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PLANTING SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDIES IN MULTI-HOUSING  
COMMUNITIES NEAR FLORENCE BAPTIST CHURCH,  
FLORENCE, KENTUCKY

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

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

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by  
Benjamin Clayton Brown

December 2013

**APPROVAL SHEET**

PLANTING SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDIES IN MULTI-HOUSING  
COMMUNITIES NEAR FLORENCE BAPTIST CHURCH,  
FLORENCE, KENTUCKY

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To Julianne,  
Excellent and Precious.  
Proverbs 31:10

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## PREFACE

God has used Florence Baptist Church in a mighty way in my life. I remember as a child learning John 3:16 with Bob Hall and Ken Clark in Royal Ambassadors. I remember Pete Coleman, a faithful student pastor, equipping me for ministry and daring me to dream big. I was saved, baptized, called to ministry, married, and now serve at FBC. I am deeply indebted to and love my church. My project was an attempt to mobilize FBC to take the gospel to a community in need of the gospel.

My project is dedicated to my family, FBC, and White Pine. Julianne, my wife of nine years, understands sacrifice and has been a relentless encourager in my life. Her tenderness and toughness are unmatched. FBC is a church committed to the gospel and ready to go here, near, and far, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. White Pine is a community responding to the gospel. The Nunn family has been an answer to prayer. This family willingly opened up their lives and homes, took on risk, and welcomed FBC into their community. I also include the young men I met as basketball players but now know as friends: Devin, Chad, Junior, Scott, Erik, Elijah, Isaiah, and Jacob. I pray these young men find their satisfaction and joy in Jesus Christ. I also pray FBC will continue to take the light of the gospel into the darkest of places.

Finally, I want to thank the faculty of Southern Seminary and the men that made up my cohort. The bond formed over a short time, I pray, will continue through a lifetime of ministry.

Benjamin Clayton Brown

Florence, Kentucky

December 2013

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to mobilize Florence Baptist Church in planting small group Bible studies throughout local, multi-housing communities.

#### **Goals**

The first goal was to gain an understanding of how effective Florence Baptist Church is in reaching neighboring multi-housing communities with the gospel. Greenlawn and White Pine are two mobile home communities located less than two miles from the church building. At the onset of this project, only one family from Greenlawn attended worship services regularly at Florence Baptist.

The second goal was for the church to change its attitude from event evangelism to servant evangelism.<sup>1</sup> The existing evangelism strategy of FBC was to have big events at the church building and hope people would come to Christ through these events. Every Christmas, Easter, and Independence Day, FBC hosted a special speaker, performed a musical, or play. These events were well attended but have not reached Greenlawn or White Pine. Authors Colin Marshall and Tony Payne explains events are convenient and easy to control for the leader, but events require unbelievers to come to the church building on the church's own terms. In the end, an event approach could

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<sup>1</sup>Steve Sjogren, *Conspiracy of Kindness* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1993), 17. Steve Sjogren in *Conspiracy of Kindness* defined servant evangelism as “demonstrating the kindness of God by offering to do some act of humble service with no strings attached.” Alvin Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 209. Alvin Reid in *Introduction to Evangelism* defined servant evangelism as “a combination of simple acts of kindness and intentional personal evangelism.” I prefer Reid’s definition for my project because of the emphasis on personal evangelism. With Sjogren’s definition the actual communication of the gospel could be ignored.



distract the church from evangelism.<sup>2</sup> In Acts, the church is consistently on the move, constantly sharing the gospel. For the project to be successful, FBC would adopt the evangelism method of the early church.

The third goal was personal and drawn from Matthew 9:36-38. In this text, Jesus saw the crowd of people and had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus told his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”<sup>3</sup> I wanted to pray earnestly for workers. The goal was to pray each day for members who are going to the mobile home communities and for more who will join in the harvest from Greenlawn and White Pine. A prayer journal was created to help fulfill this goal.

The overarching goal of my project was gospel growth in Greenlawn and White Pine through the planting of small group Bible studies. As the gospel was planted, small groups formed to house the growth. Paul planted the gospel and formed churches. Paul stated the gospel was going throughout the world bearing fruit and growing (Col. 1:5-6). When the gospel is planted, lives are changed and small groups will be formed.

### **Context of Ministry Project**

Florence Baptist Church was located in Florence, Kentucky. The city of Florence was the eighth largest city in the state and was located in the seventy-first most rapidly growing county in the nation.<sup>4</sup> Florence had approximately 28,381 residents and was located in Boone County, Kentucky, just ten miles south of Cincinnati, Ohio.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2009), 19.

<sup>3</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from the English Standard Version.

<sup>4</sup>Richard Lunnemann, “City of Florence Kentucky,” <http://www.florence-ky.gov/docs/admin/demographics2010.pdf> (accessed July 6, 2011).

<sup>5</sup>Lunnemann, “City of Florence Kentucky,” (accessed July 6, 2011).

Growth in this city had been attributed to the proximity to major modes for transportation, including I-71, I-75, I-275, the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, and the Ohio River. The median household income for Boone County in 2010 was \$69,500, and the county had an unemployment rate of 9.3 percent during this same year.<sup>6</sup>

FBC was located at 642 Mount Zion Road in Florence, Kentucky, and over 50,000 people lived within three miles of the church building.<sup>7</sup> In that three-mile radius, there were more than 19,000 households with an average household size of 2.62 people and a median age of 34.4 years.<sup>8</sup> The average household income was \$70,627, but there are nearly 4,000 households living under \$35,000 a year in this three-mile radius.<sup>9</sup> Greenlawn and White Pine mobile home communities are located less than two miles away from the church building.

FBC's racial composition reflected the community, consisting predominately of Caucasian members. The racial description of those living within a three-mile radius of the church building was 91.2% Caucasian, 3.9 % Hispanic, 2.8% African-American, and 2.7% Asian.<sup>10</sup>

FBC was over 150 years old. Members from Dry Creek Church of the North Bend Association planted FBC in 1855. FBC continued to grow, and on March 8, 2009, the first worship service was held at the new and current location off Mount Zion Road,

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census, "*Demographic and Income Profile, Florence, KY*," <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/21/2127982.html> (accessed January 13, 2011.)

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

with more than 1,500 people in attendance. FBC was made up of 2,774 members, averaged 1,223 people in Sunday morning worship, and 686 in Sunday school in 2010.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to being a church plant itself, FBC has also planted churches. The first church plant occurred in 1960, with July 24, 1960, as the first recorded meeting of Greenview Chapel.<sup>12</sup> Less than a year later, Greenview Baptist Church was dedicated on March 4, 1961, as a mission church of FBC.<sup>13</sup> In 1960, FBC sent sixty members to the new church plant and supported it until the church was self-sustaining.<sup>14</sup> The building is still standing, and the church still worships there today.

Church planting was reignited at FBC in 1994 with the calling of Stuart Perkins as the Minister of Missions. Perkins was from Fort Worth, Texas, where he had served as Minister of Missions at Gambrell Street Baptist Church. This church was the first to implement the Key Church Program,<sup>15</sup> a program aimed primarily at people in multi-housing communities such as mobile homes, apartments, and low-rent housing developments.<sup>16</sup> Perkins set the vision for FBC to establish churches in targeted communities by sending volunteers from FBC to lead Bible studies, reach people for Christ, and equip them for ministry. Volunteers from FBC would then transfer the ministry to those who were living in the community and growing in their faith. Perkins stated, “Eventually the program will turn to Bible study, and some satellites may start

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<sup>11</sup>“Annual Church Profile for Kentucky Baptist Churches and Mission, Florence Baptist Church,” Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, 2010.

<sup>12</sup>Michael Capek, *Church at the Crossroads* (Knoxville: Tennessee Valley Publishing, 2005), 216.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 299.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

worship services in a community room or in a house, but at first, the main goal is simply to reach out to people who are not being reached by other churches.”<sup>17</sup>

From 1994 to 1997, while Perkins served as Minister of Missions, FBC planted nine churches.<sup>18</sup> In the fall of 1994, four members of FBC responded to the call to be volunteer missionaries to unreached communities in Florence.<sup>19</sup> Perkins planted a church in Triple Crown. This church met from March 23, 1997, to April 26, 2000, averaging twenty people in weekly attendance. Jeff Knutson planted a church in Turfway Apartments on March 20, 1997, and members last met on July 25, 1999. During this two-year period, the church averaged nineteen people in weekly worship. Gary and Jan Martin planted a church in Edward Avenue Apartments. This church met January 18, 1998, to September 22, 2003, averaging eighteen people in weekly attendance.

In addition to Boone County, FBC volunteer missionaries planted churches in surrounding communities and cities. Wes Kidwell, one of the original four volunteer missionaries, planted a church in the city of Ludlow. Churches were also planted in the cities of Covington and Cincinnati. However, none of these churches meets for worship today. When Stuart Perkins left FBC for the mission field in 1997, the vision for church planting went with him, for he was the leader of this movement.

Since Perkins’s departure in 1997, FBC has grown in membership and has changed its location. It is useful to study FBC’s growth patterns over the past eleven years because in 2000, FBC had its highest average attendance at its weekly Sunday morning worship service and Sunday school classes.<sup>20</sup> From 2000 to 2008, weekly

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid, 365.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 299.

<sup>20</sup>Annual Church Profile, Florence Baptist Church.

worship attendance dropped from 1,072 to 818.<sup>21</sup> Weekly Sunday school attendance also dropped from 882 to 647.<sup>22</sup> In 2009, FBC moved to a new location next to a major United States highway, and worship attendance increased dramatically. The average worship attendance in 2009 was 1,062, and in 2010, it increased to 1,223 people.<sup>23</sup> Sunday school attendance did not increase as dramatically, with an average of 667 people in 2009 and 686 in 2010.<sup>24</sup>

In the past eleven years, giving increased from \$1,649,935 to \$2,485,337 annually.<sup>25</sup> From 2000 to 2010, the number of baptisms fluctuated between a high of eighty-four in 2000 and a low of thirty-seven in 2003.<sup>26</sup> The yearly average of baptisms for that time period is sixty-three.<sup>27</sup>

I was the youth pastor at FBC for the past three years and have been a member of this church for over twenty years. The senior pastor has asked if I would research planting churches in communities around FBC, and this project represented the culmination of my investigation.

### **Rationale for Project**

While FBC continued to grow, many people within a three-mile radius of the church building did not attend. People who lived in Greenlawn and White Pine mobile home communities had not responded to FBC's existing mode of outreach, which was to invite others to special FBC functions. Therefore, FBC needs to modify its efforts to

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

reach them. Due to the beliefs that Jesus is the only way to heaven (John 14:6, Acts 4:12), that God deserves the worship of every person (Ps 150:6, Phil 2:10-11), and that he has commanded his church to go and make disciples (Matt 18-20, Acts 1:8), FBC had to obey the command to go.

FBC did not have to go far. A good starting point was to practice loving our neighbors, specifically Green Lawn and White Pine mobile home communities. People need hope, and it is found in Jesus Christ. There was a need for the residents of Green Lawn and White Pine mobile home communities to know Jesus as Lord and Savior. In order to reach them with the gospel, FBC needed to revisit its efforts to plant churches. In 1994, FBC attempted to plant churches all over the Tri-State area, and Stuart Perkins commented, “My challenge is to take the gospel message out of the sanctuary and into the marketplace.”<sup>28</sup> FBC’s senior pastor, Tim Alexander, stated in 1994 that the Key Church Program was a model for how churches will serve people in the next century.<sup>29</sup> I agreed with both men. Church planting was the best way to obey the Great Commission. In Acts 5:42, the apostles are in the temple and going from house to house every day, never ceasing to preach and teach about Jesus. FBC should follow the model the early church established. In so doing, the benefits would be two-fold: the community would benefit from seeing neighbors experience new life in Christ, and the church would benefit from seeing members obediently walking with Christ. Transformed lives and personal revival were the benefits sought through this project.

### **Definitions**

Planting small group Bible studies meant planting a small number of people who meet regularly for the purpose of spiritual edification and evangelistic outreach with

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<sup>28</sup>Capek, *Church at the Crossroads*, 303.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

the goal of multiplication.<sup>30</sup> These small group Bible studies were what Matt Carter called “missional communities.”<sup>31</sup> They balanced the internal focus of following Jesus with an external focus on incarnating the gospel in their communities.<sup>32</sup> Also, they were ready to multiply and share the gospel as they go.<sup>33</sup> The number of people in a small group would depend on the size of the meeting place. In most circumstances it would be between eight and twelve people.

Servant evangelism, while it would include serving, must also include the proclamation of the gospel. Bill Bright of Campus Crusade uses three points to describe evangelism: “First, it is physical, for it involves going to people. Second, it is verbal because the message of salvation must be clearly presented verbally. Third, it is volitional, for the evangelist seeks a willful response from the hearer.”<sup>34</sup> Bill Bright’s definition of evangelism was good but did not include the service aspect of servant evangelism. Charles Roesel and Donald Atkinson defines ministry evangelism as, “meeting people at the point of their need and ministering to them physically and spiritually with the intent of presenting the good news of God’s love in order to introduce people to Jesus.”<sup>35</sup> Alvin Reid defines servant evangelism as, “a combination of simple acts of kindness and intentional personal evangelism.”<sup>36</sup> Charles Roesel’s concept of

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<sup>30</sup>Joel Comisky, *How to Lead a Great Cell Group Meeting So People Want to Come Back* (Houston: Touch, 2001), 13.

<sup>31</sup>Darrin Patrick and Matt Carter, *For the City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 122.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 177.

<sup>35</sup>Donald Atkinson and Charles Roesel, *Meeting Needs, Sharing Christ* (Nashville: LifeWay, 1995), 10.

<sup>36</sup>Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 209.

ministry evangelism and Reid's definition of servant evangelism were applicable for goal two of my project because of the focus both placed on intentional evangelism.

Steve Sjogren defines servant evangelism as, "demonstrating the kindness of God by offering to do some act of humble service with no strings attached."<sup>37</sup> Sjogren had many ideas for service projects but his definition can lead to the gospel not being verbally communicated. Water bottles could be distributed without the gospel ever being presented. Larry Short agreed with Sjogren. Short states, "I think back about all the soul-winning methods I studied as a youth, and I wonder why I was so blind to the best method of all, serving people and trying to meet their needs."<sup>38</sup> Servant evangelism must include the communication of the gospel. Evangelism is impossible if Jesus Christ is never presented as Lord and Savior.

Will Metzger warned about keeping a balance between a narrow and a broad definition of evangelism.<sup>39</sup> He states,

Narrowly defined, witnessing is confined to a rehearsal of a few gospel facts in the hearing of a nonbeliever. Broadly defined, it is whatever we do as Christians before a watching world. Neither of these definitions is satisfactory. The first narrows witness to only our lips; the second broadens it to just being nice. Clearly the way we live is a primary aspect of our witness. Yet our life is to be coupled with telling God's truth. People need to be told who makes our lives different. The airplane of Christian witness has two wings: our lives (conduct) and our lips (conversation).<sup>40</sup>

Servant evangelism kept a healthy balance between a narrow and a broad definition of evangelism. As members of FBC practiced servant evangelism in Greenlawn and White Pine, residents would not only see a difference in the lives of FBC, but would hear about Jesus Christ who makes the difference.

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<sup>37</sup>Sjogren, *Conspiracy of Kindness*, 17.

<sup>38</sup>Robert Logan and Larry Short, *Mobilizing for Compassion* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1994), 184.

<sup>39</sup>Will Metzger, *Tell the Truth* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 24.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 24-25.



### **Limitations and Delimitations**

A limitation for this project was the fifteen-week time constraint to complete planting Bible studies in the multi-housing communities. The fifteen-week time constraint removed church planting from the realm of possible options for a project. Planting small groups would be a small step toward the larger goal of planting a church in the future and was accomplished within the fifteen-week time limit. A delimitation for this project was the specific location of Green Lawn and White Pine mobile home communities. These communities were selected because they were the closest in proximity to the church building.

## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR PLANTING SMALL GROUPS

Alvin Reid, in *Fire Fall*, states, “Boniface, the leading revivalist of the eighth century, lived a life that was consumed with a two-fold mission: to awaken the Christians and to evangelize the pagans.”<sup>1</sup> Planting small groups in Greenlawn and White Pine reflected Boniface’s two-fold mission of equipping the church for mission and reaching a community with the gospel. Planting small groups will require Florence Baptist Church to wake up, as Boniface put it, and evangelize local mobile home communities. Jesus commanded the church to make disciples, baptizing and teaching them everything he commanded (Matt 28:18-20).<sup>2</sup> Planting the gospel and forming small groups was one way to make disciples. When the church shares the gospel, people will hear and some will be saved (Rom 1:16, 10:13-17, Col 1:6). Forming small groups will help new believers grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Chapter 2 examines the biblical and theological foundation for planting small group Bible studies. The focus will be on three specific issues: (1) why prayer is essential to the mission of making disciples; (2) the necessity of the gospel being preached for people to be saved; and (3) how to perpetuate a gospel movement. Each section will conclude with an examination of the early church in Acts.

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<sup>1</sup>In *Fire Fall*, Malcolm McDow and Alvin Reid define revival as God’s invasion into the lives of one or more of his people in order to awaken them spiritually for kingdom ministry. The verb “awaken” here refers to a church that is lethargic or complacent coming alive and living out the mission of God in the daily lives of its members. It is a spiritual awakening. See Malcolm McDow and Alvin Reid, *Fire Fall: How God Has Shaped History through Revivals* (Enumclaw, WA: Pleasant Word, 2002), 7, 110.

## Pray

Prayer is the alarm clock that will awaken a sleeping church. S. D. Gordon says, “You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.”<sup>3</sup> If Green Lawn and White Pine mobile home communities are going to be reached with the gospel, God will have to move in the hearts of his people and send out workers into his field.

Jesus and his disciples dealt with the same problem during his earthly ministry. In Matthew 9:36-38, many in the region remained unreached despite Jesus’ growing ministry.<sup>4</sup> When Jesus saw the crowds, he gave a specific direction to his disciples to pray for more workers to be sent out (Matt 9:36-38). The command to pray for more workers is critical for mobilizing a church to make disciples. The context for Matthew 9:36-38 and the condition of the crowd are important to understand. Jesus had compassion on the crowd when he saw their condition. The church will imitate Jesus’ compassion when it recognizes the condition of the crowd. It is specifically this condition that made the command to pray for workers urgent, a condition that has not changed to this day; thus, the command to pray for workers remains as urgent as ever.

### Context

The context in which the command to pray for more workers was given is described in Matthew 9:35. Jesus was going throughout all the cities and villages, teaching and proclaiming the gospel and healing diseases. As Jesus traveled, many people came to him. When Jesus saw the crowds he instructed his disciples to pray (Matt 9:36-38). People rushed to Jesus because they were in desperate need of him. Jesus was on the move, in the cities and in the villages, and he saw the crowds. Jesus knew the

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<sup>3</sup>McDow and Reid, *Fire Fall*, 139.

<sup>4</sup>Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 166.

harvest field was plentiful, so he commanded his disciples to pray for more workers as they saw the crowd.

The context of this passage in Matthew is important to understand. Without looking at context, a local church may think it is unnecessary to pray for more workers. A church may have enough ushers, Sunday school teachers, pastors, choir members, nursery workers, and thus have no need for more workers. The context of Matthew 9 displays the mission of the church going beyond the building and flowing into the harvest field, a field that is plentiful and in need of workers. When the church, like Jesus, is on the move, the work will be overwhelming, and the need for workers will be evident. If the church decides to remain isolated within the four walls of a building, she will fail to see those who are in desperate need of the Savior. An inward focused church will miss the crowds.

FBC is located less than two miles away from Green Lawn and White Pine mobile home communities. Only one family from Greenlawn hold membership in the church and attend on a weekly basis. Through personal interviews, it was discovered that many church members had never heard of Green Lawn or White Pine or where these communities are located. A community of nearly 300 homes, less than two miles away from the church building, remains largely unnoticed. The crowds are still present today, and as FBC focuses outside the church building, they will become evident to the church membership. Reggie McNeal describes many churches as having a refuge mentality. He stated,

Those with a refuge mentality view the world outside the church as the enemy. Their answer is to live inside the bubble in a Christian subculture. Evangelism in this worldview is about churching the unchurched, not connecting people to Jesus. It focuses on cleaning people up, changing their behavior so church people can be more comfortable around them. Refuge churches evidence enormous self-preoccupation. They deceive themselves into believing they are a potent force.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 9.

When the church views a building as a refuge and becomes preoccupied with keeping the church members happy, the crowds will be ignored. FBC cannot adopt a fortified attitude. The church's recent move to a new location and into a new building does not help. Thom Rainer, in *Eating the Elephant*, states, "Many times, when a growing church builds, the focus shifts from reaching lost people to completing a building project and that change of focus kills church growth."<sup>6</sup> Jesus saw the crowds because he went throughout all the cities and villages, and this led him to command his disciples to pray for more workers to be sent out (Matt 9:35-36). The disciples did not have to ask why because they saw the crowds. FBC will see the crowds and be driven to pray for more workers only as the church joins the Lord in his harvest field.

### **Condition**

Just as the context of this passage is important to understand, so too is considering the condition of the crowd. The context makes this command to pray for more workers evident, and the condition of the crowd makes it urgent. The crowds are described as being harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (Matt 9:36). Sheep do not have sharp claws or teeth to fight off predators, and they are not fast enough to escape them. Without a shepherd, sheep are hopeless. The imagery portrayed in this passage is that of sheep wounded by hostile animals, thrown down, and left helpless.<sup>7</sup> Sheep without a shepherd point to people who are in great danger and without resources to escape from it.<sup>8</sup> The critical nature of the condition of the crowd leads to urgency in praying for help.

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<sup>6</sup>Thom Rainer and Chuck Lawless, *Eating the Elephant: Leading the Established Church to Growth* (Crestwood, KY: Pinnacle, 2003), 82.

<sup>7</sup>Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 239.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

In Christ people have hope, for he is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 14). People who are without Jesus today are in a hopeless and desperate situation. Until the church realizes the spiritual condition of those who do not know Christ, there will be no urgency in praying for more workers to help rescue those who are perishing. The Bible paints a clear picture of those who do not know Christ as Lord. People without Christ are perishing and blinded by the devil, unable to see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Cor 4:3-4). Unbelievers are dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1). Outside of Christ people are living in the domain of darkness (Col 1:13). The church should never ignore or grow hardened to the fact that people desperately need Jesus Christ. There are too many hurting and desperate people with too few workers going to them with the gospel. The solution Jesus gave was to pray for more workers. Understanding the condition in which Jesus commanded his disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers creates an urgency and earnestness to pray. Praying for more workers to be sent out will become urgent and earnest when FBC understands the spiritual condition of the crowds.

### **Compassion**

When Jesus saw the crowds and the condition that they were in, he had compassion on them (Matt 9:36). Jesus was never was numb to the people who surrounded him. He always acted on his compassion. The cause of Jesus' ceaseless activity is traceable to his compassion on the crowds.<sup>9</sup> Robert Logan explains, "Each time Scripture records that Jesus had compassion it was immediately followed by action

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<sup>9</sup>R. T. France, *Matthew*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1985), 179.

to meet human needs.”<sup>10</sup> Leon Morris adds, “The compassion of Jesus is not human pity, but divine compassion for troubled people.”<sup>11</sup> He continues,

The main thing about Jesus seeing the crowds is not when or where he saw the crowds but that he had compassion on them. In the New Testament this verb is always used of Jesus or by Jesus in his parables; it is particularly associated with him. H. Koster comments, “Outside the original parables of Jesus there is no instance of the word being used of men. It is always used to describe the attitude of Jesus and it characterizes the divine nature of His acts.”<sup>12</sup>

Jesus’ first compassionate action after he saw the crowds was to command his disciples to pray for more workers to be sent out. The first compassionate action the church must take in reaching the lost is to pray for workers to be sent out. Every member must be on mission. Compassion must not be confused with sympathy. Ed Stetzer in *Ready or Not: A New SBC is Coming*, states, “Midtown Fellowship church in Columbia, South Carolina, engaged thousands of people through social ministries to the homeless, sick, orphaned, and poor.”<sup>13</sup> The planter and pastor of this church, Dustin Willis, says, “Too many times people see needs and are maybe even moved to tears, but do nothing. This is being sentimental. The truth is that the church is called to do something about it. That is compassion.”<sup>14</sup> Compassion drives FBC to do something about the crowds who do not know Jesus Christ. Jesus directs his compassion and the compassion of his church to prayer.

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<sup>10</sup>Robert Logan and Larry Short, *Mobilizing for Compassion: Moving People into Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1994), 16.

<sup>11</sup>Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 239.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 238-39.

<sup>13</sup>Ed Stetzer and Philip Nation, “Ready or Not: A New SBC is Coming,” in *The Great Commission Resurgence*, ed. Chuck Lawless and Adam Greenway (Nashville: B & H, 2010), 377.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*

## Command

The command Jesus gave his disciples and gives his church today is to pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest (Matt 9:38). The work is extensive, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. R. T. France states, “The harvest being plentiful represents the crowd of people who are ready to respond to the gospel.”<sup>15</sup> Jesus was speaking of people who are ripe for inclusion in the kingdom, and in this situation it is necessary that something be done to bring them in.<sup>16</sup> Crops must be gathered into the barn, and this requires workers. In the same way, while God does the saving, he calls, sends, and works through his people who join him in his harvest. The crowd in Matthew 9:35-38 displayed the reality that there were too few workers for this massive work. The same is true today, and the command to ask the Lord of the harvest for reinforcements is not outdated.<sup>17</sup> Green Lawn and White Pine mobile home communities will never be reached if workers are not sent out on mission.

Workers are needed from two areas. One group of workers who need to be sent out is passive observers. Passive observers could be called “spectators” because they listen to the pastor preach, hear the choir sing, attend on a weekly basis, but are not actively reaching the lost with the gospel. The church has a mission, and it is to join God in his redemptive work in the world. Reggie McNeal states, “Many church members have forgotten why they showed up for work, and even worse, many of them have never known there was a work to be done.”<sup>18</sup> A member of a church is a member in the mission. God changes hearts and turns spectators into servants. Jonathan Edwards once prayed, “Return, O Lord, and visit thy churches, and revive thine own work in the midst

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<sup>15</sup>France, *Matthew*, 179.

<sup>16</sup>Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 239.

<sup>17</sup>France, *Matthew*, 179.

<sup>18</sup>McNeal, *The Present Future*, 19.



of us.”<sup>19</sup> Oswald Sanders explains how important prayer was in relation to changing people’s hearts:

It is one thing to believe such power is available, but another thing to practice it. People are difficult to move; it is much easier to pray for things or provisions than to deal with the stubbornness of the human heart. But in just these intricate situations the leader must use God’s power to move human hearts in the direction he believes to be the will of God. Through prayer the leader has the key to that complicated lock.<sup>20</sup>

The other group of workers who need to be sent out is the group of believers who are in the harvest field but not working. This group could be called the sluggards: they will do some work but only if asked or prodded. Sluggards have no passion for reaching the lost with the gospel. Craig Blomberg , clarifies, “The phrase ‘send out’ in Matthew 9:38 could also be translated ‘thrust out,’ and it could even refer to workers already in the field who need to have a fire lit under them to thrust them out of their comforts into the world of need.”<sup>21</sup> Laborers will be sent out into the harvest field as the church prays for the Lord of the harvest to send more out. Through prayer the church will be awakened to the plentiful harvest field and join in the work of evangelizing the lost.

### **The Early Church: Pray**

The early church understood that the power of God was needed if the mission of God was going to be accomplished. Their desperation for God’s power is evident in the priority they gave to prayer. Of 85 NT occurrences, the verb “pray” appears 34 times in Luke and Acts, with 16 of these occurrences found in Acts (Acts 1:24; 6:6; 8:15; 9:11,40; 10:9,30; 11:5; 12:12; 13:3; 14:23; 16:25; 20:36; 21:5; 22:17; 28:8).<sup>22</sup> The Book

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<sup>19</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Jonathan Edwards on Revival: A Narrative of Surprising Conversions* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 3.

<sup>20</sup>J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody, 1994), 90.

<sup>21</sup>Blomberg, *Matthew*, 167.

of Acts displayed the church as a praying community seeking God's direction, depending upon God, and actively submitting to him.<sup>23</sup> The church was devoted to prayer (Acts 1:14; 2:42). Its members prayed specifically about their mission (Acts 2:46-47; 4:24-31; 13:3).<sup>24</sup> As the church patiently waited on God's timing, the disciples were praying and readying themselves for their task as a group.<sup>25</sup> Darrell Bock explains, "These prayers are not so much for individual personal needs, but for their needs as a community in terms of their mission; they call on God to support them with spiritual provision for that mission."<sup>26</sup>

When the church was persecuted, they gathered together and prayed that they would continue to speak the word with boldness. The Lord answered by filling them all with the Holy Spirit, who enabled them to continue to speak the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:21-39). Persecution broke out and the church scattered, but as they went, they preached the word (Acts 8:3-4). They traveled as far as Antioch and preached the Lord Jesus to Hellenists (Acts 11:20). The gospel was spreading over any and all barriers; God answered prayers and sent workers into his harvest field. He will do the same today.

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<sup>22</sup>Darrell Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 151.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 202-03.

## Preach

The gospel is God at work.<sup>27</sup> Robert Mounce clarifies, “The good news is not a lifeless message but a vibrant encounter for everyone who responds in faith.”<sup>28</sup> As the gospel is planted in a community it will bear fruit. Paul wrote about gospel growth in his letter to the church in Colossae. Paul explains the gospel, which had come to those not only in Colossae but throughout the world, was bearing fruit and growing since the day they heard it and understood the grace of God in truth (Col 1:5-6). Gospel-centered small groups will form as FBC plants the gospel of Jesus Christ in Green Lawn and White Pine mobile home communities.

## Gospel Substance

The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Rom 1:16). Clarity on the gospel is a non-negotiable because it is the means through which God accomplishes salvation (Rom 1:16). John Murray states, “The implication of Romans 1:16 is that God’s salvation power is through the gospel alone.”<sup>29</sup> Dwight L. Moody compares the gospel to a lion when he states, “All the preacher has to do is to open the door of the cage and get out of the way.”<sup>30</sup> An overview of the gospel is made up of four basic components: (1) God is sovereign-creator; (2) people are eternally separated from God because of sin; (3) the person and work of Jesus Christ; (4) the individual’s response to Jesus Christ.<sup>31</sup> Greg Gilbert, in his book *What is the Gospel?*,

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<sup>27</sup>Robert Mounce, *Romans*, The New American Commentary, vol. 27 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 70.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International commentary on The New Testament, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 27.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Greg Gilbert, *What is the Gospel?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 28-31.

summarizes these four points as God, man, Christ, and response.<sup>32</sup> More specifically, the gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ died on the cross as the sacrificial substitute for sinners and rose again, making a way for people to be reconciled to God.<sup>33</sup> On a personal level the gospel can again be broken down into four basic components: (1) God is creator and judge of my life; (2) I am a sinner and separated from God; (3) Jesus stood in my place taking on my sin and giving me his righteousness; (4) I must make a personal decision to turn from sin and follow Christ as Lord. Charles Spurgeon recognizes the significance of keeping the gospel clear:

He will succeed best, who keeps closest to soul-saving truth. He that keeps to the simple story of the cross, tells men over and over again that whosoever believes in Christ is not condemned; that to be saved, nothing is wanted but a simple trust in the crucified Redeemer; he whose ministry is much made up of the glorious story of the cross, the sufferings of the dying Lamb, the mercy of God, the willingness of the great Father to receive returning prodigals; he who cries, in fact, from day to day, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world,' he is likely to be a soul-winner especially if he adds to this much prayer for souls, much anxious desire that men may be brought to Jesus, and then in his private life seeks as much as in his public ministry to be telling out to others of the love of the dear Savior of men.<sup>34</sup>

The church must understand the gospel before it can preach the gospel to the community. Only as people understand what the gospel is will they be able to communicate it clearly to others. Paul understood the importance of reminding the church of the gospel and keeping it the priority. In his letter to the church at Corinth he offers this reminder,

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. (1 Cor 15:1-4)

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 31.

<sup>33</sup>Mark Dever, *What is a Healthy Church?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 76.

<sup>34</sup>Charles Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner: Advice on Effective Evangelism* (London: Focus, reprint, 2008), 191.

Paul reminds the church that the gospel is all about Jesus and that they would never outgrow the gospel. The gospel is the means of a person's salvation and sanctification.<sup>35</sup> The church must be reminded of the gospel message, for it is, as Paul states, of first importance (1 Cor 15:3). To confuse or dilute this message is to make the way of salvation unclear. The church must be awakened to the fact that the gospel is the power of God for salvation. Evangelism cannot happen in a church where the gospel is unclear.

### **Gospel Saturation**

God, through the gospel, brings those who are dead in their trespasses and sins to life in Christ (Eph 2:5). God uses the gospel to deliver people from the domain of darkness and transfer them to the kingdom of his Son, in whom they have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Col 1:13-14). Russell Moore states, "The problem of people being in captivity to the deception of the evil one (2 Tim 2:25) is overcome by the unabashed proclamation of the gospel (2 Cor 4:4-6)."<sup>36</sup> Preaching the gospel is being on the offensive in spiritual warfare. In dealing with gospel saturation Alvin Reid defines two helpful concepts: total penetration and total participation. Total penetration means reaching everyone for Christ and total participation means involving every believer in evangelism.<sup>37</sup> FBC will strive to reach both of these concepts: every member of FBC sharing and every resident hearing the gospel.

While the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, it does not refer to universal salvation. Salvation is through the gospel for those who believe (Rom 1:16).

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<sup>35</sup>Tim Keller, *The Centrality of the Gospel* (New York: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2001), 1.

<sup>36</sup>Russell Moore, "The Great Commission Resurgence: Theology Bleeds," in *The Great Commission Resurgence: Ready or Not: A New SBC is Coming*, ed. Chuck Lawless and Adam Greenway (Nashville: B & H, 2010), 107.

<sup>37</sup>Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 43.

John Murray clarifies, “The salvation Paul is speaking of in Romans has no reality, validity, or meaning apart from faith.”<sup>38</sup> Paul, in Romans 10:13-17, explains the process by which people will be saved. God sends his servants (Rom 10:15). His servants preach (Rom 10:14). When his servants preach people will hear (Rom 10:14). When people hear some will believe (Rom 10:14). When people believe they will call (Rom 10:14). Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Rom 10:13). Murray explains, “Calling on Christ means the relinquishment of every other confidence and abandonment to him as our only help.”<sup>39</sup> Paul’s conclusion of Romans 10:14-15 is spelled out in Romans 10:17, that faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.<sup>40</sup>

How will the residents of Green Lawn and White Pine call on him in whom they have not believed? And how will residents believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And who will go and preach unless people are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” (Rom 10:15). Members of FBC are those who are sent by God to preach the gospel. When God’s servants preach, people will hear and some will believe. When people believe the gospel they will call on the Lord and be saved. David Platt explains, “There is only one potential breakdown in this progression – when servants of God do not preach the gospel to all peoples.”<sup>41</sup> If no one goes and preaches the gospel to the residents at Green Lawn and White Pine, they may never hear the gospel. If residents never hear the gospel, they will never know the salvation of God. John Murray concludes, “The main point of Romans 10:14-15 is that salvation is not something that

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<sup>38</sup>Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 27.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>40</sup>Thomas Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 566.

<sup>41</sup>David Platt, *Radical* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 2010), 156.

can occur in a vacuum; it occurs only in a context created by proclamation of the gospel.”<sup>42</sup> Planting small groups in White Pine only occurs as FBC is obedient in preaching the gospel to all peoples.

The church cannot wait for lost people to come into a building. The church will not have a reputation of having beautiful feet described in Romans 10:15 if members are not out in the community preaching the gospel. Murray explains how Paul uses Isaiah 52:7 in verse 15:

In its immediate reference the messenger is viewed as swift-footedly coming over the mountains with the good tidings of peace and salvation to Zion. The feet are said to be beautiful because their movements betray the character of the message being brought. The essential thought the apostle expresses by saying, “how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” The purpose is to declare the inestimable treasure of gospel proclamation, a treasure that consists in the sending of messengers to preach the Word of Christ.<sup>43</sup>

The gospel is good news. Every person must hear about the love of God and how their sin can be forgiven in Christ. An awakened church will be a church that preaches the gospel to those who have yet to hear the good news of Jesus Christ and disciple new believers.

### **The Early Church: Preach**

John Polhill suggests that the story of Acts could be summarized in the single phrase “the triumph of the gospel.”<sup>44</sup> Polhill continues, “Acts is the triumphant story of how the early Christian community in the power of the Spirit saturated their world with the message of God’s salvation in Jesus Christ.”<sup>45</sup> Preaching the gospel was fundamental for the early church. Jesus, before ascending into heaven, gave his disciples the mandate

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<sup>42</sup>Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 58.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 59.

<sup>44</sup>John Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 71.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

to be his witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8). The early church was deeply committed to being a witness for Jesus Christ. Peter and John never stopped preaching Christ, even when arrested and threatened (Acts 4:17-21). Peter asserts that salvation is only found in Jesus, and there is no other name under heaven given among men by which people must be saved (Acts 4:10-12). The early church was clear on the gospel substance and saturated cities with the gospel message.

The apostles were arrested, but an angel opened the prison doors and told them to go to the temple and preach the gospel (Acts 5:18-21). When they were brought back before the council, the high priest reminded them that they had been charged not to teach in the name of Jesus, and yet they had filled Jerusalem with this teaching (Acts 5:25-28). Even in the face of possible execution Peter and the apostles answer, “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). The disciples continued to share the gospel with the council, but when the council heard this they wanted to kill them (Acts 5:30-33). After beating the apostles and charging them not to speak in the name of Jesus again, they let them go (Acts 5:40). The apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ and every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease to teach and preach Jesus as the Christ (Acts 5:41-42).

The early church could not help but speak about Jesus. Philip went to the city of Samaria and proclaimed Christ (Acts 8:5). Peter and John went to Samaria to check on Philip, and on their return journey to Jerusalem they preached the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans (Acts 8:25). The Holy Spirit led Philip to Azotus. There he shared with an Ethiopian eunuch the good news about Jesus. Then he passed through and preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea (Acts 8:35, 40). Paul and Barnabas were running for their lives, and yet they continued to preach the gospel while on the move (Acts 14:7). Paul preached Christ in Thessalonica (Acts 17:3), in Berea (Acts 17:13), in Athens (Acts 17:18), in Corinth (Acts 18:5), in Ephesus (Acts 19:10),



and in Rome (Acts 28:23,31). The early church saw gospel growth because no matter the location, they preached the gospel (Matt 28:18-20). FBC is called to do the same. Planting small groups will only happen as the gospel is planted in a community.

The power of the gospel for salvation is seen throughout Acts. As Philip preached the good news about Jesus Christ people believed and were baptized (Acts 8:12). Peter preached the gospel to the Gentiles, and they received the word of God (Acts 11:1). An angel commanded Cornelius to go to Joppa and bring back Peter because Peter would declare to him the gospel by which Cornelius and his household would be saved (Acts 11:13-14). The power for salvation is not in the messenger but in the message. God used the gospel to bring about salvation. The word of God increased and multiplied (Acts 12:24). It was as Paul preached the gospel to the city of Derbe that many disciples were made (Acts 14:21). Paul and Barnabas returned and visited the brothers in every city where they proclaimed the word of the Lord to encourage them in the faith (Acts 15:36). Brothers were in these cities because the gospel had been preached in these cities. The gospel bears fruit. In Acts 16 the jailer and his household were saved because they believed in God (Acts 16:34). The jailer and family believed in God because Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house (Acts 16:32). The Lord gave a vision to Paul when he was in Corinth affirming that the presence of his elect in the city (Acts 18:10). As Paul stayed a year and six months teaching the word of God in Corinth, God brought his own people to faith (Acts 18:11).

Paul planted the gospel in cities and churches grew. Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, to the church in Thessalonica, and to the church in Corinth. The reason there were churches in these cities was because Paul and other believers saturated these cities with the gospel. Paul was occupied with the word of God in Corinth (Acts 18:5). In Ephesus, Paul and other disciples of Jesus, continued to preach Jesus for two years so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks (Acts 19:10).

For small groups to be planted in Green Lawn and White Pine mobile home communities the gospel will have to be preached. Like Paul in Ephesus, may FBC continue to preach the gospel until every resident of Green Lawn and White Pine has heard the gospel.

### **Perpetuate**

The goal of planting small group Bible studies is to perpetuate the gospel throughout Green Lawn and White Pine mobile home communities. Equipping teachers is vital for sustaining gospel growth. The training and equipping of teachers will make the difference between a gospel moment and a gospel movement. A moment is something that does not last, while a movement continues in time. If the planting of small groups in Greenlawn and White Pine lasted for a moment, FBC members would plant and lead all the small groups. After a few months some of the leaders would grow tired or frustrated and drop out. A few months later a few more leaders would have to move away or focus their time in other areas. After a year, a few residents of the mobile home communities may have placed their faith in Christ and attend the weekly worship service at FBC, but they would have no opportunity to grow in their walk with Christ through small groups because all the leaders would have left the two mobile home communities. While the conversion of any sinner to Christ is eternally significant, this scenario would not be the best; it describes what a moment in time looks like.

A movement would look radically different. FBC members would plant small groups in Green Lawn and White Pine mobile home communities. Each leader would understand from the beginning that his or her purpose is to identify and equip faithful residents of the community to plant future small groups or be able to lead the small group when the leader has to leave. As the new leaders step into leadership roles in their small groups, they would also be expected to train up teachers and leaders who will plant other small groups in the community. Eventually, small groups would be planted not only in

these two mobile home communities, but throughout northern Kentucky. Given enough time and faithful effort, small groups could be planted all over the world, with churches forming right behind the small groups.

There is a vast difference between a moment and a movement, and it is directly tied to the effectiveness of training faithful teachers who will train faithful teachers to continue the process. FBC planted nine indigenous churches in multi-housing communities, but it was only for a moment in history. None of the nine churches meet today for worship. When the teacher moved from the location, the church plant no longer gathered because no one remained to lead the church. Emphasis on perpetuating the gospel through the training of new teachers will be a priority for the planting of small groups in Greenlawn and White Pine.

## **2 Timothy 2:2 Principle**

Teachers need to equip other faithful teachers. Paul preached the gospel faithfully and saw many people believe in Christ. He understood the importance of training faithful teachers who would one day take his place as a leader. Timothy was one such leader Paul trained and equipped for ministry. What Paul poured into Timothy, he expected Timothy to pour into other faithful men. Those faithful men would then train up other faithful men. Paul's method is outlined in 2 Timothy 2:2. What Timothy heard from Paul he would entrust to faithful men, who would be able to teach others (2 Tim 2:2). Paul encouraged Timothy to leave Ephesus and join him in Rome, but before Timothy left he needed to entrust faithful teachers with the gospel to take his place (2 Tim 4:9,21). Donald Guthrie explains, "The idea in this passage is clearly to entrust something to another for safekeeping, and in the present context, this notion is of great significance."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 14 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990), 156.

Dawson Trotman, the founder of Navigators, argued that the passage in 2 Timothy holds the key to the most efficient method of reaching the world with the gospel of Christ. Dawson was persuaded that the man-to-man method of producing reproducers, disciples who made disciples, was not only the most effective method but also the fastest way to reach the greatest number of people.<sup>47</sup> Billy Graham, an evangelist who preached in more than 185 countries and territories and to more than 210 million people in countless cultural settings, shares this conviction.<sup>48</sup> Graham concludes,

One of the first verses of Scripture that Dawson Trotman made me memorize was, “The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2, KJV). This is a little like a mathematical formula for spreading the gospel and enlarging the Church. Paul taught Timothy; Timothy shared what he knew with faithful men; these faithful men would then teach others also. And so the process goes on and on. If every believer followed this pattern, the Church could reach the entire world with the gospel in one generation! Mass crusades, in which I believe and to which I have committed my life, will never finish the Great Commission; but a one-by-one ministry will.<sup>49</sup>

As FBC spreads the gospel in Greenlawn and White Pine and small groups form as people turn to Jesus Christ, the leader in the small group must always remember that he is working himself out of his job. The leader must produce faithful leaders if the gospel movement is to continue. As new leaders are trained, new small groups will be planted, and the gospel will be perpetuated.

### **The Example of Jesus**

Jesus was a teacher who trained teachers. Jesus made disciples who made disciples. For three years Jesus was teaching, eating, sending, working, talking, preaching, healing, and living with these few men. Before Jesus commanded them to

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<sup>47</sup>Betty Lee Skinner, *Daws: A Man Who Trusted God* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1974), 263.

<sup>48</sup>Lewis Drummond, *The Evangelist* (Nashville: Word, 2001), xii.

<sup>49</sup>Billy Graham, *The Holy Spirit* (Waco, TX: Word, 1978), 147.

make disciples, he showed them how. Jesus poured his life primarily into twelve men. Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee and saw Peter and Andrew. He called to them and said, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt 4:19). Immediately they left their nets and followed him (Matt 4:20). Jesus continued a little further and spotted James and John with their father in the boat mending their nets (Matt 4:21). Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him (Matt 4:21-22). Jesus passed a tax booth and saw Matthew seated in it (Matt 9:9). He called Matthew to follow him, and Matthew rose and followed. Jesus went up on a mountain and called the twelve apostles so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach (Mark 3:13-14). The closer the disciples were to Jesus, the easier it would be for them to follow their master. Leaving everything to follow Christ and walking with him for the rest of one’s life is the essence of making disciples. Jesus came to save the world, and his method focused on training a small group of men. Robert Coleman explains this well:

It all started by Jesus calling a few men to follow him. Men were to be his method of winning the world to God. Though Jesus did what he could to help the multitudes, he had to devote himself primarily to a few men, rather than the masses, so that the masses could at last be saved. Before the world could ever be permanently helped, people would have to be raised up who could lead the multitudes in the things of God. The multitudes could be won today if they are just given leaders to follow.<sup>50</sup>

Not only did Jesus make disciples, he expected his disciples to do the same. He gave his disciples the commission to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to obey all that he had commanded them (Matt 18:19-20). He entrusted the gospel message to faithful men who were able to teach others.

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<sup>50</sup>Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 2007), 29-31.

The command to go and make disciples is for the church today, and this obligation continues to the end of the age.<sup>51</sup> FBC will plant small groups in Green Lawn and White Pine through preaching the gospel and training new teachers. This gospel movement will be perpetuated to the degree to which faithful teachers are trained and equipped to carry on the gospel.

### **The Early Church: Perpetuate**

The book of Acts, from beginning to end, records the perpetuation of the gospel. Acts 1:8 displays how the gospel spread from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth. As the word of God continued to increase, the number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem (Acts 6:7). With this growth, teachers played a vital role in the perpetuation of the gospel in the early church. When the church in Jerusalem heard about new believers in Antioch, they sent Barnabas, and he exhorted the people to remain faithful to the Lord (Acts 11:22-23). As a result, a great many people were added to the church (Acts 11:24), even to the point that Barnabas was compelled to seek more help, leading him to Tarsus to look for Paul (Acts 11:25). Barnabas brought Paul back to Antioch, and for a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people (Acts 11:26).

Paul practiced what he commanded Timothy by entrusting faithful men with the gospel. Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel, made disciples, and strengthened them in their walk with the Lord (Acts 14:21-22; 15:36). Because of these efforts, when Paul traveled to another location, the local church had leaders who were ready to continue the mission. Paul made it his practice to appoint elders in every church, which demonstrated what he would later urge Timothy to do (Acts 14:23). Paul knew that the

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<sup>51</sup>Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2009), 13.

gospel must never be altered or compromised, and one way to avoid this outcome was by entrusting the gospel message to faithful men who would do the same.

Training up teachers and leaders is a common theme in Acts. Paul trained Barnabas, Silas, and many other disciples. When Paul was in Ephesus he found some disciples, took them with him, and for two years they preached the gospel until all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord (Acts 19:9-10). This is an example of perpetuating a gospel movement through the training and equipping of teachers.

Another example of Paul's work of entrusting the ministry to faithful men appears in Acts 20. He sent for the elders from the church in Ephesus to come to him (Acts 20:17). He reminded them how he lived among them and that he did not shrink from teaching in public and from house to house (Acts 20:20). He urged them to pay careful attention to themselves and to all the flock that the Holy Spirit had given them to oversee and care for (Acts 20:28). Paul also called them to be alert, remembering that for three years he did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears (Acts 20:31). He knelt down and prayed with them all. Then they walked him to the ship and he sailed off, entrusting to these faithful men the future of the church in Ephesus (Acts 20:36-38). Perpetuating the gospel movement happens when faithful teachers are reproduced.

### **Conclusion**

Acts displays a picture of an awakened church that evangelized the pagans. All throughout the book of Acts the gospel is planted and churches are formed. FBC is challenged and encouraged by their example. An awakened church is a church joining God on his mission of seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10). An awakened church will desperately pray for workers to be sent out in the harvest, faithfully preach the gospel, and perpetuate the gospel movement through the training and equipping of teachers. FBC, when awakened, will be a church that looks very similar to the church described in Acts.

### CHAPTER 3

#### MODELS AND PRINCIPLES FOR SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDIES

Dawson Trotman, founder of Navigators, shared an account of how he led a hitchhiker to Christ one night, but a year later picked up the same hitchhiker whose speech indicated that he was not a believer.<sup>1</sup> From that point on Dawson resolved to follow up anyone he led to Christ and realigned his ministry to focus less on getting a decision and more on growing new believers up into Christ.<sup>2</sup> Trotman concludes, “You can lead a man to Christ in twenty minutes to a couple of hours, but it takes twenty weeks to a couple of years to adequately follow him up.”<sup>3</sup> The planting of small groups emphasizes and enables the church to follow up adequately with new believers in Green Lawn and White Pine Mobile home communities.

A baby cannot survive on his or her own. In the same way, new Christians should not be left to themselves to navigate the Christian life. Churches that fail to teach and equip new believers commit spiritual child abuse.<sup>4</sup> Untaught believers experience defeat in their spiritual walks.<sup>5</sup> Small group Bible studies are one option for the church to teach and equip new believers. What is a small group Bible study? How many people make up a small group? What should be included in a Bible study? This chapter will

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<sup>1</sup>Betty Lee Skinner, *Daws: A Man Who Trusted God* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1974), 263.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Chuck Lawless, *Discipled Warriors* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 57.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



investigate the different models and principles for small group Bible studies and recommend which style will best suit the targeted communities.

### **Different Models of Small Groups**

The small group may be the most effective evangelistic tool of the twenty-first century, but there are many different models of small groups.<sup>6</sup> A small group can be an evangelistically focused Sunday school or an off-campus missional community. Each model has strengths and weaknesses. This chapter will help clarify which model of small group would be the best to plant in Green Lawn and White Pine mobile home communities.

### **Sunday School**

Sunday schools were first established in America during the 1790's.<sup>7</sup> Anne Boylan, in her study, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790-1880*, writes,

Robert Raikes and other British evangelicals had pioneered this model during the 1780's by collecting children off city streets, cleaning them up, and keeping them in school for two long Sunday sessions. Inspired by British examples, most Sunday schools in America were designed to provide rudimentary instruction to poor working children on their only free day of the week."<sup>8</sup>

The earliest American Sunday schools were very similar to the British model, but in time the British model faded and a new model of Sunday school more focused on evangelism arose in the United States. In the American school, reading was not an end in itself; the greater end was an evangelical interpretation of the Bible and the conversion of the

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<sup>6</sup>Thom Rainer and Chuck Lawless, *Eating the Elephant: Leading the Established Church to Growth* (Crestwood, KY: Pinnacle, 2003), 74.

<sup>7</sup>Ken Hemphill, *Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur: A Sunday School Growth Strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 2.

<sup>8</sup>Anne Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790-1880* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 6.

pupil.<sup>9</sup> Sunday schools were also established in response to the challenge of reaching the urban masses of the 1800's in the United States.<sup>10</sup> This was a time when the study of the Bible at home was neglected and the knowledge of Scripture among the population was decreasing.<sup>11</sup> The establishment of Sunday schools was a response from the church to correct these trends.

The earliest American Sunday school organizations were interdenominational, but concern for doctrinal purity, evangelism, and a clear stand on moral issues led to denominational groups employing the Sunday school system through their individual denominations.<sup>12</sup> Southern Baptists have played a leading role in the history of the denominational Sunday school movement.<sup>13</sup> E. Y. Mullins, who served as the President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and was a local church pastor, stated in 1902, "The Sunday school is the chief and almost only hope for church growth. Whether in the family church, the church among the masses of the great city, or the country church, the Sunday school will remain the most hopeful field of evangelistic endeavor."<sup>14</sup> This evangelistic focus was not only held by leadership in the Southern Baptist Convention but also held by the laity. Arthur Flake, a Southern Baptist layman, adds, "The supreme business of Christianity is to win the lost to Christ. This is what churches are for. Therefore, Sunday school must relate itself to the winning of the lost to Christ as

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

<sup>10</sup>Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1985), 2: 254.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Boylan, *Sunday School*, 78.

<sup>13</sup>Hemphill, *Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur*, 3.

<sup>14</sup>J. N. Barnette, *A Church Using Its Sunday School* (Nashville: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1937), 17.

an ultimate objective.”<sup>15</sup> The early leaders and churches of the Sunday school movement in America had a Great Commission focus.

Small groups struggle to maintain an outward, evangelistic focus. When churches fail to use the Sunday school with evangelistic intentionality, it becomes a maintenance tool teaching Christians the Bible and offering a time of fellowship rather than a growth tool focused on reaching the lost with the gospel.<sup>16</sup> Many traditional churches have one or more Sunday school classes that would rather die than divide, because this type of class has strong fellowship within itself, but entry into the group is nearly impossible.<sup>17</sup> While the Sunday school program had an early focus on evangelism, most Sunday school classes today could not be described as evangelistically focused.<sup>18</sup>

Allan Taylor, in his book *The Six Core Values of Sunday School*, argues that the three tasks of Sunday school are reaching people for Christ and church membership, teaching people God’s Word, and ministering to people’s needs.<sup>19</sup> Taylor clarifies that the number one task of the organization is to reach lost people, but the Sunday school should pursue the other two tasks.<sup>20</sup> Taylor’s six core values for Sunday school are reaching people, teaching people, ministering to people, involving people, assimilating

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<sup>15</sup>Arthur Flake, *Building a Standard Sunday School* (Nashville: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1922), 106.

<sup>16</sup>Hemphill, *Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur*, 4.

<sup>17</sup>Rainer and Lawless, *Eating the Elephant*, 60-61.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 74.

<sup>19</sup>Allen Taylor, *The Six Core Values of Sunday School* (Woodstock, GA: Riverstone Group, 2003), 16.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

people, and building relationships with people.<sup>21</sup> Ken Hemphill agrees with many of these core values. He explains, “A well-organized Sunday School integrates outreach, assimilation, and teaching.”<sup>22</sup> While there are many obstacles that have derailed the Sunday school program from effectively reaching the lost, it has a proven track record, when properly focused and maintained, of being instrumental in reaching a community for Christ.

**Strengths.** Hemphill and Allen describe healthy Sunday school classes. If a class practiced teaching the Bible, reaching the lost, and assimilating new believers into the small groups, nothing would be lacking. These three things are fundamental in the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) and should be fundamental in the small group.

FBC is familiar with the Sunday school program. It is normal for members to meet an hour before the Sunday morning worship service for Bible study and fellowship. The Sunday school program was implemented at FBC in 1885 and continues to this day.<sup>23</sup> FBC averaged 764 people in weekly Sunday school attendance in 2011.<sup>24</sup> While it would be convenient to add new people to existing Sunday school classes, it has not happened in the past, and there is no reason to think it will change in the future. It would be convenient, but is not effective. Ken Hemphill urges churches to contextualize the methods while never changing the principles of Sunday school.<sup>25</sup> The purpose of this project is to reach a community that has not been reached with the gospel. FBC had to be

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 29-197.

<sup>22</sup>Hemphill, *Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur*, 21.

<sup>23</sup>Michael Capek, *Church at the Crossroads: The Story of Florence Baptist Church* (Knoxville: Tennessee Valley, 2005), 38.

<sup>24</sup>“Annual Church Profile for Kentucky Baptist Churches and Missions, Florence Baptist Church,” Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, 2011.

<sup>25</sup>Hemphill, *Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur*, 11.

willing to change methods if Green Lawn and White Pine were to be reached with the gospel.

Another strength of the Sunday school program is the commitment to teach the Bible. Hemphill states, “It should go without saying that the Bible is the textbook of the Sunday school. The first goal of the Sunday school teacher must be to teach the Bible with conviction and excitement.”<sup>26</sup> Allen Taylor echoes this conviction. He explains, “A Teacher should never underestimate the power of the Word. It does have the power to transform lives. Therefore, a teacher should walk into the Bible study with bold confidence in the power of the Word. If a teacher does not have this confidence, then he or she should not be teaching.”<sup>27</sup>

**Weaknesses.** To reach Green Lawn and White Pine mobile home communities, FBC had to move outside the church building. Sunday school classes are instruction-based small groups usually meeting inside a church building on Sunday morning.<sup>28</sup> While meeting on Sunday mornings in a church building is normal for members of FBC, it may not be the best time or place to meet for the residents of Green Lawn and White Pine. Someone once said that we shape our buildings, and then they shape us.<sup>29</sup> Rick Warren warns churches against letting their buildings limit their ministry when he states, “The shoe must never tell the foot how big it can grow.”<sup>30</sup> FBC is limited in on-site, Sunday school space. Even if space were available, it may not be the

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 132, 138.

<sup>27</sup>Taylor, *The Six Core Values of Sunday School*, 77.

<sup>28</sup>Steve Cordle, *The Church in Many Houses: Reaching Your Community through Cell-Based Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 124-25.

<sup>29</sup>Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 38.

<sup>30</sup>Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 46.

best strategy to reach these two communities who are currently not coming to the church facility.

Another weakness of the Sunday school program is the tendency to focus more on teaching and fellowship than on evangelism. In many Sunday school classes discipleship is synonymous with education.<sup>31</sup> Steve Cordle, in his book *The Church in Many Houses*, makes this helpful clarification:

When people think of advancing spiritually they most often think of learning more about biblical and theological matters. People are educated when they know something. People are equipped when they can do something with their knowledge. Accumulating knowledge is part of the equipping process, but it is not the whole. Church leaders must not confuse the task of educating people about spiritual matters with the task of equipping them to change the world by making disciples.<sup>32</sup>

Teaching is good, but if there is no application it misses the point. Teaching about evangelism is good, but it is a poor substitute for actually sharing the gospel with others.

### **House Churches**

One of the most important methods of spreading the gospel in the early church was the use of homes.<sup>33</sup> The Christian home was used in a variety of ways. In the book of Acts homes are used for prayer meetings (Acts 12:12), for an evening of Christian fellowship (Acts 21:7), for the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:46), for a whole night of prayer, worship, and instruction (Acts 20:7), for impromptu evangelistic gatherings (Acts 16:32), for planned meetings in order to hear the Christian gospel (Acts 10:22), for following up with enquirers (Acts 18:26), and for organized instruction (Acts 5:42).<sup>34</sup> Since the early church did not rely on buildings, it could multiply as rapidly as Christians made their

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<sup>31</sup>Cordle, *The Church in Many Houses*, 83.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 84-85.

<sup>33</sup>Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 318.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 332.

homes available.<sup>35</sup> Paul taught the gospel from house to house while he was in Ephesus (Acts 20:20). The church in this city grew out of these houses.<sup>36</sup>

The house church has a foundation and practice built in Scripture, but is it the best option for today? Roger Gehring, in *House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity*, states, “Past and present speak a clear message: By no means should the house church model be overlooked today as a viable option for church growth.”<sup>37</sup>

Members in house churches typically worship, pray, learn, and care for one another on an intensely personal level.<sup>38</sup> The Barna Group conducted a survey on house churches in 2006 that included the following results:

The most common meeting days are Wednesday and Sunday. The average size of a house church is twenty people. The typical gathering lasts for about two hours. The most common practices during these gatherings are prayer, reading the Bible, time to share personal needs or experiences, fellowship, formal teaching time, discussion about the teaching, and music or singing.<sup>39</sup>

House churches are similar to cell groups in the emphasis they place on participation by everyone in the group and on sharing life together with a sense of community and mission that extends beyond meeting times.<sup>40</sup> They differ from cell churches in that each house church is fully autonomous, while each cell group submits to pastors who oversee all cell groups of a single church.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>John Mark Terry, *Evangelism: A Concise History* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 26

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Roger Gehring, *House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 309.

<sup>38</sup>Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 118.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 122.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

**Strengths.** In a mobile home community the house is the best place for a small group to gather, for many reasons. The mobile home ensures that the small group will stay small in number. Each home has a limit on how many people can fit inside. Reaching more people must include opening another host home for the Bible study. When new people are reached with the gospel the small group cannot grow larger but will be forced to divide and become two small groups. The mobile home will be a built-in encouragement and reminder to grow through multiplication. Both of these communities are set up in a way that makes multiplication possible. Homes are in close proximity, and as residents open up their homes, small groups can be planted. The house church model accommodates the location for planting small groups.

Another benefit of the house church model is a broader scope of participation. Some residents of Green Lawn or White Pine may never step foot into a church building, but he or she will go next door to his or her neighbor's house for a Bible study. In a relationship-hungry society people are often willing to go into homes and other neutral sites for Bible studies.<sup>42</sup>

**Weaknesses.** The lack of biblical leadership in some house churches is a weakness of this model. Some house churches are so opposed to Western cultural definitions of pastors/elders and deacons that they refuse to have anything to do with such leaders.<sup>43</sup> Without biblical leadership the church will be unhealthy.<sup>44</sup>

Another weakness of this model is a tendency to deemphasize biblical preaching/teaching. Due to the informal nature of house church gatherings, a structured

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<sup>41</sup>J. D. Payne, *Missional House Churches: Reaching our Communities with the Gospel* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2007), 14.

<sup>42</sup>Rainer and Lawless, *Eating the Elephant*, 74.

<sup>43</sup>Payne, *Missional House Churches*, 91.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*



time to teach and preach the Bible is easily neglected. Neil Cole, one of the leaders in the house church movement, explains “In some house churches fellowship and the worship of God together in an intimate spiritual community praying for one another is the message.”<sup>45</sup> Cole uses this reasoning to confirm his conclusion:

Unfortunately, in most churches in the Western world the presence of the pastor is more noticeable than the presence of Jesus. Actually, it is the pastor’s absence that is more noticeable. This phenomenon is so common that on any Sunday when the pastor is expected to be away, the attendance drops. People say they missed him when he returns. I fear that we feel the absence of the pastor more than the absence of the Spirit of Jesus. Perhaps it is time we tell Jesus that we miss him at church too.<sup>46</sup>

While it is true that the church is not solely dependent on a pastor but on Christ, to oscillate to the opposite spectrum and declare biblical preaching optional for the church is unhealthy. Preaching was practiced by Jesus (Matt 4:17; 5-7; 11:5, Mark 1:14; 2:2), charged to the apostles (Matt 10; 28:18-20, Mark 3:14; 6:7-12, Luke 9:2; 24:47), and seen as fundamental for the church in Acts (Acts 2:14-41; 5:42; 10:42; 11:20; 14:7; 15:35). Mark Dever, in his book *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, explains, “Expositional preaching is not only the first mark of a healthy church, it is far and away the most important of the all, because if you get this one right, all of the others should follow.”<sup>47</sup>

One final weakness in the house church model is the natural tendency for a small group to become inward focused. Ed Stetzer, in *Viral Churches*, makes this observation:

With only a few exceptions house church participants seem to be more excited about the house, the fellowship part, than the church, making new disciples. House churches tend to gather more because of a desire to go deeper on some issue but

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<sup>45</sup>Cole, *Organic Church*, 57.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 39.

rarely with a passion for evangelistic reproduction. Too many house churches lack a heart or track record for outreach beyond their existing members.<sup>48</sup>

Inward focus is a danger to any small group, and house churches are not immune from this unhealthy tendency. Inward focus plagues small groups that meet in church buildings and small groups that meet in homes off campus. Bible studies that are planted in Green Lawn and White Pine must avoid this detrimental tendency.

### **Missional Communities**

Missional communities are small groups who gather for the sake of a lost and dying world.<sup>49</sup> In his book *Missional Small Groups*, Scott Boren explains, “Small groups are not the focus, but the vehicle used to take the gospel out and engage the neighborhood.”<sup>50</sup> Boren elaborates, “Instead of doing groups for the sake of experiencing community, groups experience community for the sake of participating in God’s redemption of creation.”<sup>51</sup> Matt Carter, Senior Pastor of Austin Stone Community Church in Austin, Texas, describes missional communities as follows:

With small groups, we’ve found that some groups will grow, while others don’t. Some small groups become holy huddles for years on end, with fellowship as the end-all, be-all of the group. They are not focused on reproducing; they are focused on care, study, and the development of long-term relationships. Missional communities, by contrast, are like bifocal lenses: they balance the internal focus of following Jesus with an external focus on incarnating the gospel in the community.<sup>52</sup>

Jeff Vanderstelt, a church planter, defines missional communities as, “Consisting of a committed core of believers who live out the mission of God together in a specific area or to a particular people group by demonstrating the gospel in tangible forms and declaring

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<sup>48</sup>Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches*, 123-24.

<sup>49</sup>Scott Boren, *Missional Small Groups: Becoming a Community That Makes a Difference in the World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 18.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>52</sup>Darrin Patrick and Matt Carter, *For the City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 122-23.

the gospel to others, both those who believe it and those who are being exposed to it.”<sup>53</sup> Missional communities for the Soma Church, where Vanderstelt serves, practice four things: (1) being led by a team committed to leading, shepherding, equipping and organizing a community on mission; (2) growing together in understanding and applying the gospel to themselves; (3) being the church together throughout the week; (4) identifying, equipping, and releasing new leadership to begin new missional communities.<sup>54</sup>

**Strengths.** Missional communities are reproducible.<sup>55</sup> They can be planted anywhere. This is healthy for FBC. Members who plant small groups in Green Lawn and White Pine will be able to use their training to plant small groups in their own neighborhoods and workplaces. The flexibility of meeting locations for missional communities benefits this project. Small groups could be planted in the mobile homes, businesses where residents of Green Lawn and White Pine are employed, or local restaurants frequented by residents.

The missional focus is another strength of this small group model for this project. Missional focus is crucial for the planting of small groups in Green Lawn and White Pine. A missional focus would be transformational in the life of FBC. FBC is currently an attraction-oriented, come-to-the-building form of church. Planting missional communities would transform FBC from waiting for visitors to come to actively pursuing the lost in the community by going to them. Residents in mobile home communities typically feel rejected by the larger society; schools do not want their children and churches do not want them as members because of perceived problems.<sup>56</sup> To reach this

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<sup>53</sup>Jeff Vanderstelt, “Missional Communities,” <http://www.somacommunities.org/soma-life> (accessed January 27, 2013).

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Neil Cole, *Organic Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 212.

community with the gospel, FBC must go to where they live. The missional community model of small group, like the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20), emphasizes going.

**Weaknesses.** Missional communities would require a change in attitude and practice for members of FBC. John Kotter explains in his book *Leading Change*, how leaders have a tendency to overestimate how much they can force big changes on an organization and underestimate how hard it is to drive people out of their comfort zones.<sup>57</sup> Planting missional communities will require the tough task of members of FBC stepping out of their comfort zones. Planting small groups in Green Lawn and White Pine has a fifteen-week time limit. Fifteen weeks may be too short of time needed for the change required for this model of small groups.

### **Cell Groups**

Joel Comiskey defines a cell group as “a group of three to fifteen people that meets weekly outside the church building for the purpose of evangelism, community, and discipleship with the goal of multiplication.”<sup>58</sup> Steve Cordle explains, “A cell group is a set of Christ-centered relationships that is focused primarily on evangelism and discipleship.”<sup>59</sup> Cordle adds that in contrast to the Sunday school program, “Healthy cell group members do not limit their contact with each other to a specific meeting time but share life together while encouraging one another to grow in the faith and reach out to unbelievers.”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>David Bunch, Harvey Kneisel, and Barbara Oden, *Multihousing Congregations: How to Start and Grow Christian Congregations in Multihousing Communities* (Atlanta: Smith, 1991), 103.

<sup>57</sup>John Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 5.

<sup>58</sup>Joel Comiskey, *Cell Church Solutions* (Moreno Valley, CA: CCS, 2005), 12.

<sup>59</sup>Steve Cordle, *The Church in Many Houses: Reaching Your Community through Cell-Based Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 33.

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

Unlike autonomous house churches, cell groups are connected to a larger congregation. A cell church may consist of many smaller cell groups, but all of the groups together comprise the church.<sup>61</sup> No single cell group identifies itself as the church apart from the other cell groups.<sup>62</sup> The cell church gives equal emphasis to the large gathering and the small group.<sup>63</sup> Ralph Neighbour explains, “While cell groups may go by other names such as care groups, shepherd groups, and others, each group should be aware of some important principles.”<sup>64</sup> He gives these six principles for cell groups:

The attendance should never grow larger than fifteen people. Groups should begin with three to eight people. Each group should multiply when it reaches fifteen people. Groups should meet weekly, never biweekly. They should be recognized as the basic Christian community of the church. They should understand they are under authority, a part of a greater vision, and will be given assistance by a pastoral team.”<sup>65</sup>

Cell groups are outwardly oriented and deeply committed to evangelism.<sup>66</sup> Joel Comiskey defines a cell church this way: “It is a church that has placed evangelistic small groups at the core of its ministry.”<sup>67</sup> Cell group ministry is not primarily focused on organizing the congregation into groups for better care or deeper Bible study but about reaching and making new disciples.<sup>68</sup> Larry Krieger continues on this point: “The primary focus of each home cell group should be outreach and discipleship, rather than fellowship, although great fellowship will be a healthy by-product of the home cell group

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<sup>61</sup>Payne, *Missional House Churches*, 14.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Cordle, *The Church in Many Houses*, 22.

<sup>64</sup>Ralph Neighbour, *Where Do We Go From Here?* (Houston: Touch, 2000), 248.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Cordle, *The Church in Many Houses*, 22.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 60.

that is constantly reaching out to others.”<sup>69</sup> Cell groups are only able to multiply, which is the fundamental goal of each cell group, when members of the group are reaching others with the gospel.

Cell groups highly value community. Cell group advocates argue that community can occur most completely only in small groups and should include interpersonal commitments, a sense of belonging, shared life, and common goals to develop between all of its members.<sup>70</sup> The priority placed on community leads cell groups to keep the number of members under a certain number and have more accountability in meeting on a regular basis.<sup>71</sup> In this community all of the basic needs of the believer will be met.<sup>72</sup> There is no need for any more programs such as prayer meetings, youth group, preschool, Awana’s, visitation, or Sunday school, because what these programs offer are already offered in the cell group.<sup>73</sup>

Cell groups, like house churches, gather most often in houses, but could also meet in restaurants, parks, or work places.<sup>74</sup> Meeting in multiple homes across a city instead of every church member meeting in one church building is part of the strategy for the cell church remaining on mission. Steve Cordle offers this insight: “Since evangelism is one of the main functions of a cell group, the meeting place should help, not hinder, outreach. Meeting in homes locates ministry in the midst of multiple neighborhoods, spreading the gospel across an area instead of stockpiling believers in a central building.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Larry Kreider, *House to House* (Ephrata, PA: House to House, 1995), 85.

<sup>70</sup>Neighbour, *Where Do We Go From Here?* 113.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup>Cordle, *The Church in Many Houses*, 33.

The format for the cell group meeting varies. One of the most common formats is a time of fellowship, worship, study of Scripture, ministering to one another, and planning group activities.<sup>76</sup> Another format option is exemplified by the Crossroads Church cell group meeting. It usually lasts about ninety minutes and includes an ice-breaker designed to get the conversation started, vision moments where members discuss future plans, prayer for unreached friends, sharing about evangelistic efforts, applying the Scripture that was taught in the weekend message, and corporate prayer.<sup>77</sup> These are two basic formats of the cell group meeting.

**Strengths.** Evangelism is at the core of the cell group model. It is crucial for small groups to be planted in the Green Lawn and White Pine communities. Joel Comiskey states, “Group outreach is the heartbeat of cell ministry.”<sup>78</sup> Currently, FBC has planted no small groups. Before small groups can be planted, residents must be reached with the gospel. Whatever model of small group used to plant in these communities, evangelism must not only be included but be its focus.

Another strength to this model is the flexibility for meeting locations. Like missional communities and house churches, cell groups could meet at the restaurant across the street from the mobile home community, in homes, on the basketball court, or in a local business.

An additional strength is that the structure of the cell group model is helpful for this project. At Xenos Christian Church, a cell group church in Columbus, Ohio, members of each cell group are encouraged to gather together during a time called

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<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 34.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Joel Comiskey, *Home Cell Group Explosion* (Houston: Touch, 1998), 70.

Central Teaching.<sup>79</sup> Central Teaching starts with prayer and music, followed by expository Bible teaching, and concludes with a question and answer time.<sup>80</sup> Members of the small groups Bible studies planted in Green Lawn and White Pine are encouraged to attend the weekly worship services with other members of FBC.

**Weaknesses.** FBC is not a cell group church. There is no leadership to manage, train, and maintain new cell groups. FBC uses Sunday school classes for small groups, and they are fundamentally different in nature than cell groups.<sup>81</sup> To plant cell groups would require changing the structure of FBC, and for a fifteen-week project this approach would be unwise. FBC just moved into a new facility with a children's wing. To move children's ministry into off-campus cell groups would be a difficult transition. The conclusion for this project relating to the usability of cell groups is that this model would work well in the targeted community but be difficult to implement in the planting church.

### **Recommendations**

Aspects from each model of small group ministry will be used for this project. From the Sunday school program the dedication to teaching the Bible will be adopted for the groups being planted. The aspect taken from the house church will be the meeting location for the small group. Groups will meet in the homes of the residents of Green Lawn and White Pine. The component taken from cell groups is the expectation of small group members to come together as the church on a weekly basis. The small group model that looks most like the small groups being planted for this project is the missional community model. Missional communities do a great job at balancing discipleship,

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<sup>79</sup>“Xenos Christian Church, Central Teachings, 2012,” <http://www.xenos.org/ministries/ct/ct.htm> (accessed July 13, 2012).

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Cordle, *The Church in Many Houses*, 124.



fellowship, ministry, and evangelism. FBC is currently at the opposite end of the spectrum of missional communities, and the change in methods will be a difficult but much needed transition.

### **Great Examples of Small Groups throughout History**

Small groups have been instrumental in the history of the church.<sup>82</sup> Examples of some small groups throughout history are Jesus and his disciples, John Wesley and the Methodist Societies, Dawson Trotman and his fisherman clubs, and Rick Warren and his purpose-driven small groups.

#### **Jesus and his Disciples**

Men were Jesus' method of winning the world to God.<sup>83</sup> Jesus called twelve men to come and follow him (Matt 10:1-4, Mark 3:13-19, Luke 6:12-16, John 1:35-51). In his book *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, Robert Coleman shares, "One cannot transform a world except as individuals in the world are transformed, and individuals cannot be changed except as they are molded in the hands of the Master. The necessity is apparent not only to select a few helpers but also to keep the group small enough to be able to work effectively with them."<sup>84</sup> In *Twelve Ordinary Men*, John MacArthur states this about the strategy of Jesus:

In earthly terms, the founding of the church and the spread of the gospel message depended entirely on those twelve ordinary men with their many obvious weaknesses, and one of them so devilish as to betray the Lord of the universe. And the entirety of their training for the task took less than half as long as it typically takes to get a degree from a seminary today. But Christ knew what he was doing. From his divine perspective, the ultimate success of the strategy actually depended

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<sup>82</sup>Steve Gladen, *Small Groups with Purpose: How to Create Healthy Communities* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 8-9.

<sup>83</sup>Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 2007), 21.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, 23-24.

on the Holy Spirit working in those men to accomplish his sovereign will. Those men were merely instruments in his hands.<sup>85</sup>

Jesus called his disciples to be with him and that he might send them out (Mark 3:14). MacArthur elaborates on this passage, “Notice the two-step process. Before they could be sent out to preach, they had to be pulled in. It was absolutely critical that they be with Jesus before they be sent out.”<sup>86</sup> Jesus Christ is the perfect teacher, and this small group accomplished more than any other group in the history of the world.<sup>87</sup>

### **John Wesley and the Methodist Societies**

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, preached several times a day and traveled thousands of miles on horseback every year, until the age of seventy.<sup>88</sup> Mark Shaw explains, “When Wesley saw the large numbers of converts in London and the inability of his traveling preachers to attend to their spiritual care, he resolved to do something about it, and he organized a Methodist ‘Society.’”<sup>89</sup> As early as 1739 Wesley began to organize new converts into societies for discipleship.<sup>90</sup> These societies at first met in homes and later had their own buildings.<sup>91</sup> When they grew too large for the effective care of their members, they were divided into classes, each with eleven members and a leader.<sup>92</sup> Classes were the most basic small group structure in a Methodist society.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>John MacArthur, *Twelve Ordinary Men* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002), xv.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>87</sup>Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 17.

<sup>88</sup>Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2: 214.

<sup>89</sup>Mark Shaw, *Ten Great Ideas from Church History* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 142.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup>Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2: 213.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*

These small groups carried on four primary functions: (1) Scripture reading; (2) prayer; (3) discussion of religious matters; (4) collecting of funds.<sup>94</sup> The purpose of small groups was mutual confession of sin and accountability for growth in holiness, which included reading the Bible and praying faithfully.<sup>95</sup> Members of these classes, in addition to meeting these four expectations, were also expected to attend the weekly church service.<sup>96</sup> Classes met weekly in the evening to avoid conflicting with work or church attendance.<sup>97</sup>

Wesley's example of preaching the gospel and the gospel bearing fruit is seen in Colossians 1:6. This passage explains that the gospel grows and bears fruit as it is proclaimed around the world. For Wesley, Small groups came about as a result of preaching the gospel. Planting small groups in Green Lawn and White Pine will only come about as the gospel is preached in the community. There is a biblical precedent of the gospel bearing fruit, and Wesley's response of setting up small groups will be mirrored in this project.

### **Dawson Trotman and the Fishermen Clubs**

Dawson Trotman had a conviction that more could be accomplished for God by focusing on and building up one person in Christ than by spreading himself over many different areas.<sup>98</sup> Trotman concludes, "God can do more through one man who is 100 percent dedicated to Him than through 100 men who are only 90 percent."<sup>99</sup> This

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<sup>93</sup>Shaw, *Ten Great Ideas from Church History*, 143.

<sup>94</sup>Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2: 213.

<sup>95</sup>Shaw, *Ten Great Ideas from Church History*, 143.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Skinner, *Daws*, 77.

conviction is what led to him to form small groups that he named “fishermen clubs.” The club set high standards, which included seven spiritual disciplines at first: (1) one hour of prayer daily; (2) daily Bible reading; (3) touching one soul a day for God; (4) sharing the gospel once a week; (5) teaching another small group; (6) always being equipped with the New Testament, the Gospel of John, tracts, and Fishermen Club information; (7) memorizing one verse a day.<sup>100</sup> Trotman’s focus on making disciples over making converts is crucial for this project. When residents respond to the gospel they will need a small group that will help them grow in their walk with Christ. The fishermen clubs excelled at balancing both discipleship and evangelism.

### **Rick Warren and the Purpose-Driven Small Groups**

Rick Warren is the pastor of Saddleback Community Church in Orange County, California. He led this church from a small group of seven people meeting in his living room to a church of over 3,500 adult small groups and a weekly worship attendance of over 20,000 people.<sup>101</sup> Warren encapsulates the Saddleback philosophy in *The Purpose Driven Church*: “The Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20) and the great commandment (Matt 22:37-40) summarize everything we do at Saddleback Church. If an activity or program fulfills one of these commands, we do it. If it does not, we do not.”<sup>102</sup> Warren focuses on five biblical purposes from the Great Commission and the great commandment:

(1) Fellowship: Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19); (2) Discipleship: Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (Matt. 28:20); (3) Ministry: Love your neighbor as yourself (Matt. 22:39); (4) Evangelism: Go and make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19);

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<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 69.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 65.

<sup>101</sup>Gladen, *Small Groups with Purpose*, 24-25.

<sup>102</sup>Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 103.

(5) Worship: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (Matt 22:37).

Steve Gladen, who has been the pastor of small groups at Saddleback Church since 1998, states, “It does not matter what you call your groups, small groups, community groups, or some other term, what matters is a healthy small group ministry full of healthy small groups.”<sup>103</sup> Gladen believed healthy small groups will be groups who balance all five of these biblical principles: fellowship, discipleship, ministry, evangelism, and worship.<sup>104</sup> The small groups at Saddleback are called purpose-driven small groups, and each group is expected to balance the five biblical purposes.<sup>105</sup>

Balance will be critical for the small groups being planted. While each group may not have all five purposes of the purpose-driven small group model, each group must have a healthy balance between discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and evangelism. While worship is encouraged in small groups, it may or may not happen in this setting, depending on the giftedness of the members of each group. Worship will occur in the large weekly gathering either way.

### **Principles for Small Groups**

There are still some important questions that need to be answered regarding small groups. Will there be a limit on membership for each small group? How big is too big? What is the focus of each small group? Where should the small group meet? How does growth happen for small groups in Green Lawn and White Pine mobile home communities? There are some helpful principles to follow when it comes to answering these questions about small groups.

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<sup>103</sup>Gladen, *Small Groups with Purpose*, 27.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid.

## **Location**

Homes are the desired locations for the planting of small groups in Green Lawn and White Pine. When a church initiates ministry within a mobile-housing community the residency participation in church increases from two to thirty percent.<sup>106</sup> As already noted in this chapter, people are open to meeting in a neighbor's home. There are over 300 lots in Green Lawn and White Pine. It would be cost efficient and convenient if homes are used for meeting locations.

One negative that is yet to be determined will be the openness of residents to using their homes for small group Bible studies. One resident responded to an inquiry along these lines by saying, "I would not be comfortable inviting my neighbors over due to the drug problem in the park." Whether this is the view of many in the community is yet to be determined.

## **Size**

The size of the mobile home will determine the size of the small group. The Florence Fire Department in Florence, Kentucky, recommends allowing 15 square feet per person in a meeting place for the purpose of fire safety.<sup>107</sup> The typical mobile home in Green Lawn and White Pine has a living room measuring 15 feet long and 14 feet wide. That is 210 square feet. Within this area, a small group could safely accommodate up to 14 members.

Gary Nicholson, who worked with LifeWay Christian Resources, explains that education space is of great importance when evaluating the quantity of space for ministry.<sup>108</sup> His research recommends 12 to 15 square feet per person in adult

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<sup>106</sup>Bunch, Kneisel, and Oden, *Multihousing Congregations*, 103.

<sup>107</sup>This information came through a volunteer fireman who contacted the Florence Fire Department. There is no fire code restriction on how many people can meet in a private residence. For public meetings, fifteen square feet per person is the rule. Obviously, fire detectors in the home are recommended.

classrooms.<sup>109</sup> This data would allow for a small group to have between 14 and 17 members. However, this research was directed at classrooms and not living rooms. More people are able to fit in chairs in a classroom setting than on couches in a living room setting. This arrangement would lead to fewer possible members. It is important to note that the church will grow not by building a bigger meeting location but by multiplying small groups. The size of membership in small groups is not limited to the size of a living room, but to the available number of living rooms for planting other small groups.

Mike Breen, in his article “What is a Missional Community,” warns against small groups being too small. He defines missional communities as “groups of twenty to fifty people who exist, in Christian community, to reach either a particular neighborhood or network of relationships.”<sup>110</sup> A group of 20 to 50 people is too large a number for using homes as a meeting location, but he offers this warning:

Missional communities first began as missional small groups, groups of eight to fifteen people, more than twenty years ago in England. After a few years it became clear that growth, multiplication, and momentum was rare with these smaller groups. Leader burnout was common. It took several years for this to surface as a recurring problem that needed to be dealt with. After a few more years of experimenting, mid-sized groups, about the size of an extended family, emerged as a missional and discipleship vehicle that was capable of the exponential growth and depth we see today.<sup>111</sup>

The number of members for Green Lawn and White Pine small groups were between 6 to 8 people due to the size of the meeting space. Connecting each small group with the larger church gathering on a weekly basis alleviated Breen’s warning.

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<sup>108</sup>Gary Nicholson, *Church Growth and Church Facilities* (Nashville: LifeWay Christian Resources, 2002), 4.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid.

<sup>110</sup>Mike Breen, “What is a Missional Community?” <http://www.vergenetwork.org/2010/12/31/mike-breen-what-is-a-missional-community-printable/> (accessed January 27, 2013).

<sup>111</sup>Ibid.

## Focus

Small groups can focus on meeting needs of members, community, fellowship, ministry, making disciples, accountability, multiplying, evangelism, and many other things.<sup>112</sup> Planting small groups in Green Lawn and White Pine emphasized making disciples, community, and multiplication.

**Outward or inward focus.** Peter Wagner coined the word “koinonitis” to refer to groups that always look inward.<sup>113</sup> Every model of small group must fight against the temptation and tendency to become inward focused. Small group ministries live in constant tension between fellowship and evangelism.<sup>114</sup> For this project, more focus will be given to evangelism. Without evangelism there will be no need for small groups. Harry Piland, former director of the Sunday School division of the Baptist Sunday School Board, stated, “Any adult Bible study class that had not attempted to lead anyone to Christ during the past year had missed their purpose for existing.”<sup>115</sup> Outward focus is critical for planting small groups.

Thom Rainer and Chuck Lawless provide insight for an outward focus for the church: “Jesus reminded his followers that their mission was to have an outward focus (Matt 10:7), that they were to be a ‘going’ church (Matt 28:18-20), and that the ‘going’ would have no geographical boundaries (Acts 1:8). The church would look outward.”<sup>116</sup> Each small group planted must have an outward focus on reaching the lost with the gospel.

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<sup>112</sup>Building Church Leaders, “Six Types of Small Groups to Help Churches,” <http://www.buildingchurchleaders.com/articles/2002/le-scan-020611.html> (accessed January 20, 2012).

<sup>113</sup>Peter Wagner, *Your Church Can Be Healthy* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), 87.

<sup>114</sup>Gladden, *Small Groups with Purpose*, 33.

<sup>115</sup>Hemphill, *Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur*, 10.

<sup>116</sup>Rainer and Lawless, *Eating the Elephant*, 39.



**Opened or closed focus.** Small groups must have an open focus. An open focus means people can join the group at any time, while closed groups have a time to sign up, but once it starts no one else can join the group. Typically, closed groups gather around studies that last for weeks or a few months on a certain topics. The groups planted in Green Lawn and White Pine will add anyone in the community at any time. Allen Taylor explained how small groups will continue to grow until they reach a saturation point, at which time the group will divide into two.<sup>117</sup> Groups will remain open for any resident to join at any time, and when the groups reaches its saturation point, another group will be planted, keeping the group open for more members to join.

**Discipleship or evangelistic focus.** Steve Sjogren states, “Every small group needs to have some form of evangelism going on in order to maintain health.”<sup>118</sup> This is a focus area where balance is imperative. Both discipleship and evangelism should occur in each small group. Dawson Trotman’s example is helpful for this focus. His goal was to make disciples, not just converts.<sup>119</sup> For this project, focus will be on both evangelism and discipleship. As in Trotman’s example, small groups will seek to make disciples who make disciples.<sup>120</sup> Evangelism and discipleship go together. Thom Rainer and Chuck Lawless states, “The most effective means to lead a church in discipleship is to have a priority for evangelism.”<sup>121</sup> Evangelism begins the process of discipleship but does not complete it. Trotman is goal of making disciples is the best focus to have for planting small groups in White Pine.

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<sup>117</sup>Taylor, *The Six Core Values of Sunday School*, 154.

<sup>118</sup>Scott Boren and Don Tillman, *Cell Group Leader Training: Leadership Foundations for Groups that Work* (Houston: Cell Group Resources, 2002), 141.

<sup>119</sup>Robert Foster, *The Navigator* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1983), 112.

<sup>120</sup>Skinner, *Daws*, 263.

<sup>121</sup>Rainer and Lawless, *Eating the Elephant*, 69.

## **Growth**

Church growth will occur through the multiplication of small groups.

Describing his expectations of Sunday school teachers, Ken Hemphill encourages, “All adult teachers should be challenged to enlist one other teacher during the year.”<sup>122</sup>

Teachers training future teachers will be a healthy practice for multiplying small groups.

Dawson Trotman believes the fastest way to reach the greatest amount of people with the gospel is through producing reproducers.<sup>123</sup> What Trotman applies to the individual, this project will apply to the small group, planting small groups that plant small groups.

## **Conclusion**

Dawson Trotman repeated this challenge often: “Remember, making a decision is five percent; ninety-five percent is following through. God is not glorified by a raised hand unless the decision is confirmed by a Christian life that follows it.”<sup>124</sup>

Planting small groups is part of the ninety-five percent Trotman called “following through.” Leroy Eims, who served with Navigators for over fifty years in various ministry positions, says, “Jesus told us to make disciples. So you must stick close to the person whom you have led to Christ, and help him grow until he takes his place among those who vigorously and effectively advance the cause of the Lord. When that happens, he may be considered a mature, committed, fruitful follower of Jesus Christ.”<sup>125</sup> The goal for this project is making disciples through the planting of small groups in Green Lawn and White Pine mobile home communities.

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<sup>122</sup>Hemphill, *Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur*, 145.

<sup>123</sup>Skinner, *Daws*, 263.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid.

<sup>125</sup>Foster, *The Navigator*, 112.

## CHAPTER 4

### PLANTING IN WHITE PINE

In 2010, I discussed with Tim Alexander, the former senior pastor of FBC, the Key Church Program implemented by the church in 1993 under the leadership of Stuart Perkins. The Key Church Program was aimed at planting churches in multi-housing communities under the leadership of volunteers from FBC.<sup>1</sup> We decided it was time to be intentional about reaching our neighbors with the gospel again. To mobilize FBC to plant small group Bible studies in Greenlawn and White Pine, the fifteen-week project was broken down into four phases: (1) evaluation of FBC's effectiveness in reaching residents of White Pine with the gospel, (2) prayer for FBC and White Pine, (3) training team members, and (4) planting small groups in White Pine.

#### **Phase 1: Evaluation**

I needed to evaluate FBC's effectiveness in reaching residents at Greenlawn and White Pine. I believed there was a need to reach both communities, and our current strategy of inviting people to come to our church building was not effective. To measure FBC's effectiveness in reaching Greenlawn and White Pine, I surveyed all of the adult small group Bible studies that met on Sunday mornings in the church building. I wrote a survey with ten diagnostic questions (Appendix 1). I contacted the small group leaders of each adult class to inform them of FBC's plan for reaching White Pine and the need for their help in the weeks to come. Each teacher was willing to lead his or her class to participate in the survey. I passed out the surveys and instructions out Sunday morning to each class before their meeting time and retrieved the surveys after small groups had

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<sup>1</sup>Michael Capek, *Church at the Crossroads* (Knoxville: Tennessee Valley, 2005), 299.

concluded. I tallied the results Sunday night and concluded that FBC was not taking the gospel to Greenlawn or White Pine, and residents from these two communities were not attending small groups at FBC.

## **Phase 2: Prayer**

Phase 2 was the longest of the four phases and covered six weeks. Its focus was prayer. The three major items in this phase were a twenty-one day prayer journal, a worship service focused on prayer, and prayer-walking through Greenlawn and White Pine.

### **Week 1**

Writing the prayer journal consumed the first week of phase 2. The 21 days were broken down into three groups of seven days. Each week represented a different focus. Each day of the prayer journal was divided into three sections: (1) reading a specific Bible passage or verse, (2) reflecting on the Bible verse or passage throughout the day, and (3) praying through the passage or verse.

Week 1 of the prayer journal was devoted to personal preparation for the mission. Day 1 applied the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) on a personal level. Reflective questions such as, “What does a disciple of Jesus Christ look like?” and “How am I making disciples in my home, neighborhood, workplace, or school?” were used to help connect the Great Commission to everyday life. Each participant in the prayer journal was encouraged to ask the Lord to give him or her opportunities to share the gospel and for a passion to make disciples. Day 2 focused on the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:17-21) and reminded the prayer journal participant that God entrusts to every Christian the ministry of reconciliation. Day 3 focused on the Great Commandment (Matt 22:37-39), noting that a person’s love for God will lead him or her to love others. Day 4 emphasized the necessity of abiding in Christ (John 15:5-11). Day 5 was dedicated to the gospel. Each participant was reminded that the gospel is the

power of God for salvation (Rom 1:16). Day 6 affirmed Paul's teaching that the Christian is created in Christ for good works, which God has already prepared for the believer to walk in (Eph 2:8-10). I asked each participant during his or her time of prayer to ask the Lord to reveal the good works God had prepared for FBC in Greenlawn and White Pine. Day seven finished the first week of the prayer journal by stressing the importance of perpetuating the gospel. Paul encouraged Timothy to entrust the gospel to faithful men who would be able to entrust it to others (2 Tim 2:2). The goal of planting the gospel in White Pine was to see those who heard the gospel entrust it to others. Participants going through the prayer journal were challenged not to let the gospel stop with them but to pray that as residents in White Pine heard the gospel, they would share it with others also.

The focus of week 2 moved from the individual to the church. The passages chosen for week 2 prepared the church for reaching Greenlawn and White Pine. Day 8 highlighted the connection between worship and mission: where worship does not exist, people on mission should be present. God has blessed the church in order to be a blessing to the nations (Ps 67:1-3). FBC was challenged to make God's saving power known throughout the world and specifically in Greenlawn and White Pine. Day 9 emphasized the need for asking the Lord to send out more workers into the mission field (Matt 9:36-38). Day 10 explained that the only way a person would hear the gospel was through someone preaching it to him or her (Rom 10:13-15, 17). Day 11 examined how the gospel grows (Acts 6:7, 12:24, 13:49). Day 12 addressed speaking the gospel with boldness (Acts 4:29,31). Day 13 reminded the church to be a light in the community so that others could see our good works and give glory to God (Matt 5:16). The final day of week 2, day 14, highlighted how the early church turned the world upside down with the gospel and challenged FBC to do the same today (Acts 17:6).

The focus during the final week of the prayer journal was on Greenlawn and White Pine communities. Day 15 challenged the church to ask the Lord to open doors for

the gospel into Greenlawn and White Pine (1 Cor 16:8-9; Col 4:3-4). Day 16 encouraged the church to pray for God to open spiritually blind eyes in Greenlawn and White Pine (2 Cor 4:3-4). Day 17 examined Acts 1:8 and asked FBC to reach its Jerusalem. Day 18 studied the life of Christ and his mission to seek and save people (Luke 19:10; 1 Tim 1:15). FBC has been sent by Christ to seek and save others as well (John 20:21). The focus of day 19 was gospel saturation. One goal for planting small groups in Greenlawn and White Pine was to give every resident an opportunity to hear the gospel, and Acts 13:49 and Acts 19:10 give the church two examples of how to spread the gospel throughout an entire community. Day 20 narrowed the prayer focus to asking for people of peace in the targeted communities who would open up their homes for future Bible studies. The final day of the prayer journal examined how God used the preaching of the gospel to save people who already belonged to God (Acts 18:9-11). FBC believed God had many people in Greenlawn and White Pine and would use the church to preach the gospel.

## **Week 2**

Early in week 2 of phase 2 I printed out four copies of the completed prayer journal, and four editors read, corrected mistakes, and highlighted any confusing areas in the journal. After collecting the editors' revised copies of the prayer journal, I made updates accordingly. On Friday of week 2 I asked for several volunteers to help with printing, folding, and stuffing the prayer journals. After the journals were printed, folded, and stuffed, we passed out week 1 of the prayer journal to each small group classroom. An insert placed in each prayer journal explained to individual small group members how to use the journal (Appendix 2). Earlier in the week I asked FBC's Sunday school director for the average Sunday morning attendance for each adult small group and the phone numbers of small group teachers. I called each teacher and explained the prayer journal and the future plans of planting small groups in White Pine and Greenlawn. After

the adult small groups concluded their classes on Sunday morning, I collected the extra copies of the prayer journal and placed them on the tables in the entrance to the sanctuary in order to enable church attenders who were not involved with a small group to utilize the prayer journals.

Week 2 of phase 2 also marked the beginning of the preparation for a worship service focused on prayer. I asked FBC's music minister to lead the church in worship songs. I also gave to those who organized and printed the church bulletins an insert including the date, time, and summary of the upcoming prayer service to print in the bulletin for the following three Sundays.

### **Week 3**

Day 1 of week 3 of phase 2 marked the beginning of the prayer journal. I reminded and encouraged the people participating in prayer through media outlets such as Facebook and email. On Saturday evening my team and I passed out week 2 of the prayer journal to every adult small group classroom. Extra copies from week 1 were placed in the entrance of the sanctuary for any member of a small group who had missed the first week and wanted to utilize the prayer journal. After small groups concluded their meetings on Sunday morning, I collected the extra copies of week 2 of the prayer journal and placed them on the table in the atrium along with the extra copies from week 1.

While the focus of phase 2 was on prayer, there was an opportunity to go to White Pine and Greenlawn and meet a need during week 3 of the prayer phase. Public schools resumed classes on Wednesday, and a member of FBC had donated numerous school supplies. On Tuesday afternoon a team of students and adults from FBC set up a table in an empty lot of White Pine and passed out school supplies to any family in need until the supplies were gone. During the first 15 minutes only one family stopped by the table. However, the slow pace did not last long. The team from FBC found out there

was a network within the White Pine community. Family members, neighbors, and friends communicated to one another that supplies for school were available. Within forty-five minutes the supplies were all given away.

The prayer service was only a week away. An insert was placed in the bulletin again with the time, date, and summary of the upcoming Sunday evening service. I also began organizing a team to set up prayer stations and help with clean up after the worship service. The prayer service included ten stations.

#### **Week 4**

Phase 2, week 4, included days 8 through 14 of the prayer journal. The second week of the prayer journal transitioned from the individual's duty to the church's mission. Week 2 concluded on Saturday, and on Sunday I passed out the final week of the prayer journal to each adult small group. Once the small groups concluded their meetings, I placed the extra copies of week 3, along with the extra copies from the previous two weeks, on tables at the entrance to the sanctuary.

The prayer service started Sunday night at 6:00pm. The worship pastor at FBC led the congregation in four songs. I spoke about the location, population, and needs of Greenlawn and White Pine and gave an overview of the plan for planting small groups in these 2 communities. I communicated the dates, times, and location of 4 upcoming training sessions for those interested in being on the team for planting small groups. I finished by explaining each prayer station, praying, and dismissing the group to the prayer stations throughout the church building (Appendix 3). Over 100 people attended, and the service lasted for an hour.

#### **Week 5**

Members of FBC prayer-walked through Greenlawn and White Pine Monday through Saturday during week 5 of the prayer phase. A total of 80 people signed up to prayer-walk Greenlawn and White Pine. Fourteen people signed up for Monday, 17 on



Tuesday, 16 on Wednesday, 12 on Thursday, 11 on Friday, and 10 on Saturday. Each participant had a guide to help as he or she walked through the neighborhoods.

During week 5 I also had the opportunity to partner with the University of Kentucky's Baptist Campus Ministry. The BCM brought 30 students to northern Kentucky and spent Friday and Saturday nights at the church building. Two weeks prior, Andrew, a BCM student and member of FBC called and prepared a prayer-walk through Greenlawn and White Pine and a block party for White Pine. On Saturday morning the entire BCM group drove to Greenlawn and White Pine and prayer-walked both communities. Saturday afternoon we packed up the grill, tables, and chairs and set up for the block party. Over 50 residents from White Pine attended. One team of students was in charge of cooking the food, another group led games for the children, another team set up the tents and chairs, and the final group of students finished a mission project for 3 homes in White Pine. The mission project included cutting the grass around the home and pulling weeds. The homeowner earlier in the week requested help with the lawn if possible. When the team of students began working on the home, two neighbors also asked for help, and the team responded to the needs. There was a prayer station at the block party inviting anyone who wanted prayer. Many residents wrote down prayer requests and were prayed for. The block party left a good first impression on the community of FBC and helped pave the way for future small group planting efforts. A key opportunity opened up during this event. A group of young men played basketball on the basketball courts located in the middle of the White Pine community. We were able to play several games with the young men already playing. Something as simple as playing basketball opened of the door for communication, learning names, and building friendships. Doors opened in White Pine, and from week 5 of phase 2 the focus for planting small groups narrowed from Greenlawn and White Pine to White Pine only.

On Sunday of the fifth week I transitioned from the prayer phase to the training phase. Before and after the worship service I passed out copies of *What is the Gospel?*

by Greg Gilbert to members of the church who had previously signed up for training. In the book were copies of the times and locations of the 4 training sessions and a reading schedule. Prayer for planting small groups did not cease with the transition of phases. The transition merely marked the beginning of training. FBC prayed for God to send out workers into the field. God answered. The workers now needed to be equipped for ministry (Eph 4:12). The purpose of training was to equip FBC for the ministry of planting small groups in White Pine.

### **Phase 3: Training**

Equipping members of the church to plant small group Bible studies in Greenlawn and White Pine was an essential task (Eph 4:12). During the 4 weeks of training I spent much time in personal prayer and study preparing for each training session. I also prayed and contacted team members throughout the week to encourage and answer any questions team members may have had. Each training session was announced in the bulletin two weeks prior to the actual training. .

#### **Week 1**

The first week of training focused on sharing personal testimonies and studying the early church's example in the book of Acts. An insert was placed in the bulletin for two weeks stating the time and location of the first training session. On Sunday night we met in a small group room and had 42 participants. I explained the goal of planting small groups in Greenlawn and White Pine, shared my personal testimony, and prayed for the group. Before asking each person to write out his or her testimony, I used class notes from Timothy Beougher's personal evangelism class to teach the "do's" and "don'ts" in giving a personal testimony.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Timothy Beougher, Personal Evangelism (32100A), The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, March 19, 2009.

After teaching about personal testimonies and having each person write out his or her own testimony I taught on the early church from the book of Acts. I used specific passages to show how the church lived out her mission. Each member of the class received a handout that included passages for each teaching point. Training lasted for 1 hour, and the class was reminded of the time and location of the next training session. I closed the training with a time of prayer focused on boldness in sharing the gospel in White Pine.

Forty copies of *What is the Gospel?* had been passed out to people who signed up for training while at the prayer service the week before, and more copies were available to each person participating in the first training session. Each team member was assigned to read 2 chapters a week over the next 4 weeks. During the first week of training each member read the first 2 chapters of the book.

## **Week 2**

A month earlier I had contacted Alan Witham, who was on staff with the Kentucky Baptist Convention. I spoke with Witham at a conference I attended earlier in the year about methods of evangelism. On a follow-up call we discussed a Bible teaching method known as Bible storying. I had heard of storying the Bible but did not know enough about this method to train others. Many missionaries on the field used Bible storying to share the gospel with their people groups, and I believed storying would be the best method of teaching small groups in White Pine. I asked Witham to teach a class on how to story the Bible. He demonstrated during the training session how to story the Bible using the prodigal son from Luke 15:11-32. He passed out handouts explaining how to story other passages in the Bible. Witham closed the training session with a time of questions and answers. The second training session lasted a total of 90 minutes, and there were 36 participants.

During the second week of training chapters 3 and 4 of *What is the Gospel?* were completed. Also during this week I went to the basketball courts at White Pine and played several pick-up games with the young men already playing in order to build relationships with residents. Several of the young men attended local high schools, two were in college, and others were out of college and working. Only 1 of the young men attended a church.

### **Week 3**

During week 3 of training I had the opportunity to spend time in White Pine on 3 different occasions. On Tuesday and Saturday I took a small team of basketball players from FBC to play with the young men already playing on the basketball courts. I learned the names of everyone who played on both Tuesday and Saturday and invited each young man to a future Bible study. Most of the young men stated they would attend a Bible study in White Pine. The third occasion for being in White Pine during week 3 was due to a fire engulfing a mobile home. The home was completely damaged, and the family had to move out salvaging only minimal belongings due to the smoke and fire. Two members of FBC, 1 with the fire department and the other with the Boone County Sheriff's Department, notified me about the fire as soon as they heard about it on their scanners. Both the fireman and the policeman attended the prayer service a few weeks before and knew about the goal of reaching White Pine with the gospel. As soon as I arrived on the scene the deputy with the sheriff's department introduced me to the family. The family had other family in the area where they could stay for the time being. A fireman on the scene explained how difficult it was to try to save a mobile home from a fire due to the rapidity with which the flames spread in a single mobile home. He also stated that most of the time, when the fire crews arrive on the scene, the fire has already ruined the mobile home, and their goal is to keep the fire from spreading to other mobile

homes. The fire gave clear evidence to a need in White Pine and paved the way for FBC to enter White Pine while meeting an urgent need.

The focus of the third week of training was on servant evangelism. Members of FBC would gain a hearing from residents in White Pine through servant evangelism. Two books, *Meeting Needs, Sharing Christ* by Donald Atkinson and Charles Roesel and *Mobilizing a Great Commission Church for Harvest: Servanthood Evangelism as a Bridge to the Gospel* by David Wheeler, along with multiple Scripture references, were used for the training session. David Wheeler explains 4 steps in servant evangelism: learning to identify needs, going where needs are, initiating a plan, and having a willingness to stay. Wheeler defines servant evangelism as “[a] combination of simple acts of kindness and intentional personal evangelism.”<sup>3</sup> Wheeler also gives 2 foundational principles for servanthood evangelism: (1) participants must be intentionally evangelistic, and (2) participants must genuinely care about the needs of people. Another definition crucial to training members of FBC for servant evangelism came from *Meeting Needs, Sharing Christ*. Roesel states, “Servanthood evangelism is designed to meet a person at the point of their need with the goal of introducing him or her to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.”<sup>4</sup>

After teaching about servant evangelism, I passed out handouts with the description of 15 service projects taken from *Conspiracy of Kindness* by Steven Sjogren. Each project would meet a need in White Pine. Each member, after being given the opportunity to read the servant project descriptions, was asked to choose his or her favorite 3 projects. Every participant turned in his or her highest 3 choices and identified whether he or she would teach a small group, be a teacher in training, be a team leader, or

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<sup>3</sup>David Wheeler, *Mobilizing a Great Commission Church for Harvest: Servanthood Evangelism as a Bridge to the Gospel* (Eugene: OR, Wipf and Stock, 2011), 156.

<sup>4</sup>Donald Atkinson and Charles Roesel, *Meeting Needs, Sharing Christ* (Nashville: LifeWay, 1995), 8.

be a team member for future servant evangelism projects. Over 40 people attended training during week 3.

The final aspect of training for week 3 was the assigned reading from *What is the Gospel?*. Greg Gilbert's book would be the focus of the next week's training, and it was important for everyone to be up-to-date on his and her reading. *What is the Gospel?* was 8 chapters long, and during week 3 of training, chapters 5 and 6 were to be completed.

#### **Week 4**

The final week of training transitioned to launching into White Pine through servant evangelism. I believed through prayer and servant evangelism doors would open for future small group Bible studies. I formed 6 teams from the response to service projects from the week before. Two service projects were chosen: (1) baking and passing out cookies to every home in White Pine, and (2) passing out smoke detector batteries to every home in White Pine and installing smoke detectors in any home in need of a smoke detector. I spent most of week 4 contacting team leaders and members, explaining the service projects, reading testimonies of each person participating in training, and preparing to teach *What is the Gospel?*. I split the fourth and final training session into 2 parts, the first part focused on the Gospel and the second part focused on gathering in teams, scheduling dates to go to White Pine, and assigning team members tasks to complete the servant evangelism projects.

The class completed *What is the Gospel?* by the time training began during the fourth week. Training started with Greg Gilbert's book. I laid out the 4 crucial questions Gilbert asks when it came to the gospel: (1) Who made us, and to whom are we accountable? (2) What is our problem? In other words, are we in trouble and why? (3) What is God's solution to that problem? How has he acted to save us from it? (4) How

do I come to be included in that salvation? What makes this good news for me?<sup>5</sup> I focused on the answers to these 4 questions given in Gilbert's book and the Bible. God, man, Jesus, and response, were the 4 answers to the questions, and each one was explained in depth. I knew from reading testimonies that each participant had a solid understanding of the gospel. However, teaching *What is the Gospel?* and covering specifically what the Gospel was, and was not, gave clarity and confidence to each member. Confidence in and clarity on the gospel were vitally important because members were about to become intentional in sharing the gospel with residents in White Pine.

Each person was given a map of White Pine and a roster of their team. I paired a baking team with a battery team to make three large teams who would go door-to-door together in the weeks to follow. Each team was assigned a color and a certain number of houses in White Pine. The map was color-coded to show each team its specific homes to which to deliver cookies, give batteries, and install smoke detectors. The orange team had 12 members and was assigned 44 homes. The blue team had 14 members and was assigned 39 homes. The green team had 20 members and assigned was 52 homes in White Pine. Each team leader and member was encouraged to recruit more team members from FBC if needed or if others were interested in joining their team but could not make the training times.

I had the opportunity to go to White Pine 2 times during week 4 of training. I played basketball with the men again on Tuesday night. I found out that 2 of the young men who were brothers wanted Bibles, and another young man worked at Rally's. I brought 2 Bibles to drop off a couple of days later, but no one was home. A neighbor guided me to the brothers' grandparents' home, which was right around the corner. I

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<sup>5</sup>Greg Gilbert, *What is the Gospel?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 31.

delivered the Bibles, and the grandparents were very appreciative. I also began going to Rally's to build a relationship with the young man who worked there.

#### **Phase 4: Planting**

Praying and training led to planting small groups in White Pine. Servant evangelism was the method used to build relationships and plant Bible studies.

#### **Week 1**

The first week of planting featured the orange team building relationships with residents of White Pine through the simple acts of passing out baked goods and smoke detector batteries. Cookie dough and pans were supplied through the church budget. Team members from all 3 teams assigned to bake cookies could pick up the cookie dough anytime during the week in the kitchen at the church building. The Florence Fire Department provided batteries and smoke detectors to cover every home in White Pine. Les Smith and I retrieved the batteries for White Pine. Les attended training at the fire department on Saturday for installing smoke detectors. Team members from every team could pick up batteries at the church building. Smoke detectors were available, but installations were scheduled on an as-needed basis.

On Saturday the orange team met at the church building to gather supplies and pray. The team split up into small groups and assigned certain roads to each small group to ensure all the assigned area given to the orange team would be covered. Handouts were given to each group asking for the names, addresses, phone numbers, what was given, and prayer concerns. Each group had a recorder to fill in as much information as possible for each home. The orange team knocked on all 44 of their assigned doors. The team passed out cookies, batteries, invited homes with children to the upcoming Fall Funfest at FBC, gave out church information cards, and offered prayer to each home opening the door. Some homes had no response due to no one being home. The gospel was presented in one home. The orange team was the first team from FBC to make an



impact in White Pine, and the team left a great impression. Residents from White Pine mentioned on several occasions their appreciation for something as simple as cookies and batteries.

Week 1 of planting marked the fourth week in a row that a team from FBC had played basketball on the White Pine basketball courts. Drew Clayton, a member from FBC who wanted to be a small group Bible study leader, came with me to the courts. A small group of students and a parent from FBC also joined us in White Pine. We played pick-up basketball games until it became so dark that we could no longer see the ball. The small group of students and parent brought Gatorade and crackers for everyone at the end. FBC's presence was continually growing in White Pine through multiple avenues.

## **Week 2**

The green team saturated White Pine during week 2 of planting. The green team was the largest team made up of 20 members and had 52 assigned homes. The team went to White Pine on a Thursday evening and continued going door-to-door until dark. The team met at the church to gather supplies and pray. They covered half of their assigned homes and had the opportunity to share the gospel with 2 of the homes visited. Thursday evening marked the first time most of the team members had ever knocked on a door in White Pine.

Week 2 of planting marked the fifth consecutive week of playing basketball with a group of young men from White Pine. The same team from FBC came again, providing snacks and Gatorade. Devin Nunn was one of the young men with whom I had developed a good relationship through playing basketball and with whom I had shared the gospel on numerous occasions. I asked Nunn, once it became too dark to play basketball, if he knew of a place where we could have a small group Bible study. He suggested digging out a fire pit in his yard and inviting everyone to his house, though he

expressed doubt about anyone attending. Nunn's house would become the location of the first small group Bible study to be planted in White Pine.

### **Week 3**

The blue team was the last team to go to White Pine. The team consisted of 14 members and was assigned 39 homes. They met at church to gather supplies, break into smaller teams to cover their assigned homes in White Pine, and pray. The day the blue team went to White Pine was cold and rainy. The team did not hesitate to continue with their mission. They passed out cookies, batteries, invite cards, and offered prayer to each home. The gospel was shared in one home. One team prayed for a widow who was struggling with the recent death of her spouse. One family came to FBC for the Fall Funfest as a result of an invite card from the blue team. Many doors were opening for FBC as a result of servant evangelism.

Basketball in White Pine continued during week 3 of planting. Over 20 people from White Pine were playing basketball when our small team arrived to the courts. We played until dark and had the opportunity to invite every player to the Bible study the following week at Devin Nunn's house. I invited many of the basketball players on an individual basis but also had the opportunity to invite the entire group when it became too dark to play basketball. Most of the players were excited to participate in the Bible study and said they would be there. None of the men stated that he was uninterested in joining a Bible study in White Pine or acted hostile to the invitation to a small group Bible study.

### **Week 4**

The first small group Bible study was planted during week 4 of planting. I recruited a team from FBC of 8 people to help. Part of the team purchased food and drinks. Another part of the team loaded and set up the grill for hot dogs. Devin Nunn, his brother, and a friend dug out the fire pit and gathered the wood for the fire. I spent time early in week 4 preparing a Bible study. The topic of the first Bible study was the

gospel. The team of 8 from FBC met at the church building, explained a tentative schedule of how the small group Bible study would go, and prayed. After prayer we loaded all the supplies and drove to White Pine.

We arrived at Devin Nunn's house and unloaded the supplies. Half of the team stayed at the house to set up chairs and the grill and started to cook. The other half of the team walked through the neighborhood inviting anyone who was outside to the Bible study. We went to the basketball courts and invited the young men playing. Everyone at the courts, the people who were playing, as well as those who were watching, followed us back to Nunn's house. We started the small group with serving hot dogs, hot off the grill, to everyone. Some of the team members passed out plates, chips, cookies, and napkins. We also made sure to have a garbage can available. The Nunns were gracious enough to open up their home and yard, so the least we could do was ensure that all trash was properly disposed of. After few minutes of eating I opened up with prayer for the group. I spent 15 minutes teaching on the gospel, explaining God, sin, Jesus, and a personal response. I used multiple Scripture references. We concluded the small group Bible study with a time of questions and answers. I asked if anyone had any prayer requests. Several people had requests, and we closed the small group with a time of prayer. We had over 30 people from White Pine at our first small group Bible study around the fire pit in the yard. We invited everyone back next week, weather permitting. The team was in the White Pine community for the small group Bible study for 3 hours.

## **Week 5**

Drew Clayton volunteered to be a small group leader. He studied 1 Corinthians 15 early in week 5 of planting. The team met at church on Tuesday night for the small group Bible study in White Pine. They filled a cooler with soft drinks and ice, loaded up chairs, prayed together, and departed. Instead of grilling hot dogs, we ordered

pizza for the small group. Donna Knott, my ministry assistant at FBC, picked up the pizzas and met the team at the Nunn's fire pit.

The second week of the small group Bible study lasted from 6:00pm to 9:30pm. The first hour was spent unloading, setting up, and inviting people to the Bible study. Drew taught for 30 minutes, including a 10-minute review of the gospel from the previous week. The team from FBC engaged in multiple one-on-one conversations. Many of these conversations were about the gospel. The team from FBC was growing, and Drew proved to be a capable teacher. Identifying and training a teacher from White Pine was still in progress. There were over 25 people at our second small group Bible study in White Pine.

### **Conclusion**

God opened doors into White Pine for FBC. Lives were changed as prayers were answered. The gospel was proclaimed, Jesus was exalted, and God was glorified. Over 120 people from FBC and UK's BCM prayer-walked Greenlawn and White Pine. Over 50 people from FBC were involved in servant evangelism at White Pine. Five people from FBC are ready to lead small groups in Greenlawn or White Pine, and there are teams to go with these 5 teachers. Fifteen weeks passed quickly, and the intentionality demanded from a 15-week project was crucial for FBC to reach a community with the gospel.

CHAPTER 5  
PROJECT EVALUATION

**Evaluation of the Project's Purpose**

The purpose of my fifteen-week project was to mobilize Florence Baptist Church to plant small group Bible studies throughout local multi-housing communities. The first part of my purpose was fulfilled. FBC has been mobilized to plant small group Bible studies in multi-housing communities. FBC planted 1 Bible study within the 15 weeks, and is prepared to plant 4 more in White Pine and Greenlawn in the spring. Members of FBC have formed 5 teams, have been trained in servant evangelism and Bible story telling, and are waiting for doors to open to plant their small groups. One team has already launched into White Pine and planted a small group Bible study with over 25 residents of White Pine in attendance.

The second part of the purpose was not fulfilled. The planting of more than 1 small group in more than 1 multi-housing community was not accomplished within the fifteen-week time limit. However, in the 1 small group planted in White Pine there are people from different multi-housing communities outside of White Pine. Drew Clayton and his team from FBC is ready to plant a small group in a different community as soon as a resident is willing to host a small group. Three more locations have been identified for future small group plants but need to wait for spring and the weather to get warmer. All 3 locations are basketball courts. One court is in White Pine, another court is in Greenlawn, and the last court is in Mosby Point.

## **Evaluation of the Project's Goals**

The project of planting small group Bible studies in Greenlawn and White Pine had 4 goals. The first goal was to determine how effective FBC was in reaching Greenlawn and White Pine mobile home communities with the gospel. The second goal was to change FBC's attitude from event evangelism to servant evangelism. The third goal was to promote personal prayer for FBC, Greenlawn, and White Pine. The fourth and final goal was to see gospel growth in Greenlawn and White Pine through planting small group Bible studies.

### **Goal 1: How Effective is FBC in Reaching Greenlawn and White Pine with the Gospel?**

I believed Greenlawn and White Pine were 2 large multi-housing communities less than 2 miles from FBC's building but were unreached and uninfluenced by the church's presence in the community. Before I began strategizing and mobilizing FBC to reach Greenlawn and White Pine, I needed to be sure my hypothesis was correct. I surveyed each adult small group to determine FBC's effectiveness in reaching Greenlawn and White Pine with the gospel and how significant a presence the church had in both communities. Out of the 194 surveys collected from every adult small group, 5 people checked the "do not agree to participate," box and 1 survey was incomplete. Ninety percent of the respondents did not know anyone living in Greenlawn or White Pine. Over 95 percent of the respondents had never shared the gospel with anyone in Greenlawn and White Pine. Sixty-two percent of the people surveyed had never heard of either Greenlawn or White Pine. On a scale of 0 to 10, 0 representing never having heard of Greenlawn or White Pine and 10 representing living in the community, respondents to the survey had an average score of 1.15. I concluded from the survey that I needed to mobilize FBC to go to Greenlawn and White Pine and plant small group Bible studies in each community.

## **Goal 2: Change in FBC's Attitude from Event Evangelism to Servant Evangelism**

FBC's evangelism strategy of hosting a big event and inviting the community to attend has not been effective in reaching Greenlawn and White Pine with the gospel. A change in attitude from event evangelism, hoping the lost come to a church building, to taking the gospel to the people, needed to occur. Over 50 members from FBC, most of whom had never been to or heard of Green Lawn or White Pine, went to White Pine through servant evangelism and Bible studies. FBC now has a presence in the community. Teams from FBC have future plans for cleaning and mulching the entrance into White Pine, cleaning out and hanging nets on the rims in the White Pine basketball court, and meeting numerous personal needs such as painting, roofing, and cleaning, in many of the homes. The purpose of serving White Pine in these ways is to gain a hearing for the gospel. FBC has moved outside of the building in which we worship once a week and into the community we are trying to reach with the gospel.

## **Goal 3: Pray Daily for FBC and Greenlawn and White Pine**

I prayed daily for FBC, Greenlawn, and White Pine throughout the 15-week project. Early in the project I prayed for wisdom and discernment for mobilizing FBC to reach Greenlawn and White Pine. I used the 21 day prayer journal during the prayer phase of the project. Once I met the young men playing basketball I prayed for them daily. I asked God to open up their eyes to the gospel and to draw them to himself. I asked for opportunities to share the gospel with the young men. I was able to share the gospel with many of them, two of which placed their trust in Jesus Christ for salvation.

During the training phase I prayed for God to move in the hearts of members of FBC. Training sessions were well attended, and many members participated in servant evangelism at White Pine. As the project moved into the planting phase my prayer focused more on residents of White Pine. The Nunns opening up their home and

property as a location to be used for a small group Bible study was an answer to prayer. We needed a location, and Devin Nunn offered his yard to be used. My personal prayer life grew during each week of the project, and it was encouraging to see God work and move through prayer in specific ways.

#### **Goal 4: Gospel Growth in Greenlawn and White Pine through Planting Small Groups**

The gospel was planted in White Pine and is growing today. Two young men who placed their trust in Christ are the first fruits of the harvest. I believe many more residents of White Pine will respond in the near future. The gospel was shared with over 35 residents. Every home in White Pine felt the presence of FBC through servant evangelism, but not every home heard the gospel. Much work remains to be done in White Pine, but the 15-week project launched FBC into the White Pine community, and the gospel has been planted and is growing.

#### **Strengths**

Gospel clarity and focus were strengths for planting small groups in White Pine. Paul delivered the gospel to the church in Corinth as of first importance (1 Cor 15:3). Paul explained to the church in Rome how the gospel was the power of God for salvation for those who believed (Rom 1:16). FBC could have organized block parties, grilled out, passed out school supplies, batteries, and cookies, installed smoke detectors, cleaned houses and yards, but still have missed the gospel. Good things could have been accomplished, but without clarity and focus on the gospel, nothing of eternal significance would have occurred. The gospel was included in all 4 phases of the project. Each person who participated in the survey was asked if he or she had ever shared the gospel with anyone living in Greenlawn or White Pine. FBC was encouraged to share and be confident in the gospel throughout the twenty-one day prayer journal. Training was devoted to clarity on the gospel. Each trainee wrote out his or her testimony and read



Greg Gilbert's book *What is the Gospel?*. In training, each team was continually reminded that the goal of meeting needs through servant evangelism was to introduce people to Jesus Christ. The gospel was the topic of the small group Bible studies.

Prayer was another strength for the project. One-third, or 5 weeks, of the 15-week project focused on prayer. The mobilization of members of a church out of their comfort zones and gospel growth in unreached communities only occurs when God moves in the hearts of people. I cannot change any hearts. My project could not change any hearts. God, through prayer, changed hearts. Through prayer God opened multiple doors into White Pine. Through prayer God gave us influence with Kim, the manager of Greenlawn and White Pine. Through prayer God gave us a location for a Bible study in White Pine. Through prayer God saved 2 individuals in White Pine. Through prayer God moved in the hearts of members of FBC and sent workers into the field. I do not know how many other things happened and will happen as a result of prayer, but I know God has moved in the lives of people in FBC and in White Pine as a result of prayer.

Another strength for planting small groups in White Pine was mobilizing FBC to go to White Pine through forming servant evangelism teams. Over 50 members of FBC knocked on doors in a community previously unengaged by the church. The team approach made equipping the saints for ministry practical and possible (Eph 4:12). Forming teams allowed leaders to lead, teachers to teach, encouragers to encourage, and servants to serve. The numerous roles on each team allowed people with a variety of spiritual gifts to get involved in ministry. Forming teams also enabled FBC to make a contact with every home in White Pine. White Pine is a large community, but by dividing it into 3 sections, with each team assigned one section, the teams made it possible to reach the whole community.

A final strength of mobilizing FBC to plant small groups in White Pine was the eagerness and discipline of members from FBC to go to the community faithfully. Members were not in White Pine every day but were in White Pine numerous times each

week. Several members from FBC would drive through Greenlawn and White Pine each week praying for houses and people they would pass. A team set up a table in White Pine and passed out school supplies. Hope Ministry, an outreach and mission of FBC, would have a delivery to a resident in Greenlawn and White Pine, and a team would go and make the delivery. Furniture, clothes, blankets, and food were delivered to White Pine. Every Tuesday night a team from FBC would play basketball in White Pine. When a mobile home burnt down, a team prayed with the family. Three teams delivered cookies and smoke detector batteries to each home in White Pine. Small group Bible studies were planted and will be planted in White Pine because FBC saturated the community, showing Christ's love through servant evangelism and proclaiming Christ's love through the preaching of the gospel. The church's presence in White Pine was essential to planting small groups.

### **Weaknesses**

Transition in senior leadership was a weakness for my project. Tim Alexander, former senior pastor of FBC, and I discussed different ideas for a fifteen-week project. We concluded that mobilizing FBC to plant small group Bible studies in two local mobile home communities would help the health of the church and meet a need in a community currently unreached by the church. Alexander was diagnosed with stage-four lung cancer before the launch of the project. He is still battling cancer, and treatment is going well. Corey Abney was called as the new senior pastor of FBC early in the year. Abney encouraged me to continue with the project. The overall goal of planting small groups in Greenlawn and White Pine was still in place, but change was needed in some of the steps for church mobilization. I could no longer preach 4 times before the congregation. Preaching the Sunday morning message was the best opportunity to cast a vision and mobilize the church for action. The Sunday morning worship service was where and when the greatest number of our members could be

reached at 1 time. Corey Abney, as the new senior pastor, needed to be in the pulpit each week. The original 4-week preaching aspect of the project would have been a great opportunity to teach the greatest amount of people the biblical and theological principles of reaching neighboring communities. Preaching would have also given me the opportunity to keep the vision of reaching Greenlawn and White Pine through planting small groups before the congregation on a weekly basis.

I focused on mobilizing the entire church instead of mobilizing the student ministry to plant small groups. My focus was too large and was a weakness of my project. As the student pastor, I taught students on a weekly basis about the biblical and theological principles for planting small groups in Greenlawn and White Pine. I kept the vision before the students each week. I updated and reminded students weekly about opportunities in White Pine and training times and locations for servant evangelism teams. Keeping the entire church updated was difficult to accomplish. I used small groups, contacted small group leaders, printed bulletin inserts, and sent emails, but I did not have a weekly platform in front of the church to communicate the vision, provide updates, and teach.

The timing of the 15-week project was a weakness. Servant evangelism teams went to White Pine in October and November. The small group Bible study met outside of a home in October and November by a fire pit. The fire pit was a great location for the fall but too cold in the winter. Once the cold weather arrived small groups were postponed. The next servant evangelism project and small group Bible study are scheduled for March. One Bible study will be at the Nunn's home and another will be at the basketball court in White Pine. Thanksgiving and Christmas gave opportunities to FBC to reach out to residents in White Pine by passing out Thanksgiving baskets, Christmas cards, and presents, but the cold weather made it difficult to meet new residents. No one was outside in the cold. The weather slowed the momentum gained through the weeks of servant evangelism and Bible studies.

### **What I Would Do Differently**

Having completed the project, there are a few things I would have done differently if I had to begin again. The largest and most crucial change I would make would be going to the community earlier in the 15-week project. FBC's presence in the community was crucial in building relationships and sharing the gospel. Building relationships and sharing the gospel was only possible as the church built relationship with residents in White Pine. No FBC presence in the community meant no gospel conversations with residents of White Pine. I would mobilize FBC to go to White Pine earlier by including servant evangelism with the training phase instead of combining servant evangelism with the planting phase. Placing servant evangelism in the training phase instead of the planting phase would move members of FBC into White Pine 4 weeks earlier. On-the-job training would have been better than classroom and lecture training. Teaching team members the biblical principles was important, but I should have spent half of the training time showing team members how to live out the biblical principles at White Pine. Jesus showed and sent out his disciples while training them for three years (Matt 10:5, Mark 6:7, Luke 9:2).

I would begin the project in March instead of August. People stay inside when the weather is cold outside. Meeting new people and developing relationships is more difficult when members of FBC have to knock on doors and be invited inside the homes to continue the conversation. Warm weather provides better opportunities to build relationships with people walking, sitting, or grilling outside. People are more open to speaking with strangers outside their homes than inviting strangers inside their homes. Launching the project in March instead of August would provide at least 4 more months for members to build relationships with residents in White Pine and discover inside locations within the community for future small group Bible studies. An expensive alternative could have been renting 1 of the empty mobile homes in White Pine. I am

hoping members from FBC will move into the White Pine community, or residents already in White Pine will open up their homes in the near future.

### **Theological Reflections**

I had many theological reflections while completing the Doctor of Ministry program and project. Prayer and the gospel were 2 major areas of my theological reflections. Both prayer and the gospel played major roles in mobilizing FBC to plant small group Bible studies in White Pine.

#### **Prayer**

Jesus told his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Matt 9:37-38). God is still sending out workers into the field. God moved in the hearts of several members of FBC and gave them a burden for the people in White Pine. God moved people out of their comfort zones and into the unknown realm of servant evangelism in White Pine. I underestimated how uncomfortable knocking on doors was to some people. Two of my best friends in the church would not join the servant evangelism team their wives were on because they were uncomfortable knocking on doors. I was shocked for a couple of reasons. One reason was that both men are believers and called to lead their families. The other reason was that both men are not shy, and I assumed knocking on doors, handing out cookies and batteries, and praying for people was not uncomfortable. I remembered Craig Blomberg’s commentary on Matthew 9:38, “Send out in Matthew 9:38 could also be translated thrust out, and it could even refer to workers already in the field who need to have a fire lit under them to thrust them out of their comforts into the world of need.”<sup>1</sup> While 2 of my friends never joined

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<sup>1</sup>Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 167.

FBC in the harvest field, God moved over 50 members from FBC out of their comfort zones and into White Pine. Members of FBC were willing to go to White Pine and were waiting for someone to ask and provide opportunities to go to this community.

God answered prayers for open doors into White Pine. Kim, the manager of White Pine, had a history of not allowing churches into Greenlawn or White Pine. She could have made it difficult for small groups to be planted in White Pine if she refused to allow servant evangelism and block parties in her properties. God moved in her heart. Many members of FBC were praying for open doors for the gospel into White Pine, and as I approached her office door I asked the Lord for influence in her life and in the communities she managed. Two days before school started I needed to secure permission to use an empty lot to set up tables and pass out school supplies to families in White Pine. I entered Kim's office and introduced myself. I explained why FBC needed an empty lot and also explained future plans for servant evangelism. Kim's response was unbelievable. She gave FBC permission to set up anywhere we wanted and also encouraged us to go door-to-door if we needed to in the future. She gave us no limitations and thanked us for our time and help. God changed Kim's heart to not only allow FBC into her community but to promote FBC's presence in White Pine. God turned the heart of the king of Assyria to the Israelites, so that the king aided them in the work of the temple (Ezra 6:22). On a much smaller scale, what God did in the heart of a king, God did again in the heart of a manager named Kim.

Paul, in writing to the Colossians, asked the church to pray that God would open a door for the word (Col 4:3). FBC prayed for the same thing and saw God open up doors. Besides Kim, another door God opened into White Pine was Devin Nunn's home and yard. While members of FBC were praying for White Pine, Devin Nunn's mom was praying for someone to come. She has four boys, and none of them were interested in Jesus or his church. During our first Bible study in the Nunns' yard, Devin Nunn's mom commented to me how she had been praying for help during the past year, and God

answered by sending FBC. God was already at work in White Pine, and all FBC had to do was find out where.

## **Gospel**

Spiritually dead and spiritually blind people are not looking for a church (2 Cor 4:4, Eph 2:1-3). I knew 1 of the families of White Pine through a tutoring program FBC offered 2 years ago. Tommy explained how his fifth grade nephew was not allowed to go to the White Pine basketball court because of a drug problem. I went to the courts and discovered that drugs were there. I would walk up and the young men would stuff things into their pockets quickly while other men walked away. Many times the scent of marijuana could be detected while playing basketball. Some of the young men trying to play basketball were under the influence of drugs. The men on the basketball court were not looking to come to church. If the basketball players at White Pine were going to hear the gospel it would only happen when someone came and preached the gospel to them (Rom 10:14-15). The young men did not care about events FBC offered. They had concluded that the large new building down the road was for church people, and they were definitely not church people. Each of the young men knew the building was a church, but each had never thought about coming to the building for a service or an event. Spiritually dead and spiritually blind people should not be expected to find their way to Jesus Christ. The church must take the gospel to the lost.

God uses the gospel to bring spiritually dead people to spiritual life (Rom 1:16, Eph 2:5). God saved 2 young men through the preaching of the gospel. Many more of the young men who played basketball have heard the gospel and are open to hearing more about Jesus Christ in the future. Devin Nunn told me before our first Bible study that the twins, Elijah and Isaiah, would never come to a Bible study. I tried to encourage Nunn and direct him to focus on God's power and not on the twins' behavior.

I said, “Devin, God does the impossible. He created the world out of nothing. He split the sea and allowed his people to walk on dry land. He calmed the sea and walked on water. There is nothing God cannot do, including changing lives, even the lives of the twins.”

Devin was not impressed and answered, “God may change the heart of Elijah, but definitely not Isaiah. There is no way Isaiah would ever come to a Bible study.”

I asked the teams from FBC to join me in praying specifically for God to move in the life of the twins. To the surprise of Devin, both of the twins attended the small group Bible study. I had the opportunity on a personal level to share the gospel with Isaiah. Isaiah used to go to church but had not attended in a long time and had no idea why. He lived in White Pine for 8 years and struggled with drugs and school. I shared the gospel with him and prayed for him. While he did not respond in faith to the gospel, I believe God is at work in his heart and life and believe that in time Isaiah will trust in Christ.

### **Personal Reflections**

People are scared. Members of FBC were uncomfortable knocking on doors in White Pine. Residents of White Pine were afraid of neighbors and certain areas in their neighborhood. Fear is debilitating to gospel growth. Passion for the Lord and for people must outgrow fear of the unknown and the dangerous. I was encouraged to see many members of FBC and residents of White Pine influenced by their love for Christ rather than by a fear of man.

Intentionality is crucial for evangelism. I was on staff at FBC for the past 3 years since the church moved to its current location. FBC is less than 2 miles away from White Pine. White Pine has over 100 homes, and yet FBC has had little to no impact in White Pine. A large, multi-housing community located less than 2 minutes away from where FBC gathers for worship led me to ask 2 question: (1) How long would it have



taken FBC to take the gospel to White Pine had it not been for a 15-week project? (2) How many other communities are waiting on FBC to bring them the gospel? Both of these questions can be solved with intentionality. FBC is not currently reaching every community in Northern Kentucky with the gospel. FBC must be intentional in locating and going to people and communities. Without a plan, White Pine may have been ignored for a long time.

Relationships and proximity are crucial in reaching people with the gospel. Going is the first part of the great commission (Matt 28:18). Lost people do not look for a church but Jesus sends his church to the lost. Jesus was not afraid to associate with sinners (Luke 15:2). The challenge for FBC is to become more like Christ.

Gospel centeredness will not happen by accident. Many members of FBC were excited to serve White Pine but few were interested in sharing the gospel. FBC was comfortable handing out batteries, school supplies, and cookies, but not as comfortable telling residents in White Pine about who Jesus is and what Jesus has done. I discovered with most people involved in servant evangelism the servant aspect was much easier to participate in than the evangelism. Leaders had to continually remind their groups that it was the gospel that had the power to save and therefore, sharing the gospel was the primary purpose for their serving residents in White Pine. FBC was meeting needs for the purpose of sharing Christ.

### **Conclusion**

Luke recorded in Acts 5:42, “And everyday, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” The early church was relentless in preaching the gospel. I want Acts 5:42 applied to my life and church. White Pine was one of many communities in need of the gospel. If the gospel is going to spread it will be because the church refuses to be quiet. Everyday is an opportunity to teach and preach Jesus. People are waiting to hear.

APPENDIX 1

FBMZ SMALL GROUP SURVEY:  
GREENLAWN AND WHITE PINE

**Agreement to Participate**

This survey is designed to reveal basic knowledge of the community surrounding Florence Baptist Church at Mt. Zion (FBMZ). Ben Brown is conducting this research to aid in planning future evangelism efforts. In this research, you will answer ten questions about Greenlawn and White Pine mobile home communities. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or identified with your responses. Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

By your completion of this survey, and checking the appropriate box below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in research.

- I agree to participate  
 I do not agree to participate

- 1) Approximately how far are the Greenlawn and White Pine communities from our church building? (Check one of the following options please)

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have no idea      | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than three miles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than one mile  | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than four miles  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than two miles | <input type="checkbox"/> Four miles or over    |

- 2) How many homes would you say are in these two communities? (Check one of the following options please)

|                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-40 homes   | <input type="checkbox"/> 121-160 homes | <input type="checkbox"/> 241-280 homes  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 41-80 homes  | <input type="checkbox"/> 161-200 homes | <input type="checkbox"/> 281-320 homes  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 81-120 homes | <input type="checkbox"/> 201-240 homes | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 321 homes |

- 3) What percentage of the residents in Greenlawn and White Pine would you guess attend church services on a weekly basis? (Check one of the following options please)

|                                 |                                 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-10%  | <input type="checkbox"/> 51-60% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11-20% | <input type="checkbox"/> 61-70% |

|                                 |                                  |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21-30% | <input type="checkbox"/> 71-80%  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31-40% | <input type="checkbox"/> 81-90%  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 41-50% | <input type="checkbox"/> 91-100% |

4) How many people would you say attend worship services at FBMZ from the Greenlawn or White Pine communities? (Please check one of the following options)

|                                       |                                       |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-5 people   | <input type="checkbox"/> 21-25 people | <input type="checkbox"/> 41-45 people | <input type="checkbox"/> 61-65 people   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 people  | <input type="checkbox"/> 26-30 people | <input type="checkbox"/> 46-50 people | <input type="checkbox"/> 66-70 people   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 people | <input type="checkbox"/> 31-35 people | <input type="checkbox"/> 51-55 people | <input type="checkbox"/> 71-75 people   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16-20 people | <input type="checkbox"/> 36-40 people | <input type="checkbox"/> 56-60 people | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 75 people |

5) Have you ever personally driven through either Greenlawn or White Pine? (Check one of the following options please)

Yes  
 No

6) Do you know anyone who lives in Greenlawn or White Pine? (Check one please)

Yes  
 No

7) Have you ever invited anyone from Greenlawn or White Pine to FBMZ? (Check one please)

Yes  
 No

8) Do you believe if you invited residents of Greenlawn and White Pine to FBMZ would they come?

Yes  
 No

9) Have you ever shared the gospel with any of the residents of Greenlawn or White Pine? (Check one please)

Yes  
 No

10) On a scale from 0-10, how familiar are you with Greenlawn and White Pine communities?

(0 = I have never heard of these communities 10 = I live in this community)

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8 ----- 9 ----- 10

\*Please make any additional comments about Greenlawn or White Pine mobile home communities that would be helpful in future evangelism efforts at the bottom of this page.

## APPENDIX 2

### INITIAL LETTER TO SMALL GROUP MEMBERS

#### A Call to Prayer

Greenlawn and White Pine Mobile Home Communities are located less than two miles away from our church building. There are over three hundred families living in these two communities. Most of these families are not coming to our building...so we must go to them. Our goal is to eventually plant off-campus small group Bible studies in Greenlawn and White Pine. Prayer is the first step we must take in reaching these two communities with the gospel. Jonathan Edwards stated, “When God has something very great to accomplish for his church, it is his will that there should precede it the extraordinary prayer of his people.”<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry added, “When God desires to do a fresh work, he sets his people to praying.”<sup>2</sup> I am inviting you to join me on a 21-day prayer journey. These 21 days are broken down into three phases:

- PHASE 1: Personal preparation for the mission (Days 1-7).
- PHASE 2: Church preparation for the mission (Days 8-14)
- PHASE 3: Praying for Greenlawn and White Pine (Days 15-21).

As you use this prayer journal you will find each day divided into three sections: (1) Reading: taking in the Word by reading a specific passage; (2) Reflecting: meditating on the Word throughout the day; (3) Releasing: letting the daily passage guide our prayers. Thomas Manton explains meditation is a vital link between reading the Bible and prayer. He stated, “What we take in by the Word we digest by meditation and let out

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<sup>1</sup>Malcolm McDow and Alvin Reid, *Fire Fall* (Enumclaw, WA: Pleasant Word, 2002), 225.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 251.

by prayer.”<sup>3</sup> Thank you for joining me on this journey. My hope is that we reach our world with the gospel beginning with our neighbors living in Greenlawn and White Pine!

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<sup>3</sup>Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991), 73.

### APPENDIX 3

#### PRAYER STATIONS

After the Sunday morning worship service, small teams organized prayer stations throughout the church building. Two stations covered the same topic, confession of sins, but with different methods. One station had paper shredders where participants could write down any sin in their lives and then feed the paper through a paper shredder so that the sin could no longer be legible. The other station focused on confession of sins included several boxes of sand where participants could write down any sin in their lives and then wipe the sin away by smoothing out the sand. The passage used for both confession stations was 1 John 1:9.

The primary focus of the prayer service was mobilizing and equipping FBC to pray for Greenlawn and White Pine. The most important prayer station was the station focused on these two communities. I printed off a picture of both neighborhoods displaying the streets and homes and assembled a team to duplicate the picture in two large rooms. We used tape to mark the roads and construction paper to mark the homes. We ended up with a miniature scaled version of Greenlawn and White Pine on the floor. Greenlawn was represented in one room and White Pine was represented in a connecting room. The Greenlawn and White Pine rooms made up the location of the prayer station focused on these two communities. While at this station, participants were encouraged to sign up to prayer walk through Greenlawn and White Pine during the upcoming week. Prayer walk guides were available to help participants pray for Greenlawn and White Pine as they walked through the communities. Maps of Greenlawn and White Pine were available for those who were physically unable to walk through the community the following week. Participants with the maps could pray for homes as they traced the roads

in Greenlawn and White Pine with their fingers. The passage used for the Greenlawn and White Pine station was Matthew 9:36-38.

“Be Light” was the title of a prayer station. I ordered 200 flashlights with Matthew 5:16 and fbmz.org written on each light. The flashlights were placed in a small treasure chest on a table with a lamp in the front of the room, and chairs were lined around the walls. Participants were encouraged to take a flashlight, read Matthew 5:16, and ask God to show them how they could be light in their homes, neighborhoods, work places, and around the world. Each participant took a flashlight home as a reminder to be light.

Psalm 67:1-3 was the passage used for two stations: (1) praying for the nations and (2) praying for unreached people groups. The Nations prayer station included a table with the name of every nation in the world printed and cut out on a piece of paper. Each person would pick up the name of a nation, pray, locate, and place a pushpin in the country he or she had selected on the world map. The world map was large and attached to a movable wall capable of holding the pushpins in place. Missionaries from FBC were also prayed for at the nations prayer station. Information about the Benin, Africa, mission trip and team were available, and specific prayer requests were printed out for participants to pray over. Bethany, a missionary to Hungary from FBC, was also prayed for at the Nations prayer station.

The unreached people group prayer station had a clothesline hanging from the ceiling of the room and ran back and forth covering the entire room. Unreached people groups were discovered using the Joshua Project website. Over 150 unreached people groups were printed and cut out. Each people group was attached to the clothesline with a clothespin. As participants came into the room they would take one unreached people group off the line, sit in a chair lining the wall, and pray for the unreached people group.

I wanted the members of FBC to pray for one another. At one of the stations our team took five empty refrigerator boxes, turned them inside out, and taped the bottom

of the boxes to the floor. Permanent markers were placed on the floor on each side of the boxes. As people came into the room they would write down their prayer requests on the boxes. Participants would read and pray for requests already on the boxes, writing their initials near the request as they finished.

Salvation was the focus in another prayer station. The verse used was 2 Corinthians 5:20. For the salvation prayer stations two large posters were printed out. On each poster the word “salvation” was printed in large letters. Volunteers taped the posters to two tables in the room. As participants came into the room they picked up a permanent marker and wrote down the names of three people they are praying for God to save. Each participant would then write down the same three names on an index card to take home as a reminder.

Dawson Trotman encouraged FBC to pray big. At the “pray big” prayer station participants would read a quote by Dawson Trotman. The quote challenged people to pray for big things, and on the back of the quote participants wrote out their own prayer, focused on big things such as reaching the world with the gospel.

The final prayer station was located in the sanctuary. The focus was on praying for the church. Each participant would find a seat in the sanctuary and pray for leadership, the future, obedience, and many other areas concerning FBC.



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## ABSTRACT

### PLANTING SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDIES IN MULTI-HOUSING COMMUNITIES NEAR FLORENCE BAPTIST CHURCH, FLORENCE, KENTUCKY

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013  
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Planting small group Bible studies in multi-housing communities focused on mobilizing Florence Baptist Church to reach White Pine with the gospel. Chapter 1 explained the purpose, goals, context of the church, context of the community, and rationale for the project. Chapter 2 gave biblical and theological support for planting small groups in White Pine. Biblical passages used were Matthew 9:36-38, Romans 1:16, Romans 10:13-17, 2 Timothy 2:2, and multiple texts from the book of Acts. Chapter 3 researched different models, examples, and principles for small groups. Chapter 4 was a week-by-week explanation of the fifteen-week project. Chapter 5 offered the strengths, weaknesses, and reflections from the project. The fifteen-week project was an initial step for church planting in the future.



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