hindu, or a Buddhist, or a Muslim to openly acknowledge Christ as Savior and Lord.”<sup>57</sup>

One would do well to not totally rely on man’s wisdom and power, but to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit to convict and convert people. Paul was sensible enough not to have confidence in his own ability and personal religious and academic credentials (Phil 3:4-11). He recognized that “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph 6:12).

### **The Sinfulness of Mankind**

The fourth theological rationale of cross-cultural evangelism is that all people are basically helplessly and hopelessly sinful. They are in need of a Savior and salvation no matter what racial, cultural, and religious background they have. All the righteousness and good works mankind has and could have done, and are proud of, do not measure up

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<sup>57</sup>Kane, *Christian Mission in Biblical Perspectives*, 136-38.

to the standard of God's holiness and requirement for salvation. Paul writes, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23). Kane further notes,

The Scriptures clearly teach that mankind is alienated from God (Eph 4:18), hostile to God (Rom 5:10), and under the wrath of God (John 3:36). The sinner's only hope is to turn from his wicked way, repent, and believe the gospel. There is no other hope held out to him. He has no other option. It is, therefore, imperative for him to hear and understand the gospel.<sup>58</sup>

Paul's passion and boldness of preaching the gospel in whatever circumstances he was in, was motivated by the fact that Christ is sinful man's only hope. He writes, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jews, then for the Gentiles" (Rom 1:16). Paul was fully convinced that all are sinners who need to hear, understand, and believe the gospel to be saved.

People need salvation because of their sinfulness which has incapacitated and therefore, deprived them of the power to save themselves. Theologians use the term "total depravity" to describe man's utter inability to save himself. Robert Reymond points out,

Man, in his raw, natural state as he comes from the womb is *morally and spiritually corrupt in disposition and character*. Every part of his being—his mind, his will, his emotions, his affections, his conscience, his body—has been affected by sin. His understanding is darkened, his mind is at enmity with God, his will to act is slave to his darkened understanding and rebellious mind, his heart is corrupt, his emotions are perverted, his affections naturally gravitate to that which is evil and ungodly, his conscience is untrustworthy, and his body is subject to mortality.<sup>59</sup>

Reymond depicts man's dilemma as being totally helpless to work for his own salvation. He further notes, "Man in his natural state *is incapable of the understanding, the affections, and the will to act* to respond to the gospel of grace, to appreciate the things of the Spirit, to do those things which are well-pleasing in God's sight, and to love God."<sup>60</sup>

Ryrie further explains,

All aspects of man's being are corrupt. 'By nature' we are children of wrath—that

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 151.

<sup>59</sup>Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 450.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 454.

is, objects of wrath (Eph 2:3). By actions we are also objects of God's wrath. Every facet of man's being is affected by this sin nature. (1) His intellect is blinded (2 Cor 4:4). His mind is reprobate or disapproved (Rom 1:28). His understanding is darkened, separated from the life of God (Eph 4:18). (2) His emotions are degraded and defiled (Rom 1:21, 24, 26; Titus 1:15). (3) His will is enslaved to sin and therefore stands in opposition to God (Rom 6:20; 7:20). Relative goodness exists in people. They can do good works which are appreciated by others. But nothing that anyone can do will gain salvation, merit, or favor in the sight of a holy God.<sup>61</sup>

The prophet aptly describe mankind: "Like sheep, [who] have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way" (Isa 53:6). Miles states,

The apostolic church recognized that all persons were lost and needed the Savior. That was true of the Jews gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:5ff.); of Samaritans, or half-Jews (Acts 8:5); of an Ethiopian God-fearer (Acts 8:26ff.); of a Roman centurion (Acts 10:1-48); and of pagan intellectuals (Acts 17:16ff.) Paul believed that his Jewish kinsmen were lost and his heart's desire was that they might be saved. (Rom 9:1-3; 10:1)<sup>62</sup>

Miles elaborates further, "Lostness always means separation, isolation, and alienation. To be lost means to be separated from one's owner, to fail in one's purpose, to be cut off from true existence. Every lost person is as lost as the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son (Luke 15:1-32)."<sup>63</sup>

It is not uncommon for believers to fall into the temptation of believing that part of their responsibilities as Christ's witnesses is to convince and convict man of their sinfulness. This can lead to their own frustration and unnecessary guilt of failure and seeming spiritual immaturity. The Scriptures tells, however, that it is the Holy Spirit's job to do the convincing (John 16:8-11). Miles says, "The Spirit's role is to convince and convict. When persons are cut to the heart through Holy Spirit powered witnessing, then they will cry out as did the outsiders at Pentecost: 'What shall we do?'"<sup>64</sup>

In his letter to the believers in Corinth, Paul was very explicit with his attitude of

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<sup>61</sup>Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 219.

<sup>62</sup>Miles, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 138.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, 203.

humility and spiritual sensibility to have total dependence on the power of the Spirit of God:

I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. (1 Cor 2:1-5)

As he expounds on Paul's letter to the Corinthians, Wiersbe explains,

It was not his experience or ability that gave his ministry its power; it was the work of the Spirit of God. His preaching was a 'demonstration,' not a 'performance.' The Holy Spirit used Paul's preaching to change lives, and that was all the proof Paul needed that his message was from God. Wicked sinners were transformed by the power of God! (1 Cor 6:9-11)

Rampant secularism and relativism, brought about by liberal media and paganistic lifestyle and culture of the unbelieving world, infiltrated the church and the lifestyle of many believers. The result is, their passion for the lost had been sedated as they unknowingly yielded to subtle satanic temptation of materialism and liberalism without realizing it. In his exposition of man's sin and lostness, Stephen Tong profoundly articulates the horrible state and destiny of sinful man:

Man is lost from the source of truth, righteousness, love, and eternal blessings. The result of sin is more than terrifying. The judgment of God will be upon sinners; then will follow the second death, which the Bible calls hell where love and truth, and the presence and holiness of God are eternally withdrawn.

Believers and evangelicals all over the world need to reaffirm the seriousness of the fact and the effect of sin, as it is taught in the Bible. This affirmation is crucial in this post-modern era, both theologically and socio-politically. We also need deep conviction for the need of sinners for salvation, and fervent affection to love sinners. Let us faithfully proclaim the gospel to the sinful world.<sup>65</sup>

## Conclusion

I spent my last eleven years in the Philippines in the vast city of metropolitan Manila in the 1970s. Most of the people there came from the different parts of the Philippines with their own dialects and peculiar regional cultures. It was my first lengthy exposure to different kind of Filipinos. As one coming from the north, I had to set aside

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<sup>65</sup>Stephen Tong, "Sin and Lostness," in *Proclaims Christ Until He Comes*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis: World Wide, 1990), 165-69.



my own Ilocano regional dialect and culture, as I tried to understand other people and minister to them. When I migrated to Hawaii in December of 1981, I was further exposed to different kinds of people, this time, those from other countries. Little did I realize then that my experience in Manila was a preparation for a greater cross-cultural ministry. God led me to establish and serve as pastor of a Filipino-American congregation in the city of Mililani, Hawaii in the early 1990s. In the early 2000s, the International Bible Church was born in Jonesboro, Georgia composed of Filipinos, Caucasians, and African Americans. God has indeed put me in a cross-cultural ministry setting to reach out to different people with the gospel in a multi-cultural community.

As many urban areas in America are becoming more culturally diverse, one cannot avoid being involved in a cross-cultural ministry. Stetzer and Putman claim,

In the 90s, while the general U.S. population grew by 6 percent, Asians grew by 107 percent. Hispanic grew by 53 percent. Native Americans grew by 38 percent. Twenty-five of the largest U.S. cities are now majority ethnic. Ethnics make up 61 percent of Chicago, 73 percent of New York, and 78 percent of Los Angeles. There are more Filipinos and Armenians in Los Angeles than in any city in the world. There are more Cubans in Miami than in Havana.<sup>66</sup>

Stetzer and Putman further stress the necessity and urgency of reaching out to different ethnic groups in America by quoting Russell Begaye, cofounder of Ethnic America, who asserts, “We need to research the demographic, lifestyles and interests of the group we want to reach. We need to go among the people, to make our message culturally relevant.”<sup>67</sup> God’s messengers need to squarely face the challenge of being willing to culturally adjust themselves in order to be engaged in a cross-cultural ministry. This must happen if the growing diverse American society is ever to be channeled to the Kingdom of God. We can then enjoy his promised blessing through faith in Jesus Christ.

As part of his discussion about the church-mission issue, Orlando Costas

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<sup>66</sup>Stetzer and Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code*, 11-12.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

quotes Horace L. Fenton, who writes, “Foreignness is an increasing liability in the work of the Lord, and our allegiance to the Great Commission may prove to be only lip service unless missions learn how to become more thoroughly rooted in the culture which they seek to serve.”<sup>68</sup> He adds that it is not simply a matter of understanding who they are and of helping them comprehend what the message concerns. Instead, Costas further explains, “It is rather a question of following Christ’s missionary strategy; he became flesh, dwelt among men, and met people at the point of their greatest need. It is a matter of letting the gospel take roots in the life, history, and culture of those whom we aim to evangelize.”<sup>69</sup>

Today, the American society is infested with religious pluralism and syncretism. With the influx of immigrants from all over the world, comes a myriad of religions, as well as their various peculiar cultures. As discussed previously, these immigrants are proud of their religious and cultural heritage. They may now be in a foreign land, but they stubbornly hang on to their religions and cultures. The challenge is to follow the example of the apostle Paul: “I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means, I might save some” (1 Cor 9:22).

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<sup>68</sup>Orlando E. Costas, *The Church and Its Mission: A Shattering Critique from the Third World* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1977), 162-63.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, 163.

CHAPTER 3  
THEORETICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS  
OF CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

God does not vary from culture to culture. However, culture shapes and influences the way people communicate about and with God among themselves. Biblical principles are universal, but when applied in a specific culture, they reflect the value and priorities of that society. Marvin K. Mayers clarifies,

Society is the name applied to interpersonal interaction or interrelationships. It refers to the social order, the social system within which individuals or groups interrelate. Culture results from the carrying out of interpersonal and intergroup relations. Culture thus stands as the identifying mark of the society. This involves the way people think, live, and do things within the totality of the social system.<sup>1</sup>

Understanding of, and adjustment to the cultural background of the hearers then, determine the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication of the gospel message.

**Theoretical Foundations of Cross-  
Cultural Communication**

Guiding principles to enhance the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication need to be understood and utilized. Ignorance or indifference will not only cause ineffectiveness but it could ruin the whole purpose of cross-cultural communication. The ramifications of such negligence could reach and affect others who are totally unaware and innocent from such careless action.

**The Culture of the People**

The role of culture is to serve as the basis to contextualization. The culture of

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<sup>1</sup>Marvin K. Mayers, *Christianity Confronts Culture: A Strategy For Crosscultural Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 122.

the people must be the frame of reference in dealing with them. Believers must understand and interpret their tradition and way of life; their action, reaction, and interaction with other people according to their own culture. The message that Christians are trying to impart, deliver, and communicate to them must be presented and explained according to their own culture if it is to be well understood, accepted, and appropriated.

Culture is the embodiment of the totality of people's lifestyle handed down by relatives and further enriched by the society where they lived. Paul H. Hiebert defines culture as the "integrated systems of ideas, feelings, and values and their associated patterns of behavior and products shared by a group of people who organize and regulate what they think, feel, and do."<sup>2</sup> Everett Rogers and Thomas Steinfatt define culture:

The total way of life of a people, composed of their learned and shared behavior patterns, values, norms, and material objects. Culture is stored in individual human beings, in the form of their beliefs, attitudes, and values. Culture influences the perceptions and behaviors of the individuals . . . through beliefs, values, and norms.<sup>3</sup>

Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers point out that personal culture "is the product of the combination of (1) the personal cultural heritage acquired through socialization with our parents, (2) the broader cultural heritage acquired through enculturation and feedback from the community, and (3) our act of accepting or rejecting those forces."<sup>4</sup>

David Hesselgrave seems to corroborate with Lingenfelter and Mayer's description of culture: "the word *culture* is a very inclusive term. It takes into account linguistic, political, economic, social, psychological, religious, national, racial, and still

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<sup>2</sup>Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 30.

<sup>3</sup>Everett M. Rogers and Thomas M. Steinfatt, *Intercultural Communication* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 1999), 79-82.

<sup>4</sup>Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 20.

other differences.”<sup>5</sup> It is imperative that a servant of God has a working knowledge and familiarity of the particular culture on which they serve. This information would greatly equip him to do a meaningful and effective contextualization and communication of God’s word.

Due to modern transportation and technological progress, gone are the years when it takes days and months to travel and transport people and materials to other countries. Hesselgrave notes, however, that this progress does not necessarily enhance faster and efficient communication with other people of different cultures:

As our technology advances and enables us to cross geographical and national boundaries with singular ease and increasing frequency, we may forget that *it is the cultural barriers that are the most formidable*. The gap between our technological advances and our communication skills is perhaps one of the most challenging aspects of modern civilization.<sup>6</sup>

A speaker who is only concerned with his message and his own equipment for communication without due regard to the listeners’ culture is bound to fail to communicate his message. People listen to and try to understand the message they hear according to their own culture.

Hesselgrave identifies this cross-cultural communication strategy as “contextualization”:

Contextualization can be thought of as the attempt to communicate the message of the person, works, word, and will of God in a way that is faithful to God’s revelation, especially as it is put forth in the teachings of the Holy Scripture, and that it is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts. The missionary task is to attempt to understand/interpret the message intended by the Holy Spirit and human authors of the biblical text and then to communicate that message in a way that is meaningful and persuasive to respondents *in the context of their culture*.<sup>7</sup>

The objective is to help people understand the message according to their own culture

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<sup>5</sup>David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 99.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 96.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 109-43.

without compromising the essence of the message. As a result, the listeners are able to apply the message in their own cultural setting and not according to the cultural background of the speaker.

### **The History of the People**

The role of people's history is to give others background of the people that have molded their total being and culture, language, traditions, behavior, and social interaction. History includes people of different races who influenced them through the years, as well as circumstances of life, like war, famine, foreign domination, and natural or man-made calamities. Hiebert and Meneses claim,

Anthropology and sociology help us study people's social and cultural context by living with people, observing them, and listening to what they say. Psychology helps us examine people's personal context—their deep emotions and inner conflicts. History gives us insight into the events that have shaped their present.<sup>8</sup>

The key to successful communication with people of other culture requires more than knowing their culture. It is also to know their historical background; who they are as persons with the ultimate objective of identifying oneself with them and accepting them as they are. Hiebert and Meneses write, “We must make the gospel known not to humans in general, but to real people who live in particular times and places in history.”<sup>9</sup> David C. McCullough attests to this and writes, “History is a guide to navigation in perilous times. History is who we are and why we are the way we are.”<sup>10</sup>

Peter N. Stearns claims,

History helps us understand people and societies. [It] offers a storehouse of information about how people and societies behave. It offers the only extensive evidential base for the contemplation and analysis of how societies function, and

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<sup>8</sup>Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise H. Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 369.

<sup>9</sup>Hiebert and Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry*, 369.

<sup>10</sup>Quote Idea, “David C. McCullough Quotes” [on-line]; accessed 11 May 2012; available from [www.quoteidea.com/authors/david-c-mccullough-quotes.html](http://www.quoteidea.com/authors/david-c-mccullough-quotes.html); Internet.

people need to have some sense of how societies function simply to run their own lives.<sup>11</sup>

The history of people gives understanding of the origin and basis of their culture. Stearns further notes, “History helps us understand change and how the society we live in came to be. The past causes the present, and so the future.”<sup>12</sup>

Knowledge of people’s history enables one to know where the people are, and why. It also serves as a guide to navigate cross-cultural interaction with people. William Lund points out, “We study the past to understand the present; we understand the present to guide the future.”<sup>13</sup>

A sound grasp of history is fundamental when seeking to understand the contemporary world. It teaches about heritage, enlightens and informs about past struggles, and can help shed light on current events. Indeed, by studying and reflecting on the actions of historical groups or individuals, one may be able to gain knowledge about what course of action to pursue in the present.<sup>14</sup>

Jesus referred his Jewish audience back to their history as he tried to contextualize his message (Mark 2:25-28; Luke 4:25-27; 6:23; 13:1-5). Peter, Stephen, and Paul, in the same manner, utilized their knowledge of the history of their audience. When they dealt with Jewish audiences, they reviewed with them the history of their ancestors (Acts 3:24-25; 7:1-53; 13:16-22). They used the history of the people to build rapport and earn the right to be heard.

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<sup>11</sup>Peter N. Stearns, “Why Study History?” American Historical Association [on-line]; accessed 11 May 2012; available from [www.historians.org/pubs/free/WhyStudyHistory.html](http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/WhyStudyHistory.html); Internet.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>William Lund, “World History” [on-line]; accessed 11 May 2012; available from <https://sites.google.com/site/mrboyak/worldhistory>; Internet.

<sup>14</sup>Permanent Culture Now, “Introduction to History” [on-line]; accessed 11 May 2012; available from [www.permanentculturenow.com/introduction-to-history.html](http://www.permanentculturenow.com/introduction-to-history.html); Internet.

## **The Language of the People**

The third essential thing to know is the cultural linguistic forms and ways of expressing their ideas. The importance of language commonly spoken and understood among certain group of people cannot be underestimated. The role of language is to foster mutual understanding, whereby harmony, cooperation, and peaceful co-existence can be attained. It is also an important element needed to have a successful and fruitful cross-cultural communication.

The problem lies, however, in having different interpretations of what is said and heard. Unnecessary misunderstandings and conflicts happen, wars are fought, and millions of lives and properties are lost as a result. Others have eternal consequences, such as in the temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden. Satan succeeded in twisting God's word to deceive Eve. As a result, Eve fell into sin, followed by Adam, and the whole of mankind suffers to this day.

When languages are properly understood as intended, the outcome is good results. This is true with what occurred on the Day of Pentecost. The original believers spoke in different languages as they were enabled by the Holy Spirit. People from surrounding countries who came to Jerusalem understood what they were saying. Others began to mock, but Peter stood up and began to preach the word of God. As a result, thousands were converted that day (Acts 2).

Understanding people in what they are trying to communicate requires some general knowledge of their culture. This is because culture is embedded in the spoken language. This is why Asians who may be proficient in English sometimes find themselves at a loss when talking to Anglos because of cultural gap. People who learned the English language in their own countries speak English according to their respective cultures. This demonstrates the necessity of knowing one's culture for effective communication.

Kenneth Burke explains that "you persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your



ways with his.”<sup>15</sup> Mayers clarifies his view, however, that “acceptance of a person does not imply acceptance into one’s life of all that the other person does, says, or believes. One does not have to believe the way another person does to accept him as a person; nor does he has to approve of what the other person believes to accept him as he is.”<sup>16</sup> An effective missionary has to learn to accept other people without necessarily accepting their beliefs and lifestyle, and still succeed to develop a good relationship with them. The ultimate objective is to reach out to people of different languages with the contextualized presentation of the gospel message. This is in obedience to the Great Commission to “go and make disciples of all nations” that culminates on the last days when “a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language” unite their voices as they worship the Lamb of God (Rev 7:9-10).

### **Sociological Foundations of Cross-Cultural Communication**

Communication in a particular society is always done according to the cultural context of the people. An effective and fruitful cross-cultural communication of the gospel requires some degree of knowledge of several elements that make a group of people functions as a society. Such knowledge should be coupled with a desire to adjust and live within the culture. There is no substitute in learning by experiencing what one knows, let alone, to earn the rights to be heard, to be understood, and to have people respond.

#### **The Society of the People**

Mayers defines society as the “interpersonal interaction or interrelationships. It refers to the social order, the social system within which individuals or groups

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<sup>15</sup>Kenneth Burke, *Grammar of Motives and a Rhetoric of Motives* (Cleveland: World Meridian, 1962), 579.

<sup>16</sup>Mayers, *Christianity Confronts Culture*, 48-49.

interrelate.”<sup>17</sup> It is essential to understand the patterns of relationship and behavior that guide and govern interaction between individuals and groups of people. This greatly enhances clear cross-cultural communication.

The success of cross-cultural communication is also determined by knowing what part of the social strata the respondents belong, which produces a mutual understanding. A universal pattern of social structures is composed of the upper, middle, and lower classes. In his description of a social structure, Mayers points out,

Society can be conceived of as a hierarchy of groups, with the lowest level of groups being the simplest and least complex, and the largest level or highest level being the most all-inclusive. Societies [also] group people in many ways: age groups; sex groups; interest groups—religious, social, economic, and political; status groups; and kin groups.<sup>18</sup>

Then there are those who classify people according to their geographical locations: people from the village, countryside, rural areas; town, or city. The objective is to adjust your communication style according to one’s status in the community or society.

In his attempt to better understand social structures, Hesselgrave mentions different kinds of respondents in relation to the other members of their community:

[The first respondents are the] *Marginals* who stand on the fringe of their society without enjoying the privileges of acceptance as full members. . . . [The second respondents are the] *influential individuals* who are especially important to communication. These individuals have an important role in the processes of informing the other members of society, instituting opinion and behavior change, and reinforcing group values and norms. . . . [The third respondents are the] *good speakers* or orators . . . who can speak persuasively. . . . [The fourth respondents are] the *sponsors* . . . they aid the flow of communication . . . or lending credibility to the messenger and his message. [The fifth are] the *mediator* who stands between the missionary and his respondents. The mediator aids communication by actually delivering or interpreting the missionary’s motive and message.<sup>19</sup>

A missionary does well in his ministry to know these respondents and have a good relationship with them so that he could utilize them according to their social status for the

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 122.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 106-34.

<sup>19</sup>Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*, 464-71.

sake of the advancement of the preaching of the gospel. This is especially true among collectivistic people who tend to work out their business transactions through intermediaries who are well-known and influential to others.

### **The Hierarchy of the People**

Every society has its own hierarchy that determines mutual interaction. This hierarchy is the controlling factor as to how close their relationship should be among themselves. Patty Lane claims that in a given culture there are two ways authority is defined and perceived. The first one is “egalitarian and informal” culture where “all persons have equal value and equal rights . . . culture may be egalitarian in its values and at the same time not treat each individual as equal.”<sup>20</sup>

The second factor is “hierarchical and formal” culture:

Unequal treatment of persons is not only accepted but also expected and considered appropriate. While every culture has its own protocol for certain occasions, hierarchical cultures rigidly adhere to their complex societal structures. For the individual member of a hierarchical society, failure to follow these cultural rules can bring severe consequences.<sup>21</sup>

Plinio Correa de Oliveira claims, “The American society is hierarchical. It could not be otherwise, since the existence of elites is not only a natural occurrence in every organized social body, but constitutes an element essential to its proper functioning.”<sup>22</sup> The United States, however, is becoming more of an informal (egalitarian) culture. Its informal culture has gradually permeated the different spectrum of society as in what would be the appropriate attire on a given occasion or in a given location. People of other cultures have also experienced this cultural shift. One would

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<sup>20</sup>Patty Lane, *Crossing Cultures* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002), 73.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Plinio Correa de Oliveira, “Nobility and Analogous Traditional Elites,” *The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property* [on-line]; accessed 14 May 2012; available from [www.nobility.org/America-hierarchy.html](http://www.nobility.org/America-hierarchy.html); Internet.

therefore do well to be cautious with what the appropriate behavior and attire would be as they get adjusted to other cultures. This has a ramification, as well, of which one should be aware when approaching someone for assistance to conduct a program, a ministry, or an evangelistic endeavor. In relation to this, Lane writes,

When working with congregations or communities, it is very important to understand the degree to which they are hierarchical. If the hierarchy is ignored, serious problems in relationships may arise, for example, a culture's beliefs about hierarchy influence who has status and why. Most hierarchical cultures adhere to some degree to *ascribed status* or status given to one by virtue of position in life. This would include gender, age, caste, tribe, family, wealth, and so on.<sup>23</sup>

As one has a cross-cultural breakthrough with the gospel message to different ethnic groups, he would do well to heed Oliveira's admonition:

It is impossible to study with intelligence and insight the basic problems of contemporary American society and the psychic life of its members without giving full consideration to the several hierarchies which sort people, their behavior, and the objects of our culture into higher and lower social statuses. They permeate every aspect of the social life of this country.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Religion of the People**

It would be of great help for the gospel communicator to have a working knowledge of the religious background of the people as he tries to find common ground, or to contextualize his message. Such knowledge would help him as well, to build rapport and to have the right to be heard. He, then, can engage himself in a friendly discussion about each other's faith without offending or aggravating his listener. Hiebert cites some concerns that an evangelist needs to be ready with, like "ancestor worship, polygamy, witchcraft, spirits, and magic; those in India are asked about the caste system, dowry, and the evil eye; and those in China must deal with parental authority, clan responsibilities, and the ethics of Confucianism."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Lane, *Crossing Cultures*, 77.

<sup>24</sup>De Oliveira, "Nobility and Analogous Traditional Elites."

<sup>25</sup>Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 210-11.

In the Philippines, where people give high regard to their parents, the question of “who is more important the mother or the son?” referring to the Virgin Mary and Jesus, has always been one of the hot issues believers have to deal with as they share the gospel among the Roman Catholics. Another aggressive home-grown cult is the *Iglesia ni Cristo* (Church of Christ) which claims that their religion is the way to heaven. They further claim that membership to their religion takes one to heaven. These religions can be lovingly but firmly refuted in that “salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

The challenge has always been how to contextualize the message for the sake of communication and eventual conversion of the listener without compromising the essence of the gospel. Hiebert notes that in spite of the teachings of the major religions like Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, that are diametrically opposite to Christianity, one would do well to capitalize on the commonality of human beings:

There are fundamental similarities underlying all cultures because they are rooted in the common humanity and shared experiences of all people. All people have bodies that function in the same ways. All experience birth, life, and death; joy, sadness, and pain; drives, fears, and needs. All create categories, languages, and cultures. And all have sinned and need salvation.<sup>26</sup>

These human similarities are excellent launching pads to share the gospel message as it meets people’s felt needs, and foremost, their spiritual needs. In addition to these common human traits, a missionary has to discern in advance any of their teachings that have some similarities with the Christian faith and use them to explain the gospel message. Hiebert writes,

We have to see common themes or redemptive analogies in other religions that can be used to communicate the gospel to the people. We must recognize the highest insights in other religions and not take cheap shots by comparing their worst with the best of Christianity. We must listen with respectful patience to the criticisms they have of Christian thought and practice.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 218.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 221-22.

In the end, however, one must gently and tactfully point out the uniqueness and efficacy of the gospel message. Hierbert underscores the fact that

all people of all religions claim that their gods can heal them and raise them from the dead. Nor are the ideas of sin, sacrifice, forgiveness, and salvation only Christian. The uniqueness of Christianity is found in the biblical message of God's redemption of sinners through Jesus Christ.<sup>28</sup>

In him alone can there be assurance of salvation for eternal life.

### **Contextualized Cross-Cultural Communication**

A remarkable degree of blending among the different cultural and ethnic groups has occurred in the United States. This trend is especially present in big cities like metropolitan Atlanta, where large concentrations of different ethnic groups reside.

Various groups have adjusted to and became a part of the American society. At the same time, they have managed to retain much of their original identity and culture and thereby have made unintentional, modifying contributions to the total society.

Sherwood Lingenfelter shares his cross-cultural experience among the Yapese in the Pacific island of Yap, almost a thousand miles away from the Philippines. When he and his family moved there to learn the language and culture, he preferred to build his house and live by the seashore. His guide gently advised him that the best place would be "in the midst of several houses where children littered their yards with empty cans and the voices and activities of mothers and children created a cacophony of sound from morning until night."<sup>29</sup> In the same manner, Jesus came to earth and adjusted himself to various people of different cultures as he lived among and ministered to them (Matt 15:21-28; John 1:14; 4:4-26).

Learning the culture of other people requires not only hearing and reading about their culture. It is identifying with them, experiencing and living their culture. This

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 221.

<sup>29</sup>Lingenfelter and Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, 15.

knowledge and these experiences empower one to have an effective and greater impact of contextualized cross-cultural communication and ministry. Lingenfelter points out that “becoming incarnate in another culture will be a trial by fire, a test of inner strength, of personal faith and most of all a test of the veracity of one’s love.”<sup>30</sup> I have strived to do the same as I ministers cross-culturally. The remainder of this chapter focuses on understanding the cultural background of the three racial components of the members of International Bible Church.

### **The Filipino People**

The Filipino-American community is comprised primarily of immigrants. In 2004, 66 percent of Filipinos in the United States were immigrants and 34 percent were born in the United States. Nevertheless, 76 percent of Filipino-Americans are US citizens. As of 2004, 42 percent of foreign-born Filipinos were naturalized US citizens. While US-born Filipinos made up a minority of the Filipino population, approximately 20 percent of US-born Filipinos were of third-generation status or more—reflecting the loss of Filipino history in the United States.<sup>31</sup> Understanding these people is, therefore, imperative for having a more effective cross-cultural evangelistic ministry.

**Their history.** The Philippines is an archipelago of over 7,000 islands lying about five hundred miles off the southeast coast of Asia. The Philippines’ aboriginal inhabitants arrived from the Asian mainland around 25,000 B.C. They were followed by waves of Indonesian and Malayan settlers from 3000 B.C. onward. By the fourteenth century A.D., extensive trade was being conducted with India, Indonesia, China, and Japan.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Pearl of the Orient Seas, “History of the Philippines” [on-line]; accessed 8 July 2011; Available from [http://www.etravelpilipinas.com/about\\_philippines/html](http://www.etravelpilipinas.com/about_philippines/html); Internet.

Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese navigator in the service of Spain, explored the Philippines in 1521. Spain retained possession of the islands for 350 years. The Philippines was later ceded to the US in 1899 after the American-Spanish War. On December 8, 1941, the islands were invaded by Japanese troops. The Filipinos fought alongside with the Americans and defeated the Japanese in 1945. On July 4, 1946, independence was finally granted to the Philippines and they became Asia's first real democracy. The United States maintained a military presence until 1992.

In 1972, President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law and ruled by decree, effectively controlling all oppositions. During his regime, graft and corruption increased, and the standard of living for peasants did not improve.<sup>33</sup> The peaceful People's Power revolution drove Marcos from power in 1986. His elected rival, Corazon Aquino, took office and tried to reform the government and the economy. Aquino's successor, Fidel V. Ramos, inherited a weak and inefficient system and was plagued by natural disasters. Ramos successfully met many challenges, allowing candidates loyal to him to win.<sup>34</sup>

James Ciment gives insight into the settlement patterns of Filipinos. Prior to America's seizure of the Philippines at the end of the nineteenth century, few Filipinos immigrated to the United States. The Filipinos were also recruited to work in the agricultural fields and canneries of California and other West Coast states beginning in the early 1900s.<sup>35</sup>

**Their culture.** The Filipino is basically of Malay stock with a sprinkling of Chinese, American, Spanish, and Arab blood. The Philippines is the twelfth most

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>James Ciment, "The Filipino American Experience: History and Culture," in *Asian American History and Culture: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Huping Ling and Allan Austin (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2010), 1:251.



populous country in the world with a population of 101.8 million as of 2011.<sup>36</sup> The Filipino people evolved from a unique blend of East and West, both in appearance and culture because of a long history of Western colonial rule, interspersed with the visits of merchants and traders. The Filipino character is actually an amalgam of all of these cultures.<sup>37</sup> The spirit of kinship and camaraderie that Filipinos are famous for is taken from Malay forefathers. The close family relationship is inherited from the Chinese. Piousness comes from the Spaniards who introduced Roman Catholicism. Filipinos are emotional and passionate about life that seems to be more Latin than Asian.<sup>38</sup>

The tendency of the Filipinos to enjoy life emotionally and passionately is demonstrated with their attitude toward time and event. Mayers observes, “A Filipino is more concerned with the event itself and what is going on than he is with the time the event begins and end.”<sup>39</sup> Related to their being event-oriented is their tendency to develop and maintain relationships, even at the expense of sacrificing their task.

Duane Elmer observes that throughout Latin America, Africa, much of Asia and parts of western and eastern Europe people have

a higher premium on nurturing relationships—talking, relating, interacting discussing and just being together. Goals and schedules are attended to after a good conversation. Socializing lays the foundation for achieving goals together. The goal is not forgotten, it just does not dictate priorities.<sup>40</sup>

Established relationships among the Filipinos reduce resistance and expedite the

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<sup>36</sup>Nation Master, “People Statistics” [on-line]; accessed 3 April 2012; Available from <http://www.nationmaster.com/html>; Internet.

<sup>37</sup>Gillian Moore, *Library of Nations: Southeast Asia* (Madrid: Time-Life, 1987), 101.

<sup>38</sup>Learn In Asia, “History and People of the Philippines” [on-line]; accessed 8 July 2011; available from [http://www.learn-inasia.com/philippines\\_people\\_history.html](http://www.learn-inasia.com/philippines_people_history.html); Internet.

<sup>39</sup>Mayers, *Christianity Confronts Culture*, 161-62.

<sup>40</sup>Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Connections* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 129.

achievement of the goal. This is especially true with the leader of a family, a village, or a tribal group. Elmer comments, “When sharing Christ among Asian people, I was constantly told that they could not make a decision to follow Christ without asking a parent, uncle, aunt or all three.”<sup>41</sup>

The Filipino characteristic of being relational is attributed to having more of an emphasis on collectivism, rather than on individualism. The trait of collectivism contributes to fruitful evangelism. Elmer points out that in “collectivistic societies, there are often group conversions—a whole village, having heard of Christ’s love for them, will confess their faith in Christ as a collective unit.”<sup>42</sup> This implies the necessity to spend time to establish relationships especially among the leaders before one plunges into intensive evangelism.

As with other Asian-American groups, strong hierarchies exist within traditional Filipino-American households, with parents being accorded great authority and respect. Traditional Filipino households place great emphasis on the authority of the father and husband. This authority can be tempered by the woman’s role as head of internal household affairs. Younger siblings are often required to obey their older brothers and sisters. At the same time, the eldest siblings are usually expected to be the primary caregivers to aging parents.<sup>43</sup>

**Their religion.** The religious composition of the Philippines remains predominantly Catholic. Approximately 82 percent of the population is Roman Catholic.<sup>44</sup> The Philippines is known as the only Christian country in East Asia. About 66

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 138.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 139.

<sup>43</sup>Ciment, “The Filipino American Experience,” 253-54.

<sup>44</sup>Country Studies, “Religion” [on-line]; accessed 3 April 2012; available from <http://www.countrystudies.us/Philippines/45.html>; Internet.

percent of the population is nominal or committed Roman Catholics and about 7 percent of the population is Protestant. However, much of the Christianity is mixed with animism, creating folk Christianity. The first Filipinos practiced animistic religions. Since there are over seven thousand islands, there is a great diversity of animistic beliefs and practices, just as there are many tribal groups and languages. Waves of immigrants introduced Hinduism and Islam, and later Christianity.

When the Spaniards conquered the Philippines in the sixteenth century, Roman Catholic missionaries were among the early settlers. They began teaching and converting almost immediately, but allowed existing Filipino culture to coexist with Christian belief and church teachings. This understanding produced the Folk Catholicism which prevails in the Philippines. That is, the coexistence of animism and Catholicism. Filipinos who believe in this do not usually perceive inconsistencies between the two.<sup>45</sup>

Upon immigrating to the United States, Filipinos find that religion plays an important role in sustaining the traditional values and customs of their home country. Values such as morality, community, and hospitality are integral to Filipino identity. Religion provides the means to justify and instill those same values among immigrant Filipino youth. Gender roles and notions of femininity as Filipino cultural values are intimately tied to notions about female purity and moral righteousness as symbolized by the obedient young women. Religion functions to control the sensuality of young Filipina-American women by justifying the cultural value of discouraging premarital sex.<sup>46</sup>

**Their language.** The Filipinos are divided geographically and culturally into regions, and each regional group is recognizable by distinct traits and dialects. There are

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<sup>45</sup>OMF, "Folk Christianity" [on-line]; accessed 3 April 2012; available from [www.omf.org.html](http://www.omf.org.html); Internet.

<sup>46</sup>Tara G. V. Munson, "The Filipino American Experience: History and Culture," in *Asian American History and Culture: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Huping Ling and Allan Austin (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2010), 1:301.

at least 170 languages and dialects in the Philippines; nearly all of it belongs to the Borneo-Philippines collection of the Malayo-Polynesian language branch of the Austronesian language family. For more than three centuries Spanish was the official language of the Philippines and became the *lingua franca* in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But after the occupation of the Americans in the 1940s and the obligation of using English, Spanish declined steadily.<sup>47</sup>

The 1987 Constitution declared Tagalog and English as official languages. Tagalog is spoken in Metropolitan Manila and city centers while English is extensively used as the *lingua franca* throughout the country. There are twelve major regional languages or dialects that are prevalent in specific provinces: Cebuano, Ilokano, Hiligaynon, Waray-Waray, Bikolano, Kapampangan, Pangasinan, Maranao, Maguindanao, Kinaray-a, Tausug and Chavacano.<sup>48</sup> English is primarily spoken in education, business, government, medicine, the legal system and various formal ceremonies. School textbooks for subjects, such as physics, biology, religion, calculus, and accounting are widely printed in English. American movies and TV programs are not subtitled but most local films and TV programs are produced in Pilipino.<sup>49</sup>

In the United States, Tagalog is the second most frequently spoken Asian language after Chinese. Tagalog features a significant number of Spanish words because of the Philippines' nearly four hundred years of Spanish colonial rule, but it includes Chinese and English influences as well. Despite the influence of other languages, the structure of Tagalog resembles that of the Malay languages.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Spain Exchange, "The Culture of Philippines" [on-line]; accessed 17 April 2012; available from <http://www.spainexchange.com/guide/PH-culture.html>; Internet.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Spain Exchange, "Languages Spoken In the Philippines" [on-line]; accessed 9 July 2012; available from <http://www.spainexchange.com/guide/PH.language.html>; Internet.

<sup>50</sup>Gabriela Oldham, "The Filipino American Experience: History and Culture,"

In more relaxed social circles, such as online chat rooms and Philippine-themed parties, a hybrid form of the language, dubbed “Taglish,” has surfaced. It is a mixture of Tagalog and English. Fluency in Tagalog is being lost naturally with younger generations in the United States, especially as new immigrants from the Philippines have been exposed to English as the country’s second national language. Nevertheless, the efforts of the consortium and the growing popularity of university courses attest to the keen desire of Filipino-Americans to preserve their home country’s linguistic heritage in the United States.

For many Filipinos, English is not the primary language spoken within the household, despite the prevalence of English as the language of instruction in the Philippine and American educational systems. In 2004, 66 percent of Filipino [American] households spoke a language other than English as their first language, whereas 34 percent of Filipino households spoke only English. Some 20 percent of Filipino households also reported speaking English less than “very well.” The language preference of Filipino households reflects the community’s immigrant background.<sup>51</sup>

The Filipinos are but one of the many ethnic groups that populate metro Atlanta. There are now more than 2.5 million Filipinos living in the United States based on the 2010 Census.<sup>52</sup> Filipinos are currently the second-largest Asian Pacific American ethnic group, following Chinese Americans.<sup>53</sup> Just like many other immigrants, Filipinos

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in *Asian American History and Culture: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Huping Ling and Allan Austin (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2010), 1:305.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Bing C. Branigin, “2010 Census: U.S. Filipino Population—2,555,923” [on-line]; accessed 15 June 2012; available from [www.scribd.com/58979501-US-201-Census-Filipinos-in-the-US.com](http://www.scribd.com/58979501-US-201-Census-Filipinos-in-the-US.com); Internet.

<sup>53</sup>T. Lachica Buenavista, “The Filipino American Experience: History and Culture,” in *Asian American History and Culture: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Huping Ling and Allan Austin (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2010), 1:269.

migrated to America looking for a better life. Many preferred the warmer weather and the friendliness of the people of the southeastern United States. Others moved from other states to metropolitan Atlanta especially at the turn of the twenty-first century for the same reasons. While many of Filipinos work in the city of Atlanta, they have established their residency in a much simpler and cheaper lifestyle in the suburban areas like in Henry County, south of Atlanta.

International Bible Church was born to reach out primarily to the Filipinos in this part of metropolitan Atlanta. Jaime Prieto asserts, “Filipino people respond more readily to the Christian witness of somebody they know and respect.”<sup>54</sup> This attitude demands someone who has a good reputation among the Filipino community with a tactful and loving approach to share the gospel. It requires identifying himself with them to get along without necessarily compromising his beliefs and personal testimony. Since most of the Filipinos are Roman Catholic, one would do well to be aware of Roman Catholic teaching not necessarily to refute it, but primarily to find common ground as a launching pad for sharing the gospel. The witness needs to have a basic knowledge of the Filipino historical (both personal and national), cultural, and religious background as discussed in this chapter.

My experiences of sharing the gospel to the people of my heritage, taught me to not be so aggressive and end up being offensive. I find it helpful to begin by establishing a relationship and friendship among the Filipinos, especially among their leaders or parents. This requires spending time and actively interacting with them by joining their public gatherings of celebrations, ceremonies, grieving, and even religious activities. In return, I invite them to non-threatening church activities, get to know them as they take time to know me, and always be ready and willing to help them, especially in

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<sup>54</sup>Jaime G. Prieto, *Filipino Church Planting Guide* (Alpharetta, GA: North American Mission Board, 2001), 10.

times of personal or family crisis. As the old adage says, “they really do not care how much you know [about the Bible and spiritual matters] until they know how much you care for them.”

Filipinos tend to be courteous at the expense of being honest. They try not to offend someone by giving a negative response. Christians would do well not to share the gospel with a preachy tone, or with a judgmental, holier-than-thou attitude. Instead, they witness in an informal, sincere conversational and non-confrontational manner. It is best to remember that a believer is not out to impress people with his knowledge of the Word of God or to win a debate, but simply to share the gospel.

### **The European Immigrants**

The famous confession of Martin Luther on April 18, 1521, brought about an unprecedented religious upheaval and began the Protestant Reformation. Along with reformation and revivals, came severe religious persecution, tortures, and martyrdom of many believers. Alvin Reid claims, “About one hundred years after the Protestant Reformation, many leading thinkers and writers in Western Europe began to debunk organized religion and exalt reason as the solution to all human problems.”<sup>55</sup> The reasons cited above contributed to the migration of many in pursuits of religious freedom.

**Their history.** The Pilgrims were one of many Protestant groups that emerged in northern Europe in the sixteenth century. More radical than many other Protestants, including the better-known and more numerous Puritans, the Pilgrims faced persistent persecution. In 1608, they fled to Holland only to return to England a decade later with the goal of winning a “patent” to establish a colony in North America.<sup>56</sup> By the end of the

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<sup>55</sup>Malcolm McDow and Alvin L. Reid, *Firefall* (Enumclaw, WA: Pleasant Word, 2002), 168.

<sup>56</sup>Peter B. Levy, ed. *100 Key Documents in American Democracy* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1994), 5.

sixteenth century, four main religious groups had evolved in England: Roman Catholics, Anglicans under the Church of England, Puritans or non-conformists, and Independents or Separatists who were totally against the establishment of a national church. The differences within these groups resulted in mutual hatred and intense persecutions. George Austin points out, “These adverse circumstances fueled migration to the New World. Had not these evils become unbearable to the weaker sects, hundreds would not so willingly have forsaken the land of their nativity and taken refuge across the sea.”<sup>57</sup>

The early 1600s saw the beginning of a great tide of emigration from Europe to North America. Spanning more than three centuries, this movement grew from a trickle of a few hundred English colonists to a flood of millions of newcomers. Impelled by powerful and diverse motivations, they built a new civilization on the northern part of the continent. Most European emigrants left their homelands to escape political oppression, seek the freedom to practice their religion, or for adventure.

The colonists’ first glimpse of the new land was a vista of dense woods. The settlers might not have survived had it not been for the help of friendly Native Americans, who taught them how to grow native plants. In addition, the vast, virgin forests, extending nearly 2,100 kilometers along the Eastern seaboard, proved a rich source of game and firewood. They also provided abundant raw materials used to build houses, furniture, ships, and profitable cargoes for export.

The whole length of shore provided innumerable inlets and harbors. Dense forests, the resistance of some Native American tribes and the formidable barrier of the Appalachian Mountains discouraged settlement beyond the coastal plain. For the first 100 years the colonists built their communities compactly along the coast.

**Their culture.** Americans are known for being time-oriented rather than event-

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<sup>57</sup>George L. Austin, *History of Massachusetts, from the Landing of the Pilgrims to the Present Time* (Boston: Rand and Avery, 1875), 1.



oriented. They are rigid in their schedule of activities and appointments. Lingenfelter observes,

They exhibit a high concern about schedule and punctuality within that schedule, and this concern is manifested in a variety of ways. American schools, businesses, and homes often have a clock in every room, and nearly everyone wears a watch. Each day is organized into time periods of specific length and the use of each period is carefully planned. Meetings, work periods, and breaks are set by the clock, and individuals carry personal calendars to schedule their activities.<sup>58</sup>

Americans were tied up to strict observance of time with the advent of the industrial revolution. Punctuality in schools and at work was rigidly imposed. This emphasis translated into more achievements, productions, profits, rewards, and recognition.

Elmer points out that in the American society “not being late was a virtue. . . . they arrived on time but at the cost of shouting and tense feelings.”<sup>59</sup> People are so concerned with time for more achievements even at the expense of compromising their relationship with other people. Elmer further observes that goal-driven people “spend much of their lives achieving goals and getting the job done. They sacrifice relationships with people closest to them. Thus, marriage breaks up often because the task took on greater importance than relationships.”<sup>60</sup>

Those who emigrated from Europe were geographically, socially, and economically diverse, and each group brought their unique material culture to the colonies. The population of early America was comprised of diverse groups that influenced and were influenced by the dominant Anglo culture. While the Native Americans in the early American period retained much of their native culture, the Africans who came to the colonies as slaves were not as free to nurture their African heritage. However, the traces

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<sup>58</sup>Lingenfelter and Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, 40.

<sup>59</sup>Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Connections*, 119.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, 128.

of their African roots that they retained added a unique thread to the emerging American society.

Likewise, various non-Anglo European settlers brought the indigenous traditions of their homelands to the colonies, thus contributing another layer to the complex material culture that existed in early America. Of course, the predominant culture derived much of its traditions from the British Isles, and this culture materially influenced the Native Americans, African Americans, and non-Anglo immigrant groups.<sup>61</sup>

**Their religion.** In the seventeenth century, some members of the Separatists group boarded the Mayflower ship and landed at Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts, on December 21, 1620. In their search for religious freedom, they helped the settlement of the colonies in the New World.<sup>62</sup> But just like the Israelites who forgot the Lord after they settled in the Promised Land, the Pilgrims' spiritual life deteriorated to a "rote religiosity among parishioners and a professional formalism among the clergy."<sup>63</sup>

Many people came to America to search for religious freedom. Their hope was to escape the religious persecution they were facing in their countries. Colonists wanted a chance to worship freely and have an opportunity to choose which religion in which they wanted to take part. Upon arrival in America the journey began for the search of the "perfect" religion in which could satisfy the needs of the people.

Many religious groups formed the first thirteen colonies on the basis of their religious beliefs. Although the plan was to escape persecution, there was actually some amount of persecution happening in the colonies. One example of this persecution was

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<sup>61</sup>Barbara G. Carson, "The Material Shape of Early American Life," in *Encyclopedia of American Cultural and Intellectual History*, ed. Mary Kupiec Cayton and Peter W. Williams (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2001), 1:66-67.

<sup>62</sup>Reid, *Firefall*, 174.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, 204.

with the Puritans. The Puritans wanted everyone to worship in the Puritan way. In order to ensure that Puritanism dominated the colonies, nonconformists were fined, banished, whipped, and even imprisoned for not conforming to the way of the Puritans. Eventually this persecution ended and other religions began to appear.

The Anglicans were already established in most of the colonies and were even part of the group of people that were “persecuted” by the Puritans. Baptists appeared in a majority of the colonies. Roman Catholics and Protestants were organized in Maryland. Some German religions surfaced in a few of the colonies. Lutherans came later and settled in the German communities in Pennsylvania, and the Presbyterians, who even had an appearance in the Massachusetts Proposals of 1705.<sup>64</sup>

Through the years, this kind of spiritual topography permeated American society. America’s spiritual condition got worse by the end of World War II. Alvin Reid has pointed out, “A growing prosperity captured in the ‘pursuit of the American dream’ taxed the spiritual fortitude of the land. Liberalism had become securely entrenched in schools of higher learning, including most seminaries.”<sup>65</sup>

Edward G. Stockwell observes,

At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the majority of the U.S. population had achieved a high level of material comfort, prosperity, and security. Nonetheless, Americans struggled with the unexpected problems of relative affluence, as well as the persistence of residual poverty. Crime, drug abuse, affordable energy sources, urban sprawl, voter apathy, pollution, high divorce rates, AIDS, and excessive litigation remained the continuing subjects of concern, as were inequities and inadequacies in education and managed health care.

Among the public policies widely debated were abortion, gun ownership, welfare reforms and the death penalty. Ideally, social, political, economic, and religious freedom would assure the like treatment of everyone, so that all could achieve goals in accord with their individual talents. This strongly held belief has united Americans throughout the centuries. The fact that some groups have not achieved

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<sup>64</sup>Lawanda Brewer, et al., “Religion in Colonial America” [on-line]; accessed 18 June 2012; available from [www.uncp.edu/home/canada/work/allam/1607183/religion.html](http://www.uncp.edu/home/canada/work/allam/1607183/religion.html); Internet

<sup>65</sup>Reid, *Firefall*, 300.

full equality troubles citizens and policymakers.<sup>66</sup>

During the second half of the twentieth century, Henry County of South Atlanta experienced an unprecedented population and economic growth. Michael Reaves asserts that growth was

directly related to Atlanta's emergence as an international city because of its friendly business climate. As Atlanta grew, many people who worked in the city yearned for the simpler life available in the country. With Interstate 75 running through the heart of the county, the cities of Henry County [Hampton, Locust Grove, McDonough, and Stockbridge] looked like the perfect place to put down roots.<sup>67</sup>

In spite of the progress that brought about a convenient and comfortable lifestyle to so many, social conflicts and problems still do exist among the people.

In his seminar on cross-cultural evangelism, Steve Parr points out,

The Anglos tend to have familiarity with the gospel message but do not assume that they know the whole of the gospel. They tend to plan for the future and value security. Build credibility for your witness by establishing a mutual friendship. Most adults in the Anglo community who trust Christ do so during the course of a crisis. Be aware of opportunities to minister and witness during these times.<sup>68</sup>

### **The African Americans**

African Americans were the only people to arrive on these shores against their will. However, they have gone a long way since the first arrival of their ancestors. They were endowed with wisdom, abilities, and skills like anybody else: "Their hopeful journeys changed not only their world and the fabric of the African Diaspora but also the Western hemisphere."<sup>69</sup> A cross-cultural messenger of God would do well to be mindful

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<sup>66</sup>Edward G. Stockwell, "United States of America," in *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th ed. (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 2002), 191.

<sup>67</sup>Michael Reaves, *History of Henry County* (San Antonio, TX: Historical Publishing Network, 2004), 36-37.

<sup>68</sup>Steve Parr, "Understanding Other Culture: Anglos" (lecture delivered during Cross-Cultural Evangelism Seminar, International Bible Church, 15 April 2012).

<sup>69</sup>The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, "In Motion: The African-American Migration Experience" [on-line]; accessed 18 June 2012; available from <http://www.inmotionaame.org/homecfm.html>; Internet.

of the historical, cultural, and sociological background of the African Americans in order to have an evangelistic breakthrough among the black community.

**Their history.** The history of African Americans in the United States began in 1619 when a Dutch ship brought the first slaves from Africa to the shores of North America.<sup>70</sup> Their ancestors were mostly indigenous to Sub-Saharan Africa. A significant number of African Americans have European or Native American heritage. Most African Americans are the descendants of captive Africans who were enslaved within the boundaries of the present United States, although some are descendants of voluntary immigrants from Africa, the Caribbean, and South America.<sup>71</sup>

In the seventeenth century, few slaves from Africa reached the North American colonies, but as the supply of indentured servants declined, more slaves were purchased, some directly from Africa but most from the West Indies. Slavery was legal in all the colonies, but 80 percent of the slave population was found in the South. Slaves were properties and economic assets to be bought, sold, rented, or inherited, and as such their ability to maintain their material culture was seriously diminished.<sup>72</sup>

The slave trade ended in 1808, but remarkably there was a large, natural increase of the slave population. By 1860, there were about four million slaves and half a million free blacks. Most of these people were born in America, which indicated that these people showed remarkable resilience and strength in laying the foundations of the black family despite the fact that many families were separated. Yet these people were

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<sup>70</sup>African Americans, “Culture, History, Legacy, and Heritage of a Proud People” [on-line]; accessed 3 May 2012; available from <http://www.africanamericans.com.html>; Internet.

<sup>71</sup>New World Encyclopedia, “African-Americans” [on-line]; accessed 18 June 2012; available from <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/African-Americans.com.html>; Internet.

<sup>72</sup>Carson, “The Material Shape of Early American Life,” 66.

able to draw upon their inner resources, to pick up the pieces, and to survive. Blacks have always found ways and opportunities to maintain their psychic strength and sanity. The most poignant part of the black odyssey was the ability of Africans to survive under the difficult circumstances of slavery and to manifest internal strength.<sup>73</sup>

The Declaration of the Emancipation of Slavery by Abraham Lincoln took place on January 1, 1863. Since that day, generations of African Americans who were born into this country, no longer had to go through the inhumane, savage, and bitter suffering that their ancestors endured. Their acceptance and assimilation into American society, however, did not come easily: it came with a high price. Led by Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King to name a few, African Americans launched their non-violent civil rights Movement in the 1960s. These peaceful protesters spearheaded the eventual assimilation and recognition of their people as bona fide members of human society.

African Americans seized opportunities to allow their sons and daughters to prove their nationalism and love for their adopted country in times of war. They fought with gallantry and valor in the battlefronts and willingly gave their lives, no longer for civil liberty, but to protect and preserve the freedom of their country. Their gifted and talented children showed that they too are God's creations.

**Their culture.** From the initial arrival of Africans as slaves in the Western Hemisphere in the sixteenth century through their emancipation in the nineteenth century, slave communities were engaged in the creation of distinctive cultural forms marked by ideas, values, and beliefs shaped by the slaves themselves. The process involved a synthesis of African elements, American institutional forces, and European cultural influences.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>James A. Perry, "African Roots of African-American Culture" [on-line]; accessed 3 May 2012; available from [www.black-collegian.com/issues/1998-12/africanroots12.html](http://www.black-collegian.com/issues/1998-12/africanroots12.html); Internet.

<sup>74</sup>Dickson D. Bruce, Jr., "Slave Culture and Consciousness," in *Encyclopedia*

When Africans were taken from their homeland and brought to America as slaves, they also brought with them individual cultures, languages, and customs. They found ways of expressing their cultural heritage and educating their people by sharing folktale stories, songs, and riddles. Their songs were used to express feelings of discontent, homelessness, as well as love, joy, and hope. These songs soon took on many shapes and meanings for people in the African American culture. Many of the songs found their way into their churches. These spiritual songs reflect African American culture through Christianity and tend to focus on religion as a means of saving slaves from the cruelty they experienced.<sup>75</sup>

Africans were routinely separated from family and friends to control the captives and prevent revolts. Those who spoke the same language or shared the same culture were divided as well. They had to find their own means of communicating with each other, often relying upon elements from their native culture and incorporating them into American customs. As a result, persons from diverse African societies formed new friendships, started new families, and created a new culture.

The character of slavery varied significantly from colony to colony. In New England, Virginia, and the middle colonies, cultural interchanges among whites and blacks were frequent. These interactions created adoptions and adaptations of European traditions that tended to dominate, though not entirely supplant, African cultural influences. Within this framework of origins and variations, the most important aspect of cultural creation with implications for later slave culture and consciousness lay in the process of “creolization,” the merging of African and European elements into distinctive forms. In many cases, African patterns were preserved, as well as styles of appearance,

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*of American Cultural and Intellectual History*, ed. Mary Kupiec Cayton and Peter W. Williams (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2001), 1:66.

<sup>75</sup>DeWitt S. Dykes, Jr., *Legacy: Treasures of Black History*, ed. Thomas C. Battle and Donna M. Wells (Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 2006), 40.

music, and movement that showed similar process of creolization.<sup>76</sup>

**Their religion.** While African Americans practice a number of religions, Protestant Christianity is by far the most prevalent. During slavery, many slaves were stripped of their African belief systems and typically denied free religious practice. Slaves managed, however, to hold on to some practices by integrating them into Christian worship in secret meetings.<sup>77</sup> Diversity marked the religious pasts of American slaves. Different groups brought unique traditions to the American colonies. Some slaves were exposed to Christianity and Islam prior to arriving in the New World. Spirit possession and visionary experiences characterized many West African religions.

Most West African religions were polytheistic, although many shared a belief in a high god ruling subordinate deities. West African religions also tended to share a reverence for ancestral spirits, along with strong components of magic, recognizing possibilities for using supernatural manipulation to affect human affairs. Although it is almost certain that no single tradition survived intact among the slaves, specific elements did, especially beliefs and reverence for ancestors, reinforced by being widely shared among diverse peoples.<sup>78</sup> African religious concepts and rituals, such as ancestor worship, initiation rites, spirit possession, healing, and funeral rituals, magical rituals for obtaining spiritual and ecstatic ceremonies enlivened by rhythmic dancing, drumming, and singing, are found in today's African American religion. They are there generally in syncretized ways, blended with diverse Euro-American elements.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Magie Papa, Amy Gerber, and Abeer Mohamed, "African American Culture Through Oral Tradition" [on-line]; accessed 19 June 2012; available from <http://www.gwu.edu/~e73afram/ag-am-mp.html>; Internet.

<sup>78</sup>Bruce, "Slave Culture and Consciousness," 321-22.

<sup>79</sup>Hans A. Baer, "Religion," in *The African American Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., ed. R. Kent Rasmussen (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2001), 2135-36.



Although a significant number of African-born people became Christians, there was still a very strong Muslim presence into the twentieth century. It is an extension of the Muslim presence with which Africans originally arrived. Christianity was not the dominant belief system until after slavery ended. Christianity is a post-emancipation development. In African-American culture, enormous and very strong African religious elements survived.<sup>80</sup>

Stockwell notes, “The Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 60s awakened the nation’s conscience to the plight of African-Americans, who had long been denied first-class citizenship.”<sup>81</sup> The election of the first Black President of the United States in 2008, and the first Black President of the Southern Baptist Convention during its Annual Convention in New Orleans in June of 2012 has brought the African Americans a long way from the days of slavery.

Many slaves moved to the northern part of the country where they found refuge and solace. Nowadays, many of the black population are heading back to the south due to economic crisis. Dan Bilefsky observes, “Of the 44,474 who left New York State in 2009, more than half went to the South. The movement marks an inversion of the so-called Great Migration . . . blacks went north because they could find work. But today, there is less of a struggle to survive in the South.”<sup>82</sup>

Sabrina Tavernise claims,

Northern blacks were a big part of southern gains. There are now more than one million black residents of the South who were born in the Northeast, a tenfold increase since 1970. Atlanta, for the first time, has replaced Chicago as the metro area with the largest number of African Americans after New York.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>Perry, “African Roots of African-American Culture.”

<sup>81</sup>Stockwell, “United States of America,” 192.

<sup>82</sup>Dan Bilefsky, “For NewLife, Blacks in City Head to South” [on-line]; accessed 8 July 2012; available from <http://herb.ashp.cuny.edu/exhibits/show/history-matters/great-migration.html>; Internet.

<sup>83</sup>Sabrina Tavernise, “Many U.S. Blacks Moving to South” [on-line]; accessed

As people share the gospel message with the black population, they would do well to be sensitive and sympathetic to their dark past of slavery. Kenneth Ellis asserts the need to understand the barriers in evangelism among the black population:

It is mandatory for believers to have some understanding of people groups. Jesus took time to understand his audience. He changed the form of the message to be understood in different circumstances. He started at their level of understanding. He recognized people's felt needs and moved to the real underlying need. [In the same manner] we must understand how they "see" the world.<sup>84</sup>

The present generation of African Americans, like other people groups, are being drawn by materialism and secularism. They continue to strive for a more convenient and prosperous lifestyle than their ancestors. In this pursuit, many find themselves miserable and battling the adversities of life. They too, need the message of hope and salvation found only in Jesus Christ.

### **Conclusion**

Cross-cultural communication of the gospel without any knowledge of the theoretical and sociological foundations of the culture will do more harm than help. The importance and necessity is no longer just applicable to missionaries who are going to other strange countries. With the advent of global ethnic diaspora, the messengers of the gospel anywhere in the world would do well to heed the admonitions of those who have gone ahead geographically and experientially to the mission fields.

The continued growth of ethnic population in the United States by birth and migration demands the necessity to be equipped to do cross-cultural evangelism. This requires knowledge and respect of their cultural, historical, and religious backgrounds. Furthermore, the unprecedented growth explosion of ethnic populations in the United

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7 July 2012; available from [www.nytimes.com/2011/03/25/us/25south.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/25/us/25south.html). Internet.

<sup>84</sup>Kenneth Ellis, "Ministry That Changes Lives" (lecture delivered during Cross-Cultural Evangelism Seminar, International Bible Church, 22 April 2012).

States is a golden opportunity of a great harvest for God's Kingdom laid right at our door steps. Lane writes,

While many lament the changing demographics in the United States, it must be recognized as one of the most significant factors affecting world evangelization. People are immigrating, coming as students and business partners and so on, and are having the opportunity to hear the gospel for the first time. While many stay here permanently, others return to their homelands and share the life-changing relationship that they discovered. Those who stay form congregations compatible with their culture and language, or join existing congregations where they can build relationships not only with Christ but with their fellow believers. Many times in these and new ethnic congregations priority is given to mission efforts in their country of origin. More and more partnerships are formed between congregations in order to reach a particular people group, as a result of a relationship formed with someone from that country residing in the United States.<sup>85</sup>

The cross-cultural information and principles presented in this chapter would be of great help toward the formation of a productive partnership between ethnic congregations, state conventions, associations, and sponsoring congregations.

I find these cross-cultural principles useful as I continue to serve as a member of the Ethnic Church Resource Team (ECRT). The ECRT ministry is sponsored by the Intercultural Church Planting and Missions Ministries Department (ILC) of the Georgia Baptist Convention (GBC). ECRT aims to be a mediating body between the GBC and the ethnic pastors and congregations. This is in line with the ILC objective of striving to assist GBC churches, individuals, and associations in starting ethnic congregations and ministries to reach language/culture people. ECRT strives to foster a better mutual cultural understanding between the GBC, local associations, ethnic pastors, and congregations through fellowship and mutual interaction. This material would greatly help achieve its goal to have a much healthier and productive cross-cultural relationship and ministry partnership.

The foundations of cross-cultural communication discussed in this chapter would greatly equip members of local ethnic or non-ethnic congregations to overcome

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<sup>85</sup>Lane, *Crossing Cultures*, 143.

racial and regional bigotry and prejudices. The congregations are challenged to become familiarized with the cultural and religious background of other people. They will be equipped to present the gospel message in a cross-cultural and contextualized manner. Church members will be enlightened and encouraged by the perseverance of cross-cultural missionaries. They will be motivated and inspired with the exemplary sacrifices of missionaries in foreign lands. Believers would catch the vision and passion to become cross-cultural missionaries wherever they are. The partnership of well-informed and equipped cross-cultural messengers of the gospel will pay great dividends to a local congregation in particular, and to the Kingdom of God in general.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

The concept of the project was presented in October 2011 to the deacons of International Bible Church. We met for three consecutive meetings for discussion and for me to receive insight on the project. As a result of these meetings, the deacons enthusiastically approved my project. We agreed to divide the congregation into five small groups: four groups for adults, and one group for youth. Each group would have a leader and assistant. They would lead their respective groups to implement the project.

I presented the project to the whole Church Council in its annual planning on December 3, 2011. Then, we discussed it in the church business meeting on December 11, 2011. The congregation unanimously approved the project. The approved project was included in the list of announcements printed in the worship service bulletin from December 18 to December 25, 2011. The different groups with their respective leaders and assistant leaders were included in the announcement. I reminded the members of their respective groups as posted on the church's bulletin board. The chairman of the deacons verbally announced the project at the end of every worship service. The group leaders met with their groups after the worship service for several consecutive Sundays. The meetings allowed the groups to get organized and acquainted with each other as they looked forward to the training and implementation of the project.

#### **Orientations**

The implementation of the project began with a meeting of the group leaders along with their assistants. The meeting occurred after a light lunch fellowship at 1:30 in the afternoon on March 4, 2012. I reminded leaders about the meeting during the

announcement time. While people were eating, one of the deacons went around to request each leader to proceed to the designated room for our meeting. As a result, all the leaders and their assistants attended the leaders' orientation.

### **Session 1: The Leaders' Orientation**

This session was conducted on March 4, 2012 (see Appendix 1). The orientation began with a word of appreciation for their commitment to participate in the implementation of the project. I then proceeded with a prayer and thanked God for them. I asked for God's blessing for the leaders and the project.

The first topic that we discussed was the rationale of the project as laid out in chapter 1. I presented the five reasons why the church decided to implement the project. First, it would move members to evangelize and not just socialize. Second, it would help members to overcome their attitude of seasonal evangelism. Third, it would help the members shed their habit of treating evangelism training as simply a theoretical and educational activity. Fourth, it would help church leaders to educate members about the cultural and religious backgrounds of the three major racial components of IBC. Fifth, it would create a radical change and reverse the deteriorating trend of the congregation in evangelism. I gave them opportunities for questions and answers in the course of the presentation of the five components.

The second topic that we discussed was the responsibilities of the leaders. I emphasized their role as a model as far as attendance, familiarity of the project, commitment to the implementation, and assisting their respective members. The third topic was the schedule of the seminar. We agreed that to ensure better attendance and participation the seminar would be conducted after lunch fellowship every Sunday. Each group would have further discussion of the lesson and some guided questions on their weekly small group meetings. Due to limited time on Sunday, I decided that they should have their group discussion at any day of their choosing during the week. I took the initiative to get in touch with each leader by phone or by personal conversation during

weekdays, prior to the next session.

The fourth topic that we discussed was about the lessons we would study in the seminar. The lessons were divided into three major subjects with four sessions each (see Appendix 18). The first major subject was Personal Evangelism and Church Growth. Session 1 was an introduction to personal evangelism. Then, we learned the preparation for evangelism in session 2. The third session consisted of a discussion of different strategies of evangelism. We closed out the subject of evangelism with a session on practical aspects of personal evangelism.

The second major subject was Cross-cultural Evangelism and Church Growth. I invited guest speakers to lead two of the sessions. First, we had a session with an Anglo speaker who taught the cultural aspects of evangelism and church growth among Anglos. Then, we had an African American share about how culture affected evangelism and church growth in the African American community. I led the third session, which was a discussion of Filipino culture and its effects on evangelism and church growth. We concluded with a session on strategies involved in cross-cultural evangelism and church growth.

The Functions of the Church and Church Growth was the third major subject. We had already covered personal evangelism, so we studied the other four functions of the church: discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and worship. The first session was an explanation of how discipleship helped the church to grow. Then, session 2 was how fellowship contributed to church growth. In the third session we discovered how having various ministries led to growth in the church. Finally, we discussed how worship played a role in church growth.

The last part of the meeting was about the questionnaire (see Appendix 19). I explained the importance of the questionnaire in measuring the effect of the project. The meeting ended with questions and answers. Some of the leaders expressed their concern about unexpected emergencies that could keep them from attending. Others expressed

their excitement as they looked forward to the actual training and implementation of the project. I concluded the meeting by asking the leaders to remind their respective members of the orientation on the following Sunday.

## **Session 2: The Participants' Orientation**

We had the second session on March 11, 2012 (see Appendix 2). This session was for the orientation of the participants. It began with a word of appreciation for their commitment to undergo the training and get involved with the implementation. One of the leaders opened the meeting with a prayer. The first topic that we discussed was the five reasons to implement the project. Then, we talked about the schedule of seminars and the subjects to be studied. I encouraged the participants to block out the dates on their calendars and make extra effort to attend the scheduled meetings. I further pointed out, by using the old adage, that “if there is a will, there is a way” to be there. However, we also took into consideration the possibility of emergency cases when they were hindered from coming. If someone was absent, the leaders would take the responsibility of sharing the lesson during the week to those who missed the session.

We talked briefly about the different methods of evangelism that would be studied. I told them that they would have the freedom to select the method of evangelism they preferred to use. I emphasized the practical aspects of the seminar. We discussed the learning process to present the gospel with their respective groups, and to the whole general assembly. I also pointed out that each person would team with another participant to do actual evangelism during the week.

The meeting included a time for questions and answers. Some wondered if they could just attend the seminar without participating in the actual evangelism. Others expressed apprehension in presenting the gospel. I reiterated to them that one of the purposes of the training was to help them overcome fear and that the participants would team up with others who already have an established confidence in evangelism. Additionally, they would first be sharing the gospel with people they are comfortable



with, like their respective family members, relatives, or friends.

The meeting concluded with the presentation of the Questionnaire Form. I made it clear to them that they would fill out the form two times. First, at the beginning of the seminar, then at the end of the project. The objective was to gauge any change they had after they went through the training and implementation of the project. I informed them that the result of the surveys would guide the pastor and leaders to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the project. I clarified that their feedbacks would help me evaluate my pastoral leadership and strategy of cross-cultural evangelism. The leaders used the result of the survey to improve the church ministry strategy. There were 26 participants who filled out the questionnaire form, including the group leaders.

### **Personal Evangelism**

Evangelism is a mandate from the Lord Jesus Christ given to his disciples. The apostle Mark records Jesus' command: "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15). It is emphasized in the Great Commission that Jesus commanded his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations." Believers cannot make disciples of others unless they have first heard the gospel message and accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Nonetheless, in spite of all the many discussions, training opportunities, and seminars attended by believers, evangelism is still one of the most evaded and neglected ministries. This is even more evident when it comes to sharing the gospel with people of a different culture.

This study covered the importance and the know-how of evangelism in general, with a specific emphasis on cross-cultural evangelism. It also included helps for the participants to overcome their fear in sharing the gospel, especially with strangers.

### **Session 3: Introduction to Personal Evangelism**

The first training session occurred on March 18, 2012 (see Appendix 3). The first part of the lesson dealt with the presentation of the different meanings of evangelism. I

shared with the participants the different definitions of evangelism, including Douglas Cecil of Dallas Theological Seminary, who puts emphasis on the gospel, which is the message of evangelism.<sup>1</sup> Delos Miles of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary included “being and doing,” on top of “telling.” The being and doing enhanced the presentation of the gospel message.<sup>2</sup> Peter Wagner of Fuller Theological Seminary underscored intentionality in evangelism as Christians seek, find, and persuade the lost.<sup>3</sup> John Mark Terry of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary reiterated the role of the Holy Spirit in bringing about conviction and conversion to unbelievers.<sup>4</sup>

The second section dealt with the priority of personal evangelism. Satan uses all possible means at his disposal to hinder evangelism. Believers are scared or indifferent about evangelism because of satanic influences. Satan deceives churches to substitute evangelism with other church activities. I took time to challenge the participants to be more intentional in sharing the gospel. They must be resourceful in order to have time to do it. Satan devises all types of hindrances and schemes.

The third section concerned cultivating a life that is conducive for evangelism. I showed them the need to set priorities right and to develop a passion for lost souls. Participants needed to become familiar with a particular method of evangelism. This section also emphasized the necessity of not relying on one’s ability or eloquence. Instead, they must depend in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring conviction to the lost souls.

The last section focused on the biblical motive of evangelism. The class took a look at the condition of man as being hopelessly and helplessly sinful. We discussed the

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<sup>1</sup>Douglas M. Cecil, *The Seven Principles of an Evangelistic Life* (Chicago: Moody, 2003), 35.

<sup>2</sup>Delos Miles, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman, 1983), 49.

<sup>3</sup>John Mark Terry, *Church Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1997), 3.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 3, 4.

love of God that caused him to send his only Son for the salvation of mankind. This was balanced with the wrath of God and the judgment that follows for all those who reject Jesus as Savior and Lord.

At the conclusion of the first session, I handed out a list of topics. I asked attendees to discuss these topics during their small group meeting. The topics were

1. Discuss the different definitions of evangelism and how they help you overcome fear.
2. What are your fears of sharing the gospel especially among people of different cultures? How do you overcome them?
3. What are the possible commonalities you have with your prospects? How will these help you overcome your fears?

#### **Session 4: Preparation for Personal Evangelism**

The second training session occurred on March 25, 2012 (see Appendix 4). The session began with the sharing of prayer concerns and prayer time. I asked the members if they had any concerns or questions about the previous session. Some of the participants gave praises to God as they began to see the benefits of the training. The first section dealt with the necessity of spiritual preparation. Evangelism is a spiritual warfare because it deals with going into the enemy's territory, spiritually and geographically. Therefore, it was essential that they were equipped not only logistically, but spiritually. The participants would persevere in evangelism if they relied in the power of the Holy Spirit. I spent time explaining what it took to have the power of the Spirit of God.

The second section focused on what was involved in spiritual preparation. We reviewed the basics of the Christian faith. We discussed and stressed the necessity to experience regeneration and to have the assurance of salvation.<sup>5</sup> In addition, I admonished the members to consecrate their life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ<sup>6</sup> and to

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<sup>5</sup>Timothy Beougher and Alvin Reid, *Evangelism for a Changing World* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1995), 119-20.

<sup>6</sup>Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (New York: Fleming H.

have compassion for the lost.<sup>7</sup> This is especially true in witnessing to those who belong to other cultures. This required the participants to ask God to help them overcome their racial prejudices.

The third section was about personal preparation. We discussed how to prepare themselves mentally, emotionally, and physically for cross-cultural evangelism. This preparation required them to know the content of the gospel and memorize some verses that they would use in evangelism. In addition, the participants needed to know some basic knowledge about their prospects. I also encouraged them to observe physical hygiene and the way they dressed. They were challenged to prepare their heart, mind, and emotions for possible opposition and argumentative and hostile attitudes, in addition to indifference and derision.<sup>8</sup>

The last section dealt with the formal preparation of evangelism. We discussed the practicum we would have. I reminded them that their respective leaders would assist and encourage them as they learned to present the gospel. Their leaders would accompany them as they went out and shared the gospel as needed. The participants could avail themselves of other evangelism seminars. These would further polish their evangelism and strengthen their confidence in God as they mingled and interacted with other believers. I emphasized the fact that preparation for evangelism without moving on to action is an utter absurdity.

Some guide questions were given at the end of the session for their small group fellowship during the week. Guide questions based on this session were

1. Why are regeneration and assurance of salvation necessary for spiritual preparation?

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Revell, 1993), 51-60.

<sup>7</sup>Miles, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 137-46.

<sup>8</sup>Darrell W. Robinson, "The Priority of Personal Evangelism," in *Evangelism for a Changing World*, ed. Timothy Beougher and Alvin Reid (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1995), 121.

2. How does a consecrated life give greater impact in your personal evangelism?
3. How would your prospect sense your compassion for him?

### **Session 5: Strategies of Personal Evangelism**

The third session occurred on April 1, 2012 (see Appendix 5). The session began with a prayer for their concerns. Then, we had a quick review of the previous lesson. We devoted a few minutes to sharing of lessons learned from their group discussions. I shared the definition of the strategy of evangelism in the first section of the lesson. Cecil defines the strategy of evangelism as “the means by which evangelism takes place. A strategy is a bridge so that the message can be shared.”<sup>9</sup> The lesson focused on how participants can “break the ice” in order to share the gospel confidently and effectively.

I moved on to discuss with them four different strategies of personal evangelism. This included proclamation, aggressive, and relational evangelism strategies. The fourth strategy was simply being a witness with one’s lifestyle.<sup>10</sup> This strategy required that a believer be a witness with his life every day, everywhere, and with anyone. This method was my transitional point to move on to the second section which centered on lifestyle evangelism.

The five keys to overcome fear in witnessing were discussed in the next section: (1) passion; (2) prayer; (3) partnership; (4) power; and (5) preparation.<sup>11</sup> In compliance with those five keys, I required them to look for someone they could team up with to do evangelism.

At this point, I shared an acronym with them that they could use as an icebreaker to start a conversation. They could also use this acronym to establish rapport and

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<sup>9</sup>Cecil, *The Seven Principles*, 40.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 40-49.

<sup>11</sup>William Fay and Ralph Hodge, *Share Jesus without Fear* (Nashville: LifeWay, 1997), 9-23.

friendship with their prospect. This was necessary before they earned the right to have the prospect listen as they presented the gospel message. Geared toward cross-cultural evangelism, the acronym FORCE stands for (1) Family; (2) Occupation; (3) Religion; (4) Culture; and (5) Evangelism. I encouraged participants to spend time practicing the icebreaker with their respective partners during the small group meeting.

We devoted the next section to getting familiar with a strategy of looking for prospects and developing friendships with them. This approach used the acronym ABCDEF, which stands for (1) Associate with non-believers of different cultures; (2) Befriend unbelievers; (3) Create an interest with their culture; (4) Declare the gospel in a contextualized manner; (5) Encourage a response from unbelievers; and (6) Follow-up with those who responded to the gospel. I ended this session by asking the participants to write their personal testimony using the following outline: (1) my life before receiving Christ, (2) what caused me to realize my spiritual need, (3) how I became a Christian, and (4) how Christ helps me in my daily life.

The participants wrote out their testimony briefly and to the point by following the outline. The leaders assisted their respective members in writing their testimonies. Then, they presented it to their respective small group meetings. I reminded them to get ready to share their testimonies in the next session. This session concluded with an encouragement from the words of Fay and Hodge: “Success in witnessing is not bringing someone to Christ. It is living out your Christian life, and sharing the gospel as you trust God for the results.”<sup>12</sup>

### **Session 6: Practicum of Personal Evangelism**

This session took place in the house of a deacon and his wife on April 7, 2012 (see Appendix 6). We had a potluck dinner fellowship before the class started. After one

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<sup>12</sup>Fay and Hodge, *Share Jesus without Fear*, 7.

hour, we sang and shared praises and prayer requests. I asked the attendees to break into their small groups for prayer. After thirty minutes, we came together and talked about their assignment of writing their personal testimony. Then, I requested each group to have someone share his or her testimony.

The session centered on helping participants overcome an attitude of seasonal evangelism. One way to do this is to master one method of evangelism. The participants would do well to have a habitual lifestyle of evangelism and allow it to become second nature to them. This would help them overcome an attitude of evangelism as an obligation. They would learn to share the gospel out of compassion for the lost without fear, as it becomes a natural part of their daily Christian life.

The first section provided guidelines to improving their testimonies. Three guidelines were given, with an acronym of ABC<sup>13</sup>: (1) ask the Holy Spirit to guide your preparation, (2) be brief and to the point about your past, and (3) center on Christ, not yourself. I admonished them not to exaggerate or glorify their past. Their testimonies focused on the amazing grace and power of God that saved and changed them.<sup>14</sup>

At this point, I presented some methods of evangelism. My objective was to give them a chance to see some approaches of evangelism and select from them. First, we talked about the ABCD of evangelism which stands for (1) Admit you are a lost sinner (Rom 3:23), (2) Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16), (3) Confess him as your Lord and Savior (Rom 10:9), and (4) Don't put it off (2 Cor 6:2).

The second method that we discussed was what I called the four REs of evangelism: (1) Realize that God loves you (John 3:16), (2) Recognize you are a sinner

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<sup>13</sup>Cecil, *The Seven Principles*, 162-64.

<sup>14</sup>Dave Earley and David Wheeler, *Evangelism Is . . . How to Share Jesus with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2010), 249-50.

(Rom 3:23), (3) Repent of your sins (Acts 3:19), and (4) Receive Jesus into your heart as Lord and Savior (Rev 3:20).

The last method of evangelism that we studied was One-Verse Evangelism. I distributed a copy of the outline as illustrated by Randy D. Raysbrook (see Appendix 20). This method, based on just one verse, Romans 6:23, was presented as follows: The presenter drew two cliffs: one on the left side and another one on the right. The presenter would take time to determine what the prospect understood about wages, sin, and death as he would write each word on the left side of the cliff. Then the presenter emphasized to the prospect that the verse did not stop there. He would write the next word, “but” in the middle and bottom of the two cliffs. At this time, the witness tried to discover what the prospect understood about the words: gift, God, and eternal life. The presenter would write those words one by one on the right side of the cliff. The witness would then draw a cross between the two cliffs. He would then say the last phrase of the verse: “Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.” At this point, the presenter would write the words “Jesus Christ, our Lord” on the cross. Then, he asked the prospect what he needed to do to cross from the left side of the cliff to the other side.

After the presentation and explanation of the different methods of evangelism, I gave the participants the freedom to determine which one they felt most comfortable using. They unanimously chose One-Verse evangelism since they do not have to memorize many verses and the presentation would be a lot easier, simpler, and directly to the points. This was in addition to explaining it with a diagram, and taking time to interact with the prospect. This method would help the presenter keep the attention of the prospect. The non-believer would not get confused with so many verses being quoted by the presenter. This is especially true for prospects who never had a chance to read the Bible, let alone study it. I went ahead and showed some videotaped demonstrations of



One-Verse Evangelism to the delight of the participants.<sup>15</sup> This greatly enhanced their excitement and desire to use this method.

This session concluded with the following assignments for the participants: (1) view the video clips on their own computer, (2) practice it with their respective spouse, or family members, and (3) practice with their respective partner according to their availability. I reminded them that cross-cultural evangelism is engaging in spiritual warfare that requires the power of the Holy Spirit. Learning to share the gospel is cooperating with the Holy Spirit by allowing him to work in us and through us. The session closed with my prayer asking specifically for God to bless each one as they started to practice presenting the gospel with the One-Verse Evangelism method.

### **Cross-Cultural Evangelism**

We focused the next sessions on the three racial components of the International Bible Church: Anglos, African Americans, and Filipinos. The intention of these sessions was to educate participants on the historical, cultural, and religious background of others within the church. With these cultural characteristics in mind, the participants learned to be sensitive and respectful to other people's cultural and religious backgrounds, and to tactfully establish rapport and relationship with them. The ultimate objective was to help them learn to contextualize their evangelism according to the culture and religion of a prospect.

#### **Session 7: Cross-Cultural Evangelism among Anglos**

My cohort, Oudone Thirakoune, and I visited Steve Parr who works with the Georgia Baptist Convention in Duluth, Georgia.<sup>16</sup> Parr encouraged us by giving valuable

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<sup>15</sup>First Baptist Church, "One-Verse Video Clips Presentation of One-Verse Evangelism," Tullahoma, TN [on-line]; accessed 7 April 2012; available from [www.fbctullahoma.org/oneverse.html](http://www.fbctullahoma.org/oneverse.html); Internet.

<sup>16</sup>Steve Parr, "Understanding Other Culture: Anglos" (lecture delivered during

insights and suggestions on how to implement our projects. I explained to him about my project and asked him to lead the session on cross-cultural evangelism among the Anglo people.

Parr led the session on April 15, 2012 (see Appendix 7). He began by giving an overview of Anglo cultural traits. Parr claimed that Anglos are competitive and goal-oriented in their professions and straight forward in communication. He noted that since Anglos are in the majority, they do not have any problem being assimilated into the culture. Parr pointed out, however, that their population is declining. But they are receptive to people of different cultures and religious background.<sup>17</sup>

Parr went on to explain that a person who wants to share the gospel to Anglos ought not to assume that they have a clear understanding of the gospel. Instead, the prospect should be encouraged to speak and learn about his general understanding of what it takes to be saved. Parr further observed that it would always help to establish mutual friendship. Another key element is to always be available to help in times of crisis. This would enhance the ability to establish friendships. He closed the session with a reminder that “the brevity and uncertainty of life would cause the Anglos to evaluate their priorities. The messenger would do well to be frank and yet friendly in his approach.”<sup>18</sup>

### **Session 8: Cross-Cultural Evangelism among African Americans**

Kenneth Ellis of the North American Mission Board in Alpharetta, Georgia was recommended to me by Parr to discuss evangelism among African Americans.<sup>19</sup> The

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Cross-Cultural Evangelism Seminar, International Bible Church, 15 June 2012).

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Jim Henderson, *Evangelism without Additives* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2007), 136-39.

<sup>19</sup>Kenneth Ellis, “Ministry That Changes Lives” (lecture delivered during Cross-Cultural Evangelism Seminar, International Bible Church, 22 June 2012)

session occurred on April 22, 2012 (see Appendix 8). He first challenged the participants to be involved in evangelism. He pointed out that evangelism is not an option, but a mandate for the church. Ellis admonished the participants to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. To be effective, Jesus must be the model for lifestyle. Christians must live out the message they proclaim with a transformed lifestyle. People look on a Christian's way of life, more than they listen to the message. Ellis also underscored the power of prayer in evangelism—to pray that the Holy Spirit will enlighten and convict the prospect.

Ellis called the attention of the participants to the way Jesus did cross-cultural evangelism. Jesus took time to understand his audience. He adapted his approach to their culture and understanding. He recognized the felt needs of the people and then moved on to their real underlying needs. The Messiah shared the word of God with understanding, love, and compassion, without compromising the truth. Ellis enumerated and discussed some of the felt needs of African Americans as he shared contemporary issues that people of this ethnic background are facing today<sup>20</sup>: (1) racism and discrimination, (2) health and healthcare access, (3) the criminal justice system, and (4) wealth and business development.

At the end of the Ellis's presentation, I took over and concluded the session with closing remarks about African Americans. I pointed out that in spite of the dark past of African Americans' ancestors, the present generation had made strides to aspire in their lives including their relationship with their Creator. The messenger of the gospel would do well to be sensitive to their past. He should be compassionate and understanding toward their attitude and spirit as he presents the gospel message.

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<sup>20</sup>“Contemporary Issues Facing African Americans” [on-line]; accessed 8 March 2012; available from <http://www.iasb.uscourts.gov/Community/section5b.pdf>. Internet.

## **Session 9: Cross-Cultural Evangelism among Filipinos**

This session happened on May 6, 2012 (see Appendix 9). It was a joy for me to lead this topic because I know the history and culture of the Filipinos by heart and experience. I began the discussion on the religious background of the people. Most Filipinos consider themselves Christians and godly. This is especially true with Roman Catholics who are predominant in the Philippines. It is also true among other religious constituents, including those who consider themselves evangelical believers. An understanding of Filipino cultural background, therefore, would greatly help the messenger of the gospel to be more intelligent and tactful in dealing with them.

We discussed the historical background of Filipinos. I shared their ancestral origins, and highlights of their history. The Spaniards who colonized the Philippines brought the Roman Catholic religion. We discussed the cultural traits of the different regions. Each region has its own dialect preferred by the people. Traditions and core values influence the fabric of the society and social interaction.<sup>21</sup>

The last section dealt with the arrival of Filipinos in the United States. The first wave of immigrants were the “Sakadas,” who worked in sugarcane plantations of Hawaii during the early twentieth century.<sup>22</sup> The second wave of immigrants included professionals, like nurses, teachers, and those who joined US military branches. Relatives of the professionals followed in the third wave.<sup>23</sup> I pointed out the benefits of being aware of their respective professions and culture, and to be flexible in sharing the gospel with the Filipinos.

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<sup>21</sup>Gillian Moore, ed., *Library of Nations: Southeast Asia* (Madrid: Time Life, 1987), 10.

<sup>22</sup>Fred Cordova, “Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans,” American Curriculum Project Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program [on-line]; accessed 12 March 2012; available from <http://www.pvfaa.com>; Internet.

<sup>23</sup>Ofelia Dirige, “Timeline: Filipino-American History,” Filipino-American Centennial Commemoration [on-line]; accessed 12 March 2012; available from <http://www.apa/si/edu/filamcentennial/timeline.html>; Internet.

This session concluded with a statement by Greg Laurie: “Establishing commonality and friendship are the main key ingredients of having an effective and fruitful evangelism. Knowing and understanding them better will help you establish relationships and determine the best approach to present the gospel.”<sup>24</sup> Filipinos are basically friendly people. They automatically look up to people who claim to be born-again believers. They hold a high expectation of friendliness and a godly lifestyle, which oftentimes implies being respectful to their cultural and religious heritage.

### **Session 10: Cross-Cultural Evangelism Strategy**

This session occurred on May 13, 2012 (see Appendix 10). The design assisted participants in overcoming their and others’ racial or cultural prejudices. The outcome helped them understand why people live and act the way they do. I reminded the participants that God and his Word do not change; however, communicating these truths to people varies according to their cultures.<sup>25</sup>

The first section dealt with what is involved in communication. I clarified that communication could either be verbal or nonverbal.<sup>26</sup> Then, we discussed developing a trust bond with people by accepting oneself and the others as they are. Mutual respect is essential if a trust bond is to take place.<sup>27</sup> The second section was about knowing the social structure of a group of people. How does the hierarchy influence the interaction of the people in a given society? In determining the social strata to which people belong,

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<sup>24</sup>Greg Laurie, *The Upside Down Church* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1999), 84-86.

<sup>25</sup>Patty Lane, *A Beginner’s Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multi-Cultural World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 136.

<sup>26</sup>Everett M. Rogers and Thomas M. Steinfatt, *Inter-Cultural Communication* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 1999), 179-87.

<sup>27</sup>Marvin K. Mayers, *Christianity Confronts Culture: A Strategy for Cross-Cultural Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 17-73.

one can understand how people in that society relate and communicate. Their relationship with each other also determines how they are identified in the community.<sup>28</sup>

The third section focused on competence in cross-cultural communication. We discussed three things that people need to overcome in dealing with other cultures. The first was overcoming ethnocentrism, which is one of the most important barriers to cross-cultural evangelism. It is a belief that one's culture is superior to other cultures. This attitude could lead to racism. The second issue was overcoming stereotypes, which is a generalization about a group of people that oversimplifies their culture. The third obstacle is prejudice, which is an unfounded attitude toward other groups of people. Prejudice is a kind of cultural blindness that prevents one from accurately seeing reality.

The last barrier that we discussed was about discrimination, which is the process of treating individuals unequally on the basis of race, gender, or other characteristics.<sup>29</sup> The session ended with a quote from Lane: "God's purposes are fulfilled when the Christian community has the skills to relate to and build relationships with those of different cultures. And it is precisely these skills and genuine appreciation for all people that the world is desperately in need of finding."<sup>30</sup> I impressed upon the participants that people want to hear and understand the gospel message when it is communicated with clarity, compassion, and cultural sensitivity.

The participants received guide topics for their small group discussion before the session ended. The topics were as follows:

1. Discuss how people have prejudice and discrimination with other cultures.
2. Discuss the basic cultural differences of the Anglos, African Americans, and Filipinos.

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 77-79.

<sup>29</sup>Rogers and Steinfatt, *Intercultural Communication*, 223-31.

<sup>30</sup>Lane, *A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures*, 117-34.

3. Discuss some barriers that you have encountered in the past to have an effective cross-cultural communication, and how you overcome them?

### **The Functions of the Church and Church Growth**

Discipleship is one of the most neglected ministries of the church. Some equate discipleship with other church activities. Others limit discipleship inside the four walls of the discipleship classroom. It is no wonder many churches are either stagnant or dying—both numerically and spiritually. The four sessions devoted to the essential functions of the church stressed spiritual maturity and church growth. These essential functions are discipleship, fellowship, ministry, worship, and evangelism. The latter was discussed in the early part of the seminar. The participants learned how these functions contribute to the spiritual and numerical growth of the church.

#### **Session 11: Discipleship and Church Growth**

This session occurred on May 20, 2012 (see Appendix 11). I intended to broaden the understanding of the participants as to what was involved in discipleship. The session began by emphasizing that discipleship begins right after conversion. The objective is spiritual growth and productivity. Discipleship then, is the key to spiritual and numerical growth of the church.<sup>31</sup> Next, I talked about the definition of a disciple. Simply, a disciple makes sacrifices to adjust his lifestyle to obey God. Hull asserts that “a disciple was and is a person of concrete action and commitment. It means more than just a believer, but a person who demonstrates belief by action.”<sup>32</sup> The word of Jesus describes the characteristics of a disciple: (1) he denies self, takes up his cross daily, and follows him (Luke 9:23-25), (2) he puts Christ before self, family, and possessions (Luke

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<sup>31</sup>Gene Warr, *You Can Make Disciples* (Waco, TX: Word, 1978), 65-66.

<sup>32</sup>Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1988), 56-57.

14:25-35), (3) he commits to Christ's teachings (John 8:31), (4) he commits to evangelism (Matt 9:36-38), and (5) he bears fruit (John 15:8).<sup>33</sup>

The next section was about the biblical principles of discipleship. I adapted these principles from Leroy Eims.<sup>34</sup> I came up with the acronym IDEA to help participants easily remember these principles: (1) the principle of Instruction, (2) the principle of Demonstration, (3) the principle of Exposure, and (4) the principle of Association. I pointed out that many churches just focus on the principle of instruction as their only means of discipleship. They neglect the other important principles that further equip a believer. Without these other principles, a believer would grow up deficient in his spiritual life and maturity.

I spent some time emphasizing the method of discipleship of Jesus. He conducted his discipleship instructions mostly outside any structure. He demonstrated what a disciple is as he travelled, ministered to, and interacted with people. He exposed his disciples to different circumstances of life to give them opportunity to practice what they had learned. For three years, Jesus closely associated himself with his disciples. He allowed them to watch the way he lived his life, his reaction toward circumstances of life, and his attitude toward other people. The disciples learned how to overcome their Jewish prejudices against the Gentiles, Samaritans, and those seen as social outcasts as they watched how Jesus treated and ministered to them (Luke 8:26-33; 19:1-7; John 4:1-26).

We progressed to the last section of the lesson—pastoral roles in discipleship. I explained that the pastor is expected to show his commitment to discipleship ministry by practicing it himself. As a pastor, I serve as a coach by teaching and showing members how it is done.<sup>35</sup> In addition to this, as one helps others become disciples, I serve as a

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 57-73.

<sup>34</sup>Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 27-36.

<sup>35</sup>Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor*, 90-92.



mentor, faithful spiritual parent, and steward of the people I have to equip.<sup>36</sup> I encouraged them to give their suggestions and observations about my discipleship ministry in order for me to improve personally and as a pastor.

As usual, the participants received a list of guide topics for them to discuss in their respective groups. The topics were as follows:

1. Discuss the different approaches of discipleship mentioned in this lesson.
2. Share with the group what aspect of your spiritual life needs further discipleship.
3. How can we improve our church's discipleship ministry?
4. What suggestions do you have to assist the pastor improves his discipleship ministry

### **Session 12: Fellowship and Church Growth**

Many believers tend to believe that fellowship is just another church activity. They take it for granted and attend as their schedules permit. The Word of God, however, encourages believers “not to give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb 10:25). This session occurred on May 27, 2012 (see Appendix 12). It underscored the necessity of fellowship with other believers for spiritual growth.

I began this session by quoting Rick Warren's definition of fellowship:

Real fellowship is so much more than just showing up at services. It is *experiencing life together*. It includes unselfish loving, honest sharing, practical serving, sacrificial giving, sympathetic comforting, and all the other 'one another' commands found in the New Testament.<sup>37</sup>

The basis of fellowship, however, must be grounded in the teaching of the Word of God. If discipleship is to take place in a fellowship, people ought to believe in the same God, proclaim the same message, walk in the light, and experience purification by the blood of

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<sup>36</sup>“Basic Training for Church Planters,” in *Growing Believers in the Faith* (Alpharetta, GA: North American Mission Board of the SBC, 2003), 73.

<sup>37</sup>Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 138.

Jesus (1 John 1:1-10). Hull strengthens this idea as he points out that the early believers committed themselves to God's word, to one another, to prayer, to praise and worship, and to outreach (Acts 2:42-47).<sup>38</sup>

We discussed the five functions of fellowship in the early church: (1) an opportunity for mutual ministry (Eph 4:13), (2) an opportunity to practice unity and cooperation in spite of diversity (Acts 4:32), (3) an opportunity to exercise church discipline and accountability (Acts 5:1-11), (4) the availability for mutual support and assistance (Acts 2:44), and (5) a venue for discipleship and worship (Acts 2:42).<sup>39</sup> These five functions of fellowship enhanced the growth of the early church.

The last section focused on the characteristics of genuine fellowship. We studied several characteristics that determine the genuineness of a fellowship that leads to discipleship and church growth. Fellowship is genuine when members have authentic relationships, experience mutuality, practice sympathy, and readily grant mercy.<sup>40</sup> Disciple-makers would do well to avail themselves of the effectiveness of discipleship in fellowship that leads to church growth. In fellowship times, people tend to readily accept admonition, correction, and instruction of the Word of God.

A list of guide topics were given for their group discussion.

1. How does fellowship cause discipleship and church growth?
2. Discuss the biblical basis of fellowship that generates discipleship and church growth.
3. How do you contribute to a fellowship that leads to discipleship and church growth?

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<sup>38</sup>Hull, *The Disciple Making Church*, 50-73.

<sup>39</sup>Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Discipleship* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1987), 59-76.

<sup>40</sup>Warren, *Purpose Driven Life*, 139-43.

### Session 13: Ministry and Church Growth

Involvement in any church ministry with a right attitude greatly enhances the spiritual growth of the believer. It is sad to observe, however, that some members treat involvement as an obligation, or a burden that they must endure. Bob Russell claims that “nothing helps you grow as a Christian like service.”<sup>41</sup> It is a venue whereby one could discover, develop, and utilize God-given gifts for the growth of the church.

This session was conducted on June 3, 2012 (see Appendix 13). The first section dealt with the four biblical basis of ministry. The outline included: (1) every believer is called to ministry (Luke 14:26-27), (2) every believer has one or more spiritual gifts (1 Pet 4:10-11), (3) every believer should be equipped to do the work of ministry (Eph 4:11-12),<sup>42</sup> and (4) every believer is accountable for, and rewarded according to his or her ministry (Col 3:23-24).<sup>43</sup>

The second section focused on helping the participants to discover the gifts God has given them that they could use to serve him in the ministry. Warren developed an acronym that guides a believer to discover his gifts. He claims that ministry is an expression of one’s SHAPE. The acronym stands for (1) Spiritual gifts, (2) Heart (passion), (3) Abilities, (4) Personality, and (5) Experiences.<sup>44</sup> We took time to discuss each item and its relationship to the participants. They were delighted to realize that each one has some gifts God has given him through the years out of his SHAPE. At this point, I asked volunteers to share their perceived God-given “SHAPE.”

The last section centered on how church bureaucracy could be minimized in

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<sup>41</sup>Bob Russell, *When God Builds a Church: 10 Principles for Growing a Dynamic Church* (West Monroe, LA: Howard, 2000), 178.

<sup>42</sup>Avery T. Willis, Jr., *Master Life: The Disciple’s Mission* (Nashville: LifeWay, 2008), 115.

<sup>43</sup>Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 368.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 370-75.

order to maximize ministry. The following are essential steps as suggested by Warren: (1) do not vote on ministry position, (2) establish a Ministry Placement process, (3) provide on-to-job training, and (4) trust people: delegate authority with responsibility.<sup>45</sup>

I closed the session by reminding the participants that God-given gifts edify the receiver and the whole body of Christ. They are intended for the expansion of God's kingdom. The discipleship ministry of the church plays a vital role in helping every individual member discover, identify, develop, utilize, and maximize the usage of his gifts. The assignment given to the participants was to discuss the following in their small group meeting:

1. Share and discuss your respective "SHAPE" to the group.
2. How do you utilize your gifts in our church?
3. How can others help you discover and use your gifts?

#### **Session 14: Worship and Church Growth**

This session occurred on June 10, 2012 (see Appendix 14). I began with a brief worship time to prepare the participants for this session. We sang some choruses and then spent a few minutes giving praises to God and praying for their prayer concerns. One of the group leaders gave a brief meditation that centered on worship.

I started the discussion by quoting John MacArthur's definition of worship as an "honor paid to a superior being. It means 'to give homage, honor, reverence, respect, adoration, praise, or glory to a superior being.'"<sup>46</sup> C. Welton Gaddy points out that worship precedes, pervades, preserves, and participates in evangelism.<sup>47</sup> Gaddy further notes that in worship we affirm our faith, obtain spiritual nourishment, and are equipped

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 378-92.

<sup>46</sup>John MacArthur, *John MacArthur's Bible Studies: True Worship* (Chicago: Moody, 1982), 8.

<sup>47</sup>C. Welton Gaddy, *The Gift of Worship* (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 58-90.

to face the challenges and adversities of life. These affirmations and equipping happen as the pastor leads worshippers to have a dialogue with him and with God that requires a response to the Father and to each other.<sup>48</sup> Worshippers grow as disciples as they are admonished and corrected through the proclamation of the Word of God.<sup>49</sup> I transitioned on to the next section of the session by using Warren Wiersbe's teaching about mutual edification in worship. He writes that in worship, we edify each by our presence, participation, song and speech, and by observing the Lord's Supper.<sup>50</sup> This takes place when worshippers move from a ritualistic or ceremonial worship to a worship done in truth and in spirit (John 4:23).

God is pleased with worship when the total being is consecrated to his blessed will (Rom 12:2). It is a life whose worship overflows beyond the sanctuary into his daily interaction with other people and circumstances of life. A worshipful lifestyle affects relationships with family, attitude at work, and social action.<sup>51</sup> MacArthur wrote that there are three aspects of worship. He described them in three dimensions: the inward, outward, and upward dimension, which refer to a worshiper's relationship with himself, with others, and with God.<sup>52</sup> I concluded this session with some guide topics for their next small group meeting. They were:

1. How does worship result in discipleship and church growth?

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 67-76.

<sup>49</sup>Robert E. Webber, *Worship is a Verb* (Nashville: Abbott Martyn, 1992), 109-27.

<sup>50</sup>Warren W. Wiersbe, *Real Worship: It Will Transform Your Life* (Nashville: Oliver Nelson, 1986), 108-20.

<sup>51</sup>Webber, *Worship is a Verb*, 203-13.

<sup>52</sup>John MacArthur, Jr., *The Ultimate Priority on Worship* (Chicago: Moody, 1983), 13-22.

2. Discuss the elements of biblical worship that cause discipleship and church growth?
3. How does your worship overflow from the church to your daily life?

### **Session 15: Celebration Worship Service**

The implementation of this project concluded with a Celebration Worship Service on June 17, 2012 (see Appendix 15). The Praise Team led the congregation with songs about missions and evangelism. I gave a message about Bible characters who devoted their life to cross-cultural evangelism (see Appendix 16). The message encouraged the congregation to put into practice what they learned throughout the seminar. I challenged them to renew their commitment to cross-cultural evangelism as exemplified by the Bible characters I shared about. The congregation decided to move the usual last Sunday of the month potluck fellowship to this day in order to further enhance a celebrative spirit as they dined together.

The congregation conducted a special program (see Appendix 17) after the lunch fellowship. We took time to recognize those who joined the seminar, as well as their respective leaders. We listened to featured testimonies about the lessons they learned. Others gave testimonies of their experiences in cross-cultural evangelism. Instead of a message, a leader demonstrated the presentation of One-Verse Evangelism. I concluded the presentation by giving closing remarks of appreciation and commendation to their continued participation of cross-cultural evangelism. The song leader led in singing “I Love to Tell the Story.” Participants were reminded to remain in their seat after the closing prayer to fill out the questionnaire form. We ended the program with a closing prayer as we held hands together in a circular formation.

The leaders assisted me in distributing the questionnaire forms to their group members. I reminded them that the results of the survey would help me improve my leadership as a pastor, as well as my strategy in cross-cultural evangelism. The leaders would use their comments to guide in their ministries. I reiterated my commitment to assist them with whatever concerns they might have as they continue in cross-cultural

evangelism among their friends and other people. Then, the leaders met with their respective groups to schedule their next meeting, and coordinate themselves with their cross-cultural evangelism.

### **Conclusion**

It has well been said that the best teacher is experience. The implementation of this fifteen-week project has taught me so much. It taught me academically, theoretically, and spiritually. My relationship with God, with the church members, and with others was greatly enriched. I was challenged to be resourceful, intuitive, and assertive as I planned, implemented, and supervised the project.

The magnitude of this project taught me to humbly recognize my limitations and the need for depending on others. It was a humbling experience to explain to the church members the necessity to cooperate in implementing the project. It took courage to overcome my pride and approach others for assistance. But, all along, the project taught me to fully rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. Only he could make it fruitful as he worked through the lives of the participants.

I cannot measure the success of this project with numerical results alone. My heart's desire was for this experience to have a lasting impact on the spiritual lives of the individuals and the church. The change will result in Kingdom growth for years to come. My prayer is that we will together comply with the apostle Paul's admonition to Timothy: "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Tim 2:2).

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

The racial components of International Bible Church and the unprecedented growth of the ethnic population in the United States inspired me to complete this project on cross-cultural evangelism and church growth. The population growth among ethnic people in America will surely offer a great opportunity for evangelism and church growth. It does, however, require education and training to conduct cross-cultural evangelism. This project aimed to meet those needs.

The evaluation of this project in this chapter is according to the following criteria: evaluation of purpose, evaluation of goals, evaluation of methodology, and evaluation of the effectiveness of the project. I conclude the evaluation of this project with my theological and personal reflections.

#### **Evaluation of Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to develop a contextual cross-cultural evangelism and church growth strategy for the International Bible Church in Hampton, Georgia. The following sequence describes the strategy applied in this project. First, participants learned about the historical, cultural, and religious backgrounds of the three racial components of the church: Anglos, African Americans and Filipinos. This was accomplished by conducting three sessions that dealt with these races. An Anglo and an African American speaker spoke about their respective people. I then took charge of discussing about my own people, the Filipinos. The fourth session was devoted to cross-cultural evangelism strategies. We reviewed the previous three sessions and discussed



adjusting the evangelism approaches of the participants according to the backgrounds of their prospects.

I realized, however, that an understanding of these races would not move the participants into action. So, after this conclusion, the fourth session focused on stimulating their passion for lost souls. I knew all along that these goals were all but a dream without the actual implementation of cross-cultural evangelism. Each team, composed of two individuals was encouraged to be of different races. For instance, an Anglo teamed up with a Filipino as they went out to evangelize a participant's relative or friend. They talked about contextualizing the gospel message according to the prospect's cultural and religious background.

The next step was the evaluation and further comprehension of cross-cultural evangelism. We met this need by requiring members to have small group discussions for evaluation, mutual encouragement, and learning from one another. This was further supplemented by an informal sharing time with other participants. I also encouraged them to attend evangelism seminars offered by the local association or state convention. This project was intended to be ongoing even after the training. We will, therefore, prove and improve its effectiveness over the course of time. To achieve these goals, I encouraged participants to continue with their cross-cultural evangelism, attend seminars, and have intermittent self or group evaluation.

### **Evaluation of Goals**

I stated in chapter 1 the four goals of this project. The first goal was to educate church members regarding the different cultural backgrounds of the church's target groups of people. The three sessions that focused on understanding the three racial components of the church accomplished the first goal. The second goal was to train the responding members to do a systematic cross-cultural evangelism. The four sessions devoted on evangelism that geared toward cross-cultural evangelism had achieved the second goal. These lessons dealt with spiritual preparation, which involved their own

salvation and spiritual growth. The lessons were followed by a formal preparation, which included the different strategies of evangelism and led to a practicum on evangelism.

In my conversation with some of the participants, they have expressed their excitement and contentment for using the One-Verse Evangelism strategy. In addition to this, one session devoted to understanding the cultural background of other races gave them knowledge to have tactful, systematic cross-cultural evangelism. One participant was surprised to learn that most Filipinos consider themselves Christians because of their Roman Catholic religion. This information encouraged her to understand the teachings of this religion in order to better explain the gospel in a systematic, contextualized manner.

The third goal was to involve those who became believers in discipleship. This goal implied an ongoing endeavor because discipleship will continue long after the project is over. I devoted four sessions to equip participants to disciple those who became believers as a result of their cross-cultural evangelism. The first session dealt with the descriptions of a disciple according to Jesus. This was followed by Jesus' method of helping believers to mature. I taught this with an acronym for the participants to easily remember and be able to teach it themselves. The acronym was IDEA, which stands for Instruction, Demonstration, Exposure and Association. The overall method of discipleship of Jesus was done in a true-to-life setting as he mingled and interacted with people. He lived and dealt with actual circumstances of life while his disciples watched and listened.

The remaining session dealt with church growth as achieved through the five functions of the church: evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and worship. Discipleship and church growth happen when new believers are involved in the five functions of the church. The participants learned to establish a personal relationship with the new converts as they guide them through the process of discipleship.

We focused more on learning about discipleship outside the four walls of a classroom in the actual day-to-day activities and circumstances in the life of a new believer. One participant expressed his great relief to realize that discipleship is not so

much of an academic endeavor as much as a practical application of God's Word in his daily life. He felt convicted that he needed to be more consistent in applying the Word of God in his personal life as he dealt with other people and circumstances of life.

Furthermore, he became more inspired and confident to disciple new believers as he shared his own life struggles. This in turn encourages the new convert to have mutual transparency and be disciplined thereby.

The fourth goal was the hardest for me to discuss as it centered on my own personal goal. It demanded humility on my part as I encouraged the group leaders and participants to freely express their observations and criticisms. It required honesty with myself as I evaluated my attitude and performance. The improvement of my personal life, pastoral leadership, and ministry asks for my courage to face reality.

The following goals dealt with my personal growth in three areas. The first focused on the area of developing and improving my teaching skill. This required preparing all the lessons and gathering all the materials to supplement them. With the exception of two sessions led by invited speakers, I conducted all of the sessions. In my discussions with participants, they presented some observations and advice to improve the seminar. Some of them shared words of encouragement and compliments to my animated presentation, flavored with personal, humorous experiences in cross-cultural evangelism. However, others gave honest but constructive criticism to improve my teaching skill. One pointed out that the Power Point presentation would have been a lot more effective if the slides were not crowded with so much information.

Some of sessions were hurried and the participants did not have enough time to digest the lesson. Others were honest enough to point out that my accent and pronunciation sometimes blurred their understanding. However, they were quick to clarify that the handouts and subsequent group discussions provided what they missed. This was a challenge for me to slow down and at the same time, strive to cover the lesson within the allotted time.

The second goal for personal growth was in the area of cross-cultural evangelism strategy. Many of the materials presented in these sessions were the result of years I spent on cross-cultural evangelism in the United States. These were supplemented by materials from books and articles on cross-cultural evangelism. In addition to these, I had attended training events and seminars through the years. The writing of this project also required me to do some research by reading books on cross-cultural missions.

My personal ministry experiences among Anglo and African American leaders and members of the congregation gave me additional insights to be more effective in cross-cultural ministry and evangelism. The research, preparation, and presentation of the lessons in this seminar further enriched and polished the lessons that I learned in the past. In my friendly, informal discussions with the non-Filipino members, they spoke candidly as we shared about our cultural differences. As a result, there was a constant mutual learning process of cross-cultural evangelism strategy.

This seminar further equipped me to be more understanding, considerate, and sympathetic toward non-Filipino people when their cultures clash with mine. Instead of treating them as rude and insensitive for being direct and upfront, I learned not to take it as a personal assault. This further conditioned and prepared my mind and emotions to get involved in cross-cultural evangelism. Overall, the participants have noticed some improvements in the way I understood the cultural characteristics of non-Filipinos. Such understanding improved my contextualized cross-cultural evangelism strategy. All of these lessons learned through the years filtered into the lessons in this seminar. God had been preparing me over a lifetime for such an opportunity.

The third goal for my personal growth was in the area of my leadership skills of planning, coordinating, and supervising the implementation of the project. The planning of this project required me to consult with people outside the church. I solicited the advice and participation of personnel from the North American Mission Board, the Georgia Baptist Convention and the Henry Baptist Association. My faculty supervisor, my

doctoral degree cohorts, and other friends also offered some ideas. Then, I coordinated with my church leaders and explained to them the goals and rationale of the project toward the spiritual and numerical growth of the church. The actual implementation of the project required my supervisory leadership to monitor the progress not only of the project but also that of the participants and their leaders.

I will always be greatly indebted to all the denominational personnel who assisted me personally and provided material resources. My leadership skill in taking the initiative to consult and coordinate with these people enhanced my resourcefulness and intentionality. My supervisory and coaching efficiency were further refined as I worked closely with our church leaders. This growth gave me an insatiable desire to have better leadership competence by launching a similar project in the future.

### **Evaluation of Methodology**

The project had two orientations before the training sessions. One was for the leaders and the other for the participants. These two orientations went as intended. The seminar was composed of four sessions on personal evangelism, four sessions on cross-cultural evangelism and four sessions on the functions of the church. This balanced treatment of the different aspects of the project proved valuable as it helped me to cover what the participants needed to learn. The process, however, was not without flaws. I discuss these flaws as this chapter progresses.

Twenty-five individuals committed themselves to participate in the training. Of the thirteen sessions, including the participants' orientation, there was an average attendance of 20. This garnered an average attendance of 4 for each of the 5 small groups represented. Eighteen of the 25 participants submitted questionnaires. Two of the participants moved out of the states after the training. Others were constrained by job schedules and other unavoidable circumstances and failed to have a consistent attendance. These circumstances were such that even a written covenant of faithful

attendance would not have covered. I gently prodded the absentees to be faithful in their commitment to attend.

The session time offered another limitation. We conducted all the sessions in the church on Sunday afternoons, with the exception of one held in the home of a deacon. We served light lunches for the participants. The participants, however, were already exhausted when we started the meeting. The length of allotted time restrained me from having more discussion. The small group sessions held during the week to discuss the list of assigned questions greatly compensated for what was not accomplished during the meetings on Sunday.

Another limitation was insufficient time to do more actual evangelism. Add to this the frustration of not spending more time with each group as they met together. I made a point to meet with the small group leaders, in either formal or informal settings, in person or by phone. These leaders in turn, did their best to encourage and assist their respective small group members. With the leaders' supervision, the teams practiced presenting the gospel by using the One-Verse Evangelism approach and coordinated their schedules of presenting the gospel to the lost.

### **Effectiveness of the Project**

The effectiveness of the project was evaluated in three approaches. The first was by the questionnaires given before and after the project. Second, I had personal dialogue with the group leaders and some of the participants. Third, the attitude of the participants toward cross-cultural evangelism after the seminar was measured. Some gave this information in written form and others gave their input orally during my informal interaction with them in a small group or one-on-one setting.

### **The Questionnaire**

The pre-project and post-project questionnaires gave me a more substantial means of evaluating the effectiveness of how the project was conducted. The questionnaire

consisted of twenty-five questions. Twenty questions of which five were multiple choice, dealt with evangelism. Only one specific question was about discipleship. I realized, however, that issues about discipleship intertwined with the other questions on evangelism.

The choice statements indicated several options of methods for evangelism. Only two had chosen the One-Verse Evangelism method before the training began. Fifteen participants preferred using it after the training. This method was followed by “The ABCs of Evangelism” and “the Four REs of Evangelism.” It seemed to me that some of the participants had already used the last two methods before this training. They preferred to stick with those approaches.

In the multiple choice statements, the participants measured their reactions with “1” being the most important and “5” as the least important. It was interesting to discover that many of the participants marked “1” on personal devotion as the primary motivating factor for them to be more involved in evangelism. The participants indicated that other motivating factors of evangelism were discipleship and ministry involvement. It delighted me to realize that they grasped what I had reiterated all along: evangelism ought not to be just academic. These three factors obviously supplemented each other and caused an overflow of a more passionate involvement in cross-cultural evangelism.

The other related reasons that emboldened the participants to do evangelism were in the form of the following statements included in the questionnaire:

1. Prayer gives me courage to do evangelism.
2. Fellowship with other believers gives me encouragement to do evangelism.
3. Being involved in church ministries gives me opportunity to share the gospel.
4. Listening to Sunday sermons convicts me to share the gospel.

Of the 25 participants, 17 of them answered with either “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” on all these statements. The number who responded in the affirmative was slightly higher than on the pre-project questionnaire. It seemed to me that the training had helped many of them to affirm the importance of prayer, fellowship, involvement in church ministries,

and intently listening to my message every Sunday as a motivation to do evangelism.

The result of the questionnaire showed that more than half of the participants indicated that “Evangelism Training” and “Group Bible Study” equipped them the most for sharing the gospel. Their responses seemed to indicate that training in evangelism would not only take place in formal session, but also at informal gatherings. One of these informal gatherings would be a home Bible study or other small group meetings where members are encouraged by the testimonies of other believers. Those settings included the opportunity to practice sharing the gospel in a non-threatening setting with some attendees who were not believers.

The participants responded to the following statement to determine their motive for evangelism: “I do evangelism as (1) a church program; (2) a hobby; (3) an optional church activity; (4) a ministry, or (5) an obligation.” The result of the pre-project questionnaire showed that 10 participants marked either “1” or “2.” The post-project questionnaire, however, doubled the number of participants who marked the last two reasons. The “ministry” option was closely followed by “obligation” as other motivating factors of evangelism.

This response of the participants seemed to indicate that the seminar greatly enhanced their passion for God and compassion for the lost. Their conviction of evangelism as a ministry and a responsibility had obliged them to share the gospel. It reminded me of what Paul wrote, “I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome” (Rom 1:14-15).

### **The Participants’ Evaluation**

I encouraged the participants to honestly write their observations and evaluations of the project. Such feedback would improve the implementation of the project for future use. One of the leaders gave her observation:



In the beginning, everyone was so enthusiastic about One-Verse Evangelism [method]. But the excitement and passion of some participants diminished as the project ended. The good thing is, there were others who kept their passion and enthusiasm to do cross-cultural evangelism. . . . Schedule a follow-up visit with the participants to help them implement what they have learned.<sup>1</sup>

These participants who kept their passion and enthusiasm implemented the project. They serve as catalysts and leaders to carry on the cross-cultural evangelism ministry of the church beyond the end of this project.

The time schedule for the training as indicated previously, was a challenge for me to overcome. In line with this, some of the respondents wrote, “Have the seminar on another day, other than Sunday. Set up a better time, [because] after lunch, people get sleepy.”<sup>2</sup> Another participant wrote, “[Let us] do it on a yearly basis . . . provide more resources.”<sup>3</sup> One of the youth suggested,

Have ministry seminars such as how to evangelize the youth . . . implement group activities to have more interaction. Conduct a community service to have more opportunities to build a relationship with those in the community . . . provide some materials [about cross-cultural evangelism] for us to read.<sup>4</sup>

The desire to have more seminars further encouraged me. One participant suggested that we “visit with other churches of different cultures.”<sup>5</sup> Some expressed desire to further enhance their understanding of other cultures. The youth impressed me with their creativity in enriching the knowledge they learned from this seminar. These responses gave other observations that I would have missed.

### **The Participants’ Change of Attitude**

The participants responded as to how the seminar changed their attitude toward

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<sup>1</sup>Church Leader 1, written evaluation, Stockbridge, GA, August 1, 2012.

<sup>2</sup>Youth Leader 1, written evaluation, Hampton, GA, July 31, 2012.

<sup>3</sup>Church Member 1, written evaluation, Hampton, GA, August 5, 2012.

<sup>4</sup>Youth Leader 2, written evaluation, Hampton, GA, July 29, 2012.

<sup>5</sup>Church Leader 1, written evaluation.

cross-cultural evangelism. One of them declared,

I have to be bold and intentional to share Jesus in a one-on-one presentation of the gospel in spite of cultural barriers. I have to learn to overcome those barriers by forgetting who I am and just do it, as I rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to enlighten and convict people. [Because] regardless of cultural barriers, we are commanded to evangelize.<sup>6</sup>

Other respondents described how they benefited from the seminar:

I enjoyed the variety of perspectives. I gained new understanding of different cultures.<sup>7</sup>

The seminar taught me to be able to approach people and tell them about the gospel more easily.<sup>8</sup>

[It] had encouraged and motivated me to be more aggressive in evangelism.<sup>9</sup> I learned how to deal with each different culture in the area of evangelism. [The seminar] made me step up and be bold to speak with other races about the gospel. . . .<sup>10</sup>

[It] had helped me to be aware that my approach in evangelism varies from culture to culture. . . .<sup>11</sup>

I became more motivated to share the gospel to people of different cultures . . . more sensitive to other cultures.<sup>12</sup>

[It] gave me a better outlook as to how I am supposed to bring people to the Lord.<sup>13</sup>

One of the leaders gave her insight by insisting that culture is not a hindrance but a stepping stone:

The seminar made me more aware that culture should not be a barrier in spreading the gospel. Instead, use culture to reach out to others. How? Knowledge of another culture establishes a common ground of communication and a starting point of relationship and eventually made it easier to present the gospel.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Church Leader 3, written evaluation, Hampton, GA, July 30, 2012.

<sup>7</sup>Church Leader 4, written evaluation, Hampton, GA, August 5, 2012.

<sup>8</sup>Youth 1, written evaluation, Rex, GA, July 30, 2012.

<sup>9</sup>Church Leader 2, written evaluation, Hampton, GA, July 30, 2012.

<sup>10</sup>Church Member 2, written evaluation, Jonesboro, GA, August 1, 2012.

<sup>11</sup>Church Leader 3, written evaluation.

<sup>12</sup>Church Leader 5, written evaluation, Rex, GA, August 1, 2012.

<sup>13</sup>Church Leader 6, written evaluation, Conley, GA, July 29, 2012.

<sup>14</sup>Church Leader 1, written evaluation.

Her well-articulated observation enlightened and encouraged others.

The final question I asked them was how the seminar affected their spiritual life and passion for the lost. Some of the respondents shared the effects of the seminar in their personal life:

It brought me closer to the Lord.<sup>15</sup>

It really helps me to put my trust in the Lord as I try to contextualize my approach so that people can understand it.<sup>16</sup>

I want to learn more about the various cultures that I encounter.<sup>17</sup>

It made me bolder in my desire to evangelize. But like others, I need more encouragement from my fellow Christians to keep me going.<sup>18</sup>

The youth leaders expressed their passion as they sensed the urgency of evangelism: “It challenged me to make the gospel an urgent priority.”<sup>19</sup> “I had the knowledge but I did not get to practice as much. It might have been due to my lack of not trusting the Holy Spirit.”<sup>20</sup> One of the group leaders claimed that the seminar “was a blessing to me as I was equipped to do cross-cultural evangelism. [Because of this] I have five people who accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior.”<sup>21</sup> Another group leader said, “My favorite verse that inspired me to go on mastering my cross-cultural evangelism method is Philippians 1:6 that says, ‘Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.’”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Youth 2, written evaluation, Conley, GA, July 30, 2012.

<sup>16</sup>Church Member 3, written evaluation, Conley, GA, July 29, 2012.

<sup>17</sup>Youth Leader 2, written evaluation, Hampton, GA, July 31, 2012.

<sup>18</sup>Church Leader 1, written evaluation.

<sup>19</sup>Youth Leader 2, written evaluation, Hampton, GA, July 29, 2012.

<sup>20</sup>Youth Leader 1, written evaluation.

<sup>21</sup>Church Member 4, written evaluation, Rex, GA, July 30, 2012.

<sup>22</sup>Church Leader 3, written evaluation.

The changes that happened in the lives of these respondents convinced me that the efforts I put into this project were worth it. The fact that these were but the initial results of the project further encouraged me. The lessons the participants learned and their increased compassion for the lost will continue to motivate them in their spiritual growth and evangelism ministry. As time passes, I expect further exponential results in and through their lives as they continue to share the gospel with people of other cultures.

### **Strengths of the Project**

The results of the evaluation convinced me that the participants were better equipped to share the gospel with people of other cultures. The knowledge they gained about different cultures and the strategy of cross-cultural evangelism motivated and emboldened them. The initial effects of the personal spiritual lives of the participants created an enthusiasm and a sense of urgency for cross-cultural evangelism.

Participants were immersed in the teaching of the Word of God. They learned of Bible characters who carried out cross-cultural evangelism. Small Group meetings during the week enhanced the learning experience of the participants with further discussion and mutual encouragement. The participation of the members in the practicum and the actual presentation of the gospel has balanced the theoretical aspect of the project. The effects of the training in the lives and ministry of the respondents proved to be the strength of the project.

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

The prominent weakness of the project was the time the fifteen seminars were conducted. Some of the respondents pointed this out in their questionnaire. It was obvious that the timing had affected their concentration and assimilation of the lessons. The limited time duration of each session did not permit us to have further discussions and interactions, which would have greatly enhanced the learning experience of the participants.

I sensed the leader's limited time and efforts to follow up and encourage each

participant. This was partly due to my insufficient time in meeting with the leaders for consultation and coordination. It seemed to me that the restriction on meeting with the leaders affected the participants negatively in having a more aggressive sharing of the gospel for the duration of the project. I realized, however, that part of the reason was that the participants required more time to get familiar with the One-Verse Evangelism method of presenting the gospel.

### **Reflections on the Project**

I will deal with two aspects in my reflections of the project. The first focuses on the theological aspect and how it affected the spiritual life of the participants. The second aspect deals with my own personal reflection. This includes how the project benefited me personally and my recommendations to improve this implementation in the future.

#### **Theological Reflection**

The seminar was focused more on teaching the participants of the different cultural backgrounds of the three racial components of the church. The ultimate objective was to train them to contextualize their evangelism according to the culture of their prospects which became apparent as we went through the lessons and training. We also dealt with the theological and spiritual aspects of the project. The participants spent time for mutual prayer, encouragement, and admonition from the Word of God, and shared their testimonies.

We discussed some Bible characters who were involved in cross-cultural evangelism. The Old Testament presented the call of Abraham to be a blessing to all nations. The New Testament taught us about Jesus who exemplified cross-cultural evangelism. He gave the Great Commission to his followers before he left for heaven. He told them to “go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:16). These Bible characters exemplified the urgency of evangelism. We talked about their passion and sacrifices in issuing a call for people to follow Jesus. It was no wonder that

some of the respondents mentioned how their relationship with God became more intimate. The participants relied more on the Holy Spirit to love other people, and to share the gospel. They drew closer to the Lord as they stood up for and began to live out what they believed.

The participants learned about the cultural and theological aspects of cross-cultural evangelism. They experienced spiritual transformation as we went through the process. The lasting effects and results will become more evident as time passes. I believe that they will continue to grow spiritually as they become more involved in cross-cultural evangelism. My responsibility demands follow up on what we have begun. Intentionality and cooperation from among all the church leaders and members are required to continue the implementation of this project. This would help overcome a chronic spiritual disease of seasonal evangelism.

### **Personal Reflection**

On a personal level, I had the opportunity to improve my skill in planning and coordinating. The project challenged my ingenuity and resourcefulness to put up such a project composed of several sessions. The several weeks of teaching gave me the chance to improve my giftedness in this area. Coaching the leaders and supervising the participants further polished my relational skills. The project tested my perseverance, but, overall I learned to have patience as I encouraged and assisted the participants. This to me worked both ways as they have also sensed my weaknesses and limitations. They in turn, became more sympathetic and compliant as we learned and worked together.

As to the future implementation of this project, I would like to see some changes and improvements. First, the time element of the components needs to be much longer. The participants may prefer to conduct the seminar in a place where there is more privacy and concentration. The seminar could last for several days. This would give ample time for discussions both in the general assembly and in a group setting. Second, implement the practicum more often in a small group setting under the supervision of the

leader. A team composed of two individuals has to repeatedly practice together by alternately presenting the One-Verse Evangelism method. Third, the pastor and leaders must have more time for consultation and coordination, having constant open communication to discuss their concerns and problems. It is necessary for them to have mutual encouragement and prayer to carry on with the project.

Fourth, the pastor and the leaders must work together to ensure the actual implementation of the project as they encourage and assist the participants. This would require the pastor's availability and willingness to spend time with the leaders and for the leaders to do the same with their respective group members. Finally, I would love to have the materials used in this project in printed form for future use and reference as the demand for more cross-cultural ministries increases. It is my ardent expectation that as this project is repeatedly implemented by others, it would be further developed and polished for a more effective and productive implementation.

### **Conclusion**

The United States continues to experience an unabated influx of immigrants. At the same time, transmigration, inter-racial marriages, trade and commerce are happening all over the world. These are brought about by much faster and efficient transportation and high-technological means of communication. These global changes have gradually altered the way mission work and evangelism are done. They are changes that offer the Christian community a greater opportunity, and a gigantic challenge to be more intentional and equipped in cross-cultural evangelism. This is true more than ever, whether one is in America or anywhere in the world.

This unprecedented change in the global demographic profile, however, does not come without a price. It brings a greater challenge of inter-racial interaction and inter-personal relationships. Exposure to different ethnicities with all their cultural and religious backgrounds could undermine the stability of believers who do not have a strong foundation in their Christian faith. This doubt could lead to being more open to the tenets

of humanism and the possible adoption of this philosophy. This belief insists on the innate ability and intelligence of man to excel and prosper apart from the divine blessing and intervention of God.

As people of different races migrate to the United States and other countries, there is the tendency for these immigrants and the local people to lean toward syncretism, in which they mix all the different aspects of religions. This is done at the expense of the purity of the gospel and the exclusive claim of the Lord Jesus Christ. He said of himself, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

It was with this backdrop and the encouragement of those familiar with our church family that motivated me to launch this project. There is a unique racial composition in the International Bible Church involving three distinct racial groups. This project addressed the numerical growth of the congregation through cross-cultural evangelism. It provided the long-term benefit of spiritual maturity. It is my ardent prayer that the materials, strategies, and trainings laid out in this project may enlighten and challenge others. It would hopefully emphasize the necessity and urgency to understand the culture of other people, establish rapport and relationships with them, and have a contextualized presentation of the gospel. It is also my desire that this project become a catalyst for an efficient methodology and implementation of the common goal of a more fruitful cross-cultural evangelism. This would be a great reward and consolation on my part for all the efforts and hours that I put into this project.



## APPENDIX 1

### SESSION 1: THE LEADERS' ORIENTATION, MARCH 4, 2012

#### A. Opening Remarks:

A word of appreciation was given for their commitment to participate in the implementation of the project.

#### B. Discussion of the Rationale of the Project

The Project would:

1. Move members to evangelize and not just simply socialize.
2. Help members to overcome their attitude of seasonal evangelism.
3. Help the members shed their habit of treating evangelism training as simply a theoretical and educational activity.
4. Help the church leaders to educate the members about the cultural and religious backgrounds of the three major racial components of International Bible Church.
5. Create a radical change, reversing the deteriorating trend of the congregation in evangelism.

#### C. Explanation of the Responsibilities of the Leaders

1. Set an example of good attendance.
2. Be familiar with the project.
3. Be committed to the implementation of the project.
4. Conduct weekly small group meeting.
5. Assist respective group members.

#### D. Clarification of the Schedule of the Seminar

1. There would be fifteen sessions, including two orientations.
2. The seminar would be conducted every Sunday for fifteen consecutive Sunday afternoons.
3. The last session would be a Celebration Worship Service.

#### E. Overview of the Lesson Outlines: (Appendix 18)

#### F. Presentation of the Questionnaire Form

1. The forms are to be filled out before and after the implementation of the project.
2. The objective is to gauge any change in the participants through the training and implementation of the project.
3. The results of the surveys would guide the pastor and leaders to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the project.
4. Their feedbacks would help the pastor evaluate his pastoral leadership and strategy of cross-cultural evangelism.
5. The leaders will use the result of the survey to improve the church ministry strategy.

## APPENDIX 2

### SESSION 2: THE PARTICIPANTS' ORIENTATION, MARCH 11, 2012

#### A. Opening Remarks

A word of appreciation expressed for their commitment to undergo the training and to be involved with the implementation.

#### B. Discussion of the Rationale of the Project (as discussed in the Leaders' Orientation)

#### C. Clarification of the Schedule of the Training Sessions (as discussed in the Leaders' Orientation)

#### D. Overview of the Lessons (as discussed in the Leaders' Orientation)

#### E. Suggestions to Overcome Fear in Evangelism

1. Undergo training seminar
2. Group leaders would assist members
3. Team up with other participants.
4. Share the gospel first with relatives and friends.

#### F. Presentation of the Questionnaire Form: (as discussed in the Leaders' Orientation)

## APPENDIX 3

### SESSION 3: INTRODUCTION TO PERSONAL EVANGELISM, MARCH 18, 2012

Evangelism is one of the most discussed topics among evangelical churches. It is also one of the most neglected commandments of Jesus Christ. The objective of this seminar is to help the participants understand, equip, and train them to actually implement evangelism.

#### A. Definitions of Evangelism:<sup>1</sup>

1. Douglas Cecil (Professor, Dallas Theological Seminary)  
“The biblical meaning of evangelism centers on two ideas: the communication of the gospel, or the good news about Jesus Christ; and the intent of inviting the listener to trust Christ.”
2. Delos Miles (Professor, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary)  
“Evangelism is being, doing, and telling the gospel of the kingdom of God, in order that by the power of the Holy Spirit persons and structures may be converted to the Lordship of Christ.”
3. Peter Wagner (Professor, Fuller Theological Seminary)  
Evangelism is seeking and finding the lost, effectively presenting the gospel to them and persuading them to become Christ’s disciples, responsible members of his church.”
4. John Mark Terry (Professor, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary)  
“Evangelism is presenting Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit so that people will become his disciples.”

#### B. The Priority of Personal Evangelism<sup>2</sup>

1. Priority of leadership and laity
2. Priority of equipping the laity
3. Reasons of maintaining the priority of personal evangelism
  - a. Satan violently attacks personal evangelism.

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<sup>1</sup>John Mark Terry, *Church Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1997), 3.

<sup>2</sup>Darrell W. Robinson, “The Priority of Personal Evangelism,” in *Evangelism for a Changing World*, ed. Timothy Beougher and Alvin Reid (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1995), 113-17.

- b. Churches and Christians tend to move away from rather than toward evangelism.
- c. Backslidden Christians are not comfortable with personal evangelism.
- d. Priority time must be planned in the church's schedule and calendar.

#### C. The Seven Principles of an Evangelistic Life:<sup>3</sup>

- 1. Keep your priorities straight.
- 2. Develop a consistent process.
- 3. Make the gospel clear.
- 4. Rely on the Spirit's power.
- 5. Cultivate a heart for lost people.
- 6. Immerse yourself in ministry.
- 7. Nurture and assimilate new believers into the body.

#### D. The Motives for Evangelism<sup>4</sup>

- 1. The love of God
- 2. The imperative to make disciples
- 3. The lostness of persons
- 4. The wrath of God
- 5. The judgment of Christ<sup>5</sup>

#### E. Group Discussion Guide Questions

- 1. Discuss the different definitions of evangelism and how they help you overcome fear.
- 2. What are your fears of sharing the gospel especially among people of different cultures? How do you overcome them?
- 3. What are the possible commonalities you have with your prospects? How will these help you overcome your fears?

Regardless of the method used to reach people, a passion for souls is the critical factor in personal evangelism. A passion for souls has as its source our experience of salvation and a deep love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul had the inner motivation for the love of Christ that compelled him to share the gospel (2 Cor 5:14).

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<sup>3</sup>Douglas M. Cecil, *The Seven Principles of an Evangelistic Life* (Chicago: Moody, 2003), 17-128.

<sup>4</sup>Delos Miles, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman, 1983), 111-58.

<sup>5</sup>David Watson, *I Believe in Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1976), 88-91.

## APPENDIX 4

### SESSION 4: PREPARATION FOR PERSONAL EVANGELISM, MARCH 25, 2012

Evangelism is spiritual warfare. It is going to Satan's territory to bring the message of liberation from sin and salvation from hell. The messenger of the gospel must be prepared. He needs to be spiritually equipped by the word of God, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The following are essential elements to prepare the participants to be victorious in spiritual warfare through evangelism.

#### A. Spiritual Preparation

1. Experienced regeneration<sup>1</sup>
2. Assurance of salvation
3. Consecrated life<sup>2</sup>
4. Compassion for the losts
5. Rely on the Holy Spirit.

#### B. Personal Preparation<sup>3</sup>

1. Mental, emotional, and physical preparation
2. Know the content of the gospel.
3. Scripture study and memorization
4. Care should be given to preparing the attitude.
5. Physical hygiene and manner and style of dress

#### C. Formal Preparation

1. Supervised preparation
2. Simultaneous preparation
3. Continuing preparation

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<sup>1</sup>Timothy Beougher and Alvin Reid, *Evangelism for a Changing World* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1995), 119-20.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1993), 51-60.

<sup>3</sup>Darrell W. Robinson, "The Priority of Personal Evangelism," in *Evangelism for a Changing World*, ed. Timothy Beougher and Alvin Reid (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1995), 121.

#### D. Group Discussion Guide Questions

1. Why are regeneration and assurance of salvation necessary for spiritual preparation?
2. How does a consecrated life give greater impact in your personal evangelism?
3. How would your prospect sense your compassion for him?

Preparation for evangelism without moving on to action is utter absurdity. We must share the gospel with compassion for the lost people, with boldness, and total confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit to convict and convert people.

## APPENDIX 5

### SESSION 5: STRATEGIES OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM, APRIL 1, 2012

A strategy of evangelism is the means by which evangelism takes place. A strategy is a bridge so that the message can be shared. Part of this lesson will equip the participants how to “break the ice” to share the gospel intelligently and confidently. He will learn to put his confidence in the Holy Spirit who will convict and convert the lost.

#### A. Different Strategies of Evangelism<sup>1</sup>

1. Proclamation evangelism strategy
2. Aggressive evangelism strategy
3. Relational evangelism strategy
4. Being a witness

#### B. Life-Style Evangelism<sup>2</sup>

1. Every-member evangelism
2. Everyday evangelism
3. Everywhere evangelism
4. At-home evangelism
5. Demonstration evangelism
6. Body evangelism

#### C. Five Keys to Overcome Fear in Witnessing<sup>3</sup>

1. Passion
2. Prayer
3. Partnership
4. Power
5. Preparation

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<sup>1</sup>Douglas M. Cecil, *The Seven Principles of an Evangelistic Life* (Chicago: Moody, 2003), 40-49.

<sup>2</sup>Delos Miles, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman, 1983), 187.

<sup>3</sup>William Fay and Ralph Hodge, *Share Jesus without Fear* (Nashville: LifeWay, 1997), 9-23.



D. The FORCE Strategy

1. Family
2. Occupation
3. Religion
4. Culture
5. Evangelism

E. The ABCD Approach to Evangelism<sup>4</sup>

1. Associate with non-believers.
2. Befriend the unbelievers.
3. Create an interest with unbelievers.
4. Declare the gospel to unbelievers.
5. Encourage a response from the unbelievers.
6. Follow-up those who responded to the gospel.

F. Assignment: Write your personal testimony following this outline

1. My life before receiving Christ.
2. What caused me to realize my spiritual need.
3. How I became a Christian.
4. How Christ helps me in my daily life.

Success in witnessing is not bringing someone to Christ. It is living out your Christian life, and sharing the gospel as you trust God for the results.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>“ABC Evangelism” [on-line]; accessed 19 July 2011; available from <http://www.scribd.com/doc/50634501/12/handout-abc-evangelism.html>; Internet.

<sup>5</sup>Fay and Hodge, *Share Jesus without Fear*, 7.

## APPENDIX 6

### SESSION 6: PRACTICUM OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM, APRIL 7, 2012

One of the objectives of this seminar is to overcome the seasonal evangelism by developing habitual lifestyle evangelism. We aim to have an attitude of doing evangelism not as an obligation, but a natural part of our daily Christian life.

#### A. Guidelines of Personal Testimony Preparation<sup>1</sup>

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your preparation.
2. Be brief and to the point about your past.
3. Center on Christ, not yourself.

#### B. Suggested Outline of Personal Testimony

1. My life before receiving Christ.
2. What caused me to realize my spiritual need.
3. How I became a Christian.
4. How Christ helps me in my daily life.

#### C. Personal Evangelism Demonstrations

##### 1. The ABCD of Evangelism:

- a. Admit you are a lost sinner.  
“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23).
- b. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.  
“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).
- c. Confess him as your Lord and Savior.  
“That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom 10:9).
- d. Don’t put it off.  
“I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor 6:2b).

##### 2. The Four REs of Evangelism:

- a. Realize that God loves you.  
“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that

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<sup>1</sup>Douglas M. Cecil, *The Seven Principles of an Evangelistic Life* (Chicago: Moody, 2003), 162-64.

whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

- b. Recognize you are a sinner.  
“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God“ (Rom 3:23).
- c. Repent of your sins.  
“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out . . .“  
(Acts 3:19a).
- d. Receive Jesus into your heart as Lord and Savior.  
“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me” (Rev 3:20).

3. One-Verse Evangelism<sup>2</sup>

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23).

- a. Watch Power Point presentation
- b. Watch Video clips demonstration

D. Small Groups’ Practicum

1. Personal Evangelism Team Practice
2. Coordinate prospects for visitation
3. Evangelism Report Form orientation
4. Prayer time for fruitful evangelism

Evangelism is being engaged in spiritual warfare that requires the power of the Holy Spirit. Learning to share the gospel is cooperating with the Holy Spirit by allowing him to work in us and through us.

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<sup>2</sup>Randy D. Raysbrook. *One-Verse Evangelism* (Colorado Springs: The Navigators, 2000).

## APPENDIX 7

### SESSION 7: CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AMONG ANGLOS

#### **Guest Speaker: Dr. Steve Parr, Georgia Baptist Convention April 15, 2012**

The religious background of the first generation Europeans provided a good foundation of the government they established in the New World. However, the purity of their faith has deteriorated as it was handed down to their ancestors.<sup>1</sup> Understanding their religious heritage provides an efficient ground in presenting the gospel message.

#### A. Their Ancestral Origin<sup>2</sup>

1. First generation are from Europe<sup>3</sup>
2. Current population are from fourth, fifth, sixth generation and beyond
3. Multi-generation Anglos consider U.S. as homeland

#### B. Their Cultural Traits<sup>4</sup>

1. Competitive in their profession
2. Straightforward in their communication
3. Competitive in their profession
4. Goal-oriented in their aspiration

#### C. Their Cultural Assimilation Process<sup>5</sup>

1. Majority but declining in population
2. Easily assimilate into the culture being in the majority
3. Generally receptive to other cultures

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<sup>1</sup>Malcolm McDow and Alvin L. Reid, *Firefall* (Enumclaw, WA: Pleasant Word, 2002), 168.

<sup>2</sup>Peter B. Levy, ed., *100 Key Documents in American Democracy* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1994), 5.

<sup>3</sup>McDow and Reid, *Firefall*, 204.

<sup>4</sup>“Literacy” [on-line]; accessed 30 June 2011; available from <http://www.literacynet.org/lp/hperspectives/anglocult.html>.

<sup>5</sup>Steve Parr, “Cross-Cultural Communication among the Anglos,” In Cross-Cultural Evangelism Seminar at International Bible Church, July 17, 2011.

D. Evangelism Strategy among the Anglos<sup>6</sup>

1. Recognize their general understanding of the gospel.
2. Establish credibility and mutual friendship.
3. Be available in times of crisis.

The cultural traits of the Anglos would enhance the presentation of the gospel as it is. The brevity and uncertainty of life would cause the Anglos to evaluate their priorities. The messenger would do well to be frank and yet friendly in his approach.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Jim Henderson, *Evangelism without Additives* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2007), 136-39.

## APPENDIX 8

### SESSION 8: CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AMONG AFRICAN AMERICANS

**Guest Speaker: Dr. Kenneth Ellis, North American Mission Board<sup>1</sup>  
April 22, 2012**

Most of the ancestors of the African Americans today came to the United States against their will. The culture of the African Americans present generation is a reflection of their ancestral origin. The bitter experience of their ancestors, however, did not deter them from embracing the Christian faith. Instead, they found ways to integrate their culture with their new found faith.<sup>2</sup>

#### A. The African American Experience<sup>3</sup>

1. Their migration to New World against their will
2. Their survival against the tyranny of slavery
3. Their settlement and adjustment to their adopted country

#### B. The African American Contemporary Issues<sup>4</sup>

1. Racism and discrimination
2. Health and healthcare access
3. Criminal justice system

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<sup>1</sup>Kenneth Ellis, "Ministry That Changes Lives," in Cross-Cultural Evangelism Among the African Americans, July 24, 2011, International Bible Church, Hampton, GA.

Kenneth Ellis, "Cross-Cultural Communication among African Americans," in Cross-Cultural Evangelism Seminar at International Bible Church,.

<sup>2</sup>"African American: Culture, History, Legacy, and Heritage of a Proud People [on-line]; accessed 8 July 2011; available from <http://www.africanamericans.com>; Internet.

<sup>3</sup>The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. "In Motion: The African American Migration Experience" [on-line]; accessed 8 July 2011; available from <http://www.inmotionname.org/home.cfmljsessionid>; Internet.

<sup>4</sup>"African American Contemporary Issues" [on-line]; accessed 10 July 2011; available from [http://www.bookrags/wiki/African\\_American\\_contemporary\\_issues.htm](http://www.bookrags/wiki/African_American_contemporary_issues.htm); Internet.

4. Wealth and business development<sup>5</sup>
5. Family and the role of the African American Church

C. The African American Culture<sup>6</sup>

1. The cultural impact in their literatures
2. The cultural influences in their religion
3. The traditions they observe

In spite of the dark past of the African Americans' ancestors, the present generation had strived to aspire in all aspects of their lives including their relationship with their Creator. The messenger of the gospel would do well to be sensitive of their past and be understanding and sensitive of their attitude and spirit as he present the gospel message.

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<sup>5</sup>“A Discussion of Contemporary Issues Facing African Americans” [on-line]; Accessed 10 July 2011. Available from <http://www.iasb.uscourts.gov/Community/section5b.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup>Papa, Maggie, Amy Gerber, and Abeer Mohamed. “George Washington: African American Culture Through Oral Tradition” [on-line]; accessed 8 July 2011; available from <http://www.gwu.edu/~e73afram/ag-am-mp.html>; Internet.

## APPENDIX 9

### SESSION 9: CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AMONG FILIPINOS

**Speaker: Sam R. Evangelista, International Bible Church  
May 6, 2012**

Most of the Filipinos consider themselves as Christians and godly. An understanding of their cultural background will greatly help the messenger of the gospel to be more intelligent and tactful in dealing with them. This would greatly assist him in showing the necessity of their needs for regeneration and salvation.

#### A. Their Historical Background<sup>1</sup>

1. Ancestral origin of their original inhabitants
2. Historical highlights that changed the life of the people
3. Geographical descriptions of the different regions
4. Regional characteristics and differences

#### B. Their Cultural Background<sup>2</sup>

1. Contributing countries that influenced the Filipino culture
2. Languages spoken in the different regions
3. Traditions practiced and dictate social interaction
4. Core Values that influence the fabric of the society

#### C. Their Religious Background<sup>3</sup>

1. “Christian religions” and their major differences
2. Mohammedanism in the south and their influences
3. Major Cults that came from other countries
4. Local Cults that originated from the Philippines

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<sup>1</sup>Infoplease, “Philippine: History, Geography, Government, and Culture” [on-line]; accessed 8 July 2011; available from <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107887/html>; Internet.

<sup>2</sup>Gillian Moore, ed., *Library of Nations: Southeast Asia* (Madrid: Time Life Books B.V., 1987), 101.

<sup>3</sup>“Filipino Culture & Religion: Main Religions in the Philippines” [on-line]; accessed 8 July 2011; available from <http://www.tagalogLang.com/Filipino-Culture/Religion/religion-in-the-Philippines.html>; Internet.



D. Their Arrival to United States<sup>4</sup>

1. First wave of immigrants: The “Sakadas”
2. Second wave of immigrants: The Professionals
3. Third wave of immigrants: The Relatives

Establishing commonality and friendship are the main key ingredients of having an effective and fruitful evangelism. Knowing and understanding them better would help you establish relationship and determine the best approach to present the gospel.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Filipino-American Centennial Commemoration: Timeline: Filipino-American History” [on-line]; accessed 8 July 2011; available from <http://www/apa/si/edu/filamcentennial/timeline.html>; Internet.

<sup>5</sup>Greg Laurie, *The Upside Down Church* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1999), 84-86.

## APPENDIX 10

### SESSION 10: STRATEGY FOR CROSS-CULTURAL EVANGELISM

**Speaker: Sam R. Evangelista, International Bible Church  
May 13, 2012**

“God’s truth does not vary from culture to culture. However, their expression and communication within a particular culture will be shaped and influenced by their culture. Biblical principles are universal, but when applied in a specific culture, they will reflect the value and priorities of that culture.”<sup>1</sup>

#### A. What is culture?

1. What is communication?
2. Verbal and nonverbal communication

#### B. Developing the Trust Bond<sup>2</sup>

1. Acceptance of self
2. Acceptance of the other
3. Mutual Respect

#### C. Knowing the Social Structure<sup>3</sup>

1. The social organization
2. The flow of truth
3. The conflict of norm

#### D. Competence in Cross-Cultural Communication<sup>4</sup>

1. Overcoming ethnocentrism
2. Overcoming stereotypes
3. Overcoming prejudice and discrimination

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<sup>1</sup>Patty Lane, *A Beginner’s Guide to CROSSING Cultures: Making Friends in a Multi-Cultural World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 136.

<sup>2</sup>Marvin K. Mayers, *Christianity Confronts Culture: A Strategy for Cross-cultural Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 17-73.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 77-79.

<sup>4</sup>Everett M. Rogers and Thomas M. Steinfatt. *Cross-Cultural Communication* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 1999), 221-40.

#### E. Group Discussion Guide Questions

1. Name and discuss how people have prejudice and discrimination with other cultures.
2. Name and discuss the basic cultural differences of the three racial components of International Bible Church.
3. Discuss some barriers that you have encountered in the past to have an effective cross-cultural communication.

The gospel has sufficient “power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile” (Rom 1:16). Its message is best understood when it is communicated with cultural understanding and the desire to establish relationship with people who are different from us. Lane writes, “God’s purposes are fulfilled when the Christian community has the skills to relate to and build relationships with those of different cultures. And it is precisely these skills and genuine appreciation for all people that the world is desperately in need of finding.”<sup>5</sup> People want to hear and understand the gospel message when it is communicated with clarity and cultural sensitivity.

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<sup>5</sup>Lane, *A Beginner’s Guide to CROSSING Cultures*, 137.

## APPENDIX 11

### SESSION 11: DISCIPLESHIP AND CHURCH GROWTH, MAY 20, 2012

The Great Commission of Jesus Christ commands every believer to be involved in making disciples. Discipleship begins with the conversion of a person with an objective of spiritual growth and maturity. Discipleship is the key to numerical and spiritual growth of the church as each individual member becomes disciple of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

#### A. The definition of discipleship<sup>2</sup>

1. “A disciple is a follower, a student of a certain teacher.”
2. “A disciple is a committed follower of Jesus Christ. It means more than just a believer, but a person who demonstrates belief by action.”

#### B. Jesus’ description of a disciple<sup>3</sup>

1. He denies self, takes up his cross daily, and follows him.  
“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23).
2. He puts Christ before self, family, and possessions.  
“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26).
3. He is committed to Christ’s teachings.  
“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples” (John 8:31).
4. He is committed to evangelism.  
“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matt 9:37-38).
5. He bears fruit.  
“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciple” (John 15:8).

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<sup>1</sup>Gene Warr, *You Can Make Disciples* (Waco, TX: Word, 1978), 65-66.

<sup>2</sup>Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1988), 56-57.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 57-73.

### C. Biblical Principles of Discipleship<sup>4</sup>

1. The Principle of Selection
2. The Principle of Association
3. The Principle of Instruction
4. The Principle of Demonstration

### D. Pastoral Role in Discipleship<sup>5</sup>

1. His functional role as a pastor
2. His commitment in making disciples
3. His practices as a disciple-making pastor

### E. The Pastor as a Coach

1. He tells them what needs to be done and why.
2. He shows them how to do it, and do it with them.
3. He lets them do it as he releases and empowers them.

### F. The Discippler's Role and Task<sup>6</sup>

1. He is a witness as he shares the gospel.  
“When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God” (1 Cor 2:1).
2. He serves as the spiritual parent as he nurtures new believers.  
“I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed you are still not ready” (1 Cor 3:1-3).
3. He acts as a servant as he discipless them.  
“What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task” (1 Cor 3:5).
4. He is a faithful steward as he equips them for the ministry.  
“So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful” (1 Cor 4:1).
5. He mentors them as he encourages and supports them.  
“By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds” (1 Cor 3:10).

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<sup>4</sup>Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 27-36.

<sup>5</sup>Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor*, 74-89.

<sup>6</sup>Basic Training for Church Planters, “Growing Believers in the Faith: The Discippler's Role and Task” (Alpharetta, GA: North American Mission Board of the SBC, 2003), 73.

#### G. Group Discussion Guide Questions

1. Discuss the different approaches of discipleship mentioned in this lesson.
2. Share to the group what aspect of your spiritual life needs further discipleship?
3. How can we improve our church's discipleship ministry?
4. What suggestions do you have to assist the pastor to improve his discipleship ministry?

Discipleship is a partnership between the disciple-maker and the disciple. There has to be a mutual cooperation for a discipleship process to happen.

## APPENDIX 12

### SESSION 12: FELLOWSHIP AND CHURCH GROWTH, MAY 27, 2012

The informality experienced in genuine fellowship creates an environment conducive for an effective and productive discipleship ministry as people tend to be more comfortable and transparent to one another in sharing their respective challenges and struggles of life.

#### A. Fellowship Defined:

Fellowship is “experiencing life together. It includes unselfish loving, honest sharing, practical serving, sacrificial giving, sympathetic comforting, and all the other ‘one another’ commands found in the New Testament.”<sup>1</sup>

#### B. The Biblical Basis of Fellowship (1 John 1:1-7)

1. Believe in the same God.  
“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life” (v.1).
2. Proclaim the same message.  
“We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us” (v.3a).
3. Walk in the light.  
“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another . . .” (v.7a).
4. Purified by His blood.  
“. . . and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin” (v.7b).

#### C. The Early Believers’ Fellowship<sup>2</sup>

1. They were committed to the Scriptures.  
“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching . . .” (Acts 2:42a).
2. They were committed to one another.  
“All the believers were together and had everything in common . . . Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts” (Acts 2:44, 46).

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<sup>1</sup>Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 138.

<sup>2</sup>Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Church* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1990), 61-75.

3. They were committed to prayer.  
“They devoted themselves to . . . prayer” (Acts 2:42c).
4. They were committed to praise and worship.  
“Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts . . . praising God and enjoying the favor of all people” (Acts 2:46,47).
5. They were committed to outreach.  
“. . . and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47b).

#### D. The Functions of Fellowship in the Early Church<sup>3</sup>

1. Opportunity for mutual ministry.  
“From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Eph 4:16).
2. Practice unity and cooperation in spite of diversity.  
“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had” (Acts 4:32).
3. Exercise church discipline and accountability.  
“When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened” (Acts 5:5).
4. Availability for mutual support and assistance.  
“All the believers were together and had everything in common” (Acts 2:44).
5. A venue for discipleship and worship  
“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).

#### E. Characteristics of Genuine Fellowship<sup>4</sup>

1. Members’ relationship is with authenticity.
2. Members experience mutuality.
3. Members share genuine sympathy.
4. Members readily grant mercy.

#### F. Group Discussion Guide Questions

1. How does discipleship occur in fellowship?
2. Discuss the biblical basis of fellowship that generates discipleship.
3. How do you contribute to a fellowship that leads to discipleship?

Disciple-makers will do well to avail of the effectiveness of discipleship in fellowship when people tend to be more receptive to admonition, correction, and instruction of the Word of God.

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<sup>3</sup>Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Discipleship* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1987), 59-76.

<sup>4</sup>Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*, 139-43.



## APPENDIX 13

### SESSION 13: MINISTRY AND CHURCH GROWTH, JUNE 3, 2012

Every believer is expected to get involved in the ministry for his spiritual sustenance and growth, as well as for the whole body of Christ. “Nothing helps you grow as a Christian like service.”<sup>12</sup> Each one has at least one gift God has given him to minister to others.

#### A. The Biblical Basis of Ministry<sup>3</sup>

1. Every believer was called to ministry.  
“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers, and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26-27).
2. Every believer has one or more spiritual gifts.  
“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Pet 4:10).
3. Every believer should be equipped to do the work of ministry.  
“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Eph 4:11-12).

#### B. Every believer is a minister.<sup>4</sup>

1. He is created for ministry.  
“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Eph 2:10).
2. He is saved for ministry.  
“Who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace . . .” (2 Tim 1:9a).
3. He is authorized for ministry.  
“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and

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<sup>1</sup>Bob Russell, *When God Builds a Church: 10 Principles for Growing a Dynamic Church* (West Monroe, LA: Howard, 2000), 178.

<sup>3</sup>Avery T. Willis, Jr., *MasterLife: The Disciple’s Mission* (Nashville: LifeWay, 2008), 115.

<sup>4</sup>Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message & Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 368.

make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:18-19).

4. He is commanded to minister.  
“Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave” (Matt 20:26-27).
5. He is needed for the ministry.  
“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it” (1 Cor 12:27).
6. He is accountable for the ministry.  
“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Col 3:23-24).

#### C. Ministry is the Expression of my “SHAPE”<sup>5</sup>

Rick Warren developed this acronym that he claims determine what a person’s ministry should be.

1. Spiritual gifts
2. Heart (Passion)
3. Abilities
4. Personality
5. Experiences

#### D. Minimize Bureaucracy to Maximize the Ministry<sup>6</sup>

1. Establish a Ministry Placement process.
2. Provide On-The-Job Training.
3. Never start a ministry without a minister.
4. Establish minimum standards and guidelines.
5. Allow people to quit or change ministries gracefully.
6. Trust people: delegate authority with responsibility.
7. Provide the necessary support.
8. Renew the vision regularly.

#### E. Group Discussion Guide Questions

1. Share and discuss your respective “SHAPE” to the group.
2. How do you utilize your gifts in our church?
3. How can others help you discover and use your gifts?

God-given gifts are intended to be utilized for the edification of the receiver and the whole body of Christ, and for the expansion of God’s kingdom. The discipleship ministry of the church plays a vital role of helping every individual member to discover and identify, develop, utilize and maximize the usage of his gifts.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 369-75.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 381-92.

<sup>7</sup>C. Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership: Becoming a Servant Leader* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2010), 36.

## APPENDIX 14

### SESSION 14: WORSHIP AND CHURCH GROWTH, JUNE 10, 2012

Worship is defined as “honor paid to a superior being. It means ‘to give homage, honor, reverence, respect, adoration, praise, or glory to a superior being.’” It gives the idea of one who “prostrates himself before a superior being with a sense of respect, awe, reverence, honor, and homage.”<sup>1</sup>

#### A. Evangelism in Worship<sup>2</sup>

1. Worship precedes evangelism.
2. Worship pervades evangelism.
3. Worship preserves evangelism.
4. Worship participates in evangelism.

#### B. Proclamation in Worship<sup>3</sup>

1. Facilitates a dialogue between people and the preacher.
2. Initiates a dialogue between people and God.
3. Requires a response to God and to each other.<sup>4</sup>
4. Corrective and redemptive proclamation of God’s Word<sup>5</sup>

#### C. Education in Worship

1. In worship, we affirm our faith.
2. In worship, we obtain spiritual nourishment.
3. In worship, we are equipped for difficult circumstances.
4. Special Worship Services creates exceptional educational impact.

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<sup>1</sup>John MacArthur, *John MacArthur’s Bible Studies: True Worship* (Chicago: Moody, 1982), 8.

<sup>2</sup>C. Welton Gaddy, *The Gift of Worship* (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 58-90.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 70-76.

<sup>4</sup>Robert Webber, *Worship is a Verb* (Nashville: Abbott Martyn, 1992), 109.

<sup>5</sup>Franklin M. Segler, *Understanding, Preparing for, and Practicing Christian Worship*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996), 113-18.

#### D. Mutual Edification in Worship<sup>6</sup>

1. We edify by our presence.
2. We edify by our participation.
3. We edify by our song and speech.
4. We edify by observing the Lord's Supper.

#### E. Worship as a Way of Life<sup>7</sup>

1. Worship and prayer
2. Worship and the family
3. Worship and work
4. Worship and social action
5. Worship in three dimensions<sup>8</sup>
  - a. The outward dimension
  - b. The inward dimension
  - c. The upward dimension

#### F. Group Discussion Guide Questions

1. How does discipleship occur in worship?
2. What are the essential elements of biblical worship that cause discipleship?
3. How does your worship overflow from the church to your daily life?

Worship that pleases God requires the consecration of our total being to his blessed will. "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship" (Rom 12:2). It is a life whose worship overflows beyond the Worship Hall into his daily life of interaction with other people.

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<sup>6</sup>Warren Wiersbe, *Real Worship: It Will Transform Your Life* (Nashville: Oliver Nelson, 1986), 108-20.

<sup>7</sup>Webber, *Worship is a Verb*, 203-13.

<sup>8</sup>John MacArthur, Jr., *The Ultimate Priority on Worship* (Chicago: Moody, 1983), 13-22.

APPENDIX 15

SESSION 15: CELEBRATION WORSHIP SERVICE,  
JUNE 17, 2012

Prelude

Scripture Reading  
(Matthew 28:18-20)

Praise and Worship  
Celebrate, Jesus, Celebrate  
Amazing Grace – My Chains Are Gone  
Victory in Jesus

Opening Prayer

Welcome and Greetings

Special Number:  
“Lord, I Offer My Life to You”

Sermon:  
“Cross-Cultural Evangelism”  
Matthew 28:18-20

Invitational Song:  
“I Surrender All”

Worship in Giving

Doxology

Announcements

Closing Prayer and Benediction

## APPENDIX 16

### CELEBRATION WORSHIP SERVICE SERMON, JUNE 17, 2012

Title: Cross-Cultural Evangelism

Text: “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go 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 I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’” (Matt 28:18-20).

Introduction: The basis of bringing the gospel message through cross-cultural evangelism finds its way all the way back to the Old Testament with the calling of Abraham. It was magnified in the New Testament with the ministry of Jesus Christ and the apostles.

#### A. Abraham’s Compliance Caused Cross-Cultural Evangelism.

“The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you’” (Gen 12:1-3).

1. Abraham’s obedience created a great nation.  
“I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you” (v.2a).
2. Abraham’s obedience became a blessing to others.  
“I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing” (v.2b).
3. Abraham ministered cross-culturally to “all peoples on earth.”  
“I will bless those who bless you . . . and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (v.3).

#### B. Daniel’s Courage Caused Cross-Cultural Evangelism.

“Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before” (Dan 6:10).

1. Daniel dared to defy the law to obey God.  
“Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before” (Dan 6:10).
2. Daniel’s defiance led him to the lions’ den.  
“So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den” (Dan 6:16).

3. Daniel's deliverance led to the king's decree.  
"I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel" (Dan 6:26a).

#### C. God's Compassion Caused Cross-Cultural Evangelism through Jonah.

"But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. He prayed to the Lord, 'O Lord, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity'" (Jonah 4:1-2).

1. God's compassion led to Jonah's commission.  
"The word of the Lord came to Jonah, son of Amittai. 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me'" (Jonah 1:1, 2).
2. Jonah's eventual obedience led to cross-cultural evangelism.  
"Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh . . . . On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: 'Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned'" (Jonah 3:3a, 4).
3. Jonah's preaching led to Ninevites' mass repentance.  
"The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth" (Jonah 3:5).

#### D. Jesus' Great Commission for Cross-Cultural Evangelism

1. Jesus was explicit about it. He gave a clear command of going to "all nations."  
"Therefore go 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 I have commanded you . . ." (Matt 28:19-20a).
2. Peter exemplified it. He shared the gospel with a Gentile family.  
"You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection . . ." (Acts 10:27-29).
3. Paul expanded it. He preached the gospel to all kinds of people groups.  
"I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings" (1 Cor 9:22b-23).

#### Conclusion:

Cross-cultural evangelism is a God-given mandate for all Christians. It reaches its final glorious culmination in the book of Revelation when a great multitude of people from every nation will worship the Lamb of God.

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.' (Rev 7:9-10)

APPENDIX 17  
APPRECIATION PROGRAM,  
JUNE 17, 2012

Opening Remarks

Recognition of Leaders

Recognition of Participants

Personal Testimonies  
of Lessons Learned and  
Cross-Cultural Evangelism Experiences

Demonstration of  
One-Verse Evangelism

Closing Hymn  
“I Love to Tell the Story”

Closing Remarks  
Appreciation and Commendation

Closing Prayer

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Activities after the Program:

Distribution of Questionnaire Forms

Groups' Meetings



## APPENDIX 18

### OUTLINE OF THE TRAINING SESSIONS

#### A. Personal Evangelism and Church Growth

Session 1: Introduction to Personal Evangelism

Session 2: Preparation for Personal Evangelism

Session 3: Strategies of Personal Evangelism

Session 4: Practicum of Personal Evangelism

#### B. Cross-Cultural Evangelism and Church Growth

Session 1: Cross-Cultural Evangelism among the Anglos

Session 2: Cross-Cultural Evangelism among the African Americans

Session 3: Cross-Cultural Evangelism among the Filipinos

Session 4: Cross-Cultural Evangelism Strategy

#### C. The Functions of the Church in Relation to Church Growth

Session 1: Discipleship and Church Growth

Session 2: Fellowship and Church Growth

Session 3: Ministry and Church Growth

Session 4: Worship and Church Growth

APPENDIX 19  
RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

**Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to assist the pastor in developing a strategy that will help the congregation understand the necessity of cross-cultural evangelism for the spiritual and numerical growth of the IBC. This research is being conducted by Pastor Sam Evangelista for the purposes of assisting him in fulfilling the requirements for his project research which is a part of his Doctor of Ministry studies at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. The result of this survey will also further equip him and the congregation to understand better the strengths and weaknesses. He will be guided accordingly with this survey to strategize the growth of our church.

The information you give will be treated with strict confidentiality. You can respond to the statements with the understanding of complete anonymity. *Your participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time.* When you complete this interview process, and sign your name below, you are giving permission for the use of your responses in this research.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide the last four digits of your telephone number. This number is used for questionnaire identification only so that you may answer question with complete anonymity. The last four digits of your telephone number:

\_\_\_\_\_.

You will be asked about some of your beliefs and understanding of evangelism as related to the growth of the church. Please read each item carefully and respond according to your own conviction by circling your choice. There is no “right” or “wrong” answer.

SA = Strongly Agree

D = Disagree

A = Agree

SD = Strongly Disagree

N = Do not Agree nor Disagree

?/NA = Don't Know or Not Applicable

1. The believers must evangelize for the church to grow.

SA    A    N    D    SD    ?/NA

2. Evangelism can take place during the worship service.

SA    A    N    D    SD    ?/NA

3. Church ministries greatly help our church growth.

SA    A    N    D    SD    ?/NA

4. The Great Commission is Jesus' command for church growth.

SA    A    N    D    SD    ?/NA

5. Evangelism is trying to convert hearers to the Baptist denomination.

SA    A    N    D    SD    ?/NA

6. The gospel is about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

SA    A    N    D    SD    ?/NA

7. Discipleship classes motivated me to receive Jesus as my Lord and Savior.

SA    A    N    D    SD    ?/NA

8. If you live a godly life, you don't have to share the gospel to evangelize.

SA    A    N    D    SD    ?/NA

9. The ultimate goal of evangelism is to help people prosper in this life.  
SA A N D SD ?/NA
10. A church does not have to evangelize as long as it ministers to people.  
SA A N D SD ?/NA
11. I was motivated to receive Jesus as I continued to fellowship with other believers.  
SA A N D SD ?/NA
12. Prayer gives me courage to do evangelism.  
SA A N D SD ?/NA
13. Fellowship with other believers gives me encouragement to do evangelism.  
SA A N D SD ?/NA
14. Being involved in church ministries gives me opportunity to share the gospel.  
SA A N D SD ?/NA
15. Listening to Sunday sermons convicts me to share the gospel.  
SA A N D SD ?/NA
16. I don't know how to do cross-cultural evangelism.  
SA A N D SD ?/NA
17. I am afraid to do cross-cultural evangelism.  
SA A N D SD ?/NA
18. I do not do cross-cultural evangelism because I might offend people.  
SA A N D SD ?/NA
19. It is hard to share the gospel with other races.  
SA A N D SD ?/NA

20. Sharing the gospel with other races is only the responsibility of the pastors, missionaries, and others.

SA    A    N    D    SD    ?/NA

Note: You may mark more than one answer or indicate your answer on the space provided on the following items.

21. I use the following methods of evangelism:

The 4 R's of Evangelism     Eternal Life booklet (from NAMB)

The ABC of Evangelism     "One Verse" Evangelism

The Romans Road     Others

22. I engage in personal evangelism:

Once a week     As opportunity comes

Once every two weeks     Never

Once a month

Rank your answers to the following questions from most important as 1 and least important as 5

23. I do evangelism as:

A church program     A ministry

A hobby     An obligation

An optional church activity

24. I use the following methods of evangelism:

The 4 R's of Evangelism     Eternal Life booklet (from NAMB)

The ABC of Evangelism     "One Verse" Evangelism

The Romans Road     Others

25. I engage in personal evangelism:

- Once a week                       As opportunity comes  
 Once every two weeks     Never  
 Once a month

Rank your answers to the following questions from most important as 1 and least important as 5

26. I do evangelism as:

- A church program             A ministry  
 A hobby                             An obligation  
 An optional church activity

27. The following have helped me to be more equipped in evangelism:

- Reading books on evangelism     Evangelism training  
 Group Bible study                       "One on one" mentoring  
 Home visitation

28. The following have motivated me to be more involved in evangelism:

- Worship Services             Ministry involvement     Fellowship  
 Personal Devotion             Discipleship class

## APPENDIX 20

### ONE-VERSE EVANGELISM

The following is from Randy Raysbrook's *One Verse Evangelism*<sup>1</sup>

#### **How to Share Christ's Love Conversationally and Visually.**

Many people feel that to be effective in evangelism they must memorize a complex illustration and a multitude of verses. But the Gospel is most powerful when shared with love, clarity, and simplicity.

One-Verse Evangelism is a simple, interactive way to share Christ's love conversationally and visually. It is based on asking questions and sharing. It's easy to learn because it uses just one verse. One-Verse Evangelism is also sensitive to people's busy schedules because it can be shared in just 10 or 15 minutes.

Here's a brief look at how it works. Let's say God's leading you to share the Gospel with your neighbor, Jeff. Write out Romans 6:23 on a piece of paper or a napkin: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Then put your Bible away. Ask Jeff if he would like to see a simple picture based on this verse that will explain God's relationship with people.

#### **WAGES**

Circle this word and ask, "How would you feel if your boss refused to pay you the wages that were due to you?" Deep down, we all know that it is only right that we get what we deserve. Similarly, we earn wages from God for how we have lived our lives.

#### **SIN**

Draw a circle around "sin," asking your friend what he thinks when he hears this word. You might explain that sin is more an attitude than an action. It can be either actively fighting God or merely excluding Him from our lives. You can ask, "Has God ever seemed far away?" If he says "Yes," add that that's one of the things sin does—it makes God seem far away. Now draw two opposing cliffs with a gap in between.

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<sup>1</sup>Randy D. Raysbrook, *One-Verse Evangelism* (Colorado Springs: The Navigators, 2000).

**DEATH**

Circle this word and ask what thoughts come to mind. Explain that death in the Bible always means some kind of separation.

**BUT**

While circling this word, mention that it is important because it means that a sharp contrast in thought is coming. What we have just looked at is bad news; what follows is good news.

**GIFT**

Draw a circle around this word. Ask, “If wages are what a person earns, then what is a gift?” Remind your friend that someone must purchase every gift.

**OF GOD**

Circle this and explain that the gift you are talking about is free. It is from God Himself. It’s so special that no one else can gift it. Ask, “How do you feel when someone gives you a special gift?”

**ETERNAL LIFE**

Circle these two words next, and then ask, “How would you define these words?” Contrast one side of the cliff, death, with the other side, eternal life. Ask, “What is the opposite of separation from God?”

**CHRIST JESUS**

Draw these words so they create a bridge between the two cliffs. Help your friend to consider that every gift has a giver, and only Jesus Christ can give the gift of eternal life.

**TRUST**

Write this word over the bridge you just drew. Explain that friends trust each other, and tell your friend that Jesus wants a trusting friendship with him. All he has to do is admit that he is responsible for the “sin” of either fighting or excluding God from his life. That is what trust means—trusting that Jesus wants to forgive us for rejecting Him from our lives. At this point, you can ask him if he wants to start a relationship with God that will last forever. If he says “Yes,” invite him to pray a short prayer in his own word, asking Jesus to forgive him.

Close by reminding him that this simple illustration shows what God is like: Someone who really cares about people, especially him. Invite him to read all about it in the Bible, perhaps beginning in the gospel of John.



APPENDIX 21  
EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

**Please answer the questions in light of the goals of the project.**

1. What did you learn from the cross-cultural evangelism seminar?
2. How did it affect your spiritual life?
3. How did it improve your cross-cultural evangelism?
4. What suggestions do you have
  - a. To improve the implementation of the project in the future?
  - b. For the pastor to improve in leading this seminar?
  - c. For you to improve in cross-cultural evangelism?
5. Do you have any other observation or suggestions for this seminar?
6. Can you express any blessings you have from this seminar?

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## ABSTRACT

### DEVELOPING A CONTEXTUAL CROSS-CULTURAL EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH STRATEGY FOR THE INTERNATIONAL BIBLE CHURCH, HAMPTON, GEORGIA

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This dissertation intends to design a contextual strategy of cross-cultural evangelism and church growth. Chapter 1 provides the ministry context of the International Bible Church. It includes the purpose, goals, rationale, definitions, limitations, and research methodology.

Chapter 2 presents the biblical and theological basis for doing cross-cultural evangelism. This covers Old and New Testaments characters who were involved in cross-cultural evangelism.

Chapter 3 deals with the theoretical and sociological foundation of cross-cultural communication. It underscores the importance of understanding the cultural, historical, and religious backgrounds of the three racial components of the IBC.

Chapter 4 describes the implementation of the project. The seminar covers three major topics: (1) evangelism (2) cross-cultural communication, and (3) discipleship and church growth.

Chapter 5 presents evaluation and modifications of the project for future implementation. This project affirms the increasing necessity and urgency to be equipped for cross-cultural evangelism in response to a growing multi-racial population.

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