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EQUIPPING BELIEVERS TO BECOME PERSONAL EVANGELISTS

AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, PRESTONSBURG, KENTUCKY

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EQUIPPING BELIEVERS TO BECOME PERSONAL EVANGELISTS
AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, PRESTONSBURG, KENTUCKY

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To Pam, Chris, and Sarah,
for their love, encouragement, and support.

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PREFACE

This project was an accomplishment involving many people, including my family, my church family, seminary professors, and an encouraging group of men known as a cohort. As pastor of a Southern Baptist church in eastern Kentucky, I knew that I needed the academic and practical training the D.Min. program offered if I was to be fully equipped to lead the church. After a careful review of the possible areas of concentration, I felt the D.Min. in Evangelism and Church Growth was the best option for my particular situation.

During the first seminar, Dr. Chuck Lawless and Dr. Jeff Walters explained how the program builds toward a fifteen-week ministry project that applies to each student's specific ministry setting. I found this challenge to be exciting as I began to consider the needs of my church. After careful consideration, I decided that my church, like most others, had a genuine need to focus on equipping its members for personal evangelism. As the project progressed from a mere concept to a structured plan, my excitement grew.

When the time came to implement the project, I felt blessed to actively involve the church family in the program of study in which they had been so faithful to encourage me. The fifteen-week project consisted of two church-wide surveys, a six-week sermon series, and a seven-week, small-group training session that involved ten individuals. Experiencing the church's excitement during the sermon series, and observing the

spiritual growth and development of the small-group participants, helped validate the project's appropriateness. I prayerfully considered and chose this project because it had great potential for the church and for individual believers who desire to share the gospel. However, I am most excited about the prospect of reaching many more lost souls with the gospel message as the church equips the saints and becomes a great commission church.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to my family for their constant support and encouragement. During the three years it took to complete this program of study, they have cheerfully made many sacrifices. They have encouraged me whenever I became discouraged, and they have strengthened me when I became weak. God has blessed me with a wife, son, and daughter-in-law who love God, are active in ministry, and understand God's calling on my life. I pray that God will allow me to bless others in the way that he has so graciously used others to bless me.

Jerry C. Workman

Prestonsburg, Kentucky

December 2013

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip groups of believers at First Baptist Church, Prestonsburg, Kentucky to confidently evangelize on a personal level. Robert E. Coleman makes the observation that men were to be Jesus' method of winning the world to God.¹ Based on Coleman's observation, it is the church's responsibility to equip believers to share their faith, on a personal level, with those who do not know Jesus Christ. If the church is to achieve this purpose, it must be intentional in its efforts.

Goals

This project sought to accomplish four goals which served as the criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the project. The first goal was for the congregation to recognize and understand the biblical mandate for personal evangelism. While most members were aware of the church's responsibility to evangelize the lost, some were not fully aware of the biblical responsibility for sharing the gospel on an individual basis. A common belief among congregations is that it is only biblically mandated, on an individual basis, for those with the spiritual gift of evangelism to share the gospel.

¹Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1993), 27.

The second goal was for the church's members to feel the urgency and the personal responsibility for reaching the lost. One reason for the lack of motivation in sharing the gospel on an individual basis was failure to realize the urgency involved. Many believers simply refused to acknowledge that they have friends and relatives who are in immediate danger of an eternity in a literal hell. Another reason for the lack of motivation was the refusal to accept personal responsibility; assuming that someone else will accept responsibility for this uncomfortable task.

The third goal was for a group of church members to be equipped, theologically and practically, to do personal evangelism. This initial small group was the first of many groups to be trained throughout the church's future. These individuals were required to engage in role playing and to submit personal evangelism reports to keep their training from being strictly academic.

The fourth and final goal was for me, as the pastor, to be better equipped to teach others to be personal evangelists. Through evaluating the effectiveness of this initial group's training, changes could be made to improve the results. Becoming better equipped myself to do personal evangelism allowed me to better equip others to personally share the gospel.

Accomplishing these goals allowed the church to have a method in place for equipping believers to become personal evangelists by giving them the theological and practical training necessary for sharing their faith. After completing this training, believers should have felt a greater level of confidence when presented with opportunities to evangelize unbelievers. Successful completion of this project made it possible to utilize Jesus' method of using men to win the world to God.

Ministry Context

The First Baptist Church (Irene Cole Memorial) is a Southern Baptist church located in the downtown section of Prestonsburg, Kentucky. Prestonsburg is the county seat of Floyd County, one of the state's eastern coalfield counties, and is located approximately two hours southeast of Lexington, Kentucky. It is a rural city with a population of approximately 3,250 people in Prestonsburg proper.² The city is located at the hub of five major highways: US 23 North, US 23 South, KY Route 80, KY Route 3, and KY Route 114 (Mountain Parkway); however, the church is not visible from any major thoroughfare. The population of Prestonsburg is primarily Protestant; however, the immediate area is home to a number of worship facilities for other religious faiths, including Catholics, Mormons, and Muslims.

The city's economy is closely tied to the coal industry and experiences directly proportional fluctuations in economic health. Since Prestonsburg is the county seat of Floyd County, it is no surprise that county government is a significant employer in the small town, as are the local hospital and the school system. The community is home to numerous locally owned small businesses and less than a dozen nationally recognized fast food restaurants. Perhaps because of past practice, people frequently travel to larger cities located two and three hours away for entertainment, shopping, healthcare, and dining, even though these services are now available much closer to home.

The people of Floyd County are proud of their mountain heritage, have a deep sense of family loyalty, and a strong respect for tradition. Although these bonds with the

²Kentucky State Data Center 2010 Census Data, Kentucky Cities: Population Change and Ranks, 2000-2010 [on-line]; accessed 17 April 2012; available from http://www.ksdc.louisville.edu/cities/2000_2010popchange_with_ranks.xls; Internet.

past are weakening, they are still noticeably present in the younger generation. As in most cultures, there is a tension that exists between generational age groups which manifests itself in many settings, including church.

Demographically, Prestonsburg is a small town and is expected to experience no significant change in population from 2010 to 2016 for a seven-mile radius around the church. For this same period of time, the percentage of population by age is expected to decrease by three percentage points for those 54 and under but increase by three percentage points for those 55 and older.³ Considering that total population for this period is expected to remain relatively unchanged, this shift most likely reflects an aging of baby boomers. From 2010 to 2016, average household income is expected to increase only modestly from \$41,142 to \$43,795; percentage wise the greatest increase will be in those earning between \$35,000 and \$74,999 annually.⁴

The demographic and income profile shows a predominantly white (less than 3 percent non-white), middle-aged community with 30 percent of households having annual income of \$15,000 or less, and 59 percent having income of \$34,999 or less.⁵ While population and families are expected to increase slightly in overall numbers on state and national levels over the next five years, both are expected to remain the same or decrease slightly in the church's community.⁶ This trend is true for both a seven and ten mile radius from the church.

³U.S. Census Bureau Census 2010 Data Esri Forecasts for 2011 and 2016, *Demographic and Income Profile Report*, report prepared by Esri Business Analyst, 13 March 2012.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

An expected increase in households (+0.10 percent) and an expected decrease in families (-0.14 percent) could indicate more ministry opportunities to singles, including divorcees and widows.⁷ Overall, the demographic profile shows a fairly stable community that has experienced little change in the past ten years, and is not expected to change significantly in the next five years. Since there is no expected increase in population from new people moving into the area, the church's growth must come from reaching the unchurched that are already living in the community.

Demographically, the church population mirrors that of the community with regard to ethnicity and, to a lesser extent, age. Church members are almost exclusively white, with the majority being baby boomers or older. However, members of the church have a reputation for being considerably more affluent than the average member of the community. The church's membership includes a high percentage of current, or retired, professionals and business owners.

Within the past two years, the church has begun an active college ministry. Prestonsburg does not have a four-year college, only a non-resident community college. Because of this fact, most students leave the community after graduating high school, and many do not return. The church has a noticeable void in the 20 to 35 age range. The obvious result of this void in young adults is a corresponding void in the preschool and children's departments.

Ironically, the church operates The Baptist Learning Center as a ministry of the church, which brings 60 to 65 preschool children and their parents through the church doors five days per week. Approximately 50 percent of these children are from

⁷Ibid.

unchurched families, and almost as many are from broken homes. Recently, individual church families have been matched with Learning Center families to build relationships and provide shepherding care as an outreach effort. The church's past efforts to reach Learning Center families have not been intentionally focused on building long term relationships.

The church was originally established in 1907 as The First Missionary Baptist Church of Prestonsburg, Kentucky, under the leadership of Pastor Charles Martin, with eight charter members. In 1908, evangelist W. H. Sledge held revival services in which 180 persons professed Christ as Lord and Savior during a three week period. Sledge then became the church's second pastor. The church built its first building in 1910 but lacked the financial means to complete the building. Through the Kentucky Baptist Convention, the church received a portion of the money to complete the building from the estate of a woman from Tennessee who had left money to be given to any church that would agree to name their church after her; The First Missionary Baptist Church changed its name to The Irene Cole Memorial Baptist Church.

The church is now in its third building and at its second location. The original building burned in 1942, the second building was razed in 1988 to make room for the present fellowship hall and educational building, and the current sanctuary was dedicated in 1972. In 1978, the church voted to change the church's name back to First Baptist Church, with Irene Cole Memorial to follow in smaller letters. The church is still recognized by many in the community as the Irene Cole Baptist Church.

During the period from 1943 to 1953, the church began three local missions known as Lancer, Slick Rock, and Holbrook; they are now known as Lancer Baptist

Church, Benedict Chapel Baptist Church, and Fitzpatrick Baptist Church. During the period from 1954 to 1962, seven local missions were started. FBC Prestonsburg has a long history of social ministries dedicated to meeting the physical needs of people within the church's community.

The church's history evidences its vision for evangelism and missions; however, in recent years this vision has manifested in a more secondary way. The members' view of evangelism is now about inviting people to church so they can hear the gospel explained, and missions is now about giving to support the cooperative program and meeting people's needs. There has been a shift away from hands-on, personal involvement, to a generous supporting role. Inviting people to church and generously giving to missions are both excellent but are incomplete by themselves.

As shown in Table 1, the average Sunday morning attendance for the past six years has fluctuated, nearing two hundred and then declining again. Some would ascribe this problem to the 200 Barrier; however, Kevin E. Martin, author of *The Myth of the 200 Barrier*, would contend it is because the church is a transitional church (141-225 average Sunday morning attendance).⁸ Based on the transitional church concept, the church is being hindered by a mindset and committee structure that works for small churches but not for larger churches. It should be noted that the church's bylaws call for nineteen standing committees, and families expect a strong, personal shepherding presence from the pastor. Whether attributed to the 200 Barrier or the transitional church concept, the fact remains that the church's growth pattern gives evidence of an inability to move beyond the two hundred level for Sunday morning worship. Average Sunday morning

⁸Kevin E. Martin, *The Myth of the 200 Barrier: How to Lead through Transitional Growth* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 63.

attendance has exceeded the two hundred level in only two of the past twenty years (211 in 2005 and 210 in 2004).

Table 1. Six-year growth pattern

YEAR	MORNING WORSHIP	SUNDAY SCHOOL	PERCENT S/S TO M/W	BAPTISMS	TRANSFERS
2011	161	105	65%	7	5
2010	175	107	61%	3	2
2009	197	112	56%	12	9
2008	184	98	53%	6	10
2007	194	99	51%	6	9
2006	187	108	57%	9	4

The fact that transfer growth either exceeds or closely follows baptismal growth for most years is indicative of the church's weakness in evangelism. It should be noted that this pattern holds true for twelve of the past twenty years. The low percentage of Sunday school attendance compared to morning worship attendance, coupled with the church's failure to maintain steady growth, shows the church is not effectively using Sunday school for evangelism or assimilation. Increased percentages for the last two years indicate an increased promotion of Sunday school among the church's existing population.

I have served as Senior Pastor at FBC Prestonsburg since September 1, 2006. The church also has a full-time Associate Pastor of Youth and Children, a part-time Minister/Director of Music, a Director for the Baptist Learning Center, and an Administrative Assistant. The church's constitution calls for congregational rule, with all major decisions being voted on by the members of the church. Assisted by a twelve-member deacon body and an associate pastor, I am to be the spiritual leader of the

church, charged with shepherding the flock. The church is set-up for a committee driven structure, with the pastor being an ex-officio member of every committee. Every ministry of the church falls under the guidance of a designated committee.

Rationale

Thom Rainer states a truth that is unsettling for many churches and Christians today when he writes, “A well-intending Christian can be very active in his or her church and never be challenged to reach the lost. That church member could be at church every time the door opened and still not become involved in outreach to the unchurched.”⁹ According to Rainer, this case holds true for most Christians in American churches. Simply put, churches are failing to do the very thing that Jesus Christ commissioned them to do in Matthew 28:19-20; they are failing to reach the lost because they are failing to equip the saints.

This failure cannot be taken lightly. When churches fail to equip believers to be personal evangelists, they are being disobedient to Jesus Christ, and are setting themselves up for certain failure. The seriousness of this error can be heard in the ominous tone of William Fay’s warning:

If you and the members of your church have forsaken your duty to reach back into the world, I can promise you your church will start to divide, to backbite, and to fight over nonessential Christian issues like hymnal selection and carpet colors. You will become keepers of a Christian aquarium instead of fishers of men. Your church will be on the way to spiritual death. In fact, I can prophesy to any church or to any believer without fear of being in error that if you choose not to evangelize, individually or collectively, your church will fossilize.¹⁰

⁹Thom S. Rainer, *The Unchurched Next Door: Understanding Faith Stages as Keys to Sharing Your Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 230.

¹⁰William Fay and Linda Evans Shepherd, *Share Jesus without Fear* (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 1999), 7.

Having an intentional plan for equipping believers to become personal evangelists is essential if a church is to remain active, vital, and healthy.

FBC Prestonsburg did not have a formal plan for equipping evangelists or making disciples. Individual members were encouraged to share the gospel with those they come in contact with; however, most of them did not feel comfortable doing so, and many did not know how. Often, when an opportunity was presented to share the gospel, the member allowed the opportunity to pass, and then called the pastor to suggest he initiate contact with the person. There was a general misconception that evangelism was primarily the responsibility of the pastoral staff and those with the spiritual gift of evangelism; this concept was not taught from the pulpit. As previously discussed, the church's historical growth pattern and transfer to baptism ratio are indicative of its weaknesses in evangelism.

This project focused on two important aspects of equipping believers to be personal evangelists. The first was aimed at helping church members to understand both the biblical mandate, and the urgency for personal evangelism. Proper motivation was provided by teaching them that failing to evangelize on an individual basis is not only disobedience (sin), it is also a refusal to be used by God to affect someone's eternal destiny. The second was aimed at helping believers move from having a knowledge of what they should do, to having the skills and confidence to actually put it into practice. The immediate benefit from this project was to equip a small group of believers to be personal evangelists. The ultimate benefit of this project is for the church to be continually equipping small groups of believers to become personal evangelists, and to be training individuals who will be able to train others in this area.

Definitions

To avoid ambiguity and confusion, it is necessary to define certain terms. The first term to be defined is *evangelism*. For purposes of this project, evangelism is defined as “the proclamation of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ with a view to bringing about the reconciliation of the sinner to God the Father through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. . . . Evangelism is based on the initiative of God himself. Because God acted, believers have a message to share with others.”¹¹ It must be noted that evangelism cannot be separated from discipling; evangelism is a part of discipling.

“Sharing the gospel” also requires clarification, especially as it relates to “sharing one’s faith.” In this sense, the *gospel* is defined as “the joyous good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. . . . Faith is more than intellectual agreement to a theoretical truth. Faith is trust placed in a living person, Jesus Christ. When the apostle Paul warned Christians of the dangers of following ‘another gospel’ (2 Cor 11:4), he was reminding them that any gospel different than the one he preached was no gospel at all.”¹² To “share the gospel” or “share one’s faith” goes further than to just share one’s personal testimony, it is to specifically share that salvation is through faith alone in Jesus Christ.

Limitations

In keeping with the guidelines established for this project, it was limited to a fifteen-week period. This time frame allowed for some initial feedback, and it was possible to gauge initial success with some degree of accuracy. It did not allow for

¹¹Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 410.

¹²Ronald F. Youngblood, ed., *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Nelson, 1995), 516.

assessment of long term results. Evangelism reports submitted by the participants at the end of the project helped determine their initial progress, but it was impossible to accurately predict their progress after the fifteen-week period. The fifteen-week limitation also made it impossible to know if the church initiates this method as a way to continually equip groups of believers to become personal evangelists, or if the church will effectively equip individuals to lead these groups.

Delimitations

I limited the small group that makes up the last seven weeks of the project to no more than ten participants. Group-member role playing, and speaking openly about personal fears and concerns relating to evangelism, were key elements to successfully accomplishing the goals of the group. Consequently, it was vital to create an atmosphere where each member would speak freely. A group number larger than ten would have made this goal of personal sharing more difficult due to, both, intimidation and time constraints. Group participants were volunteers who were at least eighteen years old.

Research Methodology

This project sought first to enlighten the entire congregation of FBC Prestonsburg to the biblical mandate for personal evangelism, and then to heighten their sense of urgency and personal responsibility for reaching the lost. It then sought to actually equip a small group of individuals, theologically and practically, to become personal evangelists. The final goal was for me to become better equipped, through this process, to train future groups in personal evangelism. The challenge was to measure these goals in a meaningful way.

The congregational goals were measured by two surveys, administered eight weeks apart. At the beginning of the project the entire congregation was invited to complete a questionnaire (Appendix 1) designed to measure how well they understood the biblical mandate for personal evangelism, the level of urgency they felt for reaching the lost with the gospel message, their understanding of the literalness of heaven and hell, and their personal responsibility as Christians for sharing the gospel. Participants were asked to express a level of agreement or disagreement, ranging on a scale from 1 to 10. Results of the first survey were summarized and retained.

After a six-week sermon series designed to accomplish the congregational goals, the congregation was asked to complete a second questionnaire (Appendix 2). The second questionnaire was very similar to the first questionnaire, and designed to measure the same items. The second questionnaire was summarized and the results compared to the results of the first survey to determine the project's level of success in achieving the congregational goals up to that point.

Toward the end of the sermon series, members of the congregation were invited to volunteer to be part of the ten-member group that trained as personal evangelists during the second part of the project. The number of people desiring to be part of this small group, and their level of desire to participate, also provided feedback concerning the success of the sermon series in meeting the first two goals. A greater understanding of the biblical mandate for personal evangelism, and a greater sense of urgency, should translate to a greater desire to be equipped for personal evangelism.

Before the first meeting of the small group, members were asked to complete a questionnaire (Appendix 3) designed to assess their fears, concerns, and level of

confidence relating to personal evangelism, as well as, what they hoped to gain from participating in this group. At the first meeting of the group, they were asked to verbally share some of these same concerns and hopes with the group as a whole. This verbal sharing served as an icebreaker, but more importantly, it provided a basis for group evaluation later.

At the second meeting, each member of the group was given an Evangelistic Outreach Form (Appendix 5), encouraged to witness to someone during the next five weeks, and asked to return the completed form before the last class. These completed forms assisted in determining how well the participants put into practice what they learned in class. This feedback helped measure the third goal of equipping members theologically and practically to do personal evangelism.

At the last class, participants were given another questionnaire (Appendix 4), similar to the one given before the first small group meeting, and asked to return it before the end of the week. The completed questionnaire was compared to the results from their first questionnaire to evaluate the progress of the group. There was also a time for oral discussion when the group shared how they had grown through this process, whether or not the class provided what they expected to gain, and provided feedback as to whether or not they felt more confident in sharing their faith on a personal level. Finally, there was a time provided at the end of the last session when the group was asked to provide suggestions on how to improve the class for future participants; this feedback helped achieve the fourth goal of the project by helping me become better equipped to teach others to be personal evangelists.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR EQUIPPING BELIEVERS TO BECOME PERSONAL EVANGELISTS

By reading the pages of both the Old and New Testaments the believer comes to understand his role of being used by God to share the gospel. Scripture teaches that this role is simultaneously a privilege and a responsibility. It is shown to be a privilege because the believer has done nothing worthy of such a high honor, his participation is a benefit of God's grace. At the same time, a study of Scripture proves this role to be a responsibility born out of obedience to God.

This responsibility becomes evident when considered in relation to what Jesus identified as the two greatest commandments.

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matt 22:35-40)¹

Loving God and loving others in the manner Jesus described compels the believer to explain to others how they can have a relationship with God.

Scripture teaches that understanding who God is, and realizing who the believer is by comparison, gives the understanding of God's grace that compels the

¹Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version®, Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

believer to declare God's truth, confident that those who should listen will listen. God's Word also demonstrates that believers are to be the vehicles delivering God's compassion to the world that he so dearly loves. The New Testament teaches the church's responsibility to equip believers to take the gospel to the world and shows that every human being is bound for one of only two eternal destinies, thereby stressing the urgency of God's great plan of evangelism. Scripture also stresses the need for the lost to hear the gospel and the importance of the believer being prepared to confidently proclaim the gospel. A thorough study of Scripture demonstrates these truths as they are taught.

Isaiah 6:1-13

The believer is compelled to proclaim God's truth to the world when he understands who he is by comparison to who God is. This revealing comparison becomes painfully evident in Isaiah 6 when one considers the first eight verses and Isaiah's vision of God on his throne. John Oswalt demonstrates the importance of considering the sequential relationship for the vision's elements when he writes, "The sequential relationship of the elements ought not to be overlooked. Each element leads to the next. The king's death prepares the way for the vision of God; the vision of God leads to self-despair; self-despair opens the door to cleansing; cleansing makes it possible to recognize the possibility of service; the total experience then leads to an offering of oneself."²

The themes of judgment and hope are interchanged and woven throughout the book of Isaiah. This pattern of interwoven themes is initially seen in the introduction

²John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1986), 186.

(chaps. 1-5); however, it is repeated in the book as a whole with chapters 7-39 primarily concentrating on judgment and chapters 40-66 primarily concentrating on hope.³ While the chapters before and after chapter 6 deal with judgment and hope as they relate to the nation as a whole, the vision of chapter 6 deals with judgment and hope as they relate to Isaiah as an individual.

The connection between Isaiah's individual experience and the nation as a whole is not lost when one considers Oswald's thoughts. Oswald writes, "Sinful Israel can become servant Israel when the experience of Isaiah becomes the experience of the nation. When the nation has seen itself against the backdrop of God's holiness and glory, when the nation has received God's gracious provision for sin, then she can speak for God to a hungry world."⁴ Oswald's statement is true for all believers, not just the Nation Israel.

Considering the vision itself, verses 1-4 set the stage in the same way that Revelation 4 and 5:8-14 do for the Apocalypse of John, showing the Lord, Yahweh of Hosts, is the center around whom all else moves.⁵ Isaiah specifies the time of his vision with the opening phrase "In the year that King Uzziah died." While there are differences of opinion as to why this phrase was included, theologically speaking it is explainable from the standpoint that Judah had known no other king like Uzziah since the time of King Solomon. With his death and with Assyria pushing closer, no earthly king could help Judah. God can more easily make himself known during such times of great

³John N. Oswald, *Isaiah*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 42-43.

⁴Oswald, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39*, 175.

⁵John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 24 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), 76.

duress.⁶ Isaiah has seen the King who offers hope that no earthly king can offer.

Verse 1 goes on to depict the Lord, on his throne, high and lifted up, with the train of his robe filling the temple. Oswalt writes, “Evidently the veil had been removed and there, where the ark should be, is a great throne.”⁷ He goes on to speak of how the quality of awe in Isaiah’s experience is perhaps more than any other recorded theophany and of “feeling the raw edge of terror at being where humanity dare not go.”⁸ Oswalt also contends that due to the Masoretic punctuation, the words *high and lifted up* are separated from the word *throne* making them modify *the Sovereign*.⁹ John D. W. Watts strengthens Oswalt’s comments when he writes, “God is clearly the Heavenly King, exalted on his throne. His glorious presence dominates the scene as *his robes fill* the room. ההיכל “the hall” may refer to the Temple in Jerusalem or the great heavenly hall. The word cannot settle the question, but the context favors a heavenly setting.”¹⁰

What becomes evident as one considers Isaiah 6:1 and the comments of writers such as Oswalt and Watts is that while there is room for variance in interpretation, the verse demonstrates the majesty of God. Before words are spoken, before surroundings are considered, before anything else is brought to mind, the vision opens with an awe inspiring sight that overwhelmingly focuses on the visual majesty of God. His is a majesty that surpasses that of any other being, including the most regal earthly king.

As the vision progresses, verses 2-4 speak to God’s holiness. Verse 2

⁶Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39*, 177.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 74.

describes the seraphim that are flying above the throne and their response to God's holiness. Oswalt points out a connection between the terms "seraphim" and "fiery," then concludes that since "fire is everywhere associated with God's holiness (Exod.3:1-6; 13:21; 19:18; Lev. 10:1-2; Num. 11:1-2; 1 K. 18:24; Isa. 6:6-7) . . . it would be entirely appropriate for those who declare that holiness (v. 3) to be 'fiery' in their appearance."¹¹

Gary Smith contends that the most important thing about the seraphs is not their appearance (e.g., their looks, their wings, or their flying), but their simple yet profound antiphonal declaration of God's holiness which shows that God alone is exalted.¹² Concerning the triple declaration of "holy, holy, holy" in verse 3, Smith writes,

There is every reason to assume that these beings provided a continuous offering of praise that did not stop with just three declarations of God's holiness. The repetition of a word is a way of expressing a superlative idea in Hebrew language (2 Kgs 25:15 "gold gold"). Thus the seraphs claim that God is completely, totally, absolutely, the holiest of the holy. Holiness is the essence of God's nature and God himself is the supreme revelation of holiness. God's absolute holiness reveals how separate, different, or totally other he is in comparison to all other aspects of the created world.¹³

Understanding God's absolute holiness and what it reveals is the first step in making the comparison with self that leads the believer to understand God's grace. It is this genuine understanding of grace that compels the believer to evangelize the lost.

The sound of the seraphim's voices caused the doorways to shake. It is unclear if the entire room was shaking and Isaiah's location and position gave the perception it was only the doorways, or if it was truly just the doorways involved. In addition, the

¹¹Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39*, 178-79.

¹²Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, The New American Commentary, vol. 15A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishing, 2007), 189.

¹³*Ibid.*, 190.

room was being filled with smoke. One cannot be certain if the smoke ascended during the entire vision or only at the point it is mentioned. Oswalt contends that regardless of how these matters are understood, the hymn was thunderous and rocked the building to its foundation while the billowing smoke added to the immediacy and mystery of the experience, showing that Holy God was not to be surveyed casually with unveiled eyes.¹⁴

In verse 5, one sees the inevitable happen. Upon his personal encounter with the holiness of God, Isaiah becomes aware of himself. The fear, despair, and sense of hopelessness that Isaiah must have felt at that moment are incomprehensible. He becomes aware of his own unworthiness and need for atonement. Smith writes, “In the presence of God’s holiness Isaiah was not struck by his humanity or mortality, but by (a) his own impurity; (b) the uncleanness of the nation of Judah; and (c) the sight of the King, the Lord Almighty. Isaiah could not join the seraphs in praising God until his lips were purified.”¹⁵ The sin and iniquity of Isaiah and his people must be removed if they are to serve God.

Isaiah 6:6-8 depicts grace and atonement. Upon Isaiah’s realization of his hopelessness and his confession of sin, God provides atonement through the actions of a seraph that removes a live coal from the altar and touches it to Isaiah’s lips. Smith shows this action to be an act of grace when he writes, “This was an act of God’s grace; Isaiah did nothing to accomplish his atonement. Isaiah offered no sacrifices, did not promise to be a missionary to gain it, and had no power to save himself from certain ruin. To help Isaiah understand that God was removing his guilt, a seraph took a coal from an altar and

¹⁴Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39*, 182.

¹⁵Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, 191.

touched Isaiah's unclean lips."¹⁶ Through no action on Isaiah's part, his sin and the associated guilt were removed, God's wrath was satisfied, and fellowship with God was established. When the Lord finally speaks and asks for someone to enter his service, Isaiah can then speak and volunteer to be that person.

Reflecting on Isaiah's experience, Smith writes, "Isaiah's experience illustrates how any believer can identify sin (have a clear vision of the holiness of God), how everyone should respond when sin is recognized (admit it), and how God deals with confessed sin (he removes it)."¹⁷ The fact that a believer is compelled to share this truth as a personal evangelist is seen in Isaiah's example. When Isaiah voluntarily answered God's call to service, he knew absolutely nothing about the requirements of that call, just that he was compelled to answer in the affirmative. After his vision showing God's holiness, his own impurity, and his personal atonement, Isaiah offered no excuses but eagerly volunteered for whatever the mission was to be. Smith expounds on this thought when he writes, "From this example one might propose the theological principle that the clarity and reality of a person's vision of the holiness and glory of the majestic King of Kings is directly related to the clarity of a person's sense of call and their willingness to humbly submit and serve God in whatever capacity he desires."¹⁸ Seeing oneself in comparison to God's holiness and understanding the grace involved in atonement compels one to personal evangelism.

As the vision progresses, Isaiah 6:10-13 discusses Isaiah's mission and its

¹⁶Ibid., 192.

¹⁷Ibid., 193.

¹⁸Ibid., 194.

intended results. Surprisingly, Isaiah's message is intended to harden hearts instead of bringing repentance. Oswalt writes, "Here is the heart of the difficult statement. Isaiah's preaching will not make it easier for the people to believe and repent. It will make it more difficult. The faculties of perception and response (eyes, ears, and heart) will be dulled and apathetic."¹⁹ Concerning Isaiah's difficult assignment, Smith writes, "This commission is not exactly what Isaiah had wanted to happen to himself or to God's people in Judah, yet from earlier prophecies he knew about God's intention to destroy Judah because of its pride (2:6-4:1), oppression, disrespect for God's deeds, and mockery of God's plans (5:1-30)."²⁰ The only hope in Isaiah's message is seen in verse 13 as it speaks of a tenth of the people being left and makes mention of a holy seed; however, commentators vary in opinion as to whether this message is really a message of hope.

Though Isaiah was commissioned for a difficult task, his personal experience in the vision did not allow him to refuse his commission. Although some say that Isaiah's question of "How long?" was an objection, Smith says it is better viewed as a cry of dismay and lamentation over the hopeless situation that lies ahead since there is no direct refusal, no excuse, and no alternative offered.²¹ In light of what Isaiah experienced through this vision in relation to God's holiness, his own and his people's sinfulness, God's grace, and atonement, it seems unthinkable that he would raise any objection before the Lord.

The connection between Isaiah 6:1-13 and personal evangelism can be seen

¹⁹Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39*, 189.

²⁰Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, 196-97.

²¹*Ibid.*, 196.

when Smith writes, “Although some of Isaiah’s responsibilities might not seem very inviting, personal preferences and fear fade into the background when a person has had the privilege of seeing the glory of the Holy King.”²² Personal preferences and fear are two significant factors that hinder personal evangelism. As a believer realizes who he is in comparison to who God is, how atonement has removed his sin and its guilt, and that it is all by God’s grace, he cannot help but see how personal preferences and fear fade in comparison. Isaiah’s vision caused him to recognize the hopelessness of him and his people apart from God and compelled him to share his faith. Studying this passage should have the same effect on any believer.

Jonah 1:1-4:11

The book of Jonah demonstrates that believers are to be the vehicles delivering God’s compassion to the world that he so dearly loves. This book gives the account of the man sent by God to preach repentance to the great city of Nineveh. Jonah’s message was to be that Nineveh had only forty days to repent or God would destroy this capital city of Assyria. Jonah tried to run from his mission hoping to see Israel’s enemy suffer the destruction that God was promising.

Through some harrowing experiences, God ultimately brought Jonah to Nineveh where he preached God’s message and the whole city repented. Because of their repentance, judgment was averted and the city was spared. Jonah was disappointed that Nineveh heeded his message and repented. Walter Kaiser, Jr., paints a sad picture of the book’s ending when he writes, “Thus, the book ends with Nineveh having been spared, but the messenger Jonah bitter, surly, and despondent over the mercy and

²²Ibid., 199.

graciousness of God.”²³ The people of Nineveh fared better than Jonah through this experience.

In discussing the book of Jonah’s message and purpose, Douglas Stuart writes,

The book [Jonah], in other words, is about Jonah, but it is also about God. Jonah hopes all along that somehow God won’t turn out to be consistent with his own well-known character (4:2). But God *is* consistent throughout, in contrast to Jonah’s hypocritical inconsistency. What happens to Nineveh and to Jonah happens precisely because of what God is like. The audience of the book is thus invited implicitly to revise their understanding of what God is like, if they have indeed shared Jonah’s selfish view.²⁴

No one can stand in opposition to God’s mercy in receiving sinners into the Kingdom. To resist being used by God as part of the evangelistic process is to be stubborn like Jonah, regardless of the reason.

Stuart writes, “Throughout the book Jonah displays a readiness to receive mercy and blessing himself and a stubborn reluctance to see his enemies, the Assyrians, receive the same.”²⁵ This thought is evidenced by Jonah’s deeply emotional cry to the Lord in chapter 2 as it compares to his exceeding displeasure, anger, and pouting in chapter 4. Stuart expounds further on this contrast as he writes,

Far from being extraneous, therefore, the psalm [chapter 2] is actually pivotal. The hypocrisy of Jonah’s attitude in chap. 4 is muddled without the psalm. The psalm celebrates Yahweh’s deliverance (cf. Exod 15; Judg 5), and thus fixes an ironic contrast: Jonah’s obedience (3:3) is won by mercy; but Jonah cannot abide the thought that Nineveh’s obedience could be won the same way! Jonah cannot fail existentially to appreciate God’s strategy in dealing with the Assyrians. He just can’t stand it, because his hate for them is so great.²⁶

²³Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 65-66.

²⁴Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, World Biblical Commentary, vol. 31 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 434.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., 473.

What becomes evident as one considers the personal struggle of Jonah, the individual, is that God was determined to use Jonah, the individual, as his vehicle for delivering his compassion to the Ninevites. Individual believers may be reluctant vehicles for any number of reasons (fear, personal prejudices, etc.); however, the book of Jonah teaches that it is God's desire to use individual believers as vehicles for sharing his compassion with the world he loves. The believer must remember that he himself is a recipient of God's grace and mercy.

Verse 1 begins with the phrase "the word of the Lord came to Jonah." The precise method in which God spoke to Jonah is not clear. God spoke to prophets using a variety of methods. It is clear that God spoke specifically to Jonah. In considering the Hebrew text of verse 2, Billy Smith and Frank Page point out that the verse begins with two imperatives, "Arise, go" and that the first one functions adverbially to give the command to go a sense of immediacy.²⁷ This call is a clear and distinct command to a specific individual. Though Jonah would prove reluctant and stubborn, God had chosen him specifically to deliver his message of compassion to the city of Nineveh.

The book of Jonah also speaks to God's desire to use individuals as vehicles for delivering God's compassion to the world by considering the target of Jonah's message. God's desire is not just to use individuals to reach like individuals, but all peoples of the world. Second Kings 14:24-25 shows that Jonah had already been used as a witness to his own people, the nation Israel. Kaiser asked the question, "So what was the purpose of sending Jonah, against his will, to such a heathen land when the work in

²⁷Billy K. Smith and Frank S. Page, *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah*, The New American Commentary, vol. 19B (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 226.

his own land was not yet finished?"²⁸

After pointing out the greatness of Nineveh's population and resources, and the enormity of its sin, Kaiser answers his own question by writing,

To send a messenger to a city so well-known in its day with resources that few if any rivaled, was to grab the attention of others besides those to whom the prophet was sent. Whatever would be done here would not be something that was done in a corner. It would be public example for all the surrounding nations. Few would have ever thought that a city and nation so self-sufficient in itself would ever be capable of being stirred to repentance and reformation. But if this one nation should by any chance respond to the call for repentance, despite the unlikelihood of success, surely that would come as an open rebuke to Israel, who had such superior advantages in the gospel, as well as to the other nations that were just as vulnerable to similar declarations of impending judgment. If the wayward foreigner eagerly received the word from God and acted appropriately, should not the people of God have done at least the same by obeying?²⁹

Kaiser is making the point that when Nineveh repents, Jonah's actions will have ultimately moved his own people to jealousy and action.

However, another point that can be made here is that when God uses an individual believer to share the gospel, God is glorified. When the great and wicked Nineveh repented (Jonah 3:5-10), the glory belonged entirely to the compassionate God who sent the prophet, not to the uncompassionate prophet who did not want to deliver the message. Even if Jonah had gone happily and obediently to Nineveh, the glory for her repentance would have belonged entirely to God. God's use of the individual in evangelism is a privilege resulting from God's grace; it is not something God does out of necessity. God desires to use the individual believer as part of the evangelism process; however, this individual believer is not part of the salvation process.

The book of Jonah teaches the seriousness involved in refusing to be used by

²⁸Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 70.

²⁹Ibid., 71.

God in personal evangelism. Every believer may not be able to relate to Jonah's great fish experience; however, they can relate to his other experience that was less sensational but just as serious. After Jonah set sail on the ship bound for Tarshish the Lord sent a storm that threatened to sink the ship (Jonah 1:4). When the captain found Jonah asleep in the lowest part of the ship he woke him and asked him to pray (Jonah 1:6). Leslie Allen writes, "If only the captain knew how far spiritually Jonah was from God and what little claim he had upon Yahweh . . . Jonah doesn't pray. Doubtless he murmurs something and lurches after the captain up to the rolling deck."³⁰ Jonah could not approach God in prayer to ask God's help with the storm because he knew the storm was a direct result of his own disobedience. If the individual believer is not following God's command to share his faith he cannot boldly approach God in prayer. Disobedience in any area of the believer's life, including personal evangelism, hinders his prayer life.

Allen writes, "The Ninevites deserve compassion not only as creatures for whom God cares but also as virtual children compared with the Jews."³¹ One must take exception to Allen's use of the word "deserves." The Ninevites did not deserve God's compassion; however, God was moved to action by his compassion for them. In chapter 4 God uses a plant to teach Jonah a lesson. He reminds Jonah that Jonah had compassion for a simple plant that he had nothing invested in (Jonah 4:10), and then reminds Jonah of his (God's) right to have compassion on the 120,000 who are his human creation (Jonah 4:11).

Allen writes, "A Jonah lurks in every Christian heart, whimpering his insidious

³⁰Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1976), 208.

³¹Ibid., 234.

message of smug prejudice, empty traditionalism, and exclusive solidarity. He that has ears to hear, let him hear and allow the saving love of God which has been outpoured in his own heart to remold his thinking and social orientation.”³² The book of Jonah teaches that there is no room for prejudice, traditionalism, or exclusivity in evangelism. The book further demonstrates that believers are to be the vehicles delivering God’s compassion to the world that he so dearly loves.

Matthew 28:18-20

Known as the Great Commission, this well-known text addresses the church’s responsibility to equip believers to take the gospel to the world. Sometime between the week following the resurrection and the end of the forty-day post-resurrection period the remaining eleven disciples went to a specific place in Galilee designated by the resurrected Jesus (Matt 28:16). Other than Galilee, the exact location is unknown. Verse 17 reports the initial response of those who saw Jesus on this occasion: “they worshiped Him; but some doubted.” This response raises some questions as to whether there were others present besides the eleven and what Matthew meant by “some doubted,” the answers are elusive.

Concerning the Great Commission, Jesus’ words spoken in Matthew 28:18-20, Craig Bloomberg writes, “This short account contains the culmination and combination of all of Matthew’s central themes: (1) the move from particularism to universalism in the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom; (2) discipleship and the establishment of the church; (3) Jesus’ commands as ultimately incumbent on Christians; and (4) the abiding presence of Jesus as teacher, as divine Son of God, and the risen and sovereign Lord of

³²Ibid., 235.

the universe.”³³ One sees in Jesus’ words the climax of Matthew and the passing of the mantle to the disciples as he promises his empowering presence.

In relation to the authority given to Jesus (v. 18), Blomberg writes, “Christ’s exaltation, as the result of his resurrection, means that one day ‘every knee’ will bow and ‘every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord’ (Phil 2:9-11), whether or not they do so voluntarily as part of his redeemed people. Because of this authority, Jesus has the right to issue his followers their ‘marching orders,’ but he also has the ability to help them carry out those orders.”³⁴ As God the Son he has the authority to command believers to proclaim his elevated status to the world and to command churches to equip believers to make that proclamation.

In speaking of the proclamation of the good news, R. T. France writes,

Now its scope is far wider: it is no longer a mission simply to the ‘lost sheep of Israel’ (10:6 15:24) but to all the nations, as Jesus had already predicted in 24:14 (cf. 26:13). The almost imperceptible mustard seed is now about to grow into a mighty tree; the kingdom of heaven is to be established over all the earth. The baptism which John had originally instituted as a symbol of a new beginning for repentant Israel (3:1-12) is now to be extended to people from all nations. And at the heart of this new community of faith is the risen Jesus himself, as he had said he would be (18:20): they are to be *his* disciples, obeying *his* commands, and sustained by *his* unending presence among them. This new international community will be his *ekklesia* [church] (16:18) because it is *he* who now holds all authority in heaven and on earth (an authority greater than that which he was initially offered by Satan and refused, 4:8-10).³⁵

This community of faith is made up of individuals who have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The *ekklesia* (church), even when spoken of internationally or universally,

³³Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 429.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 431.

³⁵R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 1108.

is still made up of individual believers. The discipleship process, including evangelism, comes down to an individual basis.

Jesus instructs his disciples to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19). In discussing the significance of genuine discipleship, Leon Morris writes, “In the first century a disciple did not enroll with such-and-such school, but with such-and-such a teacher. Jesus’ disciples are people for whom a life has been given in a ransom (20:28) and who are committed to the service of the Master, who not only took time to teach his disciples but who died for them and rose again. Those who are disciples of such a leader are committed people.”³⁶ These are the types of disciples that Jesus expects his followers to make.

The Great Commission is about obedience. Chuck Lawless writes, “Those who obey the Great Commission make disciples through evangelism, leading to baptism and teaching that result in obedience.”³⁷ In addressing the importance of the church’s responsibility to equip believers for evangelism through discipleship, Lawless writes, “Why do some believers catch fire for evangelism but then fizzle? Part of the reason is that we train believers to evangelize, but we don’t train them to put on the armor of God (Eph. 6:11-18). When the Enemy attacks them *because* they have chosen to evangelize, they are not prepared. Unarmed evangelists are vulnerable to the Enemy’s messages.”³⁸ Equipping believers to become evangelists is more than just teaching them a method for sharing the gospel; it is spiritual growth and maturity brought about through discipleship.

³⁶Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992), 746.

³⁷Chuck Lawless, *Discipled Warriors: Growing Healthy Churches That Are Equipped for Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2002), 46.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 92.

Spiritual maturity gives the confidence needed to defend the faith.

Discipleship is a process designed for multiplication through disciples making other disciples. John Nolland alludes to this fact when he writes, “Matthew restricts his use of the noun ‘disciple’ (μαθητής) to the Twelve, but by making a wider use of other language markers of discipleship and more pointedly by his wider use of the cognate verb ‘disciple’ (μαθητεύειν) Matthew indicates that the discipleship of the Twelve though unique and unrepeatable, embodies patterns of discipleship which are of a more general relevance.”³⁹ The unique experience the Twelve had as they were discipled by Jesus could never be repeated or duplicated, but it established a pattern of discipleship that can be followed.

In discussing the importance of the church’s teaching function as it relates to the Great Commission, Morris writes,

Baptism is not the be-all and end-all; it is no more than the beginning. The new disciple is to be baptized, but he or she is also to be taught “*to observe all the things I have commanded you.*” The church’s teaching function is thus of great importance. We teach because Jesus commanded us to teach, and there is no way of diminishing the importance of an activity that owes its origin to the command of our Lord himself. But Jesus is not speaking about education for education’s sake. He speaks of the taught as ‘observing’ what Jesus has commanded. In other words, Jesus is concerned with a way of life. As we have seen throughout this Gospel, he continually urges his followers to live in a manner pleasing to God. He has objected to the sterile legalism of many in his day and has gone beyond the letter of the law to the things that are rightly seen as arising from its spirit.⁴⁰

The church cannot ignore Jesus’ command to make disciples, baptizing and teaching them. Since the church is made up of individual believers, it is individual believers that must be equipped to reach and teach others. If the believer has been properly equipped

³⁹John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005), 1265.

⁴⁰Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 749.

and is spiritually mature in his relationship with the Lord, he can share his faith and disciple others with confidence, resting in the power and authority of Christ.

Revelation 20:10-21:8

Along with other Scriptures, Revelation 20:10-21:8 shows that every human being is bound for one of two eternal destinies, thereby, stressing the urgency of God's great plan of evangelism. In discussing the literal view of hell and the difficulty of many people to accept the fact that a loving God will demand everlasting retribution, John Walvoord writes, "Some openly say that if the Bible teaches eternal punishment, they do not believe it even though it is in the Bible."⁴¹ Later in the same discussion Walvoord writes, "The Bible also teaches about eternal heaven; few have problems with this concept if they accept the Bible testimony. The problem is how to harmonize an eternal heaven with that of eternal punishment."⁴² While there can be room for differences of opinions as to how end time events will unfold (e.g., premillennial, postmillennial, pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, post-tribulation, etc.), Revelation 20:10-21:8 teaches that there are only two possible eternal destinies for all of God's human creation; the lake of fire for the unregenerate and in God's presence for the believer.

In Revelation 19:20 the beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire, and in Revelation 20:10 they are joined by the devil himself. Robert Mounce helps one see the constancy and eternity of torment in the lake of fire when he writes, "The

⁴¹John F. Walvoord, Zachary J. Hayes, and Clark H. Pinnock, *Four Views on Hell*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry and William Crockett (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 11.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 12.

torment of the unholy trinity continues unceasingly, ‘day and night for ever and ever’.”⁴³ These concepts of constancy and eternality are further emphasized by David Aune when he writes, “The terms ‘day and night’ form a hendiadys meaning a twenty-four-hour day, and by extension ‘without ceasing’ or ‘without interruption’.”⁴⁴ Though verse 10 focuses on the devil joining the beast and the false prophet in the lake of fire, it also paints a picture of unceasing and unending torment that will play a key role in later verses.

The next thing John saw in his vision was a great white throne and Him who sat on it (v. 11). John’s vision (Rev 21:11) reminds one of Isaiah’s previously discussed vision of the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the humbling experience of coming into that presence. Writing about what John saw, Mounce says, “In Revelation the throne is great in size and white or shining in appearance. Its size conveys the grandeur of its authority, and its appearance reflects the presence of the glory of God.”⁴⁵ Grant Osborne contends, “It is a throne of purity and triumph and so rightly stands as the throne of judgment.”⁴⁶ The throne picture alone is intimidating and humbling.

It is then time to consider who is sitting on the throne. Concerning this matter, Mounce wrote,

It is more natural in the present context to see the Father rather than the Son in the role of judge. The ease with which the NT speaks of the judgment seat of Christ (II Cor 5:10) and the judgment seat of God (Rom 14:10) implies a unity which makes unnecessary any quibbling over exact assignment of functions. In his gospel John

⁴³Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1977), 363.

⁴⁴David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 52C (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 1100.

⁴⁵Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 364.

⁴⁶Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 720.

records the statement of Jesus, “I and the Father are one” (Jn 10:20).⁴⁷

Mounce also contends the phrase showing earth and heaven fleeing away from the awesome grandeur of God seated upon the throne of judgment (v. 11) may or may not be poetic imagery expressing the fear of the corruptible in the presence of God.⁴⁸ Whether taken as poetic imagery or literal action, the truth is that God will execute judgment on the unregenerate and there is no place for them to hide.

That God’s judgment will be on a personal and individual basis for unbelievers is seen in Revelation 20:12-15 and 21:8. This fact is evidenced by the phrases “And they were judged each one according to his works (v. 13)” and “. . . anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire (v. 15).” Concerning the book of life, G. K. Beale writes,

What is it about the “the book of life” that spares them [those whose name are written in the book]? The fuller title for the book is “the book of life *of the Lamb who was slain*” (13:8; 21:27: “the book of life of the Lamb”). “Of the Lamb” is a genitive of either possession or source. The “life” granted the saints in association with the book comes from their identification with the Lamb’s righteous deeds, and especially his death, which means likewise that they are identified with his resurrection life (cf. 5:5-13). They do not suffer judgment for their evil deeds because he has already suffered it for them: he was slain on their behalf (so esp 1:5 and 5:9 . . .). The Lamb acknowledges before God all who are written in the book (3:5) and are identified with his righteousness and his death.⁴⁹

Whether the “book” is metaphorical for God’s unfailing memory, as Beale later contends, or whether it is some type of a literal book is immaterial, those who are not recorded there will be cast into the lake of fire to suffer continuous and eternal punishment (v.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 364.

⁴⁹G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 1037.

15).⁵⁰ The lake of fire is the eternal destiny of those who are not recorded in the book of life.

By contrast, Revelation 21:1-7 speaks to the eternal destiny of those who are recorded in the book of life, those who receive Jesus Christ. This part of John's vision begins with seeing a new heaven and a new earth, and a declaration that the first heaven and first earth have passed away (v. 1). Osborne contends this newness is more of a qualitative newness than it is a temporal newness. He writes, "There will be a whole new reality, a new kind of existence in which all the negatives of the "first" (Gen. 1) world will be removed, all the discoloration by sin will be gone."⁵¹ Osborne further contends, "The idea of a 'new heaven and new earth' also hints that the old dichotomy between the 'first heaven' and the 'first earth' will be no more. God will now dwell in the New Jerusalem, and heaven will be brought down to earth."⁵² Beale feels the city [New Jerusalem] is probably figurative and represents God's fellowship with his people in an actual new creation.⁵³

In verse 4 John describes the things that will be no more when God comes to dwell with his people. Tears, death, sorrow, mourning, and pain no longer exist because they belonged to the former earth which has passed away. Mounce offers this explanation, "Eternal blessedness is couched in negation because the new and glorious order is more easily pictured in terms of what it replaces than by an attempt to describe

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Osborne, *Revelation*, 730.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1045.

what is largely inconceivable in our present state.”⁵⁴ It is impossible in terms of quantity or quality to describe the blessings of those who will dwell eternally in God’s presence.

In verses 5-7 God speaks from the throne declaring that all things are new and that “It is done”, his promise has been fulfilled, his enemies destroyed, and his saints saved. Mounce writes, “The thirst for God mentioned in verse 6 is satisfied only by the reality of divine sonship.”⁵⁵ Concerning verse 7, Beale writes, “The purpose of this verse, and the whole of 21:1-22:5, is to encourage true Christians to persevere through hardship in order to inherit the fullness of God’s blessings.”⁵⁶ It is those who have a genuine relationship with Christ, those who are recorded in the book of life, who will be citizens of heaven.

Revelation 20:10-21:8 reveals that there will be only two types of people who have ever existed at the time of the great white throne judgment, those who are recorded in the book of life and those who are not. Those who are not will be cast into the lake of fire to suffer continual and eternal punishment for their rejection of God (Rev 20:15). The individuals who are recorded in the book of life will enjoy blessed fellowship with Christ in heaven as citizens of the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:3). Writing about this citizenship, Bruce Demarest says, “This experience in the new Jerusalem will involve direct and unspoiled communion with Christ through the endless ages of eternity.”⁵⁷ Heaven is the eternal destination of those who received Christ. Understanding the reality

⁵⁴Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 372.

⁵⁵Ibid., 374.

⁵⁶Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1057.

⁵⁷Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, ed. John S. Feinberg (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1997), 478.

of these two eternal destinations helps the believer understand the urgency surrounding evangelism.

Romans 10:8-17

This passage stresses the need of the lost to hear the gospel and the importance for the believer to be prepared to confidently proclaim the gospel. Salvation requires a response of faith when the gospel is heard; however, the gospel cannot be heard if it is not shared. The gospel message must first be proclaimed if it is to be heard and then believed unto salvation.

In considering verse 8, Douglas Moo writes, “The introductory formula ‘But what does it say?’ reiterates the initial introduction to the series of quotations from Deut. 30 in v. 6a—the subject of the verb being, then, ‘the righteousness based on faith.’ Paul uses the adversative ‘but’ because he now tells us what the righteousness based on faith *does* say, in contrast to what it warns us not to say (vv. 6-7).⁵⁸ It is not necessary to bring Christ down from heaven (v. 6) because God has already sent him to earth, and it is not necessary to bring him up from the dead (v. 7) because God has already resurrected him. Verse 8 teaches that all that is required is faith in the gospel that is being preached by Paul and the other apostles. Moo expounds on the relation between Christ and the law as it relates here when he writes, “In Christ, the culmination of the law, God’s word is near in a way that it has never been before. And all that is now required of human beings is the response of faith.”⁵⁹

⁵⁸Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 656.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 657.

According to Thomas Schreiner, verses 9-13 function to explain verse 8.⁶⁰

Verse 8 proclaims “the word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” while verses 9 and 10 call for confessing with the mouth and believing with the heart which result in righteousness and salvation. James Dunn discusses the significance of confessing “Jesus as Lord” for Paul’s original audience by pointing out that within Jewish and Jewish-influenced circles the significance would be great because the implication is that Jesus as Lord shares in the one God’s lordship.⁶¹ Schreiner offers the following clarification for verses 9 and 10:

If you confess with your mouth does not mean that a spoken affirmation of one’s faith is a “work” that merits justification, but such confession does give outward evidence of inward faith, and often confirms that faith to the speaker himself. *that God raised him from the dead*. Paul does not mean that people need to believe only this individual event with no understanding of Christ’s death, but rather they need to believe in the resurrection along with the whole complex of truth connected with it, particularly Jesus’ sin-bearing death in mankind’s place, followed by his resurrection that showed God the Father’s approval of Christ’s work. *with the heart one believes*. Saving faith is not mere intellectual agreement but deep inward trust in Christ at the core of one’s being.⁶²

Verse 11 introduces a proof text (γράφ) from Old Testament Scripture (Isa 28:16) which supports the central thesis that the one who believes and confesses Jesus as the resurrected Lord will be saved.⁶³ Schreiner points out an important connection between verses 11 and 12 when he writes, “The Pauline citation here (v. 11) exactly conforms to 9:33 except for the addition of the word πᾶς (*pas*, everyone). . . . The

⁶⁰Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 559.

⁶¹James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38B (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 608.

⁶²Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, ESV Study Bible (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2175.

⁶³Schreiner, *Romans* (Baker), 560.

universality of the Pauline gospel is communicated with this term, indicating that the saving purposes of God cannot be confined to the Jews. . . . Those [all] who put their faith in Jesus as the resurrected Lord will be vindicated by God on the day of judgment.”⁶⁴

Just as γάρ (for) carried Paul’s argument along in verses 11 and 12, it continues to do so in verse 13. Paul quotes Joel 2:32 “For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Concerning this quote Leon Morris writes, “It is significant that once again Paul takes words which in the Old Testament are used of Yahweh and uses them of Christ. Characteristically we have the future of the verb ‘to save’; it is salvation in the final state of affairs that Paul has in mind. The salvation Christ brings is adequate through eternity as well as in the here and now.”⁶⁵

In discussing the seriousness of Israel’s plight in rejecting the gospel, Dunn writes, “In committing himself to act so decisively in and through Christ, he [God] obliged men and women to recognize God-in-Christ and address themselves to God-through-Christ. Thus it is now through this Christ that all will be saved, share in the final wholeness of God’s fulfilled purpose for the world—and that ‘all’ includes Jew as well as Greek.”⁶⁶ The double meaning of Paul’s message is clear, *whoever* calls on the name of the Lord (Christ) will be saved, but *only* those who call on the name of the Lord (Christ) will be saved.

The series of rhetorical questions beginning in verse 14 emphasize the

⁶⁴Ibid., 561.

⁶⁵Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1988), 388.

⁶⁶Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 618.

importance of evangelism. Schreiner writes, “What is communicated in Rom 10:14-15 and 17 is a principle that applies equally to both Jews and Gentiles: the steps of the chain must be realized if people are going to call on the Lord and be saved. We should note here the implications of this principle for contemporary missions, even though this is not the primary issue Paul addresses.”⁶⁷ In speaking of the first question “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed,” Morris writes, “Obviously this is a term with wide application and may be seen as equivalent to ‘all people’. But the apostle may have the Jews especially in view.”⁶⁸ Regardless who it is applied to, Jew or Gentile, the applicable truth does not change. The applicable truth is that people will only call on Christ to save them if they believe he can.

Paul’s next question in the sequence is, “How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?” There can be no belief in Christ if there is no knowledge of Christ. Schreiner explains, “Those who call on the Lord in a saving way must believe in him, but this belief is not possible apart from the *hearing* of a message that someone preaches.”⁶⁹ He goes on to say, “One does not truly proclaim the message unless one heralds the gospel of God’s Son (1:2-4), who is the resurrected Lord and who has accomplished salvation for his people through his work on the cross.”⁷⁰ There must be a specific telling of who Christ is and what he accomplished. Without this knowledge the lost cannot believe, and without believing they cannot call on his name.

The third rhetorical question in Paul’s sequence is “How shall they hear

⁶⁷Schreiner, *Romans* (Baker), 567.

⁶⁸Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 389.

⁶⁹Schreiner, *Romans* (Baker), 568.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*

without a preacher?” Words cannot be spoken without someone to speak them. Moo writes, “A preacher is nothing more than a herald, a person entrusted by another with a message.”⁷¹ According to Will McRaney, Jr., every believer is entrusted with the gospel message for the purpose of sharing it with the lost. McRaney writes, “Sharing the gospel is the privilege of every single believer. The norm should be that every Christian is actively sharing his faith. . . . Biblically the evangelist was given to the church as a position, role, office, or function, but evangelism is not just for a select few (Eph 4:11-13).”⁷² Combining the thoughts put forth by Moo and McRaney, it is evident that every believer is to be part of the “preaching” link in the chain that Paul is forging with his rhetorical questions.

Paul’s final question in the rhetorical chain appears in verse 15, “And how shall they preach unless they are sent?” Similar to what has already been discussed concerning the preceding question, Morris writes, “We should not confuse *preach* here with the modern Sunday morning sermon, (that, too, may be included in Paul’s meaning, but it is not the kind of thing he has primarily in mind). His verb properly denotes the action of a herald, someone who was given a message and told to proclaim it.”⁷³

Schreiner explains Paul’s quote of Isaiah 52:7 in verse 15 as follows, “The debate over whether the scriptural citation in verse 15b supports only verse 15a or all of verses 14-15a should not be overestimated in its importance. Even if the quotation supports verse 15a alone, which seems probable, it sets the whole chain of verses 14-15a

⁷¹Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 663.

⁷²Will McRaney, Jr., *The Art of Personal Evangelism: Sharing Jesus in a Changing Culture* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 44.

⁷³Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 390.

in motion. Once a preacher is sent who heralds the gospel, then it follows that unbelievers will hear the gospel, perhaps believe it, and then call on the Lord for salvation.”⁷⁴ The message brings the knowledge of Christ that makes it possible to believe and call upon the name of the Lord, and the feet bring the messenger who heralds the message.

In verse 16 Paul qualifies what he has been saying previously by clarifying that not all who hear the gospel message will believe, some will hear and still reject. Paul is speaking primarily of the Jews; however, his words suit Gentiles as well as Jews. Concerning this truth, Morris writes, “But we must not overlook the fact that the gospel contains an implicit demand for obedience (cf. 1:5). To decline the gospel invitation is to disobey God.”⁷⁵

Schreiner contends that verse 17 sums up the content of verses 14 and 15.⁷⁶ One can come to faith only after hearing the gospel, specifically, the good news of who Jesus is and what he has done. Every believer is to herald the message of Jesus Christ as the crucified and risen savior. It is through hearing this message that unbelievers come to a knowledge of Christ that allows them to believe. It is this belief that enables them to call upon the name of the Lord and to be saved.

Conclusion

Scripture shows the responsibility of every believer to share the gospel and the responsibility of the church to equip them for that task. It would be impossible to

⁷⁴Schreiner, *Romans* (Baker), 568.

⁷⁵Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 391.

⁷⁶Schreiner, *Romans* (Baker), 566.

consider all that Scripture has to say on either subject but the previously considered passages provide adequate support. Isaiah 6:1-13 shows that because the believer understands his own depravity in comparison to God's holiness, and that his reconciliation to God is by God's grace, he is compelled to share the gospel message with others.

The account of Jonah demonstrates that God chooses to use believers to deliver his compassion to the world. There is no room for the believer's personal prejudices or biases. Believers cannot be recipients of God's mercy and grace and then be content to see them withheld from others through intent or apathy.

In the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20), Jesus himself gives the command that the world is to be reached with the gospel through people pouring their lives into other people. The church has a responsibility to not only reach the lost, but to help the newly saved become equipped to reach the lost themselves one day. To expect them to evangelize without spiritual growth and development in their own lives is foolish and unbiblical.

The urgency related to evangelism is seen in Revelation 20:10-21:8. This passage shows that every human being is destined for one of two eternal places: the lake of fire for those *not* recorded in the book of life, or the presence of God (New Heaven, New Earth, New Jerusalem) for those who *are* recorded in the book of life. The believer cannot do the work of the Holy Spirit, but the believer is responsible for proclaiming the gospel message. When the believer realizes the reality of heaven and hell he is compelled by compassion and love to share the gospel.

Finally, Romans 10:8-17 teaches that salvation is by faith alone in Christ

alone; however, to have that faith a person must first know about Christ. For them to know about Christ requires someone to tell them about Christ. While not every believer holds the office or position of evangelist, every believer *is* sent by God to herald the gospel message. If the believer is to proclaim the gospel message boldly and defend his faith with confidence, he must be properly equipped.

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES
OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM

In chapter 2, the biblical and theological basis for personal evangelism was presented. This chapter considers the theoretical and practical issues surrounding personal evangelism. The best approach to accomplish this goal is to evaluate a sampling of methods available for training believers to do personal evangelism. Five well-known methods, each designed to equip believers to become personal evangelists, are summarized, evaluated, and compared. Through this process, one can determine the strengths and weaknesses associated with each method.

FAITH Evangelism

Summary

The first method to be considered is FAITH Evangelism which is taught using the facilitator's guide, *FAITH Evangelism: Discipling for Evangelism and Ministry*.¹ Students of this method (FAITH learners) use a student book called a journal.² Additional help for teaching this model is available in the form of a leader kit, which includes a journal, facilitator guide, prayer partner commitment card, FAITH outline

¹Bobby H. Welch and Doug Williams, *FAITH Evangelism: Discipling for Evangelism and Ministry*, Facilitator Guide, vol. 1 (Nashville: Lifeway Press, 2007).

²Bobby H. Welch and Doug Williams, *FAITH Evangelism: Discipling for Evangelism and Ministry*, Journal, vol. 1 (Nashville: Lifeway Press, 2007).

card, a “Step of Faith” leaflet, “Next Steps in Following Jesus” leaflet, training DVD, and FAITH Evangelism Implementation Guide CD-ROM.³ The course is designed to be taught over a twelve-week period with weekly meetings broken down as follows:

Team Time—15 minutes of learning the gospel presentation and discussing home-study assignments

Teaching Time—45 minutes of classroom training

Visitation Time—approximately 1 1/2 hours of intentional visits by teams

Celebration Time—30 minutes of celebration when teams return from visits⁴

In addition to the weekly sessions, students complete five daily sessions designed to reinforce the weekly sessions. Students also complete a “Visitation Summary” which helps them evaluate their team’s visitation experience for the week.

The first three lessons lay the foundation for equipping believers to do personal evangelism. The first session stresses the need for evangelism in today’s society, discusses in detail the teaching of the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) and the promises of Jesus’ power and presence, outlines the process of enlisting prayer partners, and explains the importance of receiving evangelism training. The second and third sessions move toward the practical aspect. Session 2 focuses on communication as it teaches the learner how to initiate spiritual dialogue, ask open ended questions, be a good listener, share his own testimony and evangelistic story, assess a person’s spiritual condition, and transition to the gospel presentation. Session 3 teaches students how to “prepare for” and “make” a visit. This session also identifies and discusses five types of FAITH visits: Evangelistic, Follow-up, Baptism, Ministry, and Opinion Poll. Session 3 goes on to explain the importance of developing relationships to enable witnessing, and

³Welch, *FAITH Evangelism*, Facilitator Guide, 1: 9.

⁴Ibid., 1:8.

closes with a discussion of how to be intentional in both approach and action with regards to evangelism.

The next five sessions present the detailed teaching for sharing the gospel using an acronym based on the five letters in the word “FAITH” (Forgiveness, Available, Impossible, Turn, and Heaven). In each of sessions 4 through 8, students are taught the biblical basis for one of the five elements of the presentation, and possible responses and dialogue that may arise during the presentation.

The ninth session teaches students how to transition from the gospel presentation using the FAITH acronym, to extending an invitation to accept Christ. This session also teaches students how to lead someone to receive Christ, including a model prayer. Finally, this session teaches students to introduce someone who has made a decision to the next steps in following Jesus: baptism, prayer, Bible study, devotional life, church, and sharing Jesus.⁵

The tenth session stresses the importance of continuing a relationship with someone after the student leads them to the Lord. This session teaches the student the importance of baptism and how to explain its importance to the new believer. The “Next Steps in Following Jesus” leaflet is introduced and discussed in detail as a help for guiding the new believer.⁶

Sessions 11 and 12 are aimed at encouraging students to consider what they will do as they approach the end of their training. The eleventh session considers the great need to reach the lost, the church’s obligation in this process, and the student’s role

⁵Ibid., 1:134.

⁶Ibid., 1:146-49.

in the church and kingdom work. Session 12 encourages students to consider their responsibility for passing the knowledge received in this training along to others.

Strengths

The FAITH Evangelism model has at least five strengths. First, it uses the first three sessions to prepare students by laying a foundation for evangelism as opposed to forging straight into the gospel presentation model itself. Second, it stresses the necessity of being intentional in approach and action and uses this opportunity to demonstrate the importance of building relationships for witnessing. Evangelism requires intent, purpose, and preparation. Third, it incorporates the practical aspect of actually doing evangelistic visits each week. It is not merely an academic training that is confined to a classroom. This practice is consistent with the method Jesus used in training the twelve (Mark 6:7, 30). Fourth, this model teaches the importance of a continuing relationship after a person receives Christ. This strength is evidenced by the statement, “When someone experiences spiritual birth, our work is not over. In most cases your work is just beginning.”⁷

The fifth and final strength is that this model encourages the student to share his knowledge and experience with others, thereby perpetuating the process. A second twelve-week semester, which uses volume 2 of the journal, is available to equip students to become effective FAITH team leaders.⁸ This second level of training also includes a

⁷Ibid., 1:144.

⁸Bobby H. Welch and Doug Williams, *FAITH Evangelism: Discipling for Evangelism and Ministry*, Journal, vol. 2 (Nashville: Lifeway Press, 2008).

facilitator's guide.⁹

Weaknesses

In spite of its strengths, the FAITH Evangelism model is not without its weaknesses. In the segment titled “Leading Someone to Ask God for Forgiveness,” the use of a model prayer (sinner’s prayer) and a commitment card has a significant risk of misleading someone to believe they have received Christ when they have not.¹⁰ This risk is especially high if the person leading them is a novice. Reciting a preprinted prayer and completing a commitment card are formalities that cannot save anyone.

Another weakness is the danger of playing on a person’s emotions. In inviting a person to respond to the gospel presentation, the student is instructed to show them the picture on front of the “A Step of Faith” leaflet. This picture shows people demonstrating different emotional responses to Christ on the cross, the student is then to ask the unbeliever if one of these people (emotional responses) represents him. There is a danger of the unbeliever responding to an emotional pull rather than the drawing power of the Holy Spirit.

The final weakness is the possibility of the gospel presentation being too structured. Every person is a unique individual with a unique story and a unique background. While such a structured gospel presentation does much to alleviate the fear associated with sharing the gospel, it can also leave the inexperienced evangelist ill prepared for questions and responses that are outside the anticipated dialogue.

⁹Bobby H. Welch and Doug Williams, *FAITH Evangelism: Discipling for Evangelism and Ministry*, Facilitator Guide, vol. 2 (Nashville: Lifeway Press, 2008).

¹⁰Welch, *FAITH Evangelism*, Facilitator Guide, 1:132-33.

Evangelism Explosion

Summary

This model for equipping believers to become personal evangelists is presented in the book *Evangelism Explosion*, by D. James Kennedy.¹¹ By way of introduction, Kennedy writes, “This ministry of training laymen for the task of friendship, evangelism, and discipleship based on New Testament principles grew out of the specific problems and opportunities faced by our congregation [Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church of Fort Lauderdale, Florida].”¹² *Evangelism Explosion* is an elaborate model that covers recruitment, training, evangelism, and follow-up, with many detailed steps along the way.

Although the exact implementation will vary depending on a number of factors, the basic model consists of thirteen weeks of instruction (a semester) which encompasses four basic types of training.¹³

1. *Class Instruction*
Sixty minute sessions on the day of visitation
Brief lecture on the topic of the unit
Assignments given to be studied for the following unit
Three-person teams practice what was learned during the previous unit
2. *Preparation for Class*
Training Notebooks contain instructions for presenting the gospel
Weekly assignments for a portion of the gospel presentation are studied at home
Weekly assignments are checked and recited each week at the class
3. *On-The-Job Training*
Trainee goes out with a trained individual and listens as they present the gospel
Trainee gradually handles larger parts of the gospel presentation
4. *Report-Back Session*

¹¹D. James Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion: Equipping Churches for Friendship, Evangelism, Discipleship, and Healthy Growth*, 4th ed. (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1996).

¹²*Ibid.*, 1.

¹³*Ibid.*, 9-11.

After the visitation
A person from each team gives a report of their visit
Results form is filled out
Statistical results for the teams are indicated on a special board

Trainees are taught three elements of the actual gospel presentation: an outline (skeleton), Scripture verses, and illustrations. In an attempt to avoid a “canned” approach, this method does not have trainees memorize a gospel presentation. Instead, trainees use a “skeleton” to guide them and give them confidence in presenting the gospel. Each element is discussed in detail (analyzed) in the Evangelism Explosion training, and the trainees are taught to flesh them out using the associated Scripture verses and illustrations.

In teaching about discipling new believers, Kennedy writes, “The responsibility for discipleship is twofold: First, it is the responsibility of the individual evangelist and the team who leads the new believer to Christ; second, it is the responsibility of the local church family.”¹⁴ Evangelism Explosion equips the evangelist how to do the appropriate follow-up care after a person receives Christ. It also addresses, in detail, methods for the church to use in order to fold new believers into the church family.

The Evangelism Explosion method gives attention to enlisting new trainees and developing new leaders to ensure the continuation of the witnessing ministry. Enlistment is taught by considering the biblical principles associated with enlistment, the practical procedures involved, the qualifications to be sought, and the proper way to approach potential trainees. Leadership development is taught by discussing the process and the positions: Prayer Partners, Trainees, Junior Trainees, Trainers, Lieutenants,

¹⁴Ibid., 103.

Assistant Lay Teachers, Teachers, Leadership-clinic Administrators, and Leadership-clinic Teachers.

Strengths

One of the strengths of this approach is its intention to avoid being a “canned” approach to sharing the gospel. The concept of starting with a “skeleton” and then “fleshing” it out with Scripture verses and illustrations allows for flexibility and enhances sincerity. At the same time, it provides support to make sure a complete and accurate presentation is made. A second strength, also related to the gospel presentation, is the *gradual* transfer of responsibility to trainees. Trainees progress at their own individual pace as to how much of the gospel presentation they will be responsible for making.

The third strength of the Evangelism Explosion method is the attention given to preparing for common objections. Evangelism Explosion seeks to preclude objections by answering them before they arise. There is considerable attention given to the proper ways of handling objections, and how to be prepared to answer many common objections.

The fourth strength is that Evangelism Explosion stresses the church’s responsibility to “fold” new believers into the church. This method moves beyond the spiritual disciplines and their essential role in the new believer’s life. Evangelism Explosion gives considerable attention to the practical steps a church must take to help new believers become an active part of the church family, and to ensure the church is functioning as a healthy church.

Weaknesses

The first weakness of Evangelism Explosion is that it appears to be labor intensive and require significant time commitment from the laity. Smaller churches may find it difficult to implement the entire method without considerable alteration. The second weakness is its potential to intimidate the person learning to share their faith. Ironically, the flexibility that is considered a strength can also be a weakness. Some people will not be comfortable with the amount of flexibility this method offers in the gospel presentation, and some people will not be comfortable with the bluntness of the two diagnostic questions.

Share Jesus without Fear

Summary

The third gospel presentation method, Share Jesus without Fear, is discussed at length in William Fay's book by the same name.¹⁵ The training is done using a four-week study prepared by William Fay and Ralph Hodge, and includes DVDs, a CD, and a *Share Jesus without Fear* workbook.¹⁶ As the name implies, the goal is to help believers overcome the fear associated with sharing the gospel, specifically, the fear of being rejected, not knowing enough, offending a friend or relative, or being ridiculed or persecuted. In addition to the four weekly group sessions, participants complete daily individual studies that are designed to reinforce the teachings of the group sessions.

During the four-week program, students master three simple steps that are

¹⁵William Fay and Linda Evans Shepherd, *Share Jesus without Fear* (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 1999).

¹⁶William Fay and Ralph Hodge, *Share Jesus without Fear*, rev. ed. (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2008).

supposed to enable them to share their faith without fear. However, these steps are not presented until the last three sessions. The first session, “Developing a Heart to Share Jesus,” focuses on identifying the fears associated with sharing one’s faith, the believer’s responsibility for sharing his or her faith (the sin of silence), trusting God for results, and understanding the believer’s role as it relates to the Holy Spirit’s role in evangelism.

The second session, “Learning a Way to Share Jesus,” introduces the first of the three steps in the gospel presentation. This step is based on the premise that people love to share their opinions. Believers are taught to ask five questions intended to keep the believer in control of the conversation, to act as a funnel leading to permission to share the gospel, and to avoid defensiveness.

The third session, “Responding to the Challenge to Share Jesus,” teaches the second and third steps of the gospel presentation. In the second step, the believer takes the unbeliever through seven Scripture references, asking him or her to read each one out loud before discussing what it means. After the person reads each verse out loud, the believer asks, “What does this say to you?” Fay contends that since the Holy Spirit is in charge of all convincing and convicting, this method allows the believer to be simply the page turner and to stay out of God’s way.¹⁷

The third step of the gospel presentation is designed to bring the person to a point of decision. The believer is taught to accomplish this goal by asking another set of five questions. Fay instructs the believer to be silent, pray, and let the Holy Spirit work after the fifth question is asked. He also contends that if the answer is “yes,” the person

¹⁷Fay and Shepherd, *Share Jesus without Fear*, 45.

is saved at that moment, and leading him or her in a sinner's prayer is only "dessert."¹⁸ This session also covers objections that people may offer at the point of decision, and how to respond to those objections by continuing to ask them "why" in response to each objection. Finally, believers are asked to plan appointments to meet with people who need to hear the gospel before the final class session.

The final session, "Being Obedient to Share Jesus," gives participants an opportunity to share their witnessing experiences of the past week. Through Fay's personal testimony they are encouraged that God can save the most unlikely person they can identify. Participants are reminded that they have succeeded if they share the gospel, even if the person rejects salvation.

Fay and Hodge suggest following up with participants after the four weekly sessions conclude. Suggestions for follow-up include scheduling a fifth session several weeks after the fourth session ends, calling participants every few weeks, and sending notes of encouragement. They suggest offering the course at least two to five times per year in order to give the church a broad base of trained Christian witnesses.

Strengths

The Share Jesus without Fear method has four significant strengths. First is the fact that it is built upon three simple steps: (1) a set of five non-threatening questions designed to keep the believer in control and gain permission to share the gospel; (2) a clear presentation of the gospel using Scripture; (3) a set of five questions designed to bring the person to a point of decision. Second, the entire presentation is designed to eliminate defensiveness and confrontation. Third, this method stresses the importance of

¹⁸Ibid., 65.

trusting God for results, thereby reducing the feeling of failure when someone rejects salvation. Fourth, the entire training process is completed in just four weeks.

Weaknesses

Two main weaknesses arise with this method. First, it is weak on practical application. Because there are only four sessions and the final two steps are not taught until session 3, participants do not have opportunity to apply and practice the principles between group sessions. Second, this method does not have a strong focus on discipleship and spiritual development after salvation. These concepts are not completely ignored, but they are not discussed at length.

Servant Evangelism

Summary

The approach for servant evangelism is considered as it is presented in two books. One book is *Conspiracy of Kindness* by Steve Sjogren, author of numerous books and articles on evangelism, church planting, and leadership.¹⁹ The other book contributing to this discussion is *Irresistible Evangelism*, by Steve Sjogren, Dave Ping and Doug Pollock.²⁰ While *Conspiracy of Kindness* introduces and explains the concept of exposing people to God's love through acts of kindness, *Irresistible Evangelism* teaches the next step in the process of leading them to the Lord.

The basic premise of servant evangelism is to get believers out of the church,

¹⁹Steve Sjogren, *Conspiracy of Kindness: A Refreshing New Approach to Sharing the Love of Jesus*, 10th anniversary ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003).

²⁰Steve Sjogren, Dave Ping and Doug Pollock, *Irresistible Evangelism: Natural Ways to Open Others to Jesus* (Loveland, CO: Group, 2004).

into the community, and doing acts of kindness for people. This “low-risk—high-grace” method of evangelism is less intimidating for the believer and less threatening for the prospect. These acts of kindness can include giving away bottles of water or soft drinks, washing windshields, raking leaves, wrapping gifts at Christmas, shoveling snow, buying down gasoline at a service station, distributing light bulbs or smoke detector batteries, or any of the many other suggestions offered by Sjogren.²¹ The possibilities for projects are limited only by the church’s creativity and resources.

One must recognize that people will be at different levels of commitment; therefore, a variety of projects should be planned to meet people where they are. This need for variety, along with the desire to keep servant evangelism from being seen as an occasional “special project,” requires that projects be done on a frequent basis. The program also suggests that alternative projects be planned in case of inclement weather. Planning must be done to (1) establish clear communication; (2) get any necessary permission; (3) consider safety and liability issues; (4) consider location; (5) consider equipment needs.²²

Sjogren recommends allowing time after each project for participants to meet and “download.” Concerning this time of debriefing, Sjogren writes,

I have found it helpful to have a debriefing time in the wake of ministry. We refer to this as a “do and tell” time. Now that we’ve done something, let’s talk about it, compare notes, and let our hair down. This gives people the chance to bring to completion the process of learning. We truly learn what we can do, digest (information), and discuss. Jesus apparently did something similar when he received back the seventy after they had gone out to minister God’s love to the surrounding towns and villages. They returned from their missions and shared lots

²¹Sjogren, *Conspiracy of Kindness*, 219-30.

²²*Ibid.*, 151-58.

of stories with one another.²³

During this informal time of debriefing, he suggests asking the following types of questions:

“How did it go with you?”

“When you served people, did they seem open?”

“Which project did you enjoy the most?”

“What did you say or do differently that could help us to be more effective the next time we go out?”

“Where shall we go next time?”²⁴

Recognizing that acts of kindness alone are not complete evangelism, *Irresistible Evangelism* speaks of taking servant evangelism further. The authors of this book attempt to build a case for doing away with the word “evangelism” and replacing it with “discipleship” by arguing that the two words mean essentially the same thing, “drawing people closer to God through relationship with Jesus Christ.”²⁵ In explaining what they call “The Natural Way” the authors contend that one must understand how the “organic pieces” work together to produce “fruit that will last.” With this concept in mind, they present (1) sowing (acts of kindness); (2) watering; (3) tending; (4) finding (receiving Christ); (5) following (learning to reach out); (6) reproducing (leading others to Christ).²⁶ Although this process begins with servant evangelism’s acts of kindness, it depends on building a relationship that allows for sharing the gospel.

Moving through the above process involves learning to listen in the right way. The authors write, “A good evangelistic listener is a person who inspires trust so that

²³Ibid., 160.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Sjogren, *Irresistible Evangelism*, 75-76.

²⁶Ibid., 77-79.

people not only allow access to their world, but find they can take a deeper look into places they would probably avoid otherwise.”²⁷ Setting aside his personal agenda and taking time to listen requires the believer to invest more of himself, on a deeper level, than did the initial act of kindness.

Strengths

One of the strengths of servant evangelism, at least at the “acts of kindness” level, is that it removes two barriers to evangelism. First, the intimidation or fear that many believers feel in relation to evangelism, and second, the threat that many unbelievers feel when approached. New believers, and people who have never participated in any type of evangelism, can participate on some level in servant evangelism projects. As a low-risk—high-grace method, there is very little emotional risk involved in servant evangelism.

Another strength of servant evangelism is that it is easy to implement. The flexibility associated with servant evangelism projects make them manageable for any church, in any community. Churches can adapt servant evangelism projects to their own size, their own resources, and their own community. Sjogren, Ping, and Pollock challenge churches to stop talking and learning about evangelism and begin doing evangelism.

The third strength of servant evangelism is that it focuses on planting, not harvesting. This strength is evidenced by the fact that the authors encouraged several churches to work together on servant evangelism projects. Since it is not focused on numbers for the harvest, discouragement is less likely to occur. Focusing on planting

²⁷Ibid., 124.

instead of harvesting allows unbelievers to feel that someone is truly interested in them and that they are not being viewed as just potential numbers.

Weaknesses

One of the weaknesses in the presentation of this method is the potential to adopt an “end justifies the means” attitude, or to misinterpret mere human thoughts as “instructions from God.” *Irresistible Evangelism* speaks with enthusiasm of the pastor who obeyed “God’s instructions” to pay for a beer for a dozen people to “show them God’s love in a practical way” and of the group who purchased cigarettes for the homeless to “show Christianity in action.”²⁸ Numerous other examples are given of God “instructing” believers to take specific actions. One must be careful to discern between what is truly God’s instruction and what is merely a human idea.

Another weakness is the high emphasis placed on servant evangelism, as though almost nothing else matters. Although this method speaks of discipleship as helping people draw closer to God through their relationship with Jesus Christ, the only form of discipleship presented is to get them involved in servant evangelism. The authors correctly state that impressive facilities, full parking lots, big budgets, great preaching, exciting music, and professional-quality programs to meet every type of need are not bad things, but they are *not* the main event. However, in their zealous support for servant evangelism they go on to say, “For a church, the main event must reflect the servant heart of Jesus.”²⁹ In reality, the main event *is* Jesus, period.

A third weakness is that even though the authors recognize a need to share the

²⁸Ibid., 61-62, 93.

²⁹Ibid, 185.

gospel verbally, beyond the acts of kindness, there is no strong support for doing so. The chapter titled “Active Sharing” does not present any type of biblically based sharing of the gospel message. This chapter presents a somewhat weak parallel between a man courting his future bride and a person coming to Christ (falling in interest, falling in like, falling in love, and committing) which ends with an encouragement to be “prepared to share.” However, the challenge is for the believer to be prepared to share his own personal story, no Scripture is involved in this portion of the training.

Becoming a Contagious Christian

Summary

The final evangelistic method to be considered is taught using the leader’s guide, *Becoming a Contagious Christian*.³⁰ Students of this model use a student book by the same name, called a participant’s guide.³¹ Participants are encouraged to obtain the companion book for this course, which is also titled *Becoming a Contagious Christian*.³² The companion book provides additional information, including real-life stories, and gives depth to the weekly lessons. The course is designed to be taught in six weekly sessions, but can be adapted to fit into three sessions or even a one or two day seminar/retreat.

While the last four sessions of the course concentrate on practical skills that

³⁰Mark Mittelberg, Lee Strobel, and Bill Hybels, *Becoming a Contagious Christian: Communicating Your Faith in a Style That Fits You*, Leader’s Guide, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).

³¹Mark Mittelberg, Lee Strobel, and Bill Hybels, *Becoming a Contagious Christian: Communicating Your Faith in a Style That Fits You*, Participant’s Guide (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).

³²Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg, *Becoming a Contagious Christian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

everyone will use, the first two sessions are designed to lay a foundation for personal evangelism and to have more of an individual focus. The first session seeks to encourage personal evangelism by discussing the benefits of becoming a “contagious Christian.” This method immediately focuses on Jesus, and the confusion that exists in the world today about Jesus, by having participants initially consider the question, “Who is Jesus?” The goal of the course is then clearly defined “to prepare us [participants] to be contagious Christians who are active in leading others to Christ.”³³ Scripture references support this goal.

Participants are then asked to identify the benefits (to us, to others, and to Christ) of leading someone to the Lord. The leader guides participants through an exercise allowing them to identify negative and positive perceptions associated with evangelism in an effort to alleviate associated fears and intimidations. To help participants fully understand what is meant by the term “contagious Christian,” the following six components of contagious Christianity are identified: (1) it is fueled by love; (2) it flows out of authenticity; (3) it is built on relationships; (4) it is expressed in both actions and words; (5) it is a process; (6) it is always a partnership.³⁴ An essential element of the first session is having participants prepare a Prayer List (names of people they will pray for throughout the six sessions) and an Impact List (one person they will concentrate their prayers and thoughts on).

The second session has a more personal focus and relates more directly to the course’s subtitle, *Communicating Your Faith in a Style That Fits You*. Participants are

³³Mittelberg, *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, Leader’s Guide, 26.

³⁴Ibid., 40-46.

encouraged to take comfort in the fact that God created, equipped, and gifted every believer differently, and there is at least one evangelistic style suited to each individual's personality. A "Styles Questionnaire" and "Styles Affirmations" are provided to help participants identify their particular evangelistic style(s). The following six styles of evangelism are identified and explained, as well as, their biblical example: (1) Direct Style – Peter in Acts 2; (2) Intellectual Style – Paul in Acts 17; (3) Testimonial Style – the blind man in John 9; (4) Interpersonal Style – Matthew in Luke 5:29; (5) Invitational Style – the Samaritan woman in John 4; (6) Serving Style – Tabitha in Acts 9. The participants are then asked to prayerfully consider what should be their "next step" in reaching out to the person whose name they put on their Impact List.

The third session is concerned with building relationships and starting spiritual conversations. Participants are taught the importance of building authentic relationships with nonbelievers before attempting to share the gospel with them. The believer is reminded of the necessity for him or her to remain the dominant and more spiritual influence in any relationship with a nonbeliever. While believers are encouraged to "mention" spiritual matters early in their relationships, they are also taught to begin serious spiritual conversation at the appropriate time in a relationship. This session introduces three approaches to starting spiritual conversations: (1) Bridging – using the topic being discussed as a bridge to a related spiritual topic; (2) Questioning – similar to bridging except it evokes a response by asking a question; (3) Inviting – invite friends to a spiritually oriented event or gathering to which they might relate.

The fourth session teaches participants to be prepared to tell their personal story (testimony) as part of the witnessing process once a relationship has been

established. Session 5 focuses on teaching participants to share the actual gospel message.

The final session focuses on what it calls “crossing the line of faith.” This term refers to the point of someone actually receiving Christ. Participants are taught to emphasize an attitude of repentance and faith as opposed to a carefully worded prayer. A brief discussion advises participants to encourage and coach new believers in the areas of daily prayer, Bible reading, forming right relationships with Christians and non-Christians, and finding a Bible-teaching church.

Strengths

One of the strengths of *Becoming a Contagious Christian* is that it is highly individualized. This method takes into account that different people have different personalities, and allows for those differences. The first session teaches that a person should ignore their perceptions (preconceived ideas) of evangelism/evangelists, negative and positive, and simply be themselves. This individualization is also seen in the use of one’s personal story in the process of sharing the gospel.

Another strength is that this model teaches evangelism based relationships. The model is further strengthened by teaching that these are to be *authentic* relationships. Being relational with people allows one to establish a context that is conducive to deep spiritual conversations, and more effective for ultimately sharing the gospel.

A third strength is that this model recognizes that there must be an actual presentation of the gospel message. Even though the model teaches building authentic relationships, engaging in spiritual conversations, and sharing one’s personal story, it does not stop there. The entire model is designed to progress to an actual sharing of the

gospel message and ultimately leading the unsaved person to a point of decision.

Weaknesses

One weakness with this model is that it does not significantly address discipleship (follow-up) for the new believer. Although participants are instructed to make new believers aware of the need for daily prayer, Bible study, and establishing right relationships, there is very little encouragement for pouring one's life into the new believer and no mention of baptism. To the model's credit, it does say, "The crime we must never commit is abandoning a newborn spiritual baby!"³⁵

Another weakness of this model is the lack of practical training. While there are practice activities to be done in the class room, and opportunities for participants to share about experiences they may have had during the previous week, there is no actual opportunity for any type of field practice. Given the nature of this model (e.g., relational), it would be difficult to build that type of practical experience into the structure. This type of problem increases the likelihood that a participant will complete the training but not put it into practice afterward.

Conclusion

Comparison of Models

In comparing the five models presented in this chapter, it is obvious that they share a number of similarities yet differ significantly. As expected, some have more similarities than others. While some take a "one size fits all" approach and have participants memorize a canned presentation, others take a more personal approach in

³⁵Mittelberg, *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, Participant's Guide, 91.

order to avoid the appearance of a canned presentation. As previously demonstrated, each method has its strengths and weaknesses.

The method that is most unique when compared to the other four models is Servant Evangelism. This method is unique in that it is not based on a structured study or classroom type training sessions. Faith Evangelism is based on a twelve-week classroom study, with students completing five daily sessions designed to reinforce the weekly sessions. Evangelism Explosion utilizes thirteen weeks of classroom study, requiring sixty-minute sessions on the day of visitation and assignments to be completed between sessions. Share Jesus without Fear is based on a four-week study supplemented by daily studies. Becoming a Contagious Christian utilizes studies taught over six weekly sessions to train believers to do evangelism. Servant Evangelism does not require any type of classroom training before putting believers in contact with the unsaved; they are instructed to participate in performing their group's act of kindness (e.g., giving bottles of water, washing windshields, etc.) and simply to tell people they are "showing God's love in a practical way."

The perceived advantage of the Servant Evangelism method is that it avoids the pitfall of methods that take participants through weeks of training and preparing to become evangelists, but never progress to *doing* evangelism. However, it should be noted that engaging people to perform acts of kindness does not ensure that they will ever share the gospel message; they may never progress beyond performing an act of kindness. It should also be noted that Evangelism Explosion includes an "on-the-job-training" component as one of its four basic types of training. In this component, a trainee goes out with a trained individual and listens as he presents the gospel with the

trainee gradually handling larger parts of the gospel presentation as his ability develops. Evangelism Explosion ensures moving to the *doing* stage (beyond the church walls), and allows for individuals to develop at their own pace.

FAITH Evangelism also incorporates a practical aspect of doing evangelistic visits each week during the training. FAITH teams (a trained leader and two learners he or she is mentoring) do “visitation time” (a 60 to 90-minute segment of each training session when the FAITH teams leave the training location to make visits). In this model, students complete a “Visitation Summary” which helps them evaluate their team’s visitation experience for the week.

Becoming a Contagious Christian and Share Jesus without Fear are the two models most likely to experience the pitfall of training *without* doing. While each of these two models provides an option for participants to voluntarily share about evangelistic encounters they may have experienced on their own, they do not provide a visitation component as part of their actual training. Incorporating a visitation component would be especially difficult for Share Jesus without Fear because, as noted previously when discussing its weaknesses, there are only four sessions and the final two steps of how to share using this method are not presented until the third session.

Not only do these five models vary in the methods they use to teach believers to become personal evangelists, they also vary in the methods they teach believers to use for sharing the gospel. FAITH Evangelism relies on the students’ memorizing a highly structured approach that allows for little personalization; however, the other methods vary in their degree of structure for the gospel presentation and allow for varying degrees of personalization. Evangelism Explosion teaches a direct approach of asking a person

very direct “diagnostic” questions about their eternal destiny if they should die and why God should allow them into heaven. The other methods vary in their degree of directness for the gospel presentation. Their degree of differences can be seen in the following comparison of their gospel presentation methods.

FAITH Evangelism teaches the believer to present the gospel by using an acronym based on the word FAITH, after asking the question, “In your personal opinion, what do you understand it takes for a person to get to heaven and have eternal life?”³⁶

The gospel presentation, with accompanying Scripture references, is as follows:

1. *F* is for Forgiveness
Everyone has sinned and needs God’s forgiveness. (Rom 3:23)
God’s forgiveness is in Jesus only. (Eph 1:7)
2. *A* is for Available
God’s forgiveness is available for all. (John 3:16)
God’s forgiveness is available but not automatic. (Matt 7:21)
3. *I* is for Impossible
According to the Bible, it is impossible to get to heaven on our own. (Eph 2:8-9)
4. *T* is for Turn
Turn means repent.
Turn away from sin and self. (Luke 13:3)
Here is the greatest news of all. (Rom 10:9-10)
5. *H* is for Heaven
Heaven is a place where we will live with God forever. (John 14:3)
Eternal life begins now with Jesus. (John 10:10)

H can also stand for How.

How can a person have God’s forgiveness, eternal life, and heaven?
By trusting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

This approach is highly structured and allows for very little variance in the presentation.

Students are taught to follow this presentation with an invitation to receive Christ and

³⁶Welch, *FATH Evangelism*, Facilitator Guide, 1:10-11.

how to lead someone in a model prayer. The danger of this approach is in its rigidity and the temptation to see the model prayer as a magic formula for receiving salvation.

Evangelism Explosion attempts to avoid the more “canned” appearance of FAITH Evangelism by having the believer build on a “skeleton” rather than having them use a memorized, rigid outline. This method uses two, fairly direct, “diagnostic” questions to launch the gospel presentation. The “skeleton” for this method appears as follows:

- I. The introduction
 - A. Their secular life
 - B. Their church background
 - C. Our Church (their impression)
 - D. Testimony: church and/or personal
 - E. Two diagnostic questions:
 1. Have you come to a place in your spiritual life where you know for certain that if you were to die today you would go to heaven, or is that something you would say you’re still working on?
 2. Suppose that you were to die today and stand before God and He were to say to you, “Why should I let you into my heaven?” What would you say?

- II. The Gospel
 - A. Grace
 1. Heaven is a free gift
 2. It is not earned or deserved
 - B. Man
 1. Is a sinner
 2. Cannot save himself
 - C. God
 1. Is merciful—therefore doesn’t want to punish us
 2. Is just—therefore must punish sin
 - D. Christ
 1. Who He is—the infinite God-Man
 2. What He did—He died on the cross and rose from the dead to pay the penalty for our sins and to purchase a place in heaven for us, which He offers as a gift.
 - E. Faith
 1. What it is not—mere intellectual assent or mere temporal faith
 2. What it is—trusting in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life

- III. The commitment
 - A. Transition: “Does this make sense to you?”
 - B. Commitment: “Would you like to receive the gift of eternal life?”
 - C. Clarification: “Let me clarify this . . .”
 - D. Prayer
 - E. Assurance

- IV. The immediate follow-up
 - A. *Partners in Growing* booklet
 - B. The means of growth
 - 1. Bible (seven-day callback appointment)
 - 2. Prayer
 - 3. Worship
 - 4. Fellowship
 - 5. Witness
 - C. Appointment for church³⁷

In addition to this “skeleton,” believers are taught to use Scripture and illustrations to flesh out the presentation. While this approach is not as memorized and rigid as the FAITH Evangelism approach, it still provides a significant structure which can give confidence to an insecure person who is sharing the gospel. However, the two diagnostic questions and the skeleton are enough to keep this method from having the natural flow that it desires to achieve.

Evangelism Explosion purposely places asking for a commitment at what it feels is the most positive place in the presentation. The believer is to ask the unbeliever, “Would you like to receive the free gift of eternal life?” If the new believer answers in the affirmative, the believer is instructed to lead them in a prayer that is spoken in short phrases so the unbeliever can repeat the prayer. While this is not the memorized model prayer used in FAITH Evangelism, it is a very similar approach with the same “magic formula” dangers.

Kennedy attempts to remedy the “magic formula” problem by insisting the

³⁷Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion*, 31-32.

person be told, “If you really meant in your heart what you just said in that prayer, then you have the promise of Jesus Christ that your sins are forgiven; He has adopted you into His family and has given you eternal life.” He goes on to explain, “The ‘if’ clause is inserted here in order not to give the person a false assurance. We are saved by trusting in Jesus Christ, not by *saying* that we trust in Jesus Christ.”³⁸ Although well intentioned and true, Kennedy’s warning is insufficient to remove the danger.

By design, the Sharing Jesus without Fear method uses a different approach for sharing the gospel message. This model uses a three-step approach to the gospel presentation. In the first step, the believer asks the following five questions:

1. Do you have any kind of spiritual belief?
2. To you, who is Jesus?
3. Do you believe there are a heaven and a hell?
4. If you died right now, where would you go?
5. If what you believe were not true, would you want to know it?

Fay refers to these questions as the “Share Jesus Questions.” As mentioned in the summary, they are designed to keep the believer in control of the conversation, to act as a funnel leading to permission to share the gospel, and to avoid defensiveness. This method differs from the other methods in that these questions can be started at any point, and can be asked in any order. Flexibility provides a measure of comfort.

In the second step of the gospel presentation, the believer presents seven Scripture references. These verses and the phrases from Fay’s summary are as follows:

Romans 3:23	The issue of sin
Romans 6:23	The penalty of sin

³⁸Ibid., 101.

John 3:3	How to enter a relationship with Christ
John 14:6	The narrowness of the gospel
Romans 1:9-11	Anyone can be saved
2 Corinthians 5:15	We must turn from/turn to (surrender)
Revelation 3:20	A choice to accept or reject ³⁹

While FAITH Evangelism and Evangelism Explosion weave Scripture throughout their gospel presentation structure, Share Jesus without Fear treats it as a separate component.

The unbeliever is brought to a point of decision in the third step of the gospel presentation. This step consists of the following five additional questions:

1. Are you a sinner?
2. Do you want forgiveness for your sins?
3. Do you believe Jesus died on the cross for you and rose again?
4. Are you willing to surrender your life to Christ?
5. Are you ready to invite Jesus into your life and into your heart?

Fay stresses the fact that the Holy Spirit is at work throughout steps two and three, and the believer's part is inconsequential. Unlike the FAITH Evangelism and Evangelism Explosion models, the Share Jesus without Fear model does not promote the use of a model prayer or a sinner's prayer. Fay contends that if a person answers "yes" to the fifth question in step three, they are saved at that moment.⁴⁰

As previously stated, the Servant Evangelism model is unique when compared to the other models. This uniqueness is seen in how it teaches evangelism and in how it teaches that evangelism is to be done. There is no doubt that Sjogren is passionate about the effectiveness of servant evangelism. Ultimately, Sjogren concludes that servant

³⁹Fay and Hodge, *Share Jesus without Fear*, 65.

⁴⁰Fay and Shepherd, *Share Jesus without Fear*, 65.

evangelism by itself is incomplete for the sharing of the gospel; there must also be words.⁴¹ However, he also concludes that traditional approaches which only use words are also incomplete by themselves. He rightly recognizes that it is not a matter of using one approach at the exclusion of the other; it is a matter of using one to compliment the other for a more complete and effective approach.

In *Irresistible Evangelism*, believers are encouraged to ask “wondering” questions to provide a breakthrough conversation with someone they are trying to build a bridge to reach. Based on the premise that this can be accomplished with three good questions, *Irresistible Evangelism* provides a list of ninety-nine questions, grouped in threes, under thirty-three different subject headings. Examples of wondering questions include: “What conclusions concerning an afterlife have you reached?” or “Have you ever been able to get a handle on what you think your purpose in life is?” The authors believe “wondering” questions should be asked for four reasons: (1) wondering questions are nonthreatening; (2) wondering questions remove barriers to evangelism because they communicate humility; (3) wondering questions allow people to discover truth for themselves; (4) wondering questions cause others to begin asking their own good questions.⁴²

Ultimately, the authors contend that “how” one shares the gospel depends on their relationship with the unbeliever. Dave Ping illustrates this with the acrostic SAFE and ties it back to the gardening illustration of sow, water, tend, and harvest. The acrostic is represented as follows: (1) S – Stranger (“This is a practical way to show God’s

⁴¹Sjogren, *Conspiracy of Kindness*, 138.

⁴²Sjogren, *Irresistible Evangelism*, 132-33.

love.”); (2) A – Acquaintance (“I want to get to know you better.”); (3) F – Friend (“I really care about you.”); (4) E – Eternal (“Would you like to experience relationship with Jesus?”).⁴³ This acrostic illustrates how one moves from simple servant evangelism to verbal sharing as their relationship builds.

Although Sjögren recognizes the need to verbally share the gospel beyond the acts of kindness, the two books considered in this chapter do not present a strong basis for doing so. Unlike the other models considered (FAITH Evangelism, Evangelism Explosion, Share Jesus without Fear, and Becoming a Contagious Christian), *Conspiracy of Kindness* and *Irresistible Evangelism* do not teach the believer a method that uses Scripture during their evangelistic presentation. This model appears incomplete when compared to the other models.

The Becoming a Contagious Christian model is also unique in its gospel presentation when compared to the other models being considered. Participants are introduced to something called “The Five-Second Gospel” presentation that says, “God loves us, we blew it, Christ paid for it, we must receive him.”⁴⁴ Explanation is then given for the four key characters (God, Us, Christ, You), and each one’s respective role in the gospel message. Scripture is given to support each element of the presentation.

Participants are taught to illustrate “The Five-Second Gospel” presentation by using an illustration called “The Bridge,” which depicts the gap between man and God being bridged by the cross.⁴⁵ The gap represents death (eternal separation from God).

⁴³Ibid., 164.

⁴⁴Mittelberg, *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, Leader’s Guide, 212.

⁴⁵Ibid., 218-22.

Three other illustrations are provided that can be used as alternatives or supplements to, “The Bridge.”

Unlike the other FAITH Evangelism, Evangelism Explosion, and Share Jesus without Fear to some extent, Becoming a Contagious Christian strongly discourages the use of a model/repeated prayer. Instead of having the person repeat a prayer, participants are taught to encourage people to pray in their own words and to include the following areas: (1) ask for the forgiveness of Christ; (2) ask for the leadership of Christ; (3) give thanks for God’s forgiveness and leadership which are already in effect.⁴⁶

Each of the models considered recognizes, to some extent, that persons sharing the gospel will have individual personalities; however, some are more sensitive to this fact than others. FAITH Evangelism is the least sensitive to this fact, but recognizes that different people will have different levels of fear associated with evangelism. This model encourages believers to rely on God, through prayer, to help them overcome their fear, and to understand that they can build their confidence with training.⁴⁷

Evangelism Explosion is more sensitive to individual personalities than FAITH Evangelism because it actually accounts for them in a portion of the training. On-The-Job-Training (visitation with a mentor) is tailored to individuals in that they are allowed to develop at their own pace. As they feel more comfortable, and demonstrate adequate ability, they are allowed to assume increasingly more responsibility during evangelistic visits.

Share Jesus without Fear is specifically designed to help those who experience

⁴⁶Ibid., 262.

⁴⁷Welch, *FAITH Evangelism*, Facilitator Guide, 18-22.

considerable fear associated with evangelism. The idea is to provide a method that removes as much fear and intimidation from the evangelism process as possible in order to allow even the most timid Christians to fulfill their God given responsibility to be personal evangelists. Fay has developed a method that he believes will meet everyone where they are.

The Servant Evangelism model also recognizes individual personalities involved in evangelism. This method encourages churches to engage in numerous servant evangelism projects, at least in part, so that Christians can become engaged on their own level. It is recognized that certain types of projects will be better suited to certain types of personalities and skill sets. Since servant evangelism projects are typically done in groups or teams, individual personalities can be mixed and matched based on outgoingness, evangelism experience, mentorships, and other beneficial factors.

Of the five methods considered, Becoming a Contagious Christian gives the most attention to individual personalities as they relate to evangelism. It begins by encouraging trainees to discard any perceptions they have associated with the words evangelism or evangelist, and encourages them to find their own niche. More significantly, as was previously discussed, it identifies six different styles of evangelism (Direct, Intellectual, Testimonial, Interpersonal, Invitational, and Serving) and gives biblical examples of each. A “Style Questionnaire” helps individuals determine which style(s) of evangelism most suits their personality. Knowing there are different, biblically legitimate styles of evangelism prevents individuals from becoming discouraged if they do not fit their perceived concept of what they thought an evangelist should be.

Each of the five methods considered address what should be done after a person makes a decision to receive Christ. Although each method addresses the issue, they do not all do it equally. FAITH Evangelism teaches the students to encourage new believers to be baptized, and to use the “Next Steps” leaflet to explain the importance of prayer, Bible study, devotionals, church attendance, and sharing their faith.

Share Jesus without Fear provides ten questions to ask when a person receives Christ. These questions are designed to connect the person with their Christian friend(s), start them reading the book of John, and to get them in church. This model also offers a very brief discussion titled, “Why Follow Through to Make Disciples?”⁴⁸

The Servant Evangelism model is particularly weak in the area of discipleship. The primary form of discipleship presented for this model is to get the new believer involved in servant evangelism. While there is spiritual benefit in actively serving and performing acts of kindness, as well as serving alongside of spiritually mature Christians, this activity is no substitute for spiritual disciplines.

The Becoming a Contagious Christian model offers discussion on coaching new believers. Like FAITH Evangelism and Share Jesus without Fear, this model briefly teaches the basics of: praying daily, reading the Bible, forming right relationships with other Christians, forming relationships with a sound church, and forming right relationships with non-Christians. These matters are recognized as important, but they are not given a significant amount of emphasis.

In terms of discipling the new believer subsequent to his decision to receive Christ, Evangelism Explosion is the strongest model. This model stresses the church’s

⁴⁸Fay and Shepherd, *Share Jesus without Fear*, 77-78.

responsibility to “fold” new believers into the church. While the other methods present the basics, Evangelism Explosion moves well beyond the basics of discipleship. Kennedy writes, “A healthy local church is where discipleship continues. New Christians are not orphans to be institutionalized, nor do they join the ‘Christian country club.’ They are born into the family of God.”⁴⁹ He mentions a number of ministries which will help the new believer become folded into the church. Evangelism Explosion recognized that the entire church is responsible for the growth and development of the new believer.

Possibilities for Incorporation into This Project

In considering the strengths and weaknesses of the five models being studied, there are certain aspects that are wise to incorporate into the scope of this project; however, there are others that are wisely avoided. The first incorporated is the way FAITH Evangelism lays a strong Scriptural basis in support of the believer’s personal evangelism responsibility. The first part of the project is a sermon series that uses Scripture to teach the people of Frist Baptist Church of Prestonsburg about the biblical necessity and urgency for believes to be personal evangelists.

The component of Evangelism Explosion which is incorporated into this project is the attempt to avoid using a “canned” approach to presenting the gospel message. Participants are not asked to memorize a rigid gospel presentation. Participants are equipped by giving them information to build on when sharing the gospel. They are encouraged to “flesh out” this presentation as the situation and their own personal experience allows.

⁴⁹Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion*, 111.

Similar to the Share Jesus without Fear method, this project teaches participants to do personal evangelism in a way that eliminates defensiveness and confrontation. If believers feel confident they can share the gospel in a way that is not confrontational, then they are more inclined to actually *do* personal evangelism. Teaching participants to share the gospel is pointless if they refuse to actively tell others about Christ and salvation

Even though the small group portion of this project is only seven weeks long it includes one Servant Evangelism project. It is important for participants to understand the impact of showing genuine concern for people before trying to share the gospel with them. Participants also need to understand the importance of planting spiritual seeds, even though they may not witness the harvest.

The concept that is incorporated from the Becoming a Contagious Christian method is the thought of individualized approaches to evangelism. Participants in this project are taught that there is a style or type of evangelism to suit any personality. Participants are encouraged to discard any preconceived ideas they have about what an evangelist or evangelism is and to realize that it is not necessary to have a specific personality type in order to effectively share the gospel with non-believers.

Closing

Many models can be studied and evaluated in an effort to consider the theoretical and practical issues surrounding personal evangelism. The five models considered in this chapter served that purpose well. Their similarities and their differences, coupled with their strengths and their weaknesses, provide a broad range of material to study and give an accurate and meaningful analysis of the materials available

for equipping believers to become personal evangelists.

CHAPTER 4

ELEMENTS OF THE MINISTRY PROJECT

This ministry project consisted of a fifteen-week project spread over sixteen weeks due to not having evening services or activities at the church on Easter Sunday. The project ran from January 6, 2013 through April 25, 2013. During the first week of the project, members and attendees were asked to complete a pre-sermon series survey (Appendix 1) relating to evangelism. Weeks 2 through 7 involved a six-week, Sunday morning sermon series titled “Personal Evangelism . . . Every Believer’s Responsibility.” During the eighth week of the project, a post-sermon series survey (Appendix 2) was completed to evaluate the effectiveness of the six-week sermon series.

The last seven weeks of the project were used to teach a Sunday evening small-group study designed to equip believers to be personal evangelists. Small-group members were asked to complete a survey (Appendix 3) at the beginning of the seven-week period, and another survey (Appendix 4) at the end of the seven-week period. The elements of this project were designed to accomplish the four goals stated in chapter 1. The four surveys were designed to gauge the project’s success or failure related to attaining those goals.

Week 1 of the Project

The project began on Sunday, January 6, 2013, with the distribution of the pre-sermon series survey. The purpose of this survey was to provide a basis for comparison

with the second survey, which was conducted *after* the six-week sermon series on personal evangelism. Comparing the results from the two surveys made it possible to determine if the sermon series had produced a change in thinking related to evangelism.

A brief visit was made to each adult Sunday school class to distribute copies of the survey and to give an explanation of its purpose. Class members were asked to complete the survey and return it to their Sunday school teacher the following Sunday. Since at least 35 percent of the congregation does not attend Sunday school, an announcement about the survey was made from the pulpit during the morning worship service. After the service, a person was stationed at each exit to offer the survey forms to any adults who had not received one in Sunday school. On Friday, an e-mail was sent reminding everyone to complete the survey and bring it back on Sunday morning.

Out of a total 118 surveys distributed to adult members and regular attenders, sixty-two (53 percent) were completed and returned by the following Sunday. The survey consisted of twelve questions related to evangelism. Identifying categories were age, gender, and the length of time a person had been a Christian. Participants were not asked to provide their names. Results of the survey are summarized as follows, using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree			Uncertain		Agree		Strongly Agree

1. A good moral person can go to heaven even though they have never professed faith in Jesus.

Overall average was 1.

Only 1 person, a female, age 50-65, who had been a Christian 11-25 years rated this question a 10.

Five people rated this question a 3 (disagree, but not strongly).

No significant difference between age, gender, or years as a Christian.

2. Those who do not have the gift of evangelism are not required to share the gospel.
 Overall average was 2.
 Three people responded with a 10 (strongly agree).
 Four people were uncertain.
 No significant difference between age, gender, or years as a Christian.

3. Simply living a Christian life in front of a lost person is sufficient to lead them to the Lord (words are not always necessary).
 Overall average was 3.
 Eight people agreed with this statement; however, there were no 10s.
 Seven people were uncertain.
 The notable difference here was in the 18-25 age group who rated this statement a 6 (uncertain).

4. While all Christians have some responsibility for evangelism, the primary responsibility for evangelism lies with the trained ministerial staff.
 Overall average was 3.
 The 26-35 age group rated this question a 1 (strongly disagree).

5. Hell is a literal place of fire and torment.
 Overall average was 9.
 No significant difference between age, gender, or length of years as a Christian.
 Two people who indicated they are not Christians rated this statement a 10 (strongly agree).

6. God's love will not allow Him to send anyone to hell.
 Overall average was 3.
 Five people rated this statement a 10 (strongly agree), 3 of the 5 are 66+ and 4 of the 5 are female.
 Three people rated this statement an 8.

7. Every believer is biblically mandated to share the gospel.
 Overall average was 8.
 The 18-25 age group strongly agreed.
 The 66+ age group bordered between agreeing and being uncertain.
 Two people who indicated they are not Christians rated this statement a 10 (strongly agree).

8. Unsaved people in my life (co-workers, family, friends, etc.) will spend eternity in hell if they do not receive Christ.
 Overall average was 9.
 No significant difference between age, gender, or years as a Christian.

9. The Bible mandates me, personally, to share the gospel with the unsaved people in my life.

Overall average was 9.

No significant difference between age, gender, or years as a Christian.

10. Simply serving people and meeting their needs is a good way to evangelize, words are not necessary.

Overall average was 5.

The 26-35 age group rated this statement a 1.

11. The church has a responsibility to teach believers how to share their faith on an individual basis.

Overall average was 8.

The 26-35 age group rated this statement a 10 (strongly agree).

12. Personal evangelism is as simple as inviting someone to church with you.

Overall average was 7.

The 26-35 age group rated this statement a 1 (strongly disagree).

In week eight the results from this pre-sermon series survey were compared to the results of the post-sermon series survey given during that week.

Week 2 of the Project

The sermon series, “Personal Evangelism – Every Believer’s Responsibility,” was introduced to the congregation on Sunday morning, January 13, 2013. This introduction was used to teach that having an intentional plan for equipping believers to become personal evangelists is essential if a church is to remain active, vital, and healthy. It was also used to clarify that personal evangelism includes verbally sharing one’s faith and discipling others.

Following the introduction of the sermon series, the first sermon of the series was preached using Matthew 28:16-20 as the text. This sermon titled, “Commissioned by Jesus,” sought to lay the foundation that every believer is commissioned by Jesus to share the gospel. The following sermon outline was used to preach this message:

I. Background

- A. Jesus conquers death.

- B. His enemies lie about the truth.
 - C. Jesus appears after the resurrection.
 - D. His resurrection proves his deity.
- II. The Authority – v. 18
- A. Authority of others is limited. (Phil 2:8-9)
 - B. Authority of others is from human sources.
 - C. Jesus’ authority is not derived from men.
 - D. Jesus’ authority is eternal and supreme.
 - E. Jesus has the authority to commission us.
- III. The Command/Commission – vv. 19-20a
- A. It is not just for the first generation of believers.
 - B. It is applicable to our generation as well.
- IV. The Promise – v. 20b
- A. I will be with you always.
 - B. I will be with you to the end of the age.
 - C. God will empower and enable us.

This sermon established that because Jesus has all authority, his commission for every believer to share the gospel and for every church to equip believers to share the gospel is not optional, it is required.

Week 3 of the Project

The second sermon in the series was preached on Sunday morning, January 20, 2013. This sermon, titled “The Compassion of Jesus,” used Matthew 9:35-38 as the text. The introduction reminded everyone that the believer’s goal in life should be to become more like Christ. John 3:30 was used to support the statement that as believers grow, a transformation takes place. The audience was instructed to ask themselves, “When it comes to compassion, what about me needs to change so that I become less like me and more like Christ?” After the introduction, this sermon was preached using the following outline:

- I. What Jesus Saw – v. 35
 - A. Every person in the multitude as an individual.
 - B. Jesus saw every person as an eternal soul destined for heaven or hell.

- II. What Jesus Felt – v. 36
 - A. He felt disgust for their sin.
 - B. He felt deep compassion for the people.

- III. What Jesus Did – vv. 37-38
 - A. Sympathy is not necessarily compassion.
 - B. True compassion moves us to do something.
 - C. Jesus was moved to do something.
 - 1. He called his disciples to him.
 - 2. He equipped the twelve and sent them out. (Matt 10:1-8)

- IV. Conclusion
 - A. Are we willing to see what Jesus saw?
 - B. Are we feeling what Jesus felt?
 - C. Are we willing to do what Jesus did?
 - 1. Use whatever appropriate means is available to open the door so we can share the gospel.
 - 2. True compassion is more than just meeting physical needs.

The point was emphasized that, while Jesus did not condone sin, he did not look at these people judgmentally. He looked at these people with compassion because they were being harassed by sin. John 3:17 was used to support the fact that Jesus did not come to condemn (man was already condemned), he came to save.

Week 4 of the Project

The third sermon in the series was preached on Sunday morning, January 27, 2013. This sermon, titled “Jesus Shows Us How,” used John 4:1-42 as the text. Since the text included forty-two verses, it was broken down into five sections as indicated in the outline below. After the text for each section was explained, care was taken to show what Jesus demonstrated about personal evangelism in each section of Scripture. The following outline was used to preach this sermon:

- I. The Encounter (vv. 1-9)
 - A. Jesus had a divine appointment and an unlikely encounter.
 - B. Sometimes we have divine appointments.
 - C. These people may be very different from us.
 - D. We may be inconvenienced.

- II. The Conversation (vv. 10-19)
 - A. Jesus explains salvation and the indwelling Holy Spirit. (John 7:37-39)
 - B. Jesus explains that she can be loved and forgiven.
 - C. We cannot look down our noses at the unsaved.
 - D. We must explain (verbally) God's love and forgiveness to the unsaved.
 - E. We must help people know that they are not rejects.

- III. The Revelation (vv. 20-30)
 - A. The woman was confused about worship.
 - B. The world is full of confused people.
 - 1. The contribution of secular society.
 - 2. The false doctrines of religions.
 - C. Start by reaching unbelievers at their individual level.
 - 1. You cannot assume they acknowledge God.
 - 2. You cannot assume they are aware of God's love.
 - 3. You cannot assume they know they need salvation.
 - 4. You cannot assume they believe the Bible is God's word.

- IV. The Explanation (vv. 31-38)
 - A. Jesus teaches the disciples.
 - B. Do not get discouraged.
 - C. There is no such thing as failure when the gospel is shared.
 - D. Salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit.

- V. The Result (vv. 39-42)
 - A. This woman brought many others to hear Christ.
 - B. Personal evangelism is one person telling another about Jesus.
 - C. Do not be the link that breaks the chain.
 - D. Start where you are.
 - E. Be prepared to meet your divine appointments.

It is important to note that although it is not clearly identified in the outline, this sermon emphasized the importance of verbally sharing the gospel. This emphasis was made in sections 2 and 3. It should also be noted that a clear presentation of the gospel was made in all three sermons for the benefit of those who were unsaved.

Week 5 of the Project

The fourth sermon in the series was preached on Sunday morning, February 5, 2013. This sermon, titled “Motivated by Love,” used Philemon 1:1-25 as the text. During the sermon introduction, a brief review of the previous three sermons was given. This review included the title and one or two main thoughts from each sermon. It was then pointed out that although the scriptural text used for each of the previous sermons could be clearly identified as relating to evangelism, the same could not be said about the text for this fourth sermon. The three primary characters in Philemon (Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus) were all believers. The audience was assured that the heart of this text has a direct application to evangelism.

Once the characters and the situation were explained, Paul’s request was explained on a deeper level. Paul had refused to exercise his apostolic authority, which would have forced Philemon to abide by his instructions. Instead, he encouraged Philemon to act out of love; love for God and love for his new brother in Christ. At this point, the difference between outside motivators (e.g., guilt and peer pressure) and inside motivators (e.g., love for God and love for man) was discussed.

The final sermon section related the previous sections to personal evangelism by showing that personal evangelism must be motivated by love. The sermon closed with a challenge for each believer to examine their own heart by asking, “Am I genuinely motivated by love to share my faith with unbelievers?” The following outline was used to preach this sermon:

- I. Introduction – Review Previous Sermons
 - A. We are commissioned by Jesus.
 - B. The compassion of Jesus.
 - C. Jesus shows us how.

- II. Three Primary Characters
 - A. The Apostle Paul as the writer.
 - B. Philemon as the recipient.
 - C. Onesimus as the subject.

- III. The Situation
 - A. Slavery then was different than United States, pre-Civil War slavery.
 - B. Apostle Paul never condones slavery.
 - C. We do not know Onesimus' circumstances or position as a slave.
 - D. Onesimus was helpful to Paul in ministry.
 - E. This letter encourages Philemon to receive Onesimus as a brother in Christ.

- IV. The Heart of the Matter (vv. 12-16)
 - A. Paul had apostolic authority.
 - B. Paul refused to exert his authority.
 - 1. Did not want Philemon to act out of compulsion.
 - 2. Wanted Philemon to act out of love.
 - C. Outside motivation vs. inside motivation.
 - 1. Outside motivation is guilt and peer pressure.
 - 2. Inside motivation is love for God and other people.

- V. Personal Evangelism – Motivated by Love (vv. 4-7)
 - A. Sharing one's faith out of guilt leaves one empty.
 - B. Sharing one's faith out of love is fulfilling.
 - C. Guilt cannot overcome the hindrances to personal evangelism.
 - D. Love enables one to overcome the hindrances to personal evangelism.

Week 6 of the Project

The fifth sermon in the series was preached on Sunday morning, February 10, 2013. This sermon, titled "One of Two," used Revelation 20:10-21:8 as the text. The sermon began by looking at the world as it exists, specifically observing the fact that the world's population can be grouped or segregated in numerous ways. The point was made that all people can ultimately be divided into just two groups, saved or unsaved.

Scripture was used to describe heaven and hell in detail, and to explain the judgment that will take place at the great white throne. In order to emphasize the importance and urgency for sharing the gospel, a greater portion of time was dedicated to

describing hell. This sermon was preached using the following outline:

- I. The World as It Exists
 - A. There are numerous ways of grouping/segregating people.
 - B. The IMB recognizes more than eleven-thousand people groups.
 - C. Differences among people have caused problems throughout history.
 - D. There are two main groups of people.
 1. The unsaved, which are destined for hell.
 2. The saved, which are destined for heaven.
 3. This thought should motivate believers to share the gospel.

- II. Hell (Rev 20:10-15)
 - A. There will be the judgment at the great white throne. (v. 11)
 - B. What happens at the throne? (v. 12)
 - C. What happens to those (names) not recorded in the Book of Life? (v. 15)
 - D. There are false ideas about hell, which are not biblical.
 - E. The Scripture's teaching about hell.
 1. Hell is a literal place.
 2. Hell is a place of torments. (Rev 20:10; Luke 16:23-25)
 3. Hell is a place of remembering. (Luke 16:25; 27-29)
 4. Hell is a place of pain and horrible noise. (Matt 8:12; Luke 13:27-28)
 5. Hell is a place filled with evil. (Rev 19:20; 20:10)
 6. People destined for hell are not just an anonymous *they*.

- III. Heaven (Rev 21:1-8)
 - A. When saved, sins are washed away by the blood of Christ. (Rev 1:5-6)
 - B. Heaven is a place of absolute aesthetic beauty. (Rev 21:10-27)
 1. Walls made of jasper.
 2. Gates made of pearl.
 3. Streets made of pure/transparent gold.
 4. Foundations made of precious stones.
 - C. Heaven is a place of no fear, wars, fighting, or thieves. (v. 25)
 - D. Heaven is a place of perfect happiness and contentment. (v. 4)
 - E. Believers will live in the very presence of God. (v. 3)
 - F. Heaven is a place too glorious to imagine. (1 Cor 2:9)

The point was made that many of the faces in hell will be people the believer sees almost daily, not just those of an anonymous *they*. This sermon was closed with the reminder that there are only two eternal destinations. The congregation was also reminded that this knowledge should compel the believer to overcome any personal hindrances he faces in order to share the gospel with the people he knows.

Week 7 of the Project

The sixth and final sermon in the series, “Personal Evangelism – Every Believer’s Responsibility,” was preached on Sunday morning, February 17, 2013. This sermon, titled “More Than Meets the Eye,” used John 9:1-41 as the text. The key thought for the sermon was that even though one may meet a lost person’s physical needs and build a relationship with him, personal evangelism still requires that the gospel message be shared verbally. The point was made that it takes this verbal sharing of the gospel to begin the spiritual drawing process that leads to salvation. This sermon was preached using the following outline:

- I. The Blind Man Healed (vv. 1-12)
- II. The Blind Man Questioned (vv. 13-23)
- III. The Blind Man Cast Out (vv. 24-34)
- IV. The Blind Man Saved (vv. 35-41)
- V. What We Learn
 - A. Meet a person’s physical needs.
 1. God commanded believers to love one another.
 2. Pressing physical needs make it difficult to concentrate on spiritual matters.
 3. Shows genuine care and concern for the person.
 - B. Build a relationship with this person.
 1. Earn their respect.
 2. Earn their trust.
 3. Earn the right to share the gospel.
 - C. Verbally share the gospel with them.
 1. Romans 10:9-17
 2. Every believer is responsible for *verbally* sharing the gospel.

A sign-up sheet was placed on the bulletin board in the church’s foyer, for anyone wanting to take the small-group class, “Equipping Believers for Personal Evangelism,” which was going to meet on Sunday evenings, at 6:30 p.m., from March 3

through April 21, 2013. Since starting the sermon series, six people had already asked to take the class, leaving only four openings available. As stated previously, these seven small-group sessions completed the second half of the project.

Week 8 of the Project

On Sunday morning, March 3, 2013, the post-sermon series survey was distributed. This survey was identical to the pre-sermon series survey distributed during the first week of the project, with the exception of an additional question. The additional question was a short-answer question, asking participants to explain how their views on evangelism or personal evangelism had changed as a result of the sermon series. This second survey was distributed in the same manner as the first survey. On the Friday before the survey was to be returned, an e-mail was sent reminding everyone to complete the survey and bring it with them on Sunday morning.

Out of a total 82 surveys distributed to adult members and regular attenders, 62 (51 percent) were completed and returned by the following Sunday. The total number of surveys distributed was significantly fewer than the 118 surveys distributed during the first week of the project. Noticeably fewer surveys were taken at the door by those who did not attend Sunday school. In addition, the number of 18-25 year olds participating dropped from 9 to 1 because college students were home for Christmas break during the first survey.

As would be expected, considering the difference in total number of surveys distributed, the number completed and returned dropped from 62 for the first survey to 42 for the second survey. Percentage wise, the number of surveys returned varied only slightly from the first to the second survey (53 percent compared to 51 percent). The

number returned may also have been affected by the fact that some members and regular attenders were in Chicago, Illinois. These families attended a tournament in which the local middle school was participating on the Sunday the second survey was to be returned.

The purpose of these two surveys was to provide a method for measuring the effectiveness of the six-week sermon series. When comparing the results from the two surveys, the following positive changes were noted:

1. In response to the statement, “Those who do not have the gift of evangelism are not required to share the gospel,” the number of people who responded with a 10 (strongly agree) dropped from 3 to 1. In addition, the first survey showed that 4 people were uncertain, this number dropped to 1 for the second survey.
2. In response to the statement, “While all Christians have some responsibility for evangelism, the primary responsibility for evangelism lies with the trained ministerial staff,” the overall average moved one point closer to strongly disagreeing (from 3 to 2).
3. In response to the statement, “God’s love will not allow Him to send anyone to hell,” the overall average moved one point closer to strongly disagreeing (from 3 to 2). The number of people rating this statement a 10 (strongly agree) dropped from 5 to 2.
4. In response to the statement, “Every believer is biblically mandated to share the gospel,” the overall average moved one point closer to strongly agree (from 8 to 9). More noticeably, the average response for the 66+ age group went from 7 to 10.
5. In response to the statement, “Unsaved people in my life (co-workers, family, friends, etc.) will spend eternity in hell if they do not receive Christ,” the overall average went from 9 to 10 (strongly agree).
6. In response to the statement, “Simply serving people and meeting their needs is a good way to evangelize, words are not necessary,” the overall average moved from 5 to 4, from being totally uncertain to less uncertain, and in the direction of disagreeing.
7. In response to the statement, “The church has a responsibility to teach believers how to share their faith on an individual basis,” the overall average moved one point in the direction of agreement (from 8 to 9).

In addition to these positive results, there was one negative result. In response to the statement, “Simply living a Christian life in front of a lost person is sufficient to lead them to the Lord (words are not always necessary),” the overall average moved one point in the direction of uncertainty (from 3 to 4). The direction of this shift is contrary to what was taught during the sermon series. In addition, the number of 10s (strongly agree) went from 0, in the first survey, to 3 in the post-sermon series survey.

The numerical ratings show a slight, but positive, shift toward biblical truth between the pre-sermon series survey and the post-sermon series survey. While it is recognized that the difference in the number of survey participants may have affected the outcome, the small change in percentage of surveys returned to surveys distributed means that it is possible, if not probable, that the overall positive result is due to the sermon series content. If the latter is true, the sermon series can be deemed successful in accomplishing its purpose.

One final element of the post-sermon series survey must be evaluated. That element is the additional, short-answer question that directly asked participants, “How have your views on evangelism/personal evangelism changed as a result of this sermon series?” Unfortunately, 23 participants (55 percent) chose to leave this question blank; it is impossible to determine, with any confidence, what their silence indicates.

Of the 19 participants (45 percent) that did respond to this question, 5 said the sermon series had not changed their views. One person said the series had not changed his or her views, but had motivated the respondent to act on convictions already held. The remaining 13 respondents to this question said it had changed their views or taught them something new. The various descriptions of how their views had changed indicated

movement closer to biblical truth. These positive responses to this short-answer question further indicate a measure of success related to the sermon series accomplishing its intended purpose.

In addition to conducting the post-sermon series survey, this week was also used to mail a letter to the ten people who would be participating in the small-group session. This letter expressed appreciation for their willingness to participate and excitement about the upcoming seven weeks, told them when and where the class would meet, and asked them to complete an enclosed pre-small-group personal evangelism questionnaire (Appendix 3). The letter asked them to bring the completed questionnaire to the first class meeting.

Week 9 of the Project

The small-group sessions were made up of the following ten individuals: (1) a 19-year-old, male college student; (2) a 60-year-old female bank officer; (3) a 55-year-old female housekeeper; (4) a 55-year-old male disabled railroad mechanic; (5) a 61-year-old male retired heavy equipment operator; (6) a 57-year-old female office manager; (7) a 61-year-old female administrative professional; (8) a 67-year-old female retired teacher/preschool director; (9) a 70-year-old female retiree; and (10) a 50-year-old male pharmacist. The number of years as a believer varied from the shortest of 6 years to the longest of 58 years. Other than age, the group was fairly diverse.

The first small-group session was held on Sunday evening, March 3, 2013. This session was intended to help the group members become familiar with each other, introduce them to the overall plan for the seven sessions, help them identify fears associated with personal evangelism, and to discuss overcoming those fears by relying on

God and the power of the Holy Spirit. The session proved successful in accomplishing all of these goals.

The welcome expressed appreciation to the members for their willingness to participate in these sessions, and explained that this undertaking was more than just a D.Min. project because personal evangelism must be a part of every believer's spiritual walk. During the overview, it was explained that the just-finished sermon series had laid the foundation by establishing the "why," and the next seven weeks would cover the more practical aspects by focusing on the "how to." A general overview was given for what would be covered in the seven weekly sessions. Participants were asked to hand in the completed questionnaires that were mailed to them earlier in the week.

Following this brief time of opening comments and prayer, participants were asked to give their definitions of personal evangelism; most gave the definition they had written on the questionnaire. The class consensus was to define personal evangelism as an individual sharing the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ with other individuals. It was further decided that true evangelism must involve the verbal sharing of the gospel message at some point.

A short video clip was shown which included several individuals talking about believers sharing their faith. This clip was taken from the DVD included in the *Share Jesus without Fear* Bible study.¹ The people featured in the video spoke with passion about sharing the gospel message, and they identified the failure to share one's faith as the sin of silence.

Following the video clip and a brief discussion, members of the small-group

¹William Fay and Ralph Hodge, "The Sin of Silence: Part 2," *Share Jesus without Fear*, Bible Study Kit, rev. ed. (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2008), DVD 1, session 1, pt. 2.

class were asked to share their personal salvation story. They were instructed to break the story down into three parts: (1) life before conversion; (2) their conversion experience; and (3) life after conversion. Each person was allowed a total of three minutes, with one minute allotted for each part. This exercise was done in this manner for five reasons: (1) to allow participants to become more familiar with one another and to demonstrate that every person has a unique story; (2) to teach them to be concise when sharing their personal stories with unbelievers; (3) to demonstrate that there are three distinct parts to everyone's story; (4) to bolster confidence by showing participants how simple it is to share their personal story; and (5) to keep control of time. Even with the three-minute limitation, time allowed for only five participants to share their stories. The other participants were assured that time would be allotted in the next session for them to share.

The next step was to study the example of Moses by using Exodus 3 and 4. A brief review was given to remind participants of Moses' birth story, his royal upbringing, and his fleeing to Midian after he murdered an Egyptian for his harsh treatment of Moses' fellow Hebrew. Exodus 3:1-10 was read and taught to show Moses' unique call to service. Additional verses were considered (Exod 3:11-14; 4:1, 10, 13) to show the fears Moses had about obeying God's desires. He was insecure (3:11), feared not having all the answers (3:13-14), felt that people knew his failures (4:1), felt he lacked qualifications (4:10), and thought someone else could do the job better (4:13). God gave a response to each concern expressed by Moses. The point was made that God will help all believers overcome their fears associated with their calling to any task, including personal evangelism.

Class members were asked to name some fears or barriers associated with sharing one's faith. The fears and barriers were written on the board as they were mentioned, and included the following:

1. Rejection
2. Ask something we do not know how to answer.
3. Will not believe us.
4. Know me too well, including my failures.
5. Do not know enough Bible.
6. Will think we are looking down our noses at them.
7. They will have an incorrect perception of us.
8. They will expect perfection from us.
9. They will become defensive.
10. If they are a member of the opposite sex, their spouse may misunderstand and become jealous.

After the list was written on the board, the class discussed some specific solutions to some of these concerns. It was concluded that even though believers rely on God for help, they cannot ignore their own responsibility. For example, those who feel they may not know enough Bible must spend time studying Scripture and committing it to memory. The tenth concern can be met by using common sense, sound judgment, careful planning, and predetermined guidelines.

In the final segment of the session, the class focused on how to overcome fears and barriers associated with evangelism. This segment included the following items:

1. Teaching of Philippians 4:13.
2. God equips believers for the work he calls them to do.

- A. God does his part.
 - B. The believer must do his part.
3. The indwelling Holy Spirit empowers believers.
- A. Believers cannot do the work of the Holy Spirit; it is not expected of them.
 - B. God only asks that believers share the gospel message.
 - C. If the believer does share, he cannot fail.
4. There is no greater thrill than being used by God to lead someone to Christ.
5. 2 Timothy 1:7 (A spirit of power, not fear.)
6. 1 Peter 3:15-16 (Always be ready to give an answer of the hope.)

After a brief time for comments and questions, the session was closed with prayer.

Week 10 of the Project

The second small-group session was held on Sunday evening, March 10, 2013.

After an opening prayer, there was a brief review concerning the fears and barriers that were discussed in the previous week's session. It was then explained that this session and the next session would teach a "how to" approach for sharing the gospel. They were told this method is the one developed by William Fay in *Share Jesus without Fear* and that it is only one of many methods available.²

Participants who did not share their salvation story the previous week, due to time constraints, were asked to share their stories. Everyone was reminded of the guidelines: discuss their life before, during, and after conversion, with one minute allotted for each of the three parts. This exercise illustrated that people come from very different backgrounds; therefore, it is necessary to assess where they are spiritually in order to witness to them.

First Peter 3:8-16 was read and discussed, with an emphasis placed on verse

²Fay, *Share Jesus without Fear*, Bible Study Kit, Workbook, 47-80.

15. The discussion focused on the fact that believers are expected to live and serve in unity, suffer for their faith, and always be prepared to share the reason for their faith and hope in Jesus Christ. It was discussed that believers must display the right attitude when sharing their faith; they should never be argumentative or threatening. Participants were then told the method they were about to learn was neither argumentative nor threatening, because it avoids putting the unbeliever on the defensive and allows the Holy Spirit to do the convicting and convincing. When using this method, they are simply to be page turners and question askers.

The three main parts of this method, and their respective benefits, were presented as follows:

1. Beginning a Spiritual Conversation (Five Questions)
 - A. Steering the conversation to spiritual matters.
 - B. Assess the person's spiritual standing.
 - C. Avoid arguments.
 - D. Keep the believer from talking more than listening.
 - E. Get permission to share the gospel.
2. Using Scripture (Seven Passages)
 - A. Verbally share the gospel.
 - B. Uses God's words, not man's.
 - C. Adds a measure of authority.
3. Bringing to a Point of Decision (Five Questions)
 - A. Gives guidance to the discussion.
 - B. Brings the person to a point of conscious/intentional decision.

Participants were told that two series of five questions each would lead them through the first and third parts, and they would learn to use seven passages of Scripture to accomplish the second part. Everyone was given a handout that listed the 5 questions for the first part, the 7 Scripture references for the second part, and the 5 questions to be used for the third part.

A short video was shown which taught the details of how to use the following five questions to accomplish the first section above:

1. Do you have any kind of spiritual belief?
2. To you, who is Jesus?
3. Do you believe there is a heaven and a hell?
4. If you died right now, where would you go?
5. If what you believe were not true, would you want to know it?

This video was taken from the DVD included in the *Share Jesus without Fear* Bible study.³

Following a time of discussion regarding Fay's teachings in this video segment, a second video segment was shown, which was also from the *Share Jesus without Fear* Bible study. This segment discussed the importance, and the "how to," of using the Bible for section two above.⁴ Although it did not discuss the actual Scripture verses to be used (they were presented in the following week's small-group session), this video segment discussed the size of Bible to use, the technique to be used, and the biblical basis for the technique. Based on principles from Romans 10:17 and Luke 10:26, the believer is to ask the unbeliever to read each passage out loud and to ask the question, "What does it say to you?" after each passage is read.

After a brief discussion relating to this second video segment, the participants were ask to memorize the five questions relating to the first part of this method, before

³Fay, "A Way to Share Jesus: Part 2," *Share Jesus without Fear*, Bible Study Kit, DVD 1, session 2, pt. 1.

⁴Fay, "Let the Bible Speak," *Share Jesus without Fear*, Bible Study Kit, DVD 2, session 2, pt. 2.

next week's class. They were also encouraged to try to memorize the Scripture references related to the second part of this method and the five remaining questions related to the third part of this message. Participants were told that memorizing the first set of five questions, and as much as possible of the Scripture references and the second set of five questions, would help them in the role playing that would take place during the next week's session. All of this information is on the handout that was mentioned earlier.

The final minutes of this session were used to handout and discuss the Evangelistic Outreach Form (Appendix 5). The purpose of the form was explained, and participants were then asked to bring the completed form to the final class session. This form was to be completed for any opportunity participants had to share their faith during the course of these small-group sessions. Following a time for questions, the session was closed with prayer.

Week 11 of the Project

The third small-group session was held on Sunday evening, March 17, 2013. After an opening prayer, there was a brief discussion of the material discussed the previous week, especially concerning the five questions to be used for beginning a spiritual discussion. All participants had done well at memorizing the five questions. A brief video was played which showed actual people talking about how they had worked the five questions into everyday conversations.⁵

Following a time of discussion concerning the first video shown, another video was viewed in which Fay identified and discussed the actual Scripture verses to be used

⁵Fay, "A Way to Share Jesus: Part 3," *Share Jesus without Fear*, Bible Study Kit, DVD 1, session 2, pt. 3.

in the second step of this method.⁶ Fay showed viewers how to mark their Bibles to guide them through the verses to be used. Prior to showing this video segment, each member of the class was given a paperback New Testament so they could mark them as they followed along with Fay. The following verses are to be used in this portion of the gospel presentation:

1. Romans 3:23 (the issue of sin)
2. Romans 6:23 (the penalty of sin)
3. John 3:3 (how to enter a relationship with Christ)
4. John 14:6 (the narrowness of the gospel)
5. Romans 10:9-11 (anyone can be saved)
6. 2 Corinthians 5:15 (we must turn from/turn to)
7. Revelation 3:20 (a choice to accept or reject)

Following a discussion of these verses and how to use them, a third video segment was shown.⁷ This brief segment was titled “The Challenge,” and gave instructions for guiding the lost person to the point of making a decision. This portion of the gospel presentation includes the following five questions:

1. Are you a sinner?
2. Do you want forgiveness for your sins?
3. Do you believe Jesus died on the cross for you and rose again?
4. Are you willing to surrender your life to Christ?
5. Are you ready to invite Jesus into your life and into your heart?

⁶Fay, “A Way to Share Jesus: Part 1,” *Share Jesus without Fear*, Bible Study Kit, DVD 2, session 3, pt. 1.

⁷Fay, “The Challenge,” *Share Jesus without Fear*, Bible Study Kit, DVD 2, session 3, pt. 2.

Following a discussion of these questions and Fay's instructions for using them, class participants were separated into pairs for a time of role play. One person from each pair was sent into the hallway, and each remaining person was given a pretend life and spiritual situation. The pairs were then reunited, told how they supposedly knew each other, and the people that had been sent to the hallway then used the *Share Jesus without Fear* gospel presentation method to role play sharing the gospel with the other person.⁸ Afterward, there was a lengthy time of discussion concerning their experiences with the role-play situations. Participants were informed that the class would do the same role-playing exercise again next week, but with each pair's roles reversed. The class was dismissed with a closing prayer.

Week 12 of the Project

The fourth small-group session was opened with prayer on Sunday evening, March 24, 2013. The first few minutes of the class were used to review material presented in the previous two classes, specifically (1) the five questions used to help determine a person's spiritual condition; (2) the seven passages of Scripture used to let the Bible speak; and (3) the five questions used to arrive at a point of decision. The point was made that the entire method can be viewed somewhat like a funnel; it guides the conversation to the ultimate goal of asking the person if they are ready to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. This explanation allowed for the introduction of the current week's topic; what to do if a person says, "No."

After a brief time of discussion, a video segment was shown in which Fay

⁸Fay, *Share Jesus without Fear*, Bible Study Kit, Workbook, 47-80.

discussed what he calls “The Why Principle.”⁹ This principle teaches the personal evangelist to simply ask “why” if a person says no when he is asked if he wants to receive Jesus as Savior. Fay then discussed several possible scenarios and appropriate responses for each.

Following a time of video related discussion, participants were asked to consider thirty-six possible objections that a person may give when rejecting the gospel. These were taken from the *Sharing Jesus without Fear* Bible study.¹⁰ Participants took turns choosing one objection each. The leader then read Fay’s suggested response to that specific objection, and the class critiqued the response, suggesting alternative responses. The consensus was that Fay’s responses were most often correct in the direction the answer should go, but his wording was often too curt. The class discussed ways of rewording the responses, without changing their meaning. In finishing this portion of the class, emphasis was made that when a person says “no,” they are rejecting Christ, not the person sharing with them.

The remaining class time was spent doing the role-play exercise introduced the previous week. Participants were paired with their same partners, but roles were reversed and scenarios changed. Subsequent discussion brought up the fact that this method would not work well with young children because of their shorter attention span. Instructions for sharing with children were worked into the following week’s session.

⁹Fay, “The Challenge: Part 2,” *Share Jesus without Fear*, Bible Study Kit, DVD 2, session 2, pt. 3.

¹⁰Fay, *Share Jesus without Fear*, Bible Study Kit, Workbook, 98-108.

Week 13 of the Project

The fifth small-group session was opened with prayer on Sunday evening, April 7, 2013. Since the class did not meet the previous week, due to Easter, there was a brief review of the major topics covered in previous classes. After the review, the group was taught the importance of building relationships for evangelism. Biblical examples were given using Matthew 11:19 and Luke 19:1-10. It was explained that, even in the face of criticism, Jesus built relationships with people in order to reach them.

Using material from *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, the group was given information on *how* to build relationships.¹¹ Participants were taught to build relationships with people they already know, people they used to know, and people they would like to know. Participants were challenged to identify one person he or she would intentionally seek to build a relationship with and to begin building that relationship during the coming week. Key points of relationships were also discussed.

Servant evangelism was the next topic defined and discussed in detail. Much of the information for this topic was taken from Steve Sjogren's book *Conspiracy of Kindness*.¹² The group was cautioned that servant evangelism, by itself, is incomplete as an approach to sharing the gospel; however, it can provide a method of gospel seed planting for those who are uncomfortable with a more direct approach.

The final topic of discussion was directed at how to evangelize a child. The group understood that Fay's method would not work due to a small child's limited

¹¹Mark Mittelberg, Lee Strobel, and Bill Hybels, *Becoming a Contagious Christian: Communicating Your Faith in a Style That Fits You*, Leader's Guide, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).

¹²Steve Sjogren, *Conspiracy of Kindness: A Refreshing New Approach to Sharing the Love of Jesus*, 10th anniversary ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003).

understanding, and their short attention span. Participants were taught how to use one of two approaches for sharing the gospel with a child. The first involved simply using John 3:16, and the second demonstrated how to use an EvangeCube.¹³

To facilitate the practical aspect of the class, students registered for 1 of 2 ministry opportunities. One opportunity was to serve as a host or hostess at a blood drive sponsored by the church, but open to the community. The four people assigned to this project directed their attention to unchurched people who came to donate blood. The other opportunity involved standing at the entrance to the local Wal-Mart or Food City grocery store to pass out information about a thirteen-week divorce ministry the church was starting. The divorce ministry is designed to provide spiritual and emotional support for people who are divorced or separated. Four group members participated in the Wal-Mart/Food City opportunity. Both projects were successfully conducted the following Saturday morning. Since the college student was out of town at a concert, he distributed gospel literature at the entrance to the concert. Due to an out of town commitment, the pharmacist was unable to participate in either project.

Week 14 of the Project

The sixth small-group session was opened with prayer on Sunday evening, April 14, 2013. There was a brief review of the need to establish and build relationships in order to share the gospel. Three members shared their experience of reconnecting with old acquaintances as a result of the previous week's challenge. Participants were reminded to bring their completed evangelism forms to the next class meeting.

¹³EvangeCube is a seven-picture cube that unfolds to illustrate the gospel message. This product is manufactured by EvangeCube International, Franklin, TN.

Participants were asked to give a brief summary of their experience from the blood drive or WalMart/Food City project in which they participated the day before. Students were excited to share their positive and negative experiences. The general consensus was that it made them feel good to step outside of their comfort zones, and they would be more receptive to doing these types of activities in the future.

Based on material from Donald S. Whitney's *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, the remainder of the session was spent discussing the importance of the spiritual disciplines in the believer's life.¹⁴ This subject was presented in relation to two perspectives. First, it was presented as it relates to the importance of the personal evangelist walking in close fellowship with God. Specifically, he must be prepared for spiritual attacks from the enemy, and he must not limit God's ability to work through him. Second, it was presented as it relates to discipling new believers. It was discussed how the personal evangelist's job is not finished at the point someone makes a decision to receive Christ. The new believer must be led to grow and develop spiritually.

Participants were given a list of ten spiritual disciplines and asked to identify three of their personal hindrances for each discipline. These were kept private by the participant, but they were challenged to concentrate on overcoming the identified hindrances. After this activity, the following spiritual disciplines were discussed: (1) Scripture reading; (2) prayer; (3) worship; (4) Scripture meditation; (5) evangelism; (6) serving; (7) stewardship; (8) fasting; (9) journaling; and (10) learning. At the end of this discussion, students were again reminded to bring their completed evangelism forms to the next week's session.

¹⁴Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991).

Week 15 of the Project

The seventh, and final, small-group session was opened with prayer on Sunday evening, April 21, 2013. The purpose of this session was to reinforce the main ideas of the previous sessions and to receive feedback about the class. To accomplish the first purpose, the following items were reviewed and briefly discussed: (1) fears relating to personal evangelism; (2) relying on God and the power of the Holy Spirit; (3) five questions for discovering a person's spiritual condition; (4) the seven Bible verses used for letting the Bible speak; (5) five questions for bringing a person to a point of decision; (6) people's objections when presented with the gospel; (7) the importance of building relationships; and (8) the importance of the spiritual disciplines to the personal evangelist and the new believer.

Three class members requested to view the Fay video segment, originally shown in week 11, which discusses letting the Bible speak.¹⁵ Since letting the Bible speak is a key step in the evangelism method taught, and the other participants excitedly agreed to the request, this video segment was shown again. Incorporating this fifteen-minute video into the session eliminated the time that had originally been set aside for additional role play. It was determined that viewing this particular video segment again was more beneficial to the participants than additional role playing.

Following the showing of the video segment, class members were asked to hand in their completed evangelistic outreach forms. Five participants agreed to share their evangelistic outreach experience with the class. Each person's experience was unique and demonstrated positive and negative aspects. This exercise proved beneficial

¹⁵Fay, "A Way to Share Jesus: Part 1," *Share Jesus without Fear*, Bible Study Kit, DVD 2, session 3, pt. 1.

by encouraging discussion among class members.

The “Post-Small Group Personal Evangelism Questionnaire” (Appendix 4) was distributed, and participants were given time to complete the form in class. Subsequent review of the completed forms revealed positive feedback in response to every question. Responses to the statement, “On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest) what is your level of confidence in relation to sharing your faith with others,” showed an increase from an average of 5.90 on the pre-class, small-group survey to an average of 8.20 on the post-class, small-group survey. The largest change in an individual’s response to this statement was from a 1 on the initial survey to an 8 on the second survey.

When asked to identify changes that should be made to improve the class, participants were adamant that no changes should be made. At the close of this final session, participants began an impromptu discussion about the positive benefits received from the class sessions. All eight participants present for this last session voiced a concern that in all their years as Christians, they had never been taught how to do personal evangelism, or how easily it can be done. The class’ unanimous conclusion was that the church must continue to offer this class on a regular basis.

Conclusion

The project was well received by the congregation. Although a complete evaluation will be offered in chapter 5, it should be noted that the project appears to have impacted the church in a positive manner. Lasting success for this project hinges on taking advantage of the church’s newly initiated, forward momentum related to equipping believers to be personal evangelists.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE MINISTRY PROJECT

Introduction

This ministry project began on January 6, 2013, and concluded on April 25, 2013, for a total of fifteen active weeks. Primary activities for the 15 weeks included 2 church-wide surveys, a six-week sermon series, and a seven-week small-group evangelism training class. This fifteen-week period proved to be beneficial for me, for the ten small-group members, and for the church as a whole. The project was intended to accomplish a specific purpose and four primary goals. Following is an evaluation of the project's effectiveness in accomplishing its purpose and meeting its goals, an analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, a consideration of possible improvements, and reflections concerning the project and related matters.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip groups of believers at First Baptist Church, Prestonsburg, Kentucky, to confidently evangelize on a personal level. It was also recognized that the church must be intentional in its efforts if it is to achieve this purpose. The implementation of this project was the first intentional step toward accomplishing the stated purpose. With the completion of this project, the church has a proven method for training personal evangelists. Consequently, the church now has a tool that can be used intentionally and repeatedly to equip groups of believers in the

future.

Two forms of feedback provided evidence that the project's identified purpose was accomplished. First, a comparison of the questionnaire (Appendix 3) completed by the small-group members *prior* to the first class with the questionnaire (Appendix 4) completed *after* finishing the series of classes showed that 8 out of 10 small-group members felt an increase in their level of confidence relating to personal evangelism. As stated in chapter 4, responses to the statement, "On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest) what is your level of confidence in relation to sharing your faith with others," showed an increase from an average of 5.9 on the pre-class, small-group survey to an average of 8.2 on the post-class, small-group survey. The two people who showed no increase in confidence had rated themselves a 10 (highest possible) in this category on the first questionnaire; this rating left no room for improvement.

The second indicator that the project's purpose had been met came from an impromptu discussion at the close of the last class session. The 61-year-old female administrative professional began to tell how much this class had helped her. She said that she did not realize that evangelism was the responsibility of every believer until the sermon series was preached during the first part of the project. Continuing, she said that the thought of personally sharing the gospel with someone was very intimidating because she had never been taught *how* to share. Her final comment was that after completing this class, she feels much less intimidated because she realizes how easy it can be now that she has a pattern for *how* to share. The entire class expressed agreement with her comments.

The 57-year-old female office manager said that she had been a Christian for

49 years and was raised in church as a pastor's daughter, but this class was the first time anyone had ever taught her *how* to share the gospel. She commented that she had always known that she was supposed to share and had often felt guilty because she did not share, but that she simply did not know *how* to share. This woman expressed her frustration that in all her years attending church as a Christian, she had never been taught how to share the gospel. This fact was especially true now that she realized it is such a simple thing to do. Again, other class members expressed that they shared similar feelings. Class members also expressed their unanimous agreement that the church must continue to offer this small-group training on an ongoing basis.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

As explained in chapter 1, this project sought to accomplish four primary goals: (1) to enable the congregation to recognize and understand the biblical mandate for personal evangelism; (2) to cause the church members to feel the urgency and the personal responsibility for reaching the lost; (3) to equip a group of church members, theologically and practically, to do personal evangelism; and (4) to better equip me, as a pastor, to teach others to be personal evangelists. Each of the four goals was successfully accomplished during the course of this ministry project.

The first goal was accomplished through the six-week sermon series preached from weeks 2 through 7 of the project. The success in accomplishing this goal was measured primarily by two church-wide surveys. The first survey (Appendix 1) was conducted during week 1 of the project, it asked participants to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with twelve statements related to evangelism, heaven, and hell. The second survey (Appendix 2) was conducted during week 8, after the sermon

series had been completed. This post-sermon series survey included the same twelve statements that appeared on the pre-sermon series survey; however, it also included an additional short-answer question, which asked, “How have your views on evangelism/personal evangelism changed as a result of this sermon series?”

When compared, the numerical responses for 7 of the 12 statements appearing on both surveys showed a small, positive shift toward biblical truth during the sermon series.¹ The only shift *away* from biblical truth occurred in the responses to the statement, “Simply living a Christian life in front of a lost person is sufficient to lead them to the Lord (words are not always necessary).” The sermon-series content should have moved responses to this statement *toward* biblical truth, which would have been to disagree with the statement. Only 19 participants (45 percent) responded to the additional, short-answer question. Five respondents said the sermon series had not changed their views, and one person said his views had not changed but the series motivated him to act on his previously held convictions. The remaining 13 respondents to this question said the series had changed their views or taught them something new. As stated in chapter 4, the various descriptions of how their views had changed indicated movement closer to biblical truth. Comparing the results of the two surveys indicates the first goal of the ministry project was accomplished.

The second goal of causing the church members to feel the urgency and the personal responsibility for reaching the lost was also accomplished. The attainment of this goal was also measured by comparing the two surveys. Five of the 7 statements

¹Three of the 5 statements that did not show movement toward biblical truth were already rated extremely high toward biblical truth on the first survey. This high agreement with biblical truth on the first survey did not leave significant room for positive shifting on the second survey.

showing a shift toward biblical truth, from the first survey to the second survey, related either to the urgency or the personal responsibility of evangelism.

In addition to the survey results, personal responses to individual sermons in the series indicated this goal was accomplished. This fact was especially true for the sermon titled “One of Two,” which predominantly spoke of hell, and described its inhabitants as people we know. After the sermon, I was approached by two women at separate times. Each woman asked me to pray for her because she realized she had a specific person she must talk to right away about his or her spiritual condition. In addition, I received phone calls, text messages, e-mails, and cards the week following this sermon, and they all indicated the urgency and necessity the senders felt for sharing the gospel. I received numerous other comments throughout this sermon series that indicated people came to understand the urgency and personal responsibility for reaching the lost.

Another indicator that this second goal was accomplished was the quick response of people wanting to reserve a place in the small-group, personal-evangelism training that was to be held during the second part of the project. I announced that the training would be limited to ten individuals and immediately had individuals who were adamant about wanting to be part to the group. Almost all of them indicated the sermon series was a significant factor in their decision to become involved in the personal evangelism training.

The third goal of equipping a group of individuals, theologically and practically, for personal evangelism was also accomplished. While the sermon series made people aware of the urgency and necessity relating to evangelism, the small-group training sessions were predominantly responsible for this goal being met. In addition to

personal observation and participants' comments, this goal was best measured by comparing the questionnaire completed prior to the small-group sessions (Appendix 3) with the questionnaire completed after the final session (Appendix 4).

The best indicator that this goal was met is found in the responses to the statement, "On a scale of 1 to 10 (ten being the highest) what is your level of confidence in relation to sharing your faith with others?" The responses to this question increased from an average of 5.9 to an average of 8.2 from the first to the second survey. Considering only those who showed change, the average goes from 4.4 to 7.7, indicating confidence levels rose by 3.3 points. The largest change in an individual's response to this statement was from a 1 on the initial survey to an 8 on the second survey. Of the three people that showed no change in their confidence level, two had rated their level at 10 on the first survey, leaving no room for positive change.

Responses to the other questions on the post small-group questionnaire indicated that participants unanimously felt the class had (1) helped address their concerns about sharing their faith; (2) helped them address their fears relating to sharing their faith; and (3) helped them gain what they had hoped by participating in this class. The responses indicated that the greatest help came from having an actual method to use in sharing the gospel and from addressing the subject of fear. When I asked the class to indicate what could be done to improve the class, the only suggestion was to unanimously make sure the church continues to offer the class.

The fourth goal of equipping me, as a pastor, to teach others to be personal evangelists is difficult to measure objectively; however, I feel confident this goal was met. Preaching the sermon series and teaching the small-group sessions forced me to

organize my thoughts relating to personal evangelism. I was also forced to present the biblical necessity, commission, and urgency relating to personal evangelism. In addition, I organized an approach for training others that included both a practical and academic approach. Seeing the excitement generated week after week as participants learned new things, or better understood old things, served as motivation to teach future classes on this subject. I more fully realized that many people have the desire to serve, but they are waiting for the church to teach them how to serve. Completing this project gave me more confidence in my own ability to develop and implement an equipping project for the church; not only as it relates to personal evangelism, but for any other need that might exist. Finally, I realized that any approach developed for equipping people to do personal evangelism must include an appropriate method for sharing the gospel with children.

Strengths of the Project

The project had several strengths that having been identified can be utilized in the future. First, the surveys proved to be good tools for measuring the pulse of the church. Because they were anonymous, widely distributed, and their return encouraged, they provided excellent feedback, and they allowed me to accurately gauge the church's beliefs. Being able to group responses according to various identifiers (e.g., age, gender, etc.) allowed me to better know the church. Since it proved successful in this project, I will use surveys in the future to gauge the church's pulse on various matters.

A second strength of this project was the emphasis it placed on evangelism. The sermon series brought the biblical necessity and the urgency related to evangelism to the forefront of the church; consequently, the church realizes its need to be more intentional in equipping members for evangelism. After seeking God's guidance in

prayer, the Missions Committee has begun developing a five-year plan aimed at educating, training, and involving church members in mission work on various levels. A major part of this plan will be to make certain that church members are equipped for personal evangelism when they become involved in local, regional, national, and international mission work.

A third strength was the overall structure of the project. Preceding the small-group training session with the six-week sermon series provided an appropriate order of progression. At first, the entire congregation was involved and brought to an understanding of why personal evangelism is important. Then specific training was made available to further develop what had been preached from the pulpit. This training allowed believers a venue to pursue developing what God had spoken to their hearts about through the sermon series. Although the first group was limited to ten participants, the church understands that future training sessions will be offered.

A fourth strength was that the class was limited to ten participants. This limitation allowed for personal involvement and adequate sharing for everyone. Participants were encouraged to share their thoughts and experiences, and to ask relevant questions. The sharing of personal experiences and personal histories made the time together fuller and richer for all participants. I was able to use the diversity of participants' backgrounds and salvation testimonies to demonstrate that every person we attempt to reach has a unique story; therefore, time must be invested to determine that person's unique circumstances and spiritual beliefs in order to most effectively share the gospel. A larger class would not have been as conducive to individual participation.

A fifth strength was incorporating Bill Fay's simple, three-step method for

sharing the gospel.² As explained in chapter 4, this method uses a series of five questions designed to determine a person's spiritual beliefs, seven Scripture references to allow the Bible to speak, and another series of five questions designed to bring the person to a point of decision. This method provided participants with a structured method to follow and a guided direction for steering their conversations with the unsaved. Having the structured method and the guided direction gave participants a greater level of confidence.

The sixth and final strength was the use of role-play exercises, which were beneficial for five reasons. First, these exercises encouraged participants to memorize the ten questions and seven Scripture verses used in this particular method. Second, role playing allowed participants to see how easily this method can be used. Third, these exercises provided a time of relaxed sharing which made the learning process even more enjoyable for the participants. Fourth, role-play exercises helped participants to overcome their inhibitions as they became more confident in using this method. Finally, role-playing enabled the class to realize that this method would not work well with children.

Weaknesses of the Project

The first weakness, which was identified as a result of the role-play exercises, is that the small-group training session did not initially incorporate a method for sharing with children. Fay's method would not work well with children because of their limited ability to understand, and the fact that the time required would exceed their attention span. After this weakness was identified, I did demonstrate how participants could use

²William Fay and Ralph Hodge, *Share Jesus without Fear*, Bible Study Kit Workbook, rev. ed. (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2008), 47-80.

John 3:16 or an EvangeCube to share with children.

The second weakness involved the amount of time needed for each small-group session. Since these sessions began at the same time as the regular Sunday evening church service, the participants probably assumed they would be the same length as the Sunday evening service, which is about an hour. Most sessions required more than one hour, especially the sessions that included role-play exercises. Although no one complained, or even seemed to notice when we exceeded the one-hour time frame, I felt rushed. I would have felt more comfortable if I had made it known from the beginning that each session would last from one to one and one-half hours.

The third and final weakness was the practical application outside the classroom. Although greeting people at the blood drive and passing out divorce care ministry information in public locations provided an opportunity for participants to experience stepping outside their comfort zone, it did not necessarily provide witnessing opportunities. It was hoped that the requirement to complete the “Evangelism Outreach Form” (Appendix 5) would encourage participants to employ Fay’s method outside the classroom; however, that never happened. According to the completed forms, not one participant used the method completely. Four individuals indicated they partially used the taught method; however, no one actually used the entire method. The problem seems to be that most of them experienced the reported encounters before they finished the training. Now that they have completed the training, I believe these participants *will* use this method in the future. I do not feel this weakness indicates a failure to equip the participants to share their faith; it is simply that the encounters occurred before the participants were fully ready to use the method.

What I Would Do Differently

To determine what I would do differently, I must begin with the areas of weakness identified in the previous section. In regard to child evangelism, I would continue to teach participants how to use John 3:16 and the EvangeCube; however, I would research other methods and resources for sharing the gospel with children, and devote a larger segment of time to discussing this topic. I would also speak with some pastoral acquaintances who are involved in children's ministry to get ideas for developing this segment of the class. Serious thought would be given to incorporating child evangelism into the role-playing exercises.

The time issue would be solved by establishing the allotted time for the small-group sessions at 90 minutes per session. This information would be communicated clearly from the time the training sessions began to be promoted. On the evenings when the class did not require the full one and one-half hours, class would be dismissed early. Having this information established at the beginning would eliminate the feeling of being rushed.

With regard to the practical application and the "Evangelistic Outreach Form," I would ask the class to complete two of these forms. The first form would be due at the end of the training session as was done this time; however, I would ask for the second form to be turned in up to six months after the sessions ended. While this change would not have allowed the second form to be included as part of the fifteen-week project, it would permit me to evaluate the effectiveness of the class better. I could more clearly determine if church members were actually applying what they learned in the sessions.

At the beginning of the six-week sermon series, I would emphasize the

importance of hearing all of the sermons to receive the maximum impact from the series. This lack of emphasis did not seem to be a major problem because all six services were well attended, and people seemed to be genuinely interested in this series of sermons; however, it would have been beneficial to emphasize the connectedness of the messages in presenting the overall picture for evangelism. Although this concern was not a significant problem or weakness, I feel it should have been handled differently.

Theological Reflections

Chapter 2 of this project paper required me to do research that would provide biblical and theological support. As a result of this requirement, I decided to use the following Scripture passages: Isaiah 6:1-13; Jonah 1:1-4:11; Matthew 28:18-20; Revelation 20:10-21:18; and Romans 10:8-17. These specific passages were originally chosen because they best fit the project requirement of providing biblical support for my project's purpose. However, as I thoroughly researched each passage, I gained a much deeper personal conviction about equipping believers at the church I pastor to confidently share the gospel on a personal level. I came to realize that this project was not only a good idea; it was theologically mandated for me as a pastor, and for the church I serve.

Isaiah 6:1-13 demonstrates that once we understand our total depravity in comparison to God's total holiness, and that our reconciliation to God is by God's grace alone, we are compelled to share the gospel message with others. Through researching for this project, I came to understand how this passage not only presents God's majesty and holiness, but also how it speaks to me as a believer and as a pastor. I am theologically compelled to share the gospel with others and to equip others to do the same.

Jonah 1:1-4:11 teaches that God chooses to use believers to deliver his message of compassion; neither our personal prejudices nor our apathy can be allowed to stand in the way of God's purpose. As I reflected on this truth, I began to realize there are numerous ways that we can be prejudiced, and the real danger is that our own prejudices can be so subtle that we ourselves can deny they exist. The account of Jonah forces us to consider our own subtle prejudices (e.g., age, economic status, etc.) and deal with them in accordance with God's will.

Matthew 28:18-20, the Great Commission, shows that Jesus himself commands that the world is to be reached with the gospel through people pouring their lives into other people. Theologically speaking, we understand this commission and proclaim it often. My research and study of this passage made me realize that while we have long understood the message of the passage, as New Testament Christians and churches we have greatly failed at the practical application of this commission. As I mentioned in chapter 2 of this paper, the church has a responsibility to not only reach the lost, but to help the newly saved become equipped to reach the lost themselves one day. To expect them to evangelize without spiritual growth and development in their own lives is foolish and unbiblical. The church here includes the church I pastor, and I must take personal responsibility to lead the church in the practical application of Jesus' teaching.

Revelation 20:10-21:8 clearly demonstrates the urgency related to personal evangelism. When we, as believers, fully understand that every person is destined to either exist eternally in the presence of God or in the lake of fire, this urgency takes on new meaning and importance. As a pastor, I must lead the congregation to appreciate

this urgency by helping them realize that the people spoken of here are not an anonymous *they*, these individuals are the people they know and love, personally. Because these people are people they know and love personally, they themselves are in the best position to reach these people; therefore, they must be willing to be equipped for the task.

Finally, Romans 10:8-17 teaches that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone; however, to have that faith a person must first know about Christ. Personal evangelism is about being the person who tells someone else about Christ. While I have long understood this passage, considering it for this project helped me realize that I must help believers understand that it is a privilege and a responsibility to be used by God for this purpose.

Personal Reflections

One of the major factors in deciding to pursue the Doctor of Ministry degree in evangelism and church growth was knowing that I needed what this program offered in order to lead the church that God has called me to pastor. In a time when the majority of Southern Baptist churches are plateaued or declining, when the number of baptisms is declining, and when churches are obviously failing to reach the lost, it is important to step back from the statistics and the big picture in order to ask, “What is my part in this entire scenario?” The Doctor of Ministry program helped me to do that, and this project helped me to make the practical application of the academic training.

Through this course of study and this project, I have developed a true biblical conviction of something for which I already possessed head knowledge. Having been a believer and active church member for forty-four years, and a pastor for the past sixteen years, I have long been aware of the biblical mandate for reaching the lost and making

disciples. Furthermore, I have always had a desire to see people receive Christ and grow in their relationship with him. However, this project has given new depth and new life to this passion. Through my research and study, I have developed a fresh sense of urgency with regards to evangelism and discipleship.

This project has given me a sense of excitement about what can be accomplished for the Lord. As I watched the church become excited about evangelism through the progression of the six-week sermon series, and then observed the ten participants in the small-group training session develop an eagerness about sharing the gospel, I felt a renewing of passion for the ministry to which God has called me. It has humbled me to be reminded that such a great God desires to use such an unworthy vessel.

Conclusion

This project is the culmination of a three-year effort. Those three years have been challenging, they have been stressful, and yet they have been a supreme blessing. From its first mention, this project has been a source of intimidation and a source of great excitement. As the project progressed from mere thoughts and ideas, to actual implementation and completion, the intimidation continuously faded and the excitement continually grew. God often asks us to step outside our comfort zone, and the blessing associated with the sense of accomplishment seems directly proportional to the time and distance we spend beyond that zone's border. My prayer is that I not allow this project to be an end to something God has done in my life, but that I make it a beginning.

APPENDIX 1

PRE-SERMON SERIES EVANGELISM SURVEY
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
PRESTONSBURG, KY

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to evaluate understanding of key biblical and practical issues of evangelism. This research is being conducted by Jerry C. Workman for purposes of collecting data for a ministry project at First Baptist Church of Prestonsburg, Kentucky. In this research, you will indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with certain statements. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

Please check the appropriate spaces:

Age: ___ 18-25 ___ 26-35 ___ 36-49 ___ 50-65 ___ 66+

Gender: ___ Male ___ Female

I Have Been a Christian for:

___ Less than 5 Years ___ 6 – 10 years ___ 11 – 25 years ___ 26+ years

Using the scale below, please rate your level of “agreement” or “disagreement” with each of the following statements by placing the appropriate number in the blank space preceding the statement:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Uncertain			Agree		Strongly Agree

- a. ___ A good moral person can go to heaven even though they have never professed faith in Jesus.
- b. ___ Those who do not have the gift of evangelism are not required to share the gospel.

- c. _____ Simply living a Christian life in front of a lost person is sufficient to lead them to the Lord (words are not always necessary).
- d. _____ While all Christians have some responsibility for evangelism, the primary responsibility for evangelism lies with the trained ministerial staff.
- e. _____ Hell is a literal place of fire and torment.
- f. _____ God's love will not allow Him to send anyone to hell.
- g. _____ Every believer is biblically mandated to share the gospel.
- h. _____ Unsaved people in my life (co-workers, family, friends, etc.) will spend eternity in hell if they do not receive Christ.
- i. _____ The Bible mandates me, personally, to share the gospel with the unsaved people in my life.
- j. _____ Simply serving people and meeting their needs is a good way to evangelize, words are not necessary.
- k. _____ The church has a responsibility to teach believers how to share their faith on an individual basis.
- l. _____ Personal evangelism is as simple as inviting someone to come to church with you.

Thank you for participating in this very important survey. When you arrive for church or Sunday school next Sunday you may place the completed form in the collection basket located in either foyer, or you may give them to your Sunday school teacher.

APPENDIX 2

POST-SERMON SERIES EVANGELISM SURVEY
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
PRESTONSBURG, KY

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to evaluate understanding of key biblical and practical issues of evangelism. This research is being conducted by Jerry C. Workman for purposes of collecting data for a ministry project at First Baptist Church of Prestonsburg, Kentucky. In this research, you will indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with certain statements. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

Please check the appropriate spaces:

Age: ___ 18-25 ___ 26-35 ___ 36-49 ___ 50-65 ___ 66+

Gender: ___ Male ___ Female

I Have Been a Christian for:

___ Less than 5 Years ___ 6 – 10 years ___ 11 – 25 years ___ 26+ years

Using the scale below, please rate your level of “agreement” or “disagreement” with each of the following statements by placing the appropriate number in the blank space preceding the statement:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Uncertain			Agree		Strongly Agree

- a. _____ A good moral person can go to heaven even though they have never professed faith in Jesus.
- b. _____ Those who do not have the gift of evangelism are not required to share the gospel.

- c. _____ Simply living a Christian life in front of a lost person is sufficient to lead them to the Lord (words are not always necessary).
- d. _____ While all Christians have some responsibility for evangelism, the primary responsibility for evangelism lies with the trained ministerial staff.
- e. _____ Hell is a literal place of fire and torment.
- f. _____ God’s love will not allow Him to send anyone to hell.
- g. _____ Every believer is biblically mandated to share the gospel.
- h. _____ Unsaved people in my life (co-workers, family, friends, etc.) will spend eternity in hell if they do not receive Christ.
- i. _____ The Bible mandates me, personally, to share the gospel with the unsaved people in my life.
- j. _____ Simply serving people and meeting their needs is a good way to evangelize, words are not necessary.
- k. _____ The church has a responsibility to teach believers how to share their faith on an individual basis.
- l. _____ Personal evangelism is as simple as inviting someone to come to church with you.

How have your views on evangelism/personal evangelism changed as a result of this sermon series:

Thank you for participating in this very important survey. When you arrive for church or Sunday school next Sunday you may place the completed form in the collection basket located in either foyer, or you may give them to your Sunday school teacher.

APPENDIX 3

PRE-SMALL GROUP PERSONAL EVANGELISM QUESTIONNAIRE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
PRESTONSBURG, KY

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to evaluate understanding of key biblical and practical issues of evangelism. This research is being conducted by Jerry C. Workman for purposes of collecting data for a ministry project at First Baptist Church of Prestonsburg, Kentucky. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

Name: _____

I have been a Christian for _____ years.

1. Briefly define the term "Personal Evangelism":

2. What concerns you the most about sharing your faith on an individual basis?

3. What do you fear the most about sharing your faith with others?

4. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest) what is your level of confidence in relation to sharing your faith with others: _____

5. What do you hope to gain from participating in this group?

APPENDIX 4

POST-SMALL GROUP PERSONAL EVANGELISM QUESTIONNAIRE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
PRESTONSBURG, KY

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to evaluate understanding of key biblical and practical issues of evangelism. This research is being conducted by Jerry C. Workman for purposes of collecting data for a ministry project at First Baptist Church of Prestonsburg, Kentucky. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

Name: _____

1. Briefly define the term "Personal Evangelism" as you now understand it:

2. Has this class helped address your concerns about sharing your faith on an individual basis? If so, how?

3. Has this class helped address your fears relating to sharing your faith with others? If so, in what way?

4. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest) what is your level of confidence in relation to sharing your faith with others: _____

5. Did you gain what you hoped by participating in this group? Please explain.

APPENDIX 5

EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH FORM
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
PRESTONBURG, KY

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to evaluate understanding of key practical issues of evangelism. This research is being conducted by Jerry C. Workman for purposes of collecting data for a ministry project at First Baptist Church of Prestonsburg, Kentucky. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

Name: _____ Date: _____

Person you shared the gospel with: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Place: _____

1. How do you know (did you meet) this person?
2. Have you witnessed to this person before?
3. If yes, under what circumstances:
4. Briefly describe the circumstances and the approach/method you used.

5. What would you do different?
6. What would you do the same?
7. Did the things you fear about personal evangelism manifest themselves? If so, how?
8. How did you feel after this experience was over?
9. Did you ask the person to receive Christ and, if so, what was their response?
10. Do you think you will you feel more confident or less confident the next time?
11. How did the information you learned in class help you?

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING BELIEVERS TO BECOME PERSONAL EVANGELISTS AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, PRESTONSBURG, KENTUCKY

Jerry Clinton Workman, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Jeff K. Walters

This project equips groups of believers at First Baptist Church, Prestonsburg, Kentucky, to evangelize confidently on a personal level. Chapter 1 describes the ministry context of First Baptist Church. Chapter 2 presents the biblical and theological basis for equipping believers to become personal evangelists. This presentation uses Old and New Testament Scripture passages. Chapter 3 considers the theoretical and practical issues of personal evangelism. This task is accomplished by summarizing, evaluating, and comparing five well-known methods designed to equip believers to become personal evangelists. Chapter 4 details the elements of implementing the ministry project. Chapter 5 evaluates and analyzes the results of the project.

VITA

Jerry Clinton Workman

EDUCATION

B.B.A., Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia, 1974-1978
M.A.R., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
M.Div., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary

ORGANIZATIONS

The Evangelical Theological Society

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Pastor, Big Hurricane Missionary Baptist Church, Fort Gay, West Virginia,
1997-2003
Pastor, Smithsboro Baptist Church, Vicco, Kentucky, 2003-2006
Lead Pastor, First Baptist Church, Prestonsburg, Kentucky, 2006-