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IMPLEMENTING AN EVANGELISM STRATEGY FOR  
THE FIRST VIETNAMESE BAPTIST CHURCH  
OF DALTON, GEORGIA

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

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

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by  
Vu Nguyen  
May 2014

**APPROVAL SHEET**

IMPLEMENTING AN EVANGELISM STRATEGY FOR  
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In memory of my dearly loved wife,  
Tam-Van Thi Nguyen,  
and to  
someone else,  
always an encouraging friend.

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## PREFACE

This significant project is built on the premise that successful interdisciplinary evangelism and church growth begins with the help of many professors and friends. It is God's blessing to build a kingdom, which is a priority task God assigned for me to do. I am sure that what I have written is reasonable and true about life and about churches. Some aspects remain part of the portrait of this project that help me to see clearly how evangelism and church growth is so important to the Vietnamese Baptist Church in Dalton, Georgia, and for all Christians. As this project continues, I pray that, with God's grace, the full potential of my project will materialize, and hope that it may enlighten and challenge others.

Atlanta, Georgia  
May 2014

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to implement an evangelism strategy leading to church growth for the First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton, Georgia.

#### **Goals**

This project had four goals. The first goal was to preach a comprehensive understanding of Jesus' Great Commission to church members. As the Minister of Missions of the First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton (FVBCD), I accomplished this by preaching a sermon based on Matthew 28:18-20. This sermon inspired the congregation to apply and perform all the things Jesus taught his original disciples to do. The Church Member Questionnaire (see appendix 1) measured the progress of this first goal.

The second goal was to train church members in personal evangelism. I equipped members with evangelism-related Scriptures, so they could respond appropriately to various scenarios and practice sharing their personal testimonies. The Evangelism Quiz (see appendix 2) evaluated the members' progress.

The third goal was to teach church members, including new believers, to become disciple makers. I helped church members realize that true discipleship will also require time and a leadership commitment with practical application and outcomes for all those involved. The Training Follow-up Evaluation Form marked the progress of the third goal (see PHỤ BÀN 4 in appendix 15).

The fourth goal was a personal one. As the Minister of Missions of the FVBCD, my objectives included improving my preaching, teaching, and writing abilities. My evangelism experiences enabled me to dedicate my life to leading people to Christ. A self-evaluation reflected my progress toward this goal.

### **Context of the Project**

This project took place in and around Dalton, Georgia. Dalton is a small city in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains near Interstate 75. Dalton is eighty miles north of Atlanta, Georgia, and twenty-five miles south of Chattanooga, Tennessee (see appendix 4). This city is the home of many floor-covering manufacturers, and “almost 90% of the functional carpet produced world-wide is made within a 25-mile radius of this north Georgia city.”<sup>1</sup> Other businesses operating in the Dalton area include chicken and agriculture farms, outlet shopping malls, and rug and carpet stores. The city also has a well-known home furnishings superstore that draws customers from throughout the United States. The Dalton area has a small community of Vietnamese people.

### **Demographics**

The project began with demographic research. According to the U.S. Census 2000, the population of Dalton was 27,912 (see appendix 5). By June 2012, Dalton’s population rose to 33,604, an increase of 20.4 percent since the year 2000. Table 1 shows that males and females were almost equally represented. The median age of 31.1 is slightly younger than Georgia’s median age of 33.4. The majority of the population was Caucasians. Other ethnic groups in the area included 478 Asians. This included 114 Vietnamese immigrants and exchange students.<sup>2</sup> In the First Vietnamese Baptist Church’s

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<sup>1</sup>“History of Dalton Georgia: The Carpet Capital” [on-line]; accessed 8 June 2012; available from <http://www.cityofdaltonga.gov/index.php/about-dalton/history>; Internet.

<sup>2</sup>“Dalton City, Georgia Statistics and Demographics (U.S. Census 2000).” *Area Connect* [on-line]; accessed 12 June 2012; available from <http://dalton.areaconnect.com/statistics.htm>; Internet.

zip code, there were twelve different languages listed as being the primary language spoken in the home (see appendix 5).

Table 1. 2012 population for Dalton, Georgia

Males:	17,134	51.0%
Females:	16,470	49.0%
Median resident age:	31.1 years	
Georgia median age:	33.4 years	

To study ethnic transition in the city of Dalton, Bryan Nowak from Research Services at Georgia Baptist Convention said, “If your area is in racial or ethnic transition, your church can grow if it responds positively to these changes” (see table 2 and appendix 6).<sup>3</sup>

Table 2. Current racial and ethnic groups within the area of First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton

Demographic Data 2010	3-Mile Radius		5-Mile Radius	
Population by Race	11,759		43,221	
White	5,246	45%	15,819	37%
Black	210	2%	367	1%
Hispanic Origin	4,068	35%	19,350	45%
Asian	41	0%	105	0%
Other Race	1,920	16%	6,835	16%
Two or More Races	265	2%	712	2%
American Indian	4	0%	28	0%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	4	0%	6	0%

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<sup>3</sup>“Bryan Nowak, telephone interview by author, Dalton, GA, 11 June 2012. The author received the information contained in table 2 from Nowak during this phone conversation.

During the recent recession, many Vietnamese workers who were employed by carpet mills lost their jobs and moved out of the city. Nevertheless, the Vietnamese population in Dalton has not decreased. Several Vietnamese moved into the area to work in the manicuring business. Telephone books on the Internet listed eleven Vietnamese nail salons that were established in Dalton and fifty-five in the surrounding areas during the past ten years (see table 3).<sup>4</sup>

Table 3. Nail salons in or near Dalton

Adairsville	1
Calhoun	8
Cartersville	16
Chatsworth	2
Chickamauga	1
Dalton	11
Fort Oglethorpe	9
La Fayette	2
Ringgold	3
Rocky Face	1
Rossville	1
TOTAL	55

In order to reach the Vietnamese community for Christ, I collected information from Demographic Research Services of the Georgia Baptist Convention, the Yellow Page directory, and the Internet. I also conducted personal and telephone interviews with Vietnamese people in the community. The research revealed the educational and vocational backgrounds, as well as the economic levels, of Dalton's Vietnamese residents. The majority were carpet mill employees. The second largest group was nail technicians.

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<sup>4</sup>“Nail Salons—Dalton, Georgia” [on-line]; accessed 9 June 2012; available from [http://www.allbusiness.com/companyindex/Georgia/Dalton/Nail\\_Salons/ABA8372EA0BDA2C0F2A3042F923EB8D-C-1.html](http://www.allbusiness.com/companyindex/Georgia/Dalton/Nail_Salons/ABA8372EA0BDA2C0F2A3042F923EB8D-C-1.html); Internet.

Some families ran chicken farms, auto shops, and restaurants. One family owned an oriental grocery store.

Dung Luong Ta, owner of the Tandat Oriental Asian grocery store in Dalton, stated, “There are about fifty families in the community; each family has from two to four members. Most of them work at carpet mills and nail salons.”<sup>5</sup> Maily Thi Nguyen, Revive Nail Salon owner, said, “Vietnamese people do nails well. They are very skillful and work hard for a living. I think Vietnamese people have some natural skills. They do a more beautiful job than other ethnic groups that I know.”<sup>6</sup> Xuy Dinh Nguyen, a seventy-five-year-old man, remarked, “I think there are about 200 Vietnamese immigrants living in the city but this number will be smaller in ten more years. Young generations will move out to big cities for education, jobs, or new business.”<sup>7</sup>

### **Church History**

The First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton began as a Vietnamese Mission (VM) of Dug Gap Baptist Church in June 1999. Dug Gap Baptist Church, the Georgia Baptist Convention, and the North Georgia Baptist Association sponsored FVBCD. The VM intended to share the gospel with the lost. As the pastor at that time, I conducted a community survey, with my wife’s help, in 1999. We found that most Vietnamese residents of Dalton were Buddhists, ancestor worshippers, or Roman Catholics. Others were Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons. Confucians and Taoists had only a limited presence in this area.

The survey revealed that it was evident the community needed to hear the gospel. I was passionate about seeing sinners come to faith in the Lord and worship God

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2012. <sup>5</sup>Dung Luong Ta, interview and translation by author, Dalton, GA, 10 July

2012. <sup>6</sup>Maily Thi Nguyen, interview and translation by author, Dalton, GA, 11 July

2012. <sup>7</sup>Xuy Dinh Nguyen, interview and translation by author, Dalton, GA, 11 July



at the sponsoring church. My heart went out to the people who had suffered for the loss of their country. I knew that God cared about the Vietnamese people. The Bible says, “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd” (Matt 9:36).<sup>8</sup> I prayed for them as I shared the hope of Jesus Christ among many who had lost hope. I invited those people to join me in the church. God answered my prayers.

The Vietnamese Mission’s activities moved the hearts of the nonbelievers in the neighborhood. Because the message of salvation somehow was misunderstood by some of the new converts, they came to church only to ask for God’s blessings. At home, they continued their superstitious activities. God used the VM to share Jesus, the source of lasting hope that can break tradition’s barriers. God is the one who can change the hearts, lives, and communities of people who need Jesus in places such as Dalton and the surrounding areas.

From 1999 to 2005, the VM used small witnessing groups as a tool to get the gospel out to the Vietnamese community. These groups visited homes and passed out tracts to residents. The groups were well trained and they were sincere when responding to questions asked by the nonbelievers. The VM identified many problems in the Vietnamese communities in Dalton, such as child and elder abuse, gambling, gang activity, adultery, and drug and alcohol abuse. I had learned from Jesus how to care for people while they live on earth. I also professed to follow Jesus in every area of my life. My wife and I continued to do the work that Jesus did, such as striving to relieve the pain of the people, comforting the grieving, restoring security, and helping people understand God’s purpose for their lives. We showed Jesus’ compassion to all, read the Bible with them, and maintained loving family relationships. In addition, we personally counseled

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<sup>8</sup>Unless otherwise indicated, all Scriptures are taken from the King James Version.

with over ten families and individuals. As a result, two men received Christ and were scheduled for baptism a few months later.

In 2005, the church voted to license a young Christian who would be in charge of the youth and children's ministry. As children and the youth grew in age, they also grew in faith, through faithful prayers and Sunday Bible studies. However, the group's attendance remained at a low number for many years. The church struggled with obstacles in reaching out to the Vietnamese young generation. Nonbelieving parents not only rejected the gospel, but also forbade their children to come to the church for youth activities.

The mission was involved in the Katrina Hurricane Rescue Program through the North Georgia Baptist Association. One Vietnamese family who came from Biloxi, Mississippi, received spiritual and financial support from the Vietnamese Mission to resettle in Dalton. A single mother and two of her teenaged girls were saved and attended the worship services.

In 2006, after I presented my vision for church growth, church members voted to form a Church Building Committee. This committee would be responsible for locating a building that would accommodate more people. The church chose five individuals who possessed the business experience necessary for this important task. In addition, the church adapted the principles of church growth, self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation. The church members also formed small prayer groups so that members were praying continuously for the church.

By the grace of God, the church acquired the first facility in October 2006. Also during that year, three church members enrolled in The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for further theological education. In the same year, a church member offered his home for Bible study. Six to ten members faithfully came to the house every Saturday night to study God's Word and pray. Church leaders took turns leading this group.

In January 2007, the church became constituted as the First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton. As pastor, I presented the Church Constitution and By-Laws to the Georgia Baptist Convention and the North Georgia Baptist Association. A month later, a church dedication ceremony and ordination of the associate pastor/youth minister took place. In 2009, the congregation voted to join the Georgia Baptist Convention in sponsoring new missions and cosponsored the Asian-American Baptist Church, led by Pastor Nathan Tran. Recently, the church branched out statewide and contributed financially to a new Asian mission established in Georgia.

### **Church Growth Pattern**

The growth pattern of the church resembles the growth of a seed and a tree. Once the seed is planted, fertilized, and watered, it begins to grow and thrive; it will produce a tree. As the tree produces fruit, the fruit will spread more seeds. The aim of the church is to help members to develop a more meaningful relationship with Christ and with the Vietnamese community. Community outreach is essential in sharing the gospel and inviting non-Christians to come to faith in Christ. This ministry focuses on people rather than on programs, realizing that the conversion process will take a long time for the nonbelievers.

**Door-to-door evangelism.** Because of our passion for evangelism, my wife and I started the mission in June 1999. We went door to door meeting with fellow Vietnamese in an effort to gain credibility. One month later, we began a worship service with one new Christian.

My wife and I also began several outreach programs to provide more opportunities to contact prospective members who were hesitant to allow home visits. We invited people to join us in English classes on Saturday mornings at Dug Gap Baptist Church. Two sponsoring church members and my wife led the classes. To help participants prepare for their U.S. citizenship exams and interview, citizenship classes

provided instruction in basic U.S. history and government. We made available biblical and family counseling. This offered families both practical assistance and prayer for issues such as domestic violence, substance and alcohol abuse, depression, and truancy. In all these programs, we shared the gospel and invited prospective members to the church. These programs continued, along with practical classes for church members geared toward preparing people for the ministry.

**Community services.** In continuing to serve God, the church provided translators and other services such as home appliance repair services and grocery services. I took pride in knowing about heating and air conditioning (HVAC) and taught church members how to fix HVAC problems by themselves. My wife helped women who were unable to drive to Atlanta to buy ethnic food. She collected shopping lists and purchased food at oriental grocery stores in Atlanta. When she delivered the groceries, she had an opportunity to revisit Vietnamese families to share the gospel. As a result, some of them attended the church service on Sunday.

In keeping with God's work, I encouraged church members to take an active role in the community. Members strove to establish friendships and visited believers and nonbelievers alike in homes or hospitals. The church's outreach activities included all ages and skill levels: teenagers picked up trash in public areas, adults did yard work and home maintenance for elderly residents, and a certified technician visited homes to repair appliances for needy families. After building relationships, group members then shared their personal testimony and the gospel. Even today, evangelism to unbelievers remains the most important reason to build relationships within Dalton's Vietnamese community, where these activities are still ongoing.

**Continuing growth.** In 2000, church membership more than tripled, rising from three to ten, and more than tripled again by 2002, rising to thirty-four members. All of the new members came by baptism. The church became known through word

of mouth, attracting people from Calhoun and Gordon counties, and from nearby Chattanooga and Cleveland. By 2007, worship service attendance had risen to forty-six. The average number of attendees in Sunday school was twenty-eight. Scott Parrish, associate pastor of Dug Gap Baptist Church, gave this report at the 2007 annual meeting of the North Georgia Baptist Association:

The Vietnamese congregation continues to grow with new members who are added through the profession of faith and believer's baptism. Presently, they are averaging about 46 in attendance. Their total membership and prospect file numbers are over 120. They currently have two Sunday school classes with an average of 28. In addition, they have established a small group study on Wednesday evenings and organized a witness group.<sup>9</sup>

Between 2007 and 2011, in a depressed economy and due to difficult situations, the average of worship attendance dropped from forty-six to thirty-seven members, a decrease of 20 percent as families moved away (see appendix 8).

### **My Role in the Church**

While a student at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS), I was also serving the congregation in the ways that God has equipped me to serve. On June 10, 2012, when I resigned as senior pastor of the FVBCD because of my wife's death, the church council voted for me to become the Minister of Missions. I firmly believed that my role in the church was to obey God's call absolutely. I had a heart for God and desired to share Jesus' story with those around me. Aside from the benefit of the work of evangelism and church growth, I was reaching out to the Vietnamese community in multiple ways, calling the lost to faith, discipling them, and using them to reach their own families.

As Minister of Missions, I determined a new course of action, realizing that "effective ministers of missions orient their churches to penetrate their community and

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<sup>9</sup>"145th Session Annual Minutes of the North Georgia Baptist Association," October 25, 2007. The number of prospects included Vietnamese residents in Dalton and surrounding areas.

world with the gospel, but obsessively concern themselves with discipling their members and equipping them for the work of the ministry.”<sup>10</sup> I expressed my care for others verbally and showed my affection physically with acts of service. I knew that God had blessed me so that I might bless others (1 Tim 6:18). I also equipped the congregation for ministry, as prescribed in Ephesians 4:11-13:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

The strength of my mission’s role included encouraging the church members to help those who are hurting or depressed to handle their burdens. I explained to my witnessing teams that many nonbelievers have come to know the Savior because a team member took the time to listen to them and care about their concerns. Through words and actions, my teams expressed their love for the lost. They contacted prospective members personally and made home and hospital visits. While interacting with individuals, they talked with them about God’s love and eternal life. They followed up with telephone calls to build trust and friendship. I prayed for the new believers and helped them break their barriers of tradition. I encouraged and trained them to become disciples week by week. My responsibilities included preaching God’s Word, using contextual sermons, and teaching the congregation about evangelism, with an emphasis on the Great Commission. In addition to preaching and leading Sunday school and Bible studies, I continued monthly small group training for effective personal witnessing.

During a monthly church meeting on July 15, 2012, I directed the church leaders to review these witnessing techniques and to determine if any modifications were needed. I have tried a variety of approaches to evangelism and have conducted all evangelistic events to reach people for Christ. From the church’s inception, I have

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<sup>10</sup>James E. Means, *Effective Pastors for a New Century: Helping Leaders Strategize for Success* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 15.

continued to find prospects by using direct mail. I have also made the most of the God-given opportunities to share his love with others.

### **Rationale**

Dalton's Vietnamese community is in great need of the gospel. People in the community live under the control of darkness. They have rejected the gospel and refuse to come to Christ. The majority of them are non-Christians who are influenced by traditional religions. Bad habits such as drinking, gambling, adultery, and the like take place daily in families. Parental sins affect their children emotionally, ethically, and spiritually (Rom 1:29; Gal 5:19-21a). Parents and their offspring need to be saved. Church members are acting as a reflection of God's light to the community as instructed in Matthew 5:14, 16: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

In order to implement an evangelism strategy leading to church growth, the church needs to equip its members to become witnesses for Christ. The Lord's command is the supreme guideline for the commitment of the FVBCD to the Vietnamese families in the area surrounding the church. For this reason, many church members create their own way to follow God's direction to reach people in the community. However, they must discover the three key commands. First, Jesus gave this command in his Great Commission and commanded his disciples to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:18-20). Second, Jesus wanted his disciples to fulfill his mission (John 20:21). Third, Jesus commanded his disciples to be witnesses everywhere (Acts 1:8).

Church members must have compassion for the lost and knowledge of the Bible to make the community a part of God's kingdom. As Jesus' followers, the FVBCD church members are to fulfill God's will and the Lord's commission. Church members must share the gospel to help Vietnamese non-Christians be reconciled to God and into the fellowship of the church. God's love for lost people is always shared. Once the members help

people find new life in Jesus Christ, they will be fulfilling the Great Commission. Thus, evangelism leads to church growth, but the salvation of souls is paramount.

### **Definitions and Limitations**

This project had definable limitations in duration and scope. The project lasted for only fifteen weeks, and included only Vietnamese Americans in Dalton, Georgia. The Vietnamese focus was a natural result of the constituency of the FVBCD and the site of the project, and the fifteen-week limit allowed for a meaningful trial of the project and for assessment of short-term results. However, some important long-term results would not be measurable. Five terms—*Evangelism*, *church growth*, *gospel*, *Vietnamese*, and *Vietnamese refugee*—should be defined and, in several cases, expanded beyond the dictionary meaning for the purposes of this paper.

*Evangelism*: John Stott explains that evangelism is “derived from a Greek term meaning literally ‘to bring or to spread good news.’ It is impossible to talk about evangelism without talking about the content of the good news.”<sup>11</sup> God’s witnesses must announce this to all and the door to God is open to everyone. Chuck Lawless writes, “Evangelism is being, doing, and telling the good news of Jesus Christ, depending upon the triune God to draw His own unto Himself and His church; that is, evangelism is never less than the *telling of the good news*.”<sup>12</sup> For the purpose of this project, *evangelism* denotes going and telling Jesus’ story under the leadership of the Holy Spirit to the lost.

*Church growth*: Elmer L. Towns states that “‘church growth’ . . . is associated with evangelism and/or missionary enterprises that imply outreach to the lost and their

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<sup>11</sup>John Stott, *For the Lord We Love: Your Study Guide to The Lausanne Covenant*, The Didasko Files Series (Oxford: The Lausanne Movement, 2009), 25.

<sup>12</sup>Chuck Lawless, “Church Growth Terminology,” classroom lecture handout, “32020—Introduction to Evangelism and Church Growth, Part 1,” Summer 2003, photocopy, 1.



incorporation into a church, hence causing local church growth.”<sup>13</sup> Charles L. Chaney and Ron S. Lewis write, “Church growth is an indigenous affair. A church must grow up in a place and fashion its ministry in such a way that it is natural to the community.”<sup>14</sup> *Church growth* here does not denote merely the usual meaning—a simple count of the number of people who attend the church or who are members of the church—but includes spiritual growth. Growth in faith as well as in numbers has been ordered by the Lord: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19-20).

*Gospel*: Lawless says the Greek word *euaggelion* as a noun “covers the proclamation of good news victory and joy about Jesus Christ.”<sup>15</sup> The English word means ‘God spell or God’s story.’ The Vietnamese word *Phúc Âm* literally means gospel. John Mark Terry writes, “Normally, we think of the gospel as the basic message of salvation.”<sup>16</sup>

*Vietnamese*: As applied to this project, the term *Vietnamese* includes any person from Vietnam or of Vietnamese ancestry who speaks Vietnamese or shares Vietnamese culture in the United States of America.

For this paper, *Vietnamese American* refers to the people displaced from their Vietnamese origin, the movement of these people to the U.S.A., and the struggle of these people to redefine their culture amidst such change. The term *Vietnamese refugee* is employed only in the narrow context of the Vietnam War, particularly during the time of the U.S.A. involvement in the struggle between North and South Vietnam from 1950 to

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<sup>13</sup>Elmer L. Towns, “The Relationship of Church Growth and Systematic Theology,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 29, no. 1 (March 1986): 1.

<sup>14</sup>Charles L. Chaney and Ron S. Lewis, *Design for Church Growth* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1997), 45.

<sup>15</sup>Lawless, “Church Growth Terminology,” 2.

<sup>16</sup>John Mark Terry, *Church Evangelism: Creating a Culture for Growth in Your Congregation* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1997), 4.

1975. This paper does not use “refugee” as a general term because it carries emotional discomfort. When applied to Vietnamese Americans, the term *refugee* connotes their particular history of displacement, exile, and immigration during the Vietnam War and after its end.

### **Research Methodology**

At the beginning of the project, I recruited participants from among church members. After preaching a sermon on the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20), I concluded by encouraging church members to sign up for courses and make commitments to attend all seminars. Then I invited church members to join me in praying for the project and for the evangelism movement throughout Dalton, focusing on Vietnamese nonbelievers.

I distributed and explained a Church Member Questionnaire (pretest) that requested each church member’s input on church growth, on his or her present and prior ministry service, and on how much time the member could devote to the project. The survey also helped the member to determine if he or she was ready to become a project participant.

The survey instructed the church members to check the box or fill in the blank that best represents his or her opinions. Questions measuring attitudes had a five-response range, while other questions called for demographic information to be filled in or required a yes/no response. From the survey responses, I selected a group of church members who were willing and able to participate in the evangelism project. At the preliminary meeting, participants formed themselves into small prayer groups. Group leaders reminded, encouraged, and led their group members to pray for the unsaved at least twice a week for fifteen weeks.

I then conducted the fifteen-week project. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 4. Participants took weekly three-hour seminars for twelve weeks regarding personal evangelism and discipleship. I led each seminar and group activity. In the

final two weeks, groups role played leading people to Jesus Christ and created and put into practice a plan of evangelism in the community. As the groups found prospective converts, I invited the prospects to the worship service, where I preached about God's love (John 3:16) and encouraged the prospects to make professions of faith in follow-up contacts. I asked those who professed faith in Jesus to stay for counseling and for the harvest celebration.

At the end of the fifteen-week project, I distributed the Church Member Questionnaire (posttest) and the Follow-up Evaluation forms for analysis and encouraged participants to give oral feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the project. Using my knowledge of Vietnam and its culture, I paid careful attention to any attitudes that may influence the result. This feedback helped the FVBCD achieve the best results in proclaiming the gospel to the Vietnamese community.

All resources utilized in the project were Bible-based. I reached out to and interviewed the elders of the Vietnamese community, business people, nail salon technicians, and Christians to discover any needs that this project could meet. In addition, research included observations, books, journals, articles, statistical data, projects, dissertations, the Internet, and resources from the James Boyce Library of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, which contains a large volume of information pertaining to evangelism and church growth.

## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

The Bible is full of examples of evangelism that demonstrate how God uses the power of the Holy Spirit to inspire his messengers to proclaim his will and his plan. These efforts lead to the development and growth of churches. When biblical and theological foundations are present, the church experiences spiritual growth, whether or not there is an increase in membership. Conversely, without these basics, the church does not grow spiritually, even if the membership increases. This chapter will discuss the fundamentals for evangelism that are found in biblically based theology that result in authentic church growth.

#### **Biblical Foundations for Evangelism and Church Growth**

Church growth requires specific principles and methodology, but these principles or methods alone do not lead to church growth. Church growth must be based on biblical foundations. This conclusion is not a vague conjecture. Such understanding flows inevitably from biblical texts that show God in relentless pursuit of messengers to carry out his mission, from the Old Testament to its consummation in the New Testament. J. Erickson Millard gives additional emphasis to the spiritual nature of the church when he says, “The church is biblically described as the people of God and the body of Christ.”<sup>1</sup> Chuck Lawless emphasizes this point, as he quotes Thom S. Rainer: “Church

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<sup>1</sup>Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1-vol. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), 12.

growth is evangelism that results in fruit-bearing disciples in the local church.”<sup>2</sup> To produce the best results, fruit trees need full sunlight. Disciples of Jesus Christ also need full SON-light when they serve God.

### **Evangelism Foundations in the Old Testament**

The term *evangelism* is not recorded in the Old Testament but it has the same meaning as *mission*. Both involve proclaiming God to the unsaved. The heart of the gospel and the Great Commission of the New Testament is imbedded in the Old Testament.<sup>3</sup> Evangelism and missions are from the first book of the Bible where God himself, in Genesis 3:15, promises that the woman’s descendent would defeat Satan, onward to the godly men he inspired to present his plan. Among the many notable examples of people chosen by God are Abraham, Moses, and Jonah. They are inspirations for evangelists today.

**The covenant made with Abraham.** God called Abraham to be the father of a great nation. His plan was to bless the nation and to establish a covenant with Abraham and his descendants. God commanded Abram to leave his homeland of Haran (Gen 11:31) and go to a place he had never known. Abram obeyed. When he was called, Abram proved to God that he was brave and faithful. Abram had a very challenging journey. When he was old, he had to leave the safety of his home and travel through enemy territory. With trust and obedience, he responded to God’s call. God was pleased with Abram and set out three significant promises. “I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless

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<sup>2</sup>Chuck Lawless, “Church Growth Terminology,” classroom lecture handout, “32020—Introduction to Evangelism and Church Growth, Part 1,” Summer 2003, photocopy, 28.

<sup>3</sup>Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2012), 18.

thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen 12:2-3).<sup>4</sup> In the book, *Mission in the Old Testament*, Walter C. Kaiser writes,

Abram was promised three blessings: (1) that he would be a great nation, (2) that God would personally bless him, and (3) that his “name” would be great. But why would God seek to do this for one isolated individual? The answer came in the fourth clause, which I have translated here as a purpose clause: “*in order that you may be a blessing.*” Therefore, this man was not to be singled out as one of God’s favorites, whom he would spoil rotten with gifts beyond what he should!

Abraham, the new name given by God, followed God’s calling without hesitation because of his commitment to pursue Yahweh’s sovereign will (Gen 12:1-20). He believed his heavenly Father and by faith followed God’s instructions. He is also a model of faith for us in many ways (Heb 11:8). God blessed one individual because he wanted Abraham to transmit God’s goodness and mercy to others. This emphasis is echoed in Galatians 3:8, “In thee shall all nations be blessed.” The promise came from God; it extended to Abraham’s descendants and to all other nations so that the world would be blessed. All people would know God as their Lord. Kaiser elaborates on the redemptive history that explains God’s pledge to Abraham from the past to the present. He refutes the thought that “many will still claim that Abraham and his successors did not have anything like a missionary mandate to be actively involved in spreading the good news. The thought is that God was the only actor on the scene, and the Old Testament saints were assigned a role in the cosmic order that was only meant to be *passive*.”<sup>5</sup> Bryant W. Hicks writes of “Israel’s frequent failure to remember that God cared for other nations as well and that Israel was his special treasure *for the very purpose* of being a blessing to them.”<sup>6</sup> Through Abraham, God could extend his plan to all people so that all

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<sup>4</sup>Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 10.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 20-21.

<sup>6</sup>W. Bryant Hicks, “Old Testament Foundations for Missions,” in *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, and Justice Anderson (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 56.

nations could join in worshipping the creator of the universe—the One and only Living God. Specifically, Abraham and Israel would become “evangelists.”

God’s provision is fulfilled in the Bible. Studying and analyzing God’s promises for Abraham are crucial for deeper understanding in growing the Vietnamese church in Dalton. Careful evaluation of the covenant is required, and the order of the presentation of the material is important for successful personal evangelism. Each church member needs to realize that the covenant with Abraham set up an unconditional mandate to obey God in the Old Testament that became a call for evangelism in the New. Acting on this God-given call to action makes possible the blessing of Abraham to individuals and nations.

Understanding that Abraham’s covenant was based on faith and future fulfillment is important to evangelism. We know that this blessing would ultimately be fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah. In the interim, through Abraham, the nations were to be blessed. This theme is found throughout the Old Testament: the covenant and the expectation of the Messiah. He would come to restore God’s people and in him the nations would come to receive salvation and an abundance of divine help. In order to get a biblical perspective on evangelism, one must start in the Old Testament. One must recognize that the people of Israel were set apart by the Lord to be a holy people and at the same time to be a light and a blessing to the nations around them.

The living mission began in the city of Haran. The people did not believe in the one God; they believed there were hundreds of gods. They prayed to many idols, which were objects carved from wood and stone. People believed the idols had magical powers. If they worshipped the One God, they were better able to live good lives. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD” (Deut 6:4). Abraham did not believe there was any magic or anything good in the idols. The story is told that once he smashed an idol to see what would happen to him. Of course, there were no consequences. Behn Boruch writes,

In those days, every city and every country had its own god. . . . They believed these gods were only a little more powerful than men.

When they went to another city, they prayed to the god or idol of that city. Because Abraham had become a nomad, a desert wanderer, he began to think of God as being *everywhere*. Wherever they camped, he felt God was near him. He began to believe there was only one God.<sup>7</sup>

A New Testament parallel is when Paul spoke the gospel for the first time to those religious pagans in Athens on Mars Hill. He took the time to explain their idolatry and then shared the truth. The truth is, there is only one God. The following verses concern Paul and his writings on this subject:

Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. . . .

Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. . . .

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. (Acts 17:16, 22, 24-25)

More passages from the Old Testament could be quoted, but there is an emerging pattern. Genesis 12:3 and Exodus 19:6 are two outstanding missions texts. Both revolve around the famous declaration that God's plan was to provide for the blessing of all the peoples in all the nations of the earth. This would happen through the father of the chosen people and the nations that would be born from him. Kaiser points out that the verb for "blessed" could be in its passive form. Literally, it would imply that to "be blessed" is a given.<sup>8</sup> In the first place, Israel is God's special people, his chosen nation. He dwells among them and they experience his blessings. These blessings also can help them live with a constant awareness of God's presence in their lives. In the second place, Israel is intended to be a blessing to the nations around them. God's people should

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<sup>7</sup>Behn Boruch, "In the Beginning," 2012 [on-line]; accessed 30 May 2013; available from <http://www.trussel.com/hf/abraham.htm>; Internet.

<sup>8</sup>Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "The Great Commission in the Old Testament," *International Journal of Frontier Mission* 13, no. 1 (January–March 1996): 4.



have an intense desire that the people of the world would be able to see that life in the covenant is good, and that there will be a future during which the nations will come and join God's people to declare God's praises.

Today, people all over the world have accepted the Jewish belief in one God. These people are called the New Israel. The gospel message goes around the world. Through Abraham's obedience, all nations could be blessed, and through all Christians, the New Israel, all kinds of people are being saved. The beginning of God's specific intent to have all people worship him is found in the call of Abraham. He was to share the truth of one God who wanted everyone in the covenant.

**The law given through Moses.** For almost forty years, Moses experienced God in the wilderness. The Father was preparing him for his next assignment. The book of Exodus records the remarkable life events of Moses, particularly when he challenged Pharaoh. He overcame the Egyptians' power through his trust in God. In the midst of overwhelming challenges, God worked through Moses, as he did Abraham, to demonstrate his desire to let all people know him. Hicks cites H. H. Rowley:

Moses was one of the earliest missionary figures of the Old Testament era. H. H. Rowley even calls him the first missionary of the Bible, coming from Midian to the captive Hebrews in Egypt to introduce them to the great "I Am," who would be their deliverer from captivity. Even more important, Moses would be Yahweh's instrument to bring the Hebrews into a clear understanding of how they were to live in relation to God.<sup>9</sup>

In order to bring Israel out of slavery in Egypt, Moses boldly confronted the king of Egypt, demanding that he let the Israelites leave the country. The Egyptian leader refused the Israelite's request. Despite Moses' demonstration of God's power through miracles, Pharaoh's heart became hard and he did not listen to Moses and Aaron, Moses' spokesman.

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<sup>9</sup>Hicks, "Old Testament Foundations for Missions," 56.

As God had done for Abraham, he gave supernatural, spiritual insight to Moses, enabling him to bear God's power. Once the ten plagues and the crossing of the Red Sea had proven God's might, the Bible says, "the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD" (Exod 7:5). Moses warned Pharaoh that the Egyptians would experience the wrath of God through the plagues so that they would learn to fear the word of the Lord. Pharaoh did not listen. The ruler left slaves and livestock in the field during the plague of hail (Exod 9:20-21). Pharaoh and the Egyptians had not known God before Moses' ministry, but they came to know of the power of the one true God through God's ambassador.

After demonstrating the Almighty's power, Moses received God's laws (the Ten Commandments, as well as many other laws for daily living and for worship). God orchestrated all of the actions of Moses. His actions would be used to continue to call people to be a part of the covenant with the one true God. In time, the meaning would be even clearer. The contrast between God's laws and his promise is pointed out in Galatians 3. Verses 2 and 5 contrast faith with law. The law given to Moses was a temporary measure until Christ, the Seed, came: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one" (vv. 19-20). "But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (v. 25). Christians are not required to obey the laws of Moses. They were glorious for a time, but Jesus Christ has fulfilled their purpose. The role of Moses was to guide humanity to worship and obey the Almighty God and to submit to him only. In that role, he was to deliver God's Commandments for the Israelites. They were to be aware of how God loved them and wanted to guide them to the right way. Unlike the laws, which were temporary, this mission continued in the evangelism of the New Testament to worship only the Trinity.

Today, in the FVBCD, every member is to continue in the line of evangelists. They must learn from the life of Moses. Initially, he did not want to take the people to

where God wanted them to be. He could not imagine himself being God’s spokesman before Pharaoh. Later on, he learned to trust and have faith in God. God “convinced” Moses to take the job. The Lord would provide whatever was needed for the task at hand. Moses just needed to understand that Jehovah was not requesting that he go back to save the children of Israel. He was commanding him to go. In Exodus 14:10-14, the Israelite people learned two valuable lessons: (1) God is able to overcome the enemy, and (2) God is able to provide for the needs of the people.

Similarly, the church needs to understand that the Lord does not just ask that they help him in saving others; he commands it. If the church members have been saved from their sins, it is expected that they will help the Savior find others to save; it is expected that they will be evangelists. This term is often used in the New Testament in a restricted sense—equivalent to a gospel preacher, a minister (cf. Acts 21:8; Eph 4:11; 2 Tim 4:5). In a general use of the term, any person, male or female, who brings the gospel to others through various means is an evangelist. And every Christian should be involved, in some way, in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ through evangelism. This task is a continuation of God calling together a missionary people.

**The message spread by Jonah.** Jonah was sent by God to preach in the Assyrian capital city of Nineveh. God gave instructions to Jonah twice. The first time, “the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me” (Jonah 1:1-2). And the second time, “the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee” (Jonah 3:1-2). The Scripture passage about the woe of Nineveh in Nahum 3:1-4 gives a clear idea of how wicked the people of Nineveh were. Jonah had every reason to expect that, at the very best, he would be mocked and treated as a fool. He might be attacked and killed if he did what the Lord told him to do. His reluctance to evangelize was also because Jonah did not want the Assyrians in Nineveh to escape God’s judgment.

When Jonah heard God's call, he was afraid of the powerful and wicked Assyrians. He may have been afraid because he was given a difficult job to do. Discussing Jonah's reasons for not doing what God told him to do is easy. God told Jonah to go and to preach; every Christian has the same command in Matthew 28:18-20. With Jonah's example, all Christians have even less reason than the prophet for their disobedience.

Jonah fled from God and tried to escape from the mission. He ran away rather than obeying God. Jonah "rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD" (Jonah 1:3).

Jonah, fleeing from the presence of the Lord, is completely different from any other prophet in the Bible. He ran away from God. When he boarded the ship to flee, God put a storm in his way. He was thrown overboard by the sailors. This shows that human plans must come under God's sovereign control. After spending time in the belly of a great fish, Jonah eventually surrendered and obeyed God. He preached a message of judgment to large crowds in Nineveh. "So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jonah 3:3-4).

Jonah fulfilled his mission. He preached a message of judgment to large crowds in Nineveh. This affected the whole city, from the king to his subjects, from the highest to the lowest levels, from the richest to the poorest people. Everyone responded to God. They put on sackcloth as a sign of repentance (Jonah 3:5-10). Kaiser states,

The hand of God pursued him and finally brought him back, after some harrowing experiences, to Nineveh. There, he finally preached his message of judgment that had such an effect on the whole city, from top to bottom, that the king and people

put on sackcloth as a sign of their contrition and repentance. Thus, the threatened judgment was averted in the nick of time.<sup>10</sup>

God forgave the wicked nation when the city of Nineveh repented. Jonah knew that God wanted him to grab the attention of all people there, regardless of their religion or country of origin. Jonah's message to Nineveh led to a fruitful great awakening, and the results of his mission expanded throughout many nations.<sup>11</sup> Jonah thus might be called the first evangelist to the Gentiles, and his proclamation of God's will the model for converting all nations.

Jonah's evangelistic efforts still affect the heart of many ministers. Jonah ran away from God's command and did not want to preach to Nineveh, the most important city in Assyria. He eventually did the job as God commanded. Currently, Jonah's eventual obedience helps many evangelists discover and understand the facts and the concepts about "evangelism," a word that has generally been understood to apply to the propagation of the gospel among the unsaved. Jonah fulfilled his mission, and his commitment inspires believers to do as God had commanded him. The book of Jonah helps missionaries to see the picture of God's love; it encourages those who love to share the gospel with everyone so that unbelievers might repent and believe. In order to help the church to grow, the church must learn from the story of Jonah and determine to obey God, doing whatever and going wherever needed for evangelism. The pastor of the church must lead his congregation to fulfill God's commission. God's plan for those of Israel to be a blessing to all nations continued through Jonah, the reluctant evangelist.

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<sup>10</sup>Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 65.

<sup>11</sup>Greg Laurie, "Could There Be Another Great Awakening?" August 24, 2012 [on-line]; accessed 31 May 2013; available from <http://www.wnd.com/2012/08/could-there-be-another-great-awakening/>; Internet.

## **Evangelism Foundations in the New Testament**

The New Testament reveals that the prophecies of the old covenant have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Christ followers now share the good news. Among the best known passages that highlight this aspect is Matthew 5:14-16: “Ye are the light of the world.” Followers of Christ are called to let their light shine before men, “that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” A similar passage is Philippians 2:14-16 where the apostle Paul calls on believers to “shine as lights” among “a crooked and perverse nation.” Jesus and Paul are two main examples of evangelists in the New Testament. The New Testament itself has been the standard reference for evangelism for church growth throughout the centuries. The following paragraphs examine the evangelistic emphasis of Jesus and Paul.

**Jesus and the Great Commission.** According to the Bible, Jesus had the boldness and compassion for evangelism of many types. He performed miracles, healed the sick, fed the hungry, and taught valuable lessons through the use of parables. Jesus also spent many hours in conversation with anyone who would speak with him. Some, such as the woman at the well, became his witnesses to others. The regenerated Gadarene demoniac wanted to travel with Jesus (Mark 5:1-20). The Bible contains over forty accounts of Jesus’ personal evangelism.

Jesus, God’s Son, came to demonstrate the Father’s call to all people to be a part of the covenant. Hundreds of years after the Hebrew prophet Isaiah delivered the message of the coming kingdom of God, another man recognized as a Jewish prophet emerged on the scene, bringing a message reminiscent of Isaiah’s. He proclaimed: “the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). Could this man, Jesus, son of Joseph from Nazareth, be the one whom God sent to fulfill Isaiah’s prophecy? “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that

publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” (Isa 52:7). Jesus’ life and ministry reflected the fact that he did fulfill the prophecy. He intended to share the gospel with all nations.

In Mark 16:15, Jesus talked to his disciples: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus gave the instructions known as the Great Commission: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (v. 19). The meaning of “baptizing” is thus expressed by baptizing them unto the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by a solemn profession of the only true religion, and by a solemn consecration to the service of the sacred Trinity. In John 15:16, Jesus taught, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”

Christ founded the church. He is the cornerstone. The church does his work. In order to help the lost cross the bridge to God, the church must continuously produce disciples, just like Jesus did. These disciples make other disciples. John Mark Terry writes, “The command here [the Great Commission] is to make ‘disciples,’ not ‘converts.’ A disciple is a mature, reproducing follower of Christ. A convert is a new believer who is still a spiritual baby.”<sup>12</sup> Of course, a nonbeliever becomes a convert first, due to evangelism, and then, with training, becomes a disciple. They then practice evangelism as they share the gospel with nonbelievers. Even a spiritual baby can tell another person about Jesus’ salvation and point someone toward a church.

The Great Commission calls for evangelism and, by implication, congregationalism. But the mission also calls for a heavy emphasis on expressing Jesus’ teachings to all the nations of the world. Jesus’ teaching was not for the disciples alone.

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<sup>12</sup>John Mark Terry, *Church Evangelism: Creating a Culture for Growth in Your Congregation* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1997), 8.

He had a clear notion that other nations were also to be part of God's salvation plan. He gave the church both the authority and power to go and make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:18). Ed Stetzer writes,

The Great Commission explains that the gospel is intended to reach every nation. The word *nation* is better translated every "people" or "ethnic group."  
. . . The most biblical church is the one in which the cross is the only stumbling block for the unchurched.

Lost people should face no church-culture stumbling blocks that keep them from Christ. Lost people need no additional reasons to stay away from church.<sup>13</sup>

The Lord's goal, as it has been since Abraham, is for his disciples to establish and expand his kingdom on earth so that all people can receive salvation. His universal mission was repeated to Isaac (Gen 26:4), and reaffirmed to Jacob (28:13-15; 35:11, 12; 46:3) and Moses (Exod 3:6-8; 6:2-8). Thomas D. Lea and David Alan Black write, "The Gospel [of Acts] describes what Jesus began to do and teach."<sup>14</sup> Christians cannot evangelize until they understand the ministry and commandments of Jesus. This command of Jesus, as written in Mark 16:15, states that believers should be actively witnessing to nonbelievers. Yet, many Christians know nothing about sharing their faith or reaching out to non-Christians. Many fear that they might be confronted with dangerous situations. Lea and Black note that throughout the persecution, "the reality of the ascension pointed to the hope of Jesus' return, and during the interim of Jesus' absence his disciples are to be involved in spreading the gospel."<sup>15</sup> Christians also realize that Jesus loves the church—that is, the body of believers—and wants the church to grow. He wants them to use his Spirit to spread the gospel throughout the world. Conversation with the lost community must break through any language barrier, must eliminate any

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<sup>13</sup>Ed Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003), 34, 37.

<sup>14</sup>Thomas D. Lea and David Alan Black, *The New Testament: Its Background and Message*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003), 291.

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



culture barrier, and must begin with the Great Commission. If church members take Jesus' Great Commission seriously, world evangelization will flourish. The greatest goal for a Christian would be to glorify God by being obedient to the Great Commission. Many Christians today are discovering that the gospel of the kingdom of God must be communicated in a way that is understood by our culture. The gospel calls us, not only to personal faith in Jesus, but also to be part of his kingdom community and to join him in his work of recreating the world.

**Paul and his missionary journeys.** The Old Testament was Paul's authoritative source for the mission that God gave him. Luke quoted the prophet Isaiah: "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth" (Acts 13:47). The apostle Paul wanted people to be saved in his life time as he quoted Isaiah 59:20-21:

And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and forever.

These words are found in Romans 11:26-27: "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion [*sic*] the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

The Holy Spirit can be seen in Paul's ministry. The Apostle always consulted the will of God in any circumstance. In Colossians 1:23, Paul says, "Continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister." It is wonderful that God transformed Paul from a persecutor of Christians to an evangelist who connected the Roman world with the Jewish community. Kaiser says, "The case for evangelizing the Gentiles had not been a recently devised switch in the plan of God but had always been the long-term commitment of the living

God who is a missionary God.”<sup>16</sup> This connects with God’s promise to Abraham. Luke’s record of Paul’s missionary journeys in Acts shows that Paul started many churches.

The book of Acts also records church growth through the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul made three long missionary journeys throughout the Roman Empire, planting churches, preaching the gospel, and giving strength and encouragement to early Christians. Saul’s passion for persecution turned to evangelism. After being converted by Jesus, Saul (from then on, Paul) became the greatest evangelist in the history of the church. He is included in that “so great a cloud of witnesses” mentioned in Hebrews 12:1. These witnesses had evangelistic intensity and spoke with great power to the church.

Paul’s final speech at Rome was, “Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles and they will listen!” (Acts 28:28 NIV). This is in contrast to the Jews. Concerning them, Paul quoted Isaiah 6:9-10. “And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.” These two statements came as a conclusion to a spiritual decision that had been made years before in Antioch. In that city, Paul and Barnabas announced their decision to turn to the Gentiles: “It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46). The Lord commanded Paul and Barnabas to use the Old Testament, the Law of Moses, to persuade the Jewish leaders to learn about Jesus. Paul ended with, “Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it” (Acts 28:28). Paul, a pioneer church planter, a missionary, and an evangelist, stepped forward to obey the living God. He went on to evangelize the Gentile nations and brought many nonbelievers to Christ. Paul was a great missionary to the Gentiles. Kaiser comments,

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<sup>16</sup>Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 81.

Paul was the missionary to the Gentiles par excellence. The same gospel that had been given by the prophets in the Holy Scriptures was now the good news that Paul carried to the nations. In the plan of God, there was a “full number of the Gentiles” that must first come to know the Savior. But this coming was to cause the Jewish people to become jealous. However, when that number had been reached, then God would once again turn to the Jewish people.<sup>17</sup>

The heritage from the Old Testament and men like Abraham, Moses, and Jonah continued. Paul was working hard to follow God’s command and the prophets’ examples to go and evangelize the nations. As he traveled his long journey to the various Christian churches, he always had a strong commitment. Despite the abundances of conflicts and battles lost by the early church, God’s plan was evident in Paul’s work in Jerusalem, Asia, and Rome. Of Paul’s attitude and behavior as a missionary, Gerald Borchert writes, “Paul was a genuine man of God, but he was flesh and blood. He was an incredible missionary statesman; he had a tenderness that continues to touch us today. He truly learned what it meant to be a faithful follower of Jesus.”<sup>18</sup>

Luke’s description of Paul’s sermon on Mars Hill (Areopagus, Hill of Ares) is well known. Borchert reminds us that there are times when the gospel is presented immediately:

This does not mean an evangelist ignores developing friendships, but to grow in a relationship takes time and time is not something that we all have. There are those today who use Acts 17. Let’s examine. Paul’s audience was very hard to preach to. Paul looked at the surroundings he was in and all he saw was false worship. Athens was famous for their temples that were works of art. There was no other place on earth at the time where so many idols were exhibited. Idolatry was the very thing for which God had punished Israel over and over again.<sup>19</sup>

Paul’s Mars Hill encounter was with the Greek philosophers who wanted to prove that truth is found elsewhere and that the Bible was not the only place that contained spiritual truth. He gave consideration to their ignorance in that he did not

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Gerald L. Borchert, *Discovering Thessalonians* (Carmel, NY: Guideposts, 2010), 13.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

call their idols demonic. Wherever Paul turned, he must have seen statues, temples, and shrines. What happened on Mars Hill is important because of the many lessons that can be learned. One learns not only from how Paul presented the gospel and presented a biblical worldview directly to the audiences, but also from the varied responses he received. With these pagan philosophers, however, he took a different tack. He told them we are created beings, countering the Greek thought that men were gods. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 8:4-5: “As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there be gods many, and lords many).” To the believers, Paul instructs in 1 Corinthians 10:19-20: “What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.”

Paul obviously saw himself as a defender of the truth. He presented the gospel of Christ clearly. He did not try to make the gospel merely palatable nor was he willing to compromise to gain people for Christ. He said, “But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts” (1 Thess 2:4). Paul worked hard to accomplish his call to evangelism in keeping with biblical instructions. The psalmist notes, “I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me” (Ps 119:30). The same idea is recorded in Hebrews 3:2, 6: “Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. . . . But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” These verses remind believers again of the continuity of spreading God’s Word, which will bless others throughout the whole Bible. Paul’s conversion led him to establish churches throughout

the Gentile world.<sup>20</sup> He had become a faithful steward of the message of Christ. In the early days, Paul wrote to his personal acquaintances that faithfulness is the core element of a steward: “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor 4:2). He remained such a steward to the very end of his life.<sup>21</sup> He also was a remarkable disciple-maker, as evidenced by his training of Timothy and John Mark.

Evangelists today can learn from Paul’s life and from his dedication to the calling God gave him. Faithfulness included a price to be paid. Paul ended up spending at least five years of his ministry in prison, was whipped five times, beaten three times with rods, survived a stoning, and endured being shipwrecked in the Mediterranean. He evangelized countless cities as outlined in Acts. His impact on Christianity is truly enormous.

**Paul’s responsiveness to the Holy Spirit to go to Macedonia.** In the sixteenth chapter of Acts, Paul was on what many refer to as his second missionary journey. He and his mission team had traveled to Asia. Luke says that while they were passing through this area, the Holy Spirit forbade them to preach the Word. When they came to Mysia, they wanted to turn to the northeast and take the gospel into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not allow them to go there, either. While in the Mysian city of Troas, in a vision at night, Paul received what is termed the Macedonian Call.

And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. (Acts 16:8-10)

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<sup>20</sup>There are four accounts of Paul’s conversion: Gal 1:15-17 (from Paul himself); Acts 9:1-19 (Luke relating Paul’s experience); Acts 22:2b-16 (Luke relating Paul’s telling of his conversion to the crowd in Jerusalem); and Acts 26:9-18 (Luke relating Paul’s telling of his conversion to Agrippa). Gal 1:11-12, 1 Cor 9:1, and 15:8 also contain allusions to Paul’s conversion.

<sup>21</sup>The faithful steward is someone who is doing the best he can with the things that God has given him. The Lord calls us to be faithful stewards in everything we do.

The reason Paul could not preach the gospel in Asia or Bithynia was because he was needed in Macedonia. Determining that God had called them, Paul and his mission team went to preach to the Macedonians. Paul was very successful on this journey. Today, all Christians have a responsibility to help spread the gospel in the place God chooses for them to help the church to grow.

I recently had an experience that emphasized this need to be responsive to the Holy Spirit. Such a willingness often must come in spite of our desires and prejudices. I had signed a contract to teach at Thailand Baptist Theological Seminary. Due to a number of issues, the assignment was changed to Hanoi, Vietnam. Hanoi is a Communist-controlled country where I had been in a concentration camp after the end of the war in 1975. The Holy Spirit impressed on me the need to go and share the gospel in spite of my preference not to go. Believers must always go where the Spirit leads. When I did my teaching and witnessing in Hanoi and the surrounding areas, it turned out (logically, since the Spirit was leading me) that my personal memories did not interfere with my mission. From the start, when I talked about Jesus to the non-Christians on the streets, I had in mind first and foremost people who needed salvation, not Communists trying ineffectively to control all by their unknown gods.

All Christ-followers have their own comfort areas. As a rule, they do not like to get out of these areas. Having a vision and focus only on certain kinds of people is easy for them. If believers are going to respond to something similar to the Macedonian Call, they must be open to different kinds of opportunities. Sometimes, the best prospects for the gospel are not so obvious. They are not always found where we are accustomed to looking. Paul made it his aim to follow the Holy Spirit and to go to those who had not heard the gospel (Rom 15:20-21). Jesus talked to those whom society deemed unworthy of association (Matt 9:9-13; John 4:7-9). The church must be willing to do the same. Paul did not ignore these people. He preached the gospel to them. Not everyone responded to his message, but some people did. As they did, one by one the hearts and minds of

people began to change. The same thing can and must happen today. Those who serve God faithfully obey him immediately (Gen 22:3; John 9:4; Jas 4:17). As soldiers of Jesus Christ, believers are qualified to respond. Sometimes, Christians are hesitant to act, doubting their ability, wondering if they are qualified. Part of the armor of Christians is feet shod “with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (Eph 6:15). Christ-followers must always be ready with an answer when the cry for help is heard.

The Macedonian Call is an event that all Christians can read about in the Bible, but it has principles that apply in our lives today. The church should always be open to the possibility of taking the gospel to anyone who is interested, realizing that those who are lost are in need of what Christians have to share. The Holy Spirit will be the guide.

The church members in the FVBCD also know that they live in Christ. He is in them because he has given individuals and the church his Spirit. They learned from the example of the apostles who went forth and proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ who was crucified and rose from the dead. Beginning in Jerusalem, these early believers moved to Judea and Samaria and then to other areas. They called on everyone to repent and have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The church of Christ incorporated people from different cultures and national backgrounds: Jews and Samaritans, Greeks and Romans, blacks and whites. God’s people are recruited from all nations in the world. The new covenant differs from the old covenant in many ways; however, some things have not changed at all. Believers are still aliens and strangers in the world. They are still called out of the world to be a holy nation, yet they are called to live in the world as a blessing and a light to the people around them. The original calling of Abraham, Moses, and Jonah still applies today.

### **Theological Foundations for Evangelism and Church Growth**

Church leaders must see the biblical basis for church growth through the theological lens. The Trinity is intimately linked with the theological foundations of

evangelism. In this section, I will address two issues: the Trinity and the three dimensions of church growth.

### **The Trinity**

If the evangelism growth view corresponds to the perspectives of the Trinity, then the church will grow authentically. God in three persons calls, equips, and empowers the church. John Stott, in *The Living Church*, declares, “It is not our church; it is God’s. This is a splendid Trinitarian truth about the church, namely that it belongs to God the Father, has been redeemed by the blood of Christ His Son, and has overseers appointed by God the Holy Spirit.”<sup>22</sup> Louis A. Drummond quotes from C. E. Autry the theological truths that form the skeleton of evangelism:

Theology is to evangelism what the skeleton is to the body. Remove the skeleton and the body becomes a helpless quivering mass of jelly-like substance. By means of the skeleton the body can stand erect and move. The great systems of theological truths form the skeleton which enables our revealed religion to stand. If the church would effectively evangelize today, it must do so from a strong theological base.<sup>23</sup>

**God the Father: The Designer.** By way of design, God the Father created human beings because he loved people and had good purposes for them. He wants to grow his church in order for people to experience that fellowship and purpose. Initially, God the Father wants unchurched people to be saved. He wants them to be in his church. One must remember, however, that God is the ruler of his church. Thus, Paul describes in Ephesians 1:22; 3:10: “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church. . . . To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.” This proves that God the Father is the designer. His design could also include

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<sup>22</sup>John Stott, *The Living Church: Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 83.

<sup>23</sup>Lewis A. Drummond, *Leading Your Church in Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1975), 35.



new church plants. One must understand that leaders of existing churches or church plants cannot make a church grow. God's work involves many different individuals with a variety of gifts and abilities. They must work together and be committed to God for church growth. This truth is explained in 1 Corinthians: "I have planted; Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Cor 3:6). The Father's followers can be a part of his gracious work.

**God the Son: The Leader.** Jesus leads his churches in this way:

Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matt 16:17-19)

John 1:14 proclaims, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." The cross Jesus bore more than two thousand years ago means God the Son died for sinful people. Unbelievers should repent of their sins and be reconciled to God. The church purchased by Jesus Christ is the place for believers to worship God and the place to help the lost to be saved. Jesus Christ came to the earth to fulfill God's will for salvation on behalf of sinful people. The Bible has this unforgettable verse: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). The main organization to help God with his eternal plan is the church. Its members give unbelievers the knowledge of Jesus Christ so that they can receive God's salvation. They can mature to the point of winning and discipling others. God has given his Son, whom he set apart as an evangelist. He has special gifts and qualifications for service as the Messiah of the Lord and herald of the kingdom of God. An Van Pham writes,

God the Son built His church and died for His church so that it would be able to grow. Before being nailed on the cross, Jesus informed His disciples that He,

Himself, was responsible for building His church on earth not men. . . . Christ purchased His church for God with His blood; therefore, church growth is not intended to be a movement affecting one nation, but one impacting the whole world. . . . Jesus died for His Church so that it would be able to grow.<sup>24</sup>

The care of God clearly provided doctrinal guidelines. First, the church Jesus built is the assembly of God's people (Heb 12:23). Second, the church continues the covenantal obligation of being a "blessing" to all nations (Acts 1:8). Third, its members have forsaken the fellowship of the world and its sin (2 Cor 6:17-18).

**God the Holy Spirit: The Communicator.** God the Holy Spirit is a brilliant communicator. God's will is that members be added to the church. The sovereignty of God provides his children with the comfort that an all-knowing, all-powerful God is in control. He communicates with his church through the Holy Spirit. God uses this communication to help the church to grow. By dwelling in Christian's lives, the Holy Spirit directs them to live up to God's standards and to witness for him.

In addition, the Holy Spirit empowers Christians to use their grace to serve one another and to expand God's kingdom. Most importantly, the Holy Spirit helps Christians to determine the best ways to serve God. First Corinthians 12:7-10 discusses spiritual gifts:

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.

Since the Holy Spirit indwells believers, by the grace of God church members can bear fruit in their lives. Galatians 5:22-23 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." God wants his children to be different from the secular world: "Ye also,

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<sup>24</sup>An Van Pham, "A Missiological Strategy for Korean-American Church Growth in Georgia" (D.Miss. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004), 66.

as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 2:5).

In the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit worked within the church and in the world to foster oneness within the body of Christ and to lead the church to expand from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. In Acts 1:8, the Holy Spirit empowered the church to be Christ’s witness. Wayne Grudem, writing about the presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers, says there are “various aspects of the Holy Spirit’s work in the world, and especially in the lives of believers. . . . He is the one who is most prominently *present* with us now.”<sup>25</sup>

References to evangelism are an indication that the church’s mission still must be carried out. The responsibility of declaring the resurrection of Jesus Christ demands the full presentation of the gospel under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. After Jesus ascended into heaven, however, and continuing through the entire church age, the Holy Spirit is now the only manifestation of the presence of the Trinity among his children. Christians can find great comfort and joy reminiscing over the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ also taught many lessons in the gospels. The church must work now to tell his story, as it is empowered by the Holy Spirit. Jesus wants total dedication, not halfhearted commitment. Christians cannot pick and choose among Jesus’ commandments or follow him selectively. They must be willing to abandon anything that keeps them from following Christ’s commands. The behavior described here is not religious fanaticism; it is a proper response to the risen Christ in light of his sacrifice and in light of this world’s end and eternity’s approach.

### **The Three Dimensions of Church Growth**

Church growth has been built on theological bedrock. Continued expansion occurs only when Christians produce a tremendous surge of church growth in large

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<sup>25</sup>Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 634.

areas that remain non-Christian. D. A. McGavran writes that church growth is not automatic:

The church of Jesus Christ has grown enormously. From 120 on the day of Pentecost to more than a billion in 1982, and from a small band of believers to great companies of Christians, the church has grown tremendously. It has also grown unevenly. In places it remains static for generations. In places it declines. Many denominations in the United States in the last few years have declined.<sup>26</sup>

The resources of the church growth, including prayer, allow believers to understand what God's will is for the church. One lens for examination of how the body of Christ can grow is the pastor. He must have good leadership abilities, good biblical and theological knowledge, and a workable action plan for evangelism and church growth. He will lead the church in biblical growth. The congregation understands the three dimensions of church growth. A growing, vibrant congregation gives emphasis to each dimension of church growth: numerical, spiritual, and missional.

**Numerical growth.** The numerical dimension is the common measurement in evaluating the growth of the church. Since people are the recipients of Jesus' compassion, a church that follows Jesus will be well known for caring for the lost. Jesus formed his church upon his Word as a caring foundation not necessarily measured by numbers. Lawless says, "The simplest dimension of growth is based on the total of membership data in three sources: conversion growth, transfer growth, and biological growth."<sup>27</sup> Pham writes, "Physical or numerical growth is rapid church growth through an increase in the size and number of congregations. The foundation of church growth is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who leads the church from a simple beginning to expansion."<sup>28</sup> Jesus'

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<sup>26</sup>D. A. McGavran, "Church Growth Movement," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1989), 241.

<sup>27</sup>Lawless, "Church Growth Terminology," 28.

<sup>28</sup>Pham, "A Missiological Strategy for Korean-American Church Growth in Georgia," 61.

illustration of the mustard seed gives an indication of his kingdom plan. This allusion illustrates that God is obviously interested in numerical growth as a dynamic aspect of Christianity.

A growing church must initiate this important step, and a pastor must train church members for personal witnessing. This can be accomplished through effective preaching, stimulating Bible study and pastoral care. When church members learn to share the gospel, their church has an opportunity to grow. The church should have a plan and be committed to witnessing in its local area.

In order to effectively witness, church members must embrace the responsibility to walk in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. They should focus on the right objectives so that they will make few mistakes in dealing with the person who responds appropriately to the Spirit's witness. Church leadership must make sure that every member within the body has a clear understanding of the aims as well. The best objectives are targeted for the specific goal of creating awareness of their own roles and responsibilities in reaching people for Christ. Such a focus is a tough challenge for the church in any era. Some churches may feel inadequate. The church members can prepare an action plan to accomplish God's work by working every day to win the lost. Similarly, Gary McIntosh emphasizes the need of numerical growth in churches. He says, "Numerical growth is to be expected in local churches. Some local churches grow dramatically, others more slowly, and, of course, some do not grow at all. However, if the universal church is to grow, as Christ promised it would, local congregations must win people to Christ and assimilate new disciples into the body."<sup>29</sup> Scriptures have more examples to prove that the apostles were blessed when they strove to bring people to the church. For example, although Peter and John were arrested because of their powerful sermons, thousands of people were saved. Acts 4:4 is another illustration: "Howbeit

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<sup>29</sup>Gary L. McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth: How You Can Work with God to Build a Faithful Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003), 169.

many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.” The number of converts grew. The message was presented in forms other than through preaching.

The nature of church growth requires starting congregations. This increases the possibility of adding people to the church. The city of Jerusalem could not contain Christianity, as evidenced in Luke’s statement: “Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied” (Acts 9:31). “Churches” indicates that new churches had been started.

The early church grew numerically and rapidly (Acts 9:31). According to the Bible, the initial growth was from one hundred twenty to more than three thousand (Acts 1:15; 2:41). While the church members nurtured the new believers, they continued to evangelize. Under the grace of the Lord, more people joined the church community daily (Acts 2:47). Five thousand men were added to the church in one day (Acts 4:4). The church followed the basic pattern in accordance with the teaching of the apostles. They also had the benefit of one-on-one teaching and the evangelizing that had to occur within this newfound way of worshipping God (Acts 2:46a). The modern church must retain this approach. The church of today would grow exponentially if such a pattern was followed. Growth, rather than survival, would be the emphasis. Resources would be used for ministry, not maintenance. Aubrey Malphurs stresses the need for growth with the metaphor of a sinking ship and a life boat:

If a church waits until it is dying to make changes, it finds itself in a reactive not a proactive mode. . . . The church may have used up most of its resources in trying to keep the sinking ship afloat. Some people are willing to invest in a ship that is listing badly, but many head for the lifeboats. Those who decide to stay with the ship find themselves constantly wrestling with discouragement.<sup>30</sup>

Biblical evangelism and discipleship will keep this from happening.

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<sup>30</sup>Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leader* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2005), 16.

Every church today should still strive to increase church membership. In most cases, the use of diagrams, charts and graphs can be a helpful tool in monitoring numerical growth. They can also provide a picture of the fluctuating church membership. In *Advanced Strategic Planning*, Malphurs describes the life cycle of a church with the Sigmoid Curve (figure 1), which he relates to church growth:

The S-curve depicts how virtually everything in life begins, grows, plateaus, and then ultimately dies. It is true of human beings. It also may be true of relationships such as marriage. . . . In general, a church is born and over time it grows. Eventually it reaches a plateau, and if nothing is done to move it off that plateau, it begins to decline. If nothing interrupts the decline, it will die.<sup>31</sup>

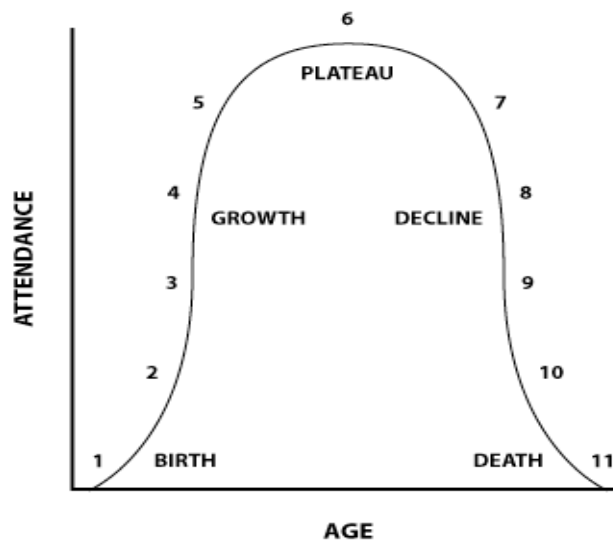


Figure 1: The life cycle of a church with the Sigmoid Curve

Numerical growth was the norm in the days after Pentecost. This period is described in retrospect in the following verse: “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands” (Rev 7:9). Because evangelism was the final command issued by

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 10-11.

the risen Lord, it became the very lifeblood<sup>32</sup> of the churches. Consequently, “the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). The Scriptures declare that church growth is God’s will. In response to Jesus’ care and love, his followers through the centuries obeyed his commission. Believers were faithful coworkers and they assisted in activities that promoted church growth.

A church may be growing numerically, but it may still face obstacles. Even though a church’s life is indicative of the hard work of a pastor, the congregation must also contribute. The powerful commitment that a pastor makes to himself in order to do well for his congregation requires a reciprocal commitment from the congregation for the church to be fruitful and multiply.

**Spiritual growth.** Another significant goal for the church is spiritual growth. This type of growth cannot be seen until people really are connected to God. Galatians 5:22-23a describes spiritual growth: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” With the help of the Holy Spirit, Christians can produce the fruit of the Spirit and have it grow in their lives. By obeying God’s Word and applying the character traits of the fruit of the Spirit, church members grow in fellowship. The Bible shows that God calls and endows his children so that they can join him in accomplishing divine activities for church growth. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11:1, writes, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of a godly life. Christians grow in faith by walking with the Holy Spirit and overcoming the lust of the flesh, as stated in Galatians 5:16-18; 24-26. Many believers go their entire Christian lives and never understand the necessity of the Holy Spirit’s presence and work. The Spirit helps believers interpret Scripture, have fellowship with the Lord, and have a genuinely fruitful and victorious Christian life.

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<sup>32</sup>Lifeblood means “vitality.” Theologically, Christ himself is our source of life (John 15—vine and branches).



The church followed through with this command in the book of Acts. Rightly understood, the spiritual growth of all the churches is its central purpose to fight against the power of Satan. Rainer writes, “as the individual members of the body mature spiritually through worship, Bible study, prayer, service, and the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit, the corporate body grows in strength.”<sup>33</sup> Lawless suggests that Christians must be stronger in spiritual warfare. He writes, “This *theological* truth—that believers find security in their identity in Christ—is foundational for the book of Ephesians. Standing on this theological truth enabled the Ephesians to fight against the schemes of Satan.”<sup>34</sup>

Ephesians 4:13-15 stresses the need to grow to be Christlike. This is especially the case in the Great Commission passage of our Lord in Matthew 28:18-20. The church can hold fast to the faith in spiritual warfare through the spiritual discipline of prayer. Praying for and with others is the most effective way for Christians to walk successfully with God, according to Acts.<sup>35</sup>

During the time of the gospel’s spread among the Judeans, Luke made an observation on the prayer of Christians. He writes, “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren” (Acts 1:14). The presence of the Holy Spirit during their prayer demonstrated a living faith for the new converts and helped them to grow spiritually. A Christian’s spiritual growth includes a strong faith and trust in God. Spiritual growth is a lifelong process of producing the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). The Holy Spirit empowers Christians to grow spiritually. He enables church members to become more like Jesus

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<sup>33</sup>Thom S. Rainer, *The Book of Church Growth: History, Theology, and Principles* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1993), 23.

<sup>34</sup>Lawless, “Church Growth Terminology,” 28.

<sup>35</sup>Spiritual growth passages include Acts 1:14; 2:42; 4:32, 34-37; 5:13; 6:7; 8:4, 5; 11:19-20; 12:5.

Christ. The sense of fellowship that is created results in genuine faith-building, it is long-lasting, and it leads to the sort of worship that makes people want to get deeper into the Word of God.

For the first three hundred years of its existence, the church met primarily in the homes of its members, not in specially designed buildings. The meeting place for the first-century church was the home. Romans 16:3, as well as 1 Corinthians 16:19, speaks of the church that met in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. Paul's letter to Philemon is addressed to Archippus and to the church in his house (v. 2). Likewise, in his greetings in Colossians 4, the apostle mentions the church that met in the house of Nymphas (v. 15). These early Christians were interested in growing spiritually, not in building physical structures. The church experiences spiritual growth when its individual members grow spiritually. Spiritual growth is concerned with demonstrating the Christian lifestyle through faith and love. Today, as in every generation, there is a need for spiritual growth.

**Missional growth.** Church growth is not only concerned with numerical growth and spiritual growth, but also with missional growth. Such growth requires that church members intentionally reach out to people. Stetzer provides a definition of missional growth when he writes, "A church becomes missional when it remains faithful to the gospel and simultaneously seeks to contextualize the gospel (to the degree it can) so the gospel engages the worldview of the hearers. . . . [T]he church must learn to exegete its culture and reflect on the culture from a biblical perspective."<sup>36</sup> Acts 1:8 states, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Apostles and early church members spread God's Word in missional growth. Christianity spread naturally along the main roads of the Roman Empire. Pham writes,

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<sup>36</sup>Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern World*, 28.

The very first group of Christians left Jerusalem after the persecution and “preached the word wherever they went” (Acts 8:4). Peter and John were sent to Samaria (Acts 8:14). Philip, a deacon of the Jerusalem church, was called as an evangelist “to go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza” (Acts 8:26), and then to Azotus, “preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea” (Acts 8:40). The church of Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 11:22), and then the church of Antioch “fasted and prayed, they placed their hands” on Barnabas and Saul and sent them off to start their missionary journeys (Acts 13:3).<sup>37</sup>

These Scriptures point to multiple examples of contextualizing the gospel.

The great persecution of the early church also created missional growth. The three dimensions of church growth (numerical, spiritual, and missional) depend on what a Christian is willing to say or whether a Christian is willing to share the gospel across boundaries. The gospel was spread by Christians unhindered and unstoppable. Arthur F. Glasser and Donald A. McGravan write, “We are witnessing tremendous worldwide missionary activism. God saved adherents of every religion, through Christians, knowing the way God has spoken to them and believing that it has universal applicability, will share what God has said and done in Christ.”<sup>38</sup> Christians must introduce Jesus Christ and speak strongly against Satan’s spiritual warfare against the church today. A pastor should realize the large number of people who need to be saved. The church must strive to reach the world for Christ.

The role of the church and its members is to share the gospel with all people. First, believers must learn from the Scriptures that missional growth is sharing the gospel with others, regardless of race, ethnicity, or nationality. Second, they must learn that missional growth is spreading the gospel wherever they go. This was God’s intention from the beginning. He wanted to fulfill his mission by forming a special people—Israel—with whom he would have an intimate relationship and through whom he would

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<sup>37</sup>Pham, “A Missiological Strategy for Korean-American Church Growth in Georgia,” 64.

<sup>38</sup>Arthur F. Glasser and Donald A. McGravan, *Contemporary Theologies of Mission* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 66.

bless all nations (Gen 12:1-3; Exod 19:3-6). Churches follow the Father's intentions and are healthiest when they reach out to all ethnic groups. In order to experience missional growth, the church must address the needs of all people. Someday, God will demonstrate his reign. God's people will be comforted and reconciled to their Creator. God's salvation will reach even to the ends of the earth.

Missional growth involves bringing the good news to all nations. A church that cares about people will create a positive image within the community, but image without missions will not result in missional growth. Therefore, every church must balance internal and local church growth with growth beyond its local ministry area.<sup>39</sup> God's universal concerns for all people were reflected in the Old Testament. Hicks points out,

Solomon asked God to hear and grant the request of the stranger in Israel's midst *in order that all* peoples on earth might know Yahweh's name and reverence him, as did his people, Israel. This same world-encompassing vision was manifested again when, after the prayer, Solomon pronounced a blessing on the people, asking that Yahweh bless them *in order that all* peoples might know that he is God.<sup>40</sup>

This is further evidence of God's plan for all people to be a part of the covenant.

The church must continue the mandate of being "a blessing to all nations." The purpose of witnessing is to help the lost come to Christ and be saved. Witnessing is not only about church growth, but also about sharing, even with our enemies, God's love and the good news of Jesus Christ as Savior. Being a witness is not a Christian's option; it is a gift from God for his chosen children. Once the church has encountered the living God, church members are a witness of God's saving grace.

In the Old Testament, God called Abraham, Moses, and Jonah, among others, to be missional leaders. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul is an example of such an ambassador. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that

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<sup>39</sup>William M. Easum, *The Church Growth Handbook* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 29.

<sup>40</sup>Hicks, "Old Testament Foundations for Missions," 57.

watereth; but God that giveth the increase.” God builds a church, and its growth depends on our working, but God is the one who gauges its success.

Congregational numbers could indicate only one dimension of church growth. Some of the churches with the largest audiences do not preach the whole truth from the Word of God. People come to hear only feel-good messages that are very weak in theology. They can leave feeling good, rather than being convicted of their sin and disobedience. The numbers may increase, but few hear or do what God wants them to do in order to achieve extraordinary results.

Many churches rarely see people come forward to publicly profess faith in Christ and to receive scriptural baptism. Few are burdened enough to serve the Lord. A populated church does not always mean a church is experiencing balanced growth. Some churches are powerless, as mentioned in 2 Timothy 3-3: “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” Acts 2 describes a healthy church. Its numbers did increase daily, but other important aspects showed they were truly growing: “they were all with one accord in one place” (v. 2). They all wanted to do what pleased the Lord and there was no mention of any worry about “what the church could do for me.” Bickering and bitterness among members were not mentioned. They purposed to all work together for what they could do for the Lord. These actions came because of their gratitude for what he had done for them. When they heard the preaching, “they were pricked in their heart” and they wanted to obey God (v. 37). No one stormed out because the preaching addressed their sin. They were excited and wanted to work for God. Repentance, baptisms, and praying were on every heart. Money and the objects of this world had lost their importance. Spiritual matters of God had become more valuable to them. The church did increase; it grew as a result of their faithfulness to the covenant.

The Acts 2 church did not have the finished Word of God with them at the time. God did allow them to do things that are not for our church age in order to increase their faith (1 Cor 13:9-13). We, today, do have the completed Word of God and will

not see all the types of miracles the early church did. We can, however, still see similar growth if we follow their example in their attitude toward Christ.

Today's church will grow if the Word of God is preached in its entirety. More believers need to have a burden for the unsaved of this world. They need to work harder to reach the lost. More Christ-followers need to obey what is preached to them and what they have been shown to do from the Bible. Each saved person is one of the tools God has saved to serve him. They will not do any good for the cause of Christ if they sit "rusting" and unused for his glory. In the "last days" that the Bible speaks about, it may be harder to reach the lost and overcome the world's temptations and obstacles.

God is the same as he was in biblical days. He still desires and expects us to obey his commands. The majority of those who are saved were led to the Lord by someone else or by someone else's work. Nowhere in the Bible is it mentioned that leading people to Jesus Christ is the work of a pastor alone. All church members are to be equipped to witness to the lost. Nonbelievers are offered an opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Followers of Christ will do their part in defending their faith in the light of God's compassion. Churches focused on their mission will grow into healthy kingdom churches; it is the work of God that should be performed. If all Christians are of one mind to do the work God has left them to do, Christianity will grow daily (Acts 2:27).

To summarize, an important element in creating an active church is to understand the biblical perspectives for evangelism and church growth. Growth of any kind follows a typical pattern of those who plant the seed and those who water the seed. Believers will use their spiritual gifts for the growth in the church. But note that the increase must keep a balance between planting and watering for a church to grow (1 Cor 3:7). The result is church members honoring God in the areas of numerical growth, spiritual growth, and missional growth. Believers will receive their own reward according to their labor as God's kingdom increases.

## Conclusion

Throughout the Bible, the histories of heroes on God's mission support the case for evangelism and church growth. God wants his church to grow in three dimensions. He wants growth that is numerical, spiritual, and missional. These three elements are best seen in a biblical and theological model for the church. Therefore, the church must stand firmly on those three types of growth, with unwavering commitment to evangelism for numerical church growth. Believers should realize that a promise of God is not a simple matter. Following him takes faith, obedience, and patience. Even more than gaining the promises of God, following the Father requires a deep abiding love for him. Genesis 12:3 emphasizes that "in thee shall all families be blessed." The mandate of the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) reminds believers to share the gospel with all people. Acts 1:8 adds an emphasis to worldwide evangelism. The three areas of spreading the gospel would indicate, again, the international scope of evangelism.

If Christians obey God, they will be blessed in surprising ways on the Gentile Mission at Antioch. Abraham's descendants were a blessing and the growth of God's kingdom is a blessing, too. Luke's theological points emphasize that the restored Israel multiplied like the old Israel. Christians must know the texts of Acts 6:7 and Acts 12:24—the early church was to be "a blessing to all nations." Theologically, evangelism should meet local needs and endeavor to bring the community outside the church to salvation in Jesus Christ. Church leaders must raise biblical and theological awareness among their congregations and cross over boundaries to all peoples. A growing church must build on the solid foundation of obedience to the Father, God's promises, and on worshiping one God. Every generation must go and tell the story of Jesus Christ. True evidence of belief is a commitment to follow God under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. A growing congregation listens to God, walks with him, and engages in spiritual warfare. They do this to win more and more souls for Christ. The desire, according to Tim Millwood, is to

“make disciples of all nations, which the Lord Jesus Christ gave before his ascension.”<sup>41</sup>

It is the cultural mandate, and it is the theological mandate both in the old covenant (the people of Israel) and the new covenant (the new Israel—the church).

The true disciple must see the church as the entity that not only includes all nations, but also will increase in the three dimensions of growth. The church in the secular world is expected to be “a blessing to all nations.” It belongs to the messianic community not only as commanded, but also as a promise and blessing. This responsibility began with God’s call of Abraham, continued through the Old Testament prophets and New Testament believers, and is still in effect for Christ-followers today.

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<sup>41</sup>Tim Millwood, “Introduction to New Testament Study,” classroom lecture, “BIUS 1135—The Early Church,” Fall trimester at Warner Robins Baptist Association, GA, 2012.



## CHAPTER 3

### THE VIETNAMESE AMERICANS AND THEIR CULTURAL DISTINCTIVES

The Vietnamese Americans who immigrated to the United States are very diverse in cultural areas that directly impact their lives. Understanding that diversity is critical to connecting with a representation of Vietnamese immigrants and in helping Christians to share the gospel with them. The question is, “How can these people be reached without learning their culture?” The problem is that opportune moments to learn, to share, and to love the immigrants are overlooked. Connecting should be easy if the main areas of diversity are carefully examined through three waves of immigration, three religions, and three generations. The Vietnam War ended in 1975, but the pain and confusion from this misunderstood war remains to this day. I will present a background of those who immigrated as a result of the war and also the cultural distinctions regarding English proficiency, vocations, and family lifestyles. I will conclude this chapter with the evangelical reply to reconcile to Christianity nonbelievers who are influenced by the three non-Christian religions.

#### **The History of the Vietnam War and Its Emigrants’ Background**

Learning about the history of Vietnam War and its emigrants’ background will help church advocates know that, in the words of Min Zhou and Carl L. Bankston, “to see an immigrant culture as a microcosm of the original . . . is to overlook the historical dynamic nature of all cultures.”<sup>1</sup> Vietnam occupies the eastern and southern part of the

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<sup>1</sup>Min Zhou and Carl L. Bankston III, *Growing Up American: How Vietnamese Children Adapt to Life in the United States* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1956), 11.

Indochinese Peninsula in Southeast Asia, with the South China Sea along its entire coast. China is to the north; Laos and Cambodia are to the west. Long and narrow on a north-south axis, Vietnam is about twice the size of Arizona. Vietnam has been a place for constant war.

### **Political Shock**

Vietnam was under Chinese control from the third century BC to the fifteenth century AD. French influence was prevalent until communist forces based in the north and led by the nationalist leader Ho Chi Minh defeated the French in 1954. After the fall of the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, “accords were negotiated that split the country into communist north and pro-American south, divided by a demilitarised zone”<sup>2</sup> (see appendix 9). The civil Vietnam War between the North and South drew out over two decades (1954-1975) with no regard for morality or for human well-being. After American support for the South was cut, North Vietnam forced President Nguyen Van Thieu to resign and the South Vietnamese government collapsed on April 30, 1975.<sup>3</sup> The Communists of the North seized Saigon and took control of the whole country. A short time later, according to Hung Tien Nguyen, “the familiar voice of President Duong Van Minh rumbled in the air . . . relinquishing Saigon to the Communists.”<sup>4</sup> The Saigon government surrendered unconditionally to communist forces on an unforgettable day, further aggravating the impact of the political shock on South Vietnam.<sup>5</sup> Over the ensuing

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<sup>2</sup>“History of the Vietnam War: Introduction” [on-line]; accessed 1 September 2012; available from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/asia\\_pac/05/vietnam\\_war/html/introduction.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/asia_pac/05/vietnam_war/html/introduction.stm); Internet.

<sup>3</sup>Hung Tien Nguyen, *Tam Tu Tong Thong Thieu* (n.p.: Hua Chan Minh Publisher, 2010), 433, 434.

<sup>4</sup>Kien Nguyen, *The Unwanted: A Memoir* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 2001), 40.

<sup>5</sup>“Duong Van Minh” [on-line]; accessed 1 September 2012; available from [http://enc.slider.com/Enc/Duong\\_Van\\_Minh](http://enc.slider.com/Enc/Duong_Van_Minh); Internet. President Duong Van “Minh announced that South Vietnam was surrendering unconditionally, when he went on national

years, nothing could possibly be better under the reign of the Social Republic of Vietnam. Thereafter, more shock and turmoil brought a wave of death again and again over the Vietnamese people. In the book *A Thousand Tears Falling* by Yung Krall, Griffin B. Bell, former United States Attorney General, shares in the foreword that “more than twenty years after the United States withdrew its forces from Vietnam, Americans still wrestle with pain and loss that resulted from this divisive war. Huge crowds gather daily at the Wall in Washington, DC, to remember nearly sixty thousand Americans who died in the conflict.”<sup>6</sup> The political shock is still also forever fresh in the memory of the Vietnamese. That is a tragedy to the human spirit.

### **Historical Shock**

The war ended and the country was “reunited” in 1975. During a 4,000 year history, there was never a Vietnamese Diaspora until April 30, 1975. The resulting communist takeover destroyed the unique institution of South Vietnam. Many of its citizens wanted to flee the country. Millions left, seeking a better life for themselves and their children in the United States, Canada, and Europe. Neighboring countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Hong Kong turned them away. Their migration, for the most part, was sudden and was out of fear and desperation. Andrew Lam writes,

A Diaspora—Two million or so Vietnamese, in an unprecedented move in Vietnam’s millennia old history, fled at the end of the Vietnam war into five different continents. And for all the umbilical cords buried, for all the promises we made to our ancestors’ spirits, we did the unimaginable: We left, trampling underfoot that

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radio and television at 11 AM on April 30 [1975]. He announced ‘The Republic of Vietnam policy is the policy of peace and reconciliation, aimed at saving the blood of our people. We are here waiting for the Provisional Revolutionary Government to hand over the authority in order to stop useless bloodshed.’”

<sup>6</sup>Yung Krall, *A Thousand Tears Falling: The True Story of a Vietnamese Family Torn Apart by War, Communism, and the CIA* (Decatur, GA: Kim Quy Publishing, 2010), iii.

old sentimental garden, refuting the perennial and insular agrarian-based ethos of entrenchment.<sup>7</sup>

Binh Thanh Phan states that because many departed in haste, they “had not planned on resettling in the U.S. . . . They are pushed there by nightmarish circumstances.”<sup>8</sup> Thousands of people from Saigon and other parts of South Vietnam began to flee towards the shores in hopes of procuring boats and leaving the country by sea. They fully understood the enormity of the communist rule and sought freedom. They struggled to support themselves; times were hard. Thousands drowned in the sea. Their journey through the South China sea was harrowing. Thuyền Nhân cites estimates concerning the number of boat people who died at the height of the migration:

- *Orange County Register* (29 April 2001): 1 million sent to camps and 165,000 died.
- *Northwest Asian Weekly* (5 July 1996): 150,00-175,000 camp prisoners unaccounted for.
- Elizabeth Becker (*When the War Over*, 1986) cites the UN High Commissioner on Refugees: 250,000 boat people died at sea; 929,600 reached asylum.
- The 20 July 1986 *San Diego Union-Tribune* cites the UN High Commission: 200,000 to 250,000 boat people had died at sea since 1975.
- The 3 Aug. 1979 *Washington Post* cites the Australian immigration minister’s estimate that 200,000 refugees had died at sea since 1975.
- The 1991 *Information Please Almanac* cites unspecified “US Officials” that 100,000 boat people died fleeing Vietnam.
- Encarta estimates that 0.5 M fled, and 10-15% died, for a death toll of 50-75,000.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Andrew Lam, “My Journey Home: Vietnamese Diaspora” [on-line]; accessed 1 September 2012; available from [http://www.pbs.org/weta/myjourneyhome/andrew/andrew\\_diaspora.html](http://www.pbs.org/weta/myjourneyhome/andrew/andrew_diaspora.html); Internet.

<sup>8</sup>Binh Thanh Phan, “Overcoming Cultural Conflict to Strengthen Vietnamese Ministries” (D.Min. project, Bethel Theological Seminary, 2001), 8, 13.

<sup>9</sup>Thuyền Nhân, “Statistics Boat People” [on-line]; accessed 2 September 2012; available from <http://quehuongngaymai.com/forums/showthread.php?p=1132012>; Internet.

Among other miseries were rapes and murders committed by Thai pirates. Camps accepted those people who survived. The United States of America, geared to favor Vietnamese, had nearly 759,482 refugees in this country (see appendix 10).

### **The Waves of Refugees**

After the war ended in Vietnam, there were three distinct waves of refugees from 1975 to 1980. The waves involved different economic classes. They were also impacted by whether or not the emigrants received assistance from the U.S. and other countries.

The first wave of refugees, involving some ten to fifteen thousand people, began at least a week to ten days before the collapse of South Vietnam's government. Immigration to the United States from Vietnam was virtually nonexistent before the 1970s. Refugees in the first wave were composed mostly of upper middle-class urbanites. Many of these people were generally well educated and proficient in English. Rita C-Y Chung points out that due to their contact and cooperation with Americans during the war, "they were targets of the Vietcong resulting in the United States government air lifting and sea lifting many of them out of Vietnam."<sup>10</sup>

The second wave of refugees began during 1978 and lasted through the mid-1980s. Because most of the natives fled Vietnam in untrustworthy wooden boats, they became known as the boat people. They were subjected to greater premigration trauma than the first wave. One large group of the second wave was composed of former military officers and government employees who had been sent to communist reeducation camps for brainwashing. All were kept in crowded and unsanitary camps for months or years.

The third wave of refugees occurred in the mid-1980s. The communist government allowed some people to legally emigrate from Vietnam to countries such

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<sup>10</sup>Rita C-Y Chung, Frederick Bemak, and Sumie Okazaki, "Counseling Americans of Southeast Asian Descent: The Impact of the Refugee Experience," in *Multicultural Issues in Counseling: New Approaches to Diversity*, ed. Courtland C. Lee (Alexandria, VA: The American Counseling Association, 1997), 207.

as the United States. In order to determine which refugees would be allowed to settle in America, U.S. officials did background checks on all Vietnamese who had been repatriated from Asian refugee camps. Amerasians, former political prisoners, and family members continued to come to the United States through “orderly departure” and ordinary immigration channels in the third wave.

### **Vietnamese Americans in the United States**

According to statistics on refugee arrivals to the U.S. from Southeast Asia from 1975 to 2002, a total of 759,482 foreign-born Vietnam migrated to the United States.”<sup>11</sup> In the initial stages in 1975, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) resettled some of the Vietnamese in the U.S. In 2002, David M. Robinson, Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, made the following observation:

So the United States, along with about two dozen or so other countries around the world, offer resettlement spots to those people. We work through the United Nations and other groups to bring in refugees. Now, the United States is by far the largest resettlement country in the world. We, last year, resettled about 56,000 refugees. This year, we’ll do something similar. In the past, we’ve settled up to 100,000 in a year. Two years ago, we settled, I think, 74- or 75,000 refugees. So we’re always up around that number.<sup>12</sup>

As these immigrants reached America, some remained where they had resettled, while others found their way across the nation. Lan Cao and Himilce Novas wrote that the five primary areas settled were “Boston, Chicago, Houston, Seattle, and

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<sup>11</sup>Aaron Terrazas, “Vietnamese Immigrants in the United States,” August 2008 [on-line]; accessed 2 October, 2012; available from <http://migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?id=691>; Internet.

<sup>12</sup>David M. Robinson, “Refugee Resettlement and the U.S. State Department’s Role in the U.S. Refugee Admission Program,” 11 April 2012, *U.S. Department of State* [on-line]; accessed 2 October, 2012; available from <http://fpc.state.gov/188085.htm>; Internet.

Orange County (California) where 400,000 Vietnamese reside today.”<sup>13</sup> At the present time, most Vietnamese Americans live in more widely spread areas. All along the path, refugees encountered caring Christians. In Atlanta, agencies such as World Relief US, Tearfund UK, the Salvation Army, World Vision, and Youth with a Mission were among the many who responded to the needs of refugees in Southeast Asian refugee camps.

Other research indicates that Atlanta is an attractive place to immigrants because it is a very large city that contains many ethnic groups. Immigrants created Vietnamese recreation and shopping centers in Norcross, Chamblee, Doraville, and Jonesboro, cities in metro Atlanta. Leng Leng Chancey, Director of Development for the Center for Pan-Asian Community Service in Chamblee, says the strong Asian community along Buford Highway has played a role in the group’s growth:

I think historically, up and down Buford has been a great hub of the Asian community. It’s been a great area for business—small business—to set up shop and grow their businesses, sort of like a congregation area. [But] people are going to move where there are great businesses. Dekalb [County] can keep more people here if more areas are revitalized to create places to live, work and play.<sup>14</sup>

The city of Chamblee, however, has seen a 41.2 percent decline in Vietnamese residents since 2000. Doraville saw a slight decrease, falling from 4,284 to 4,119. Overall, many Vietnamese moved into the Atlanta areas and other counties: “Cherokee 187, Clayton 4,047, Cobb 1,599, DeKalb 6,051, Douglas 41, Fayette 102, Fulton 2,608, Gwinnett 6,077, Henry 172, and Rockdale 163.”<sup>15</sup> Some were placed in Atlanta by agencies,

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<sup>13</sup>Lan Cao and Himilce Novas, *Everything You Need to Know about Asian-American History* (New York: A Plume Books, 1996), 215.

<sup>14</sup>Nneka M. Okona, “Asian, Hispanic Population on the Rise in Dekalb,” *Dekalb Neighbor Newspapers*, 30 March 2011, sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup>“Vietnamese,” *Global Atlanta Snapshots* [on-line]; accessed 3 September 2012; available from <http://documents.atlantaregional.com/gawsnapshots/vietnamese.pdf>; Internet.

while some opted to go to Dalton, Georgia. Recent figures put the Dalton Vietnamese population at 114 out of a total population of 25,672.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Three Vietnamese American Generations**

The North Vietnamese communist government forced the Vietnamese to leave their native land due to fear of persecution or experiences of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, social class, or political ideology. The Vietnamese who settled in Dalton and other places have since revitalized these areas. Once they were in the United States, they began rebuilding their community with “a complex mosaic of different languages, religions, and cultures.”<sup>17</sup>

All immigrants brought their culture with them when they arrived in the new country. A potential dilemma, according to Zhou, is that “this original culture may be seen as hindering the adaptation of members of the ethnic group (the assimilations perspective) or as promoting this adaptation (the multiculturalist’s perspective).”<sup>18</sup> Many feel the experience has brought the community closer together and still remember the boat that carried them to freedom.

### **The First Generation**

The first generation included the young adults and the elderly people who were born in Vietnam and immigrated to the United States. Some of the Vietnamese Americans—mostly wives and children of American servicemen before the end of the Vietnam War in 1975—lived on military bases or nearby homes across the state

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<sup>16</sup>“Dalton City, Georgia Statistics and Demographics (U.S. Census 2000),” *Area Connect* [on-line]; accessed 3 September 2012; available from <http://dalton.areacconnect.com/statistic.htm>; Internet.

<sup>17</sup>Stanley K. Inouye, “Asian,” in *The Complete Evangelism Guidebook: Expert Advice on Reaching Others for Christ*, ed. Scott Dawson (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 265.

<sup>18</sup>Zhou and Bankston, *Growing Up American*, 11.



of Georgia. The first generation Vietnamese American's predilection to preserve a worldview was steeped in anti-communism. Many of this generation found themselves unfamiliar with the new culture. Due to regret and sadness at leaving their homes, their lives were unrewarding. As a result, religion became more important in the lives of some among those aged sixty-five years or more. Phan writes, "The first Vietnamese Christians in the United States typically want[ed] their children not only to be Christians, but to be Vietnamese Christians," reflecting a relational approach based on cultural distinctions, English proficiency, vocations, and family lifestyle.<sup>19</sup>

**Cultural distinctions.** The first generation has retained cultural distinctions in their daily practices. They are very group- and family-oriented and are desirous of maintaining their Vietnamese culture. Stanley K. Inouye explains why the Vietnamese like to stay close, and cites this as being the foundation of their family values: "They believe the needs of the group, especially the family, are more important than the needs of the individual. It should not be surprising then to hear some say that they would rather be in hell with their family than in heaven without them. . . . Once they belong, they always belong."<sup>20</sup>

In daily life, the immigrants value peace and harmony in communicating with others. They tend to be exceedingly polite and delicate in dealing with strangers and highly respectful of people. They are timid in making friendships with foreigners. In the article titled "Vietnamese—Missions Overview," the North American Mission Board writes,

They favorably respond to Americans who seek their friendship. The Vietnamese expect friends to visit in their homes. In group settings, especially with Anglos present, they may be timid because of their limited knowledge of the English language. They are more comfortable sharing their ideas with individuals than

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<sup>19</sup>Phan, "Overcoming Cultural Conflict," 12.

<sup>20</sup>Inouye, "Asian," 266.

before groups. It takes time to help the Vietnamese understand church activities, as well as Christian friendships that include love and sharing.<sup>21</sup>

**English proficiency.** Most of the first generation is limited in their ability to speak English. In general, they speak Vietnamese in three main, yet different, dialects: Northern, Central, and Southern. In addition to Vietnamese, the first generation may be fluent in French. People with little or no formal education speak only broken English. They know only limited English, such as “how are you” and “hello.”

Some of the first generation who do not speak English very well must find work to support themselves and their families. Because of the language barrier and the fact that Vietnamese do not like to talk to strangers, they depend on their children to translate and interpret for them. Such a practice makes it difficult for them to learn English. Many of the first generation have lived in America for over twenty years and still do not know a word of English.

Dung Luong Ta, a successful businessman in Dalton, says, “The more I speak Vietnamese, the more I gain Vietnamese customers. Usually, the old Vietnamese people do not like to go to the American market. They are afraid to speak English and they feel more comfortable staying close to their own people.”<sup>22</sup> When asked why the first generation does not want to speak English, Xuy Dinh Nguyen, an elderly man, answers,

Learning English is important for the refugees who live here. At refugee camps, the old Vietnamese people want to learn English but they can’t memorize the vocabularies. When they live in America, anytime when the phone rings, they are scared to pick it up while their children are not home. I have a vivid memory of one day where I went to a Social Service in Dalton to apply for Medicare. A social worker did not understand me at all. I had to write what I wanted on a piece of paper

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<sup>21</sup>North American Mission Board, “Vietnamese—Missions Overview” [on-line]; accessed 3 September 2012; available from [http://www.churchplantingvillage.net/site/c.joJMITOxEpH/b.4667237/k.468F/Vietnamese\\_Missions\\_Overview.htm](http://www.churchplantingvillage.net/site/c.joJMITOxEpH/b.4667237/k.468F/Vietnamese_Missions_Overview.htm); Internet.

<sup>22</sup>Dung Luong Ta, interview and translation by author, Dalton, GA, 3 September 2012.

and used my body language to express my needs. I felt so embarrassed and do not want to face the Americans.<sup>23</sup>

**Vocations.** In Dalton, a large percentage of the first generation works in carpet mills and plants. Some are employed as construction and transportation workers. These workers are contributing their skills and energies to the metropolitan economy. As Christian Phuoc Phan notes, “Because of a lack of English proficiency, the first generation Vietnamese Americans can’t get high-paying jobs . . . they have had a lower standard living than over all (other) Asian populations.”<sup>24</sup> As a result, they prefer to own their own businesses rather than be employed by someone else. Looking to the future, they patiently save money and work hard to better their lives.

**Family lifestyle.** The first generation has difficulty adapting to the American culture in which they now live. Family has always been an essential part of their lifestyle. They continue to live in an insular, family-centered world in which, according to Nathan Caplan, “the family is the central institution in Asian life.”<sup>25</sup> Another point of Vietnamese heritage is paternal structural codes that include reverence for ancestors and respect for elders. Women tend to remain in the family home prior to marriage, which generally occurs between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. Kieu Tran writes,

The Vietnamese household traditionally followed the extended multi-generational pattern. The parents, their sons and their wives, their children, and unmarried siblings usually constituted a Vietnamese household. They love each other, and they support and help each other. The children are followers, because they submit to and obey the

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<sup>23</sup>Xuy Dinh Nguyen, interview and translation by author, Dalton, GA, 3 September 2012.

<sup>24</sup>Christian Phuoc Phan, *Vietnamese Americans: Understanding Vietnamese People in the United States 1975-2010* (LaVergne, TN: Xulon Press, 2010), 33.

<sup>25</sup>Nathan Caplan, Marcella H. Choy, and John K. Whitmore, *Children of the Boat People: A Study of Educational Success* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1991), 99.

advice of their parents. The father, however, had the duty to exercise restraint and wisdom in running his family in order to deserve his respected position.<sup>26</sup>

For many people of the first generation, the family meal is one way to keep their family happy. The meal is not simply understood as lunch or dinner; it can be a time of sharing and care. In many Vietnamese families, the wives know the favorite dishes of their husband or children. They try to make these dishes frequently, or at least on special occasions.

When the first generation came to the United States in 1975, they had little knowledge of American culture and language. They knew that it was going to be a struggle to get their family back on its feet. The father worked hard to support his family. The mother also worked and reared her children. They had a strong work ethic and insisted that their children go to school. Vietnamese American parents do not encourage their children to play with friends after school or engage in extracurricular activities. The high value placed on education, self-improvement, self-esteem, and family respect plays a big role in the high educational achievement of their children.

Pham emphasizes an additional influence. “The first generation grew up influenced by Confucianism, which allows parents a strong authority over their children.”<sup>27</sup> The trait of being superstitious is also part of their daily life. On such occasions as marriages, funerals, and opening a business, people will try to choose a propitious date. Even while residing in America, they still try to avoid crossing the path of a woman, in much the same way as Western people would try to avoid crossing the path of a black cat. This is especially true when undertaking something important, embarking on a business venture, or planning an investment strategy.

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<sup>26</sup>Kieu Tran, “Misconception of Child Abuse and Discipline in the United States,” 1996 [on-line]; accessed 5 September 2012; available from <http://www.colorado.edu/journals/standards/V6N1/EDUCATION/ktran.html>; Internet.

<sup>27</sup>Phan, *Vietnamese Americans*, 92.

## The 1.5 Generation

The 1.5 generation was born in Vietnam and came to the United States during their youth after the fall of Saigon in 1975. This 1.5 term refers to people who immigrated before their early teens, and brought with them characteristics from their home country while continuing their socialization in the new country. The 1.5 generation has different cultural distinctions, proficiency in English, vocations, family lifestyle values, and stresses than the first generation.

**Cultural distinctions.** The 1.5 generation is the first to be predominantly reared in American culture. This generation lives in two different worlds and two different cultures. Their feeling is that at home they are Vietnamese, but outside of the house they are Americans. The best way to describe their situation is “cultural switching.” In his book *The Vietnamese American 1.5 Generation*, Sucheng Chan writes,

The “1.5 generation”—Immigrants who come at a young age who retain their ability to speak, if not always to read and write, the ancestral language as well as Asian values and norms. . . . They often act as cultural brokers, regardless of whether they wish to do so, between their grandparents, parents, aunts, and uncles, on the one hand, and the younger, usually American-born members of their families, on the other. . . . They mediate not only between different generations in their families, but between American and Vietnamese ways of life and thought as well.<sup>28</sup>

**English proficiency.** Most of the 1.5 generation came to the U.S. with an elementary school education or less. After their arrival in the United States, they began to learn English either in elementary or high school. They later attended college, went to work, got married, and raised the second generation.

Most of the 1.5 generation speak Vietnamese and English fluently and have no problem with pronunciation of either. Minh La, a church secretary at the First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton, says, “I was born and raised in South Vietnam and speak

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<sup>28</sup>Sucheng Chan, *The Vietnamese American 1.5 Generation: Stories of War, Revolution, Flight, and New Beginnings* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), xiv.

Vietnamese with a mixed Chinese accent. I am more comfortable speaking English and regret that I am unable to read Vietnamese.”<sup>29</sup>

**Vocations.** In general, the 1.5 generation is independent, able to use technology, and very adaptable. They are better educated, open-minded, and more scientific than the first generation. Nguyen-Vu Nguyen arrived in the United States penniless with his family at age ten. When Nguyen was in elementary school in College Park, a suburb of Atlanta, he won an essay contest and was taken by Pat Montandon on her peace mission trips to Washington, DC, the Soviet Union, Italy, and Egypt.<sup>30</sup> Nguyen writes in his journal,

Life would be different if we did not have to leave the country. I cannot imagine what family relations would be like. I can imagine American kids feeling the protection and fulfillment of growing up in a neighborhood with childhood friends, grandparents, relatives around – a stable environment. I cannot translate that into my life, nor can I transfer that experience to this country.<sup>31</sup>

Nguyen went on to graduate from Harvard and Emory University Medical School. His current work is that of a Pediatric Cardiologist in Children’s Memorial Hospital in Chicago. He makes full use of his capacity as a volunteer with Operation Smile, Children as the Peacemaker Foundation, and Project Vietnam. In a Legacy International Youth Camp’s alumni profile, Nguyen writes,

I was born and raised in Viet Nam, and immigrated to the USA in 1982 as part of the Boat People Movement. I currently live in Chicago, IL. My most treasured memories of Legacy were being able to have experiential learning through one-on-one meetings with young people from other cultures and walks of life. It was at Legacy that I experienced the safety of living without threat of wars, conflicts, violence, and poverty. What I have done with my life since those summers has been to accrue education and skills to empower others, particularly, children of our

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<sup>29</sup>Minh La, interview, Dalton, GA, 3 September 2012.

<sup>30</sup>“Pat Montadon’s Biography,” *Red Room* [on-line]; accessed 8 September 2012; available from <http://www.redroom.com/author/pat-montandon/bio>; Internet.

<sup>31</sup>Nguyen-Vu Nguyen, personal journal, 6 July 1995.

planet. In addition to being a pediatric cardiologist, I hope to return to school for a master of public health and spend more time in Africa and Asia.<sup>32</sup>

One of the 1.5 generation who has succeeded in the medical business in Dalton is Dr. Phuong-Lynh Ta, a Buddhist believer who joined an expanding medical practice in the Medical Plaza. Another example is Maily Thi Nguyen, a Christian woman who is a member of the First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton. She rented a station for her Revive Salon on Cleveland Highway of Dalton, Georgia. She states,

After striding into the nail salon business in Dalton in 2004, I worked for the welding factories in Gwinnett county of Atlanta for years to save money to open my own business. I would rather work for myself than for a company. I have a natural skill in art which had been developed when I was young. I did not want to change my skills unless compelled, and I needed to take up another job to make a living. Normally, I like to run my own business for a long period of time.<sup>33</sup>

Some of the 1.5 generation were unable to raise much income for education. They entered the United States unprepared for either school or work. Others were able to receive a good education and obtain the necessary skills for professional employment. As an orphan, John Nguyen, a 1.5 generation young man, struggled to prepare for a better future. Based on his memoirs, John shared gladly his relationship with God as very personal and intimate. He spent time getting acquainted with God through his grandmother. In 1996, he entered Pennsylvania University to study nursing in order to become a medical missionary. John says, “When I see what God has done for me, I know God loves me, and I know he loves others. That’s what I want people to remember when they hear this story. That God loves people much.”<sup>34</sup> He and his wife entered the Master

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<sup>32</sup>“Nguyen-Vu Nguyen Receives Legacy’s Service to Humanity Award,” 28 July 2009, *Global Youth Village International Summer Program* [on-line]; accessed 9 September 2012; available from <http://globalyouthvillage.org/alumni/alumni-profiles/pediatric-cardiologist-nguyenvu-nguyen/>; Internet.

<sup>33</sup>Maily Thi Nguyen, interview and translation by author, Dalton, GA, 9 September 2012.

<sup>34</sup>John Nguyen, telephone interview by author, 9 September 2012.

of Divinity program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He was employed as a nurse at Gwinnett Hospital. At present, he is residing in Philadelphia.

A countervailing force, however, is at work for the 1.5 generation. Many of them became low-paid working people. Because of the financial challenges in some families, parents could not support children continuing their education. Some dropped out of high school to work for a living. Others joined gangs and hoped to become rich through criminal activities.

**Family lifestyle.** The 1.5 generation acts as a bridge between the first and second generation. Cao and Novas, in their book *Everything You Need to Know about Asian-American History*, write, “This generation is straddling two countries and two cultures and has helped link the gap between the first generation and American-born Vietnamese.”<sup>35</sup> In the book, *Vietnam Memories in America*, this account of a fourteen-year-old girl was edited by Chan, who writes,

Our family’s economic condition is now much better and my siblings and I have adapted quite well to America culture. However, no matter what we do, Vietnam is still in our hearts. We respect older people, including our teachers. We speak Vietnamese at home, read Vietnamese newspapers and magazines, watch Vietnamese movies, and eat Vietnamese food. Vietnam will always be in our brains and blood.<sup>36</sup>

The 1.5 generation is Vietnamese but they claim to be American in public life. They like to have American names. Later, when they have their own families, they prefer to live separately in their own homes. They are young, successful in business, and have frank discussions about the political underpinnings of Asian American studies. They often confront the anti-establishment and anti-capitalist stances of early Asian American studies. Proponents often turn away more conservative student views, such as those held

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<sup>35</sup>Cao and Novas, *Everything You Need to Know*, 198.

<sup>36</sup>Chan, *The Vietnamese American 1.5 Generation*, 227.



by strongly anti-communist Vietnamese Americans. Some of them lack education and many drop their faith in Christ when they are in college.

Good lifestyle examples of the 1.5 generation do exist, such as that of thirty-six-year-old Tuan Van Nguyen. Nguyen is a fast worker who became a mechanic before age thirty-five at the Oriental Rug Factory of Dalton, Georgia. He is working hard to provide for his family, but he has scaled back to spend more time with his two children. Tuan's biggest regret is that he did not make the change sooner to stay closer to his seventeen-year-old son. Now he and his son are unable to relate. He also has a five-year-old daughter who is growing up fast. When asked about his lifestyle change, he says,

I worked from ten to twelve hours a day. My lifestyle was not only for my family but for drinking and smoking. So I renewed my commitment to something bigger than me: My wife and children. It was not a sacrifice—it was simply doing what a husband and father should do. I told my children that my life was terrible and I asked them to remain in the church.<sup>37</sup>

Chi Thanh Le of Dalton, Georgia, is a thirty-nine-year-old Amerasian with two children who went from being a carpet roller worker to a night foreman. He plans to stay at home during the day to spend time with his children when his wife is at work. He says that he likes to take his daughter, ten, and his son, nine, to Tae Kwon Do classes three times a week:

There will always be a job waiting for me but I want to have more time with my children. I am in charge as a volunteer maintenance worker at the Vietnamese Baptist Church in Dalton. I would like to be a good church member and a good father. I also want my kids to become godly children. If I do not have enough time for them, I will get lost. So, I commit myself not to let money destroy my family.<sup>38</sup>

Phuong Kim Pham says, “The main reason I love my children is because when I was young, I did not have a chance to enjoy my childhood. That’s why I do not want

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<sup>37</sup>Tuan Van Nguyen, interview and translation by author, Dalton, GA, 9 September 2012.

<sup>38</sup>Chi Thanh Le, interview and translation by author, Dalton, GA, 9 September 2012

my children separated from their parents.”<sup>39</sup> This is another example of what is truly important in life.

### **The Second Generation**

The second generation was born in the United States or in the refugee camps. They have been predominantly reared in American culture. Their parents’ generation prefers that their children retain the Vietnamese culture and traditions. Kurt Kinbacher quotes Mary Pipher and Andrew X. Pham:

As a general rule, first generation urban villagers remained deeply connected to the culturescapes of Vietnam. Preferring hierarchical and harmonious extended families, they often constructed support systems solely within the Vietnamese community and felt little pressure to abandon old-world patterns. As parents, they attempted to keep their children involved in affairs within the home and the urban village and dissuaded prolonged contact with new American peers.<sup>40</sup>

The lives of the second generation created conflict with their parents.

Kinbacher remarks that

their greatest fear was that their children would become Americanized and in the process “lose their spiritual nature and become materialistic.” While the elders remained certain of their Vietnamese identities in the twenty-first century, they often described the next generations as “uncentered” and “uncertain of their identity.” They called these individuals “mất gốc—lost roots” because they appeared to be growing away from the values of their urban villages.<sup>41</sup>

Discussing the same issue, Phan writes,

However, the cultural orientation of second generation Vietnamese in the United States is quite different. They grow up learning some Vietnamese language and culture in the home and in voluntary Vietnamese associations, such as at church. But the hours are relatively few when second generation Vietnamese are not attending American schools, doing English-language homework, associating with non-

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<sup>39</sup>Phuong Kim Pham, interview and translation by author, Dalton, GA, 9 September 2012.

<sup>40</sup>Kurt Kinbacher, “Immigration, the American West, and the Twentieth Century: German from Russia, Omaha Indian, and Vietnamese-Urban Villagers in Lincoln, Nebraska” (Ph.D. diss, The University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2006), 304.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 305.

Vietnamese friends and peers, watching American television, playing American video games, and so on.<sup>42</sup>

The Vietnamese American second generation feels that they are trapped between the traditional Vietnamese values of their parents and the influences of growing up in American society. To some extent, this situation, according to Zhou and Bankston, “involves taking mainstream American society, with all its injustices and inequalities, as given, and focusing on the factors that enable the children of Vietnamese refugees to advance in that society.”<sup>43</sup> Today, in Dalton, the children of the boat people are filling the enrollments at local schools and universities and, following graduation, are moving into the larger cities while their parents remain in the local community.

**Cultural distinctions.** The Vietnam War is over, but the tragedy still remains a story of despair. The first generation paid an immense price with their own lives in the concentration camps or the new economic zones for many years. They used their wisdom to seek freedom in order to help their offspring receive the best gifts fathers and mothers can offer to their children. This is the benefit of their experience through the war.<sup>44</sup> The concrete facts cannot be wiped away so easily, even if sometimes the second generation thinks that they are American. Some of them claim they are not Vietnamese. Most of the second generation, however, realize that they need to maintain an important link with their parents. Regarding the process of working on establishing this new identity that connects American and Vietnamese culture, C. N. Le writes, “The process may not be completely smooth at times, but ultimately, the results usually represent a positive

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<sup>42</sup>Phan, “Overcoming Cultural Conflict,” 12.

<sup>43</sup>Zhou and Bankston, *Growing Up American*, 19.

<sup>44</sup>Don Yost, *Blessings: Transforming My VietNam Experience* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1995), v.

reinforcement of not just the bond between family members, but also the bond of ethnic solidarity within each Asian/immigrant community.”<sup>45</sup>

**English proficiency.** The primary language of most of the second generation is English. Some of them might speak Vietnamese with the older generations, but many do not. Some can understand Vietnamese, but it is very hard for them to speak, to write, or to read the Vietnamese language. Consequently, they are caught between the two cultures and may feel that they do not really connect with their Vietnamese roots.

An example is Kim Le, daughter of Chi Thanh Le and Phuong Kim Pham, church members of the First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton, Georgia. Kim Le was born in the U.S. and has little knowledge of the war in Vietnam. She is willing to adapt to mainstream culture and has a strong passion for learning many things such as Tae Kwon Do and playing the piano. She made good grades in school at City Park Elementary School in Dalton and was selected speech winner of her homeroom at fifth grade graduation on May 25, 2010.

**Vocations.** Educated people and scholars have been well respected in Vietnamese tradition, and parents hope to maintain that value for their children. For most parents, the school is a top concern. In Vietnamese society, qualifications are respected; the better educated one is, the easier it is to find a job. The second generation is attracted to high technology fields, such as computer science, mathematics, and medical professions.

Generally, they have better employment and have dedicated themselves to helping vulnerable children and women strengthen their educational opportunities here and overseas. Some may work in journalism, communications, and public relations in the

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<sup>45</sup>C. N. Le, “Adult Asian Americans Helping Their Parents,” 29 April 2007, *Asian-Nation* [on-line]; accessed 10 September 2012; available from <http://www.asian-nation.org/headlines/2007/04/adult-asian-americans-helping-their-parents>; Internet.

Vietnamese community. Media groups and businesses offer opportunities to showcase their work while fostering interaction with the general public. Zhou and Bankston write,

To the extent that these young people succeed in the American educational system, they can move into new positions in the American job structure and become structurally assimilated. Consequently, young Vietnamese in the United States can be expected to become an increasingly integral part of American society. In the process, being Vietnamese will become yet another way of becoming American.<sup>46</sup>

**Family lifestyle.** Some in this second generation feel that they are caught between two cultures and do not really fit in either one. They have begun to think for themselves and use self-judgment with the reactions of friends and peers playing a vital role. Sometimes parental relationships for them can become difficult as they often feel their parents curb their expressiveness. Those who do not conform to their parents' lifestyle are sometimes influenced by negative social activities such as gangs or other criminal behavior. Most of the earlier second-generation children do well in school and excel in their professional fields because they have a strong family background with support and help. Peter Van Do states, "While many second-generation Vietnamese Americans do well in school and obey their parents, they have more tendency to rebel, because they hear conflicting messages from school and American culture."<sup>47</sup>

Although today they are sympathetic to and full of love for their parents, the second generation does not want to adhere to their parents' advice. In practicing individualism, they choose careers unapproved by their parents. Some totally lose their identities in gangs and deviant lifestyles. To help pastors understand some of these problems, Phan relates this generation to Vietnamese church activities:

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<sup>46</sup>Zhou and Bankston, *Growing Up American*, 23.

<sup>47</sup>Peter Van Do, "Between Two Cultures: Struggles of Vietnamese American Adolescents" (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 2002), 6 [on-line]; accessed 2 October, 2012; available from [http://www.hawaii.edu/hivandaids/The\\_Dream\\_Shattered\\_\\_Vietnamese\\_Gangs\\_in\\_America.pdf](http://www.hawaii.edu/hivandaids/The_Dream_Shattered__Vietnamese_Gangs_in_America.pdf); Internet.

This presents the leadership of Vietnamese churches in the United States with a formidable challenge: They must introduce more English language and American culture in congregation activities so as to aid the young, but not so much as to alienate the old or undermine the essentially Vietnamese cultural character of their churches. Meeting this challenge requires identifying positive aspects of both American and Vietnamese cultures, educating Vietnamese congregations about the same, and using these positive aspects to the advantage of Vietnamese ministries.<sup>48</sup>

This generation is increasingly designing their lifestyles in ways that meet their needs more efficiently in the new culture. As evidenced by the rapid growth of participation in society across the nation, most of them continue to think of moving out of their parents' home when they finish high school or college. They are trying out new forms of secular community with many abandoning the traditional forms altogether. Most of this generation have a lot of confusion and conflict and few join the Vietnamese churches. The freedom they choose for the future is in a different direction from what their parents planned for their children.

### **The Three Religions**

The three main religions introduced from Vietnam were Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Kinbacher asserts that “although Buddhism and Taoism were popular with the people, Confucianism became the recognized religion.”<sup>49</sup> The Vietnamese, however, retained religious open-mindedness. The traditional three religions are comprehensive, with three aspects that complement each other for survival: Confucian society, Buddhist spirituality, and Taoism with its natural “path” through life.<sup>50</sup> Within each of the three religions, Vietnamese were often led to construct fairly specific identities. Moreover, religions typically cross the national border into the worldview.

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<sup>48</sup>Phan, “Overcoming Cultural Conflict,” 14.

<sup>49</sup>Kinbacher, “Immigration, The American West,” 288.

<sup>50</sup>Thuc Dang Nguyen, *Buddhism in Viet Nam* (Saigon: An Tiem Publisher, n.d.), 475.

Friedrich Schleiermacher comments on religious activity as twofold, having to do with living and with theology:

Religion is a way of thinking, a faith, a peculiar way of contemplating the world, and combining what meets us in the world; at another, it is a way of acting, a peculiar love, a special kind of conduct and character. Without this distinction of a theoretical and practical you could hardly think at all, and though both sides belong to religion, you are usually accustomed to give heed chiefly to only one at a time.<sup>51</sup>

A common misconception is that the three religions of the Vietnamese were not brought to America. Ultimately, many Vietnamese immigrants practice some form of their three religions in the United States.

Sharing the gospel with Vietnamese Americans cannot be done simply by bringing people together but must, instead, be done by introducing a life-changing dynamic. Christians should understand religion, such as the three religions, as a bridge to connect the gap between earthly life and eternal life. Christ followers should understand that the supernatural is real and material to the center of life, and that the two facets, which have contradictory aspects, form a synthesized whole.

### **Taoism: A Way of Life**

Lau Tzu founded Taoism sometime around 604 BC. The legend says that Lao Tzu was so “saddened by his people’s disinclination to cultivate the natural goodness he advocated” that he decided to abandon civilization.<sup>52</sup> Before leaving the world, Lao Tzu wrote “a brief work called *Tao Te Ching*, ‘The Classic of the Way and Its Power’ . . . describing the meaning of Tao [the way, or path] and how one should live according to the Tao.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 27.

<sup>52</sup>Huston Smith, *The World’s Religions* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), 197, quoted in Michael Gleghorn, “Taoism and Christianity” [on-line]; accessed 10 September 2012; available from <http://michaelgleghorn.com/artTaoism.php>; Internet.

<sup>53</sup>Michael Gleghorn, “Taoism and Christianity” [on-line]; accessed 10 September 2012; available from <http://michaelgleghorn.com/artTaoism.php>; Internet.

**Understanding Lao Tzu's philosophy.** Central to the Taoist philosophy is the idea of human beings' oneness made of complementary opposites. Yang is male, Yin is female. This principle applies to all elements of existence. Nature cannot be changed. Restoring harmony cures the long history of the suffering that Vietnamese people have endured and gives a sense of direction. The implications of Yin and Yang based on the natural law that is governing all life and directing activity towards harmony prompts Taoists to behave in a way that least disturbs the balance of Yin and Yang. Lifestyles should therefore be based on the result of the many different wars that many people faced throughout the years. Lao Tzu is considered an ethical writer. His Taoism book is influential and he is recognized as the founder of Taoism.<sup>54</sup>

While having only a limited formal organization in Vietnamese Americans today, the concepts of Taoism are evident in the daily life cycle of ethnic Vietnamese, whether they are dwellers of the cities or peasants tilling the rice paddies. The cultural mold into which the Vietnamese are born and in which they are reared has been developed through more than two thousand years. While many people do not know just why certain customary acts are performed, the necessity to see that these are fulfilled is a constant pressure that few Vietnamese would be willing to ignore. Americans may have little understanding of such influences, but success will be present in Vietnamese American relations only as awareness of such factors promotes consideration and patience.

In the Vietnamese mind, Taoism is the linking mechanism for Buddhism, Confucianism, ancestor worship, and animism. Countless images of the gods of Taoism are in temples and pagodas throughout the country. Most homes use their altar to worship the "Kitchen God," the name for the triumvirate of Taoist deities that monitor behavior of families. Many of Vietnam's festivals, including Tet, have a Taoist tradition. Fortune-

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid.



telling, astrology, and geomancy are an accepted part of everyday life. Ingredients for traditional medicine and foods are designated as “hot” or “cool,” and the principle of harmony and balance underpins healthcare. Visitors to Vietnam will often be puzzled by a small mirrored octagonal disc, with the Yin Yang and other symbols, fixed above the door of most houses and small shops. This disc is to guard the house by barring wandering spirits or ghosts.

**Evangelical reply.** A church must find a possible way to share the gospel. Church members should understand that the Vietnamese Americans have a religious view that does not have the same basis or concept of God as religions from the West. To share the gospel with refugees who are Taoists, a Christian should not say something like, “We are the same religion, we have the same doctrine.” Instead, the witness must focus on Scriptures and must be faithful to all truth and authority. Christians say they believe that the terminology is different. They know the difference will lead to the necessity of making a decision between Lao Tzu and Jesus. In making a comparison between the terms to trust or not to trust, D. H. Johnson offers this consideration,

[V]erbal similarities do not necessarily imply conceptual similarities. The use of similar words in seemingly similar ways can deceive us into thinking that two authors are discussing the same concept. Only when one document is understood in its own right can it be compared to another which must also be understood in its own right.<sup>55</sup>

It is time for Christians to acknowledge the truth of what Jesus said: “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6) and “ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Christians can stand firmly on God’s Word in proclaiming his love and salvation assurance to everyone.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>D. H. Johnson, “Logos,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 483, quoted in Gleghorn, “Taoism and Christianity.”

<sup>56</sup>Timothy Beougher and Alvin L. Reid, *Evangelism for a Changing World* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1995), 119-20.

## **Confucianism: A Philosophy of Life**

Confucius' philosophy flows in Vietnam without barriers to understanding and acceptance. Virtually all Vietnamese accept Confucianism as a philosophy of life with a high level of values and views. As an ideology, Confucianism has lasted longer than any other in the East or West and has crossed many national borders into all parts of the world. An Van Pham explains that "Confucianism is *a philosophy of life*; the original teaching of Confucius was not a religion. Confucianism can be considered as a social philosophy of a man whose real name was K'ung Futz'o."<sup>57</sup> Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, wrote books to teach people the fear of God; he did not tell people to worship him. Vietnamese, however, say Confucius is the eternal master who should be worshiped. Confucius was a good man, not a god man. Pham quotes from George Braswell Jr., a professor of missions at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary:

Confucius was born about 555 B.C. in Shantung province. He worked as a civil servant, traveled widely in China, and made friendships with government leaders and princes. His learning and council were sought, and he gathered disciples and founded a school. His teachings were collected later in the Analects. He was more rationalistic and humanistic.<sup>58</sup>

**Understanding Confucius' philosophy.** The name Confucius is a transliteration of Khong Phu Tu, with Khong as the family name and Phu Tu meaning "master." Confucius collected, edited, and, in some cases, rewrote the classics of the Chou period (1100-481 BC). His books were responsible for the standard of Confucian orthodoxy. Confucius urged a code of social behavior, saying that man ought to live in harmony with society and reach happiness in his individual life. His teachings were social and ethical, without speculative questions. Confucius instructed people of all

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<sup>57</sup>An Van Pham, "Establishing a Language-Culture Congregation in the Savannah Baptist Association" (D.Min. project, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1990), 73.

<sup>58</sup>An Van Pham, "A Missiological Strategy for Korean-American Church Growth in Georgia" (D.Miss. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004), 33.

walks of life in the six arts: “Ceremonies, music, archery, charioteering, history, and numbers.”<sup>59</sup> These involve devotion to Chinese people who were interested in humanity. Confucianism is also a desire for all classes of people to associate with nature, the Yin and Yang, and the Five Elements of the universe.

Confucius was more a moral, ethical guide than a spiritual leader. He strongly advocated Jen (benevolence) and Shu (tolerance) on the basis of which is filial piety. He also pointed out that the truth involves knowledge of one’s faults and that man could be led by the example of his own time or by the example of the past. In relation to the three fundamental principles, Vuong Gia Thuy writes, “Rank within the family (in terms of age and relationship) should be strictly observed, and within the social hierarchy one has to respect and obey the king (*quân*), teacher (*su*) and father (*phu*) in that order of priority. Therefore, an individual’s relationship vis-à-vis others must be clearly spelled out by specific and unambiguous terms of address.”<sup>60</sup>

Confucianism has exercised a powerful influence in the formation of Vietnamese society where the family is the basic unit. Three fundamental principles that govern Vietnamese women are the obedience to father until married, the obedience to husband while married, and the obedience to eldest son when the husband is dead. Confucius did not believe in worrying about life after death. All he wanted was for people to live in harmony and peace, and to be a good citizen in their community. He refused to discuss life after death. According to Confucianism, death does not mean the annihilation of man.

Confucians believe that the spirit that wanders in space as an exile should be brought back to the family altar and worshiped. Filial reverence is the primary duty of all Confucians. Family members worship their ancestors. They think parents will go to live

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<sup>59</sup> Vuong Gia Thuy, *Getting to Know the Vietnamese and their Culture* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1976), 9.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 9-10.

in another world after they die and this altar is the place where the ancestors' souls live. In light of this belief, Vietnamese people not only lay the table for meals, but they also place the food on the altar in the belief that those ancestors will have a meal with them. On all solemn occasions, the ancestral spirit is invoked and offered liquors, flowers, and fruit, accompanied with prayers and incense.

**Evangelical reply.** Reconciling Confucians to Christianity has no easy shortcut. The Christian must create fellowship with Confucians and help them cross or adjust some traditional barriers that have set deeply in their minds over generations. An example is the inequality between males and females. Christians should be open-minded and subjective; listening is needed in this case. Hebrews 11:3 teaches, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Paul declared that God wants people to seek him and reach out for him (Acts 17:27). Timothy C. Tennent reminds Christians that to grant God to the Confucians is "to affirm a transcendent God who is immanent as the sustainer of his created order. We are quite right to flee from the extreme transcendence views of the deist who, in a famous analogy, pictures God as the divine, aloof clockmaker who made the universe, wound it up, and then left."<sup>61</sup> But the essence of God still operates the universe daily; He still maintains the creation even while Satan tries to destroy the world.

Discussing the methods of ministering to people who are Confucians, Pham suggested that one who needs to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with Confucians should be prepared to cite and explain specific biblical verses supporting basic Christian doctrines that relate to the Confucian teaching. Pham suggested that one should search the Scriptures for topics such as "Family relationships (Exod 20:12; 1 Pet 3:1-7; 1 Cor

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<sup>61</sup>Timothy C. Tennent, *Christianity at the Religious Roundtable: Evangelicalism in Conversation with Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 73.

7:1-16; Heb 13:14); loyalty to rulers (1 Pet 2:13-17; Matt 17:24-27; 22:15-22); Christ will return and reign (Isa 11:4; Rev 2:26-27); millennium and new heaven and earth are hope of every Christian (Rev 20:22), and the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.”<sup>62</sup>

Josh McDowell and Don Stewart observe the differences between Confucianism and Christianity:

The ethical system taught by Confucius has much to commend it, for virtue is something to desire highly. However, the ethical philosophy Confucius espoused was one of self-effort, leaving no room or need for God.

Confucius taught that man can do it all by himself if he only follows the way of the ancients, while Christianity teaches that man does not have the capacity to save himself but is in desperate need of a savior.<sup>63</sup>

McDowell and Stewart emphasize,

The Bible, on the other hand, teaches that man is basically sinful and left to himself is completely incapable of performing ultimate good. Contrast what the Bible says about human nature and the need of a savior against Confucianism. . . . Confucianism as a religious system is opposed to the teachings of Christianity and must be rejected summarily by Christians.<sup>64</sup>

### **Buddhism: A Cycle of Life**

The founder of Buddhism was Buddha Shakyamuni, who was born as a prince in a place called Lumbini, which was originally in northern India, but is now part of Nepal. At the age of twenty-nine, he left the royal palace, his wife, and child and started to search for the cause of suffering and to find peace and happiness in the countryside. He met successfully with an old man begging for alms, a diseased man, a dead man, and a monk. He traveled broadly and disseminated his doctrine, which became known as Buddhism. Like most of the great religions of the world, Buddhism is divided into a number of different traditions.

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<sup>62</sup>Pham, “Establishing a Language Culture Congregation,” 76.

<sup>63</sup>Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, *Handbook of Today's Religions* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983), 336.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, 336-37.

**Understanding Buddha's philosophy.** Buddhists believe there is no God. Buddhism is a search for god by denying self. For them, reincarnation is *a cycle of life* and the cause of suffering is craving or grasping. The way to cease craving and escape from continual rebirth is by following the Buddhist practice known as the Noble Eightfold Path. Buddha compares a new life to a leaf growing on a tree in the image of reincarnation. When the withering leaf falls off, a new leaf will eventually replace it. The new leaf is similar to the old leaf, but it is not identical to the original. In rebirth, a person does not necessarily return to earth as the same entity ever again. Hien Duc Do explains,

There are Four Noble Truths taught by Buddha: life is suffering [*Dukkha*], suffering is caused by desire [*Samudaya*], suffering can be eliminated by eliminating desire [*Nirodha*], and to eliminate desire, one must follow the Eightfold Path of righteousness [*Magga*]: understanding, purpose, speech, conduct, vocation, effort, thinking, and meditation. In general, Buddhism teaches that life is suffering. To end suffering, one must try to escape the endless birth-death cycle called reincarnation by following the Eightfold Path.<sup>65</sup>

The hope of *nirvana* is a flame of life and human beings have no hope of entering it, but Christ is eternal life in “a new heaven and a new earth” (Rev 21:1). This is Fritz Ridenour's explanation of “the Eightfold Path”:

The Eightfold Path consists of eight ways of right living: (1) right view point, (2) right aspiration, (3) right speech, (4) right behavior, (5) right occupation, (6) right effort (7) right mindfulness, and (8) right meditation. Buddha claimed that whoever could follow this Eightfold Path would eventually reach nirvana, a release from the endless cycle of death and rebirth . . . life is permanent (*anicca*); that individual selves do not truly exist (*anata*); that all is determined by an impersonal law of moral causation (*karma*); that reincarnation is an endless cycle of continuous suffering, and that the goal of life is to break out of this cycle by finally extinguishing the flame of life and entering a permanent state of pure nonexistence (*nirvana*).<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Hien Duc Do, *The Vietnamese Americans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 7.

<sup>66</sup>Fritz Ridenour, *So What's the Difference? A Look at 20 Worldviews, Faiths and Religions and How They Compare to Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1979), 86, 218.

Georgia has a few Buddhist temples in metro Atlanta and elsewhere. Examples are: Quang-Minh and Kim Cang temples in Atlanta, Tucker, DeKalb, and Chamblee and the Vietnamese Buddhist Association of Savannah/Cat-Tuong Temple (Vietnamese) in Garden City, Georgia. Today, Vietnamese Buddhists in Dalton go to Atlanta for meditation in both a Buddhist and a nonsectarian form. This tradition influences all generations. A few Vietnamese residents in Dalton practice Buddhism, which influences their lives. Hoa Thi Nguyen says, “I go to church with my husband very rarely. I do not want to betray my ancestors. I have at least one altar on which there are the pictures of their ancestors, even my husband who is a Christian. I do believe my ancestors’ soul will live in the altar which is placed in my home.”<sup>67</sup>

**Evangelical reply.** The members of the First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton are happy to go into the Vietnamese community to meet people when they first arrive. Members want to help them settle their lives while their memories are still wandering in Vietnam. Christians, however, must understand Buddhist and Vietnamese traditions before sharing the gospel with the new arrivals; there is one true God, and he is the creator and sustainer of all things. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen 1:1). “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God” (Ps 90:2). Christians love Buddhist people, who are at heart a curious but friendly people; however, for them, Christianity is still a different world. They often wait and see the action and words of church members in order to give some sympathy or just something that shows reverence rather than fear. They want to see something that does not refer to a distant, indifferent universe. Daniel Heimbach and Vic Carpenter suggest that

when witnessing to a Buddhist, avoid terms such as *new birth*, *rebirth*, *regeneration*, or *born again* that could easily be confused with concepts of reincarnation. Use

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<sup>67</sup>Hoa Thi Nguyen, interview and translation by the author, Dalton, GA, 15 September 2012.

alternative phrases such as “endless freedom from suffering, guilt, and sin,” “new power for living a holy life,” “promise of eternal good life without suffering,” or ‘gift of unlimited merit.’<sup>68</sup>

Josh McDowell and Don Stewart emphasize sin in explaining the difference between the two religions:

There is no such thing in Buddhism as sin against a supreme being. In Christianity sin is ultimately against God although sinful actions also affect man and his world. The Bible makes it clear, “against thee, thee only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in thy sight” (Psalm 51:4).

Accordingly man needs a savior to deliver him from his sins.

With these and other differences, it can be seen readily that any harmonization of the two religions simply is not possible.<sup>69</sup>

Ridenour charts the difference (see appendix 11) between Christianity and Buddhism.<sup>70</sup> Christians must share the good news of Jesus Christ with Buddhists. In the Buddhist view, they deeply understand suffering, but deny that suffering is real. Witnesses can explain to them that Christ comforts the suffering, but he overcomes it by solving the problem of sin. In *Christian Apologetics in a World Community*, William Dyrness writes,

Though it is true that sin affects all that a person does, including reasoning, it is not true that he or she cannot understand truth when it is presented. The image of God was not entirely lost with the Fall; theologians have included this ability to understand truth among the benefits of common grace. While the illumination of the Holy Spirit is necessary to faith, it is the truth of Christianity that is illumined, and it is this truth we must contend for.<sup>71</sup>

In order to respond to some of the issue challenges that Christians face in the secular world, Timothy Beougher defends the faith very clearly concerning sin. He writes,

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<sup>68</sup>David Heimbach and Vic Carpenter, “Buddhism,” in *The Complete Evangelism Guidebook: Expert Advice on Reaching Others for Christ*, ed. Scott Dawson (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 220.

<sup>69</sup>McDowell and Stewart, *Handbook of Today's Religions*, 321.

<sup>70</sup>Ridenour, *So What's the Difference?* 92.

<sup>71</sup>William A. Dyrness, *Christian Apologetics in a World Community* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1983), 20.



“Adam’s sinful, he could give us no better life; being guilty, he could not beget persons that are innocent; nor bring clean thing from himself, who was unclean.”<sup>72</sup> Sin is any thought or deed contrary to the will of God, and man is spiritually dead in sin (Rom 3:10, 23; 5:12; Eph 2:1) and salvation is through Christ’s effort only in person. The Bible says, “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor 4:18). This verse describes things that are seen as suffering, and things which are not seen as a future good life in Christ. Witnesses can also convince Buddhists by saying that Jesus Christ demonstrated his love for everyone. He died for them (Rom 5:8). In contrast, Buddhists *work* for love in order to be loved. According to the Scriptures, people have been saved by grace through faith, not by works (Eph 2:8-9).

### **Conclusion**

The importance of reaching out to the community must be based on teaching the Vietnamese Americans through their immigrant culture and religion. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations to win the lost to himself. Evangelism is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every Christian church. Many from Vietnam migrated to Dalton, still wandering in their spiritual paths and without the knowledge of the one true God. The kingdom theology is almost a foreign language to them. They do not fully understand God’s Word even if its message is written in the Vietnamese language. They do not speak the language in which salvation is available. Many of them will die and still be totally unprepared to meet God. The apostle Paul explains the process of reaching people in Romans 10:14b-15a, “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?”

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<sup>72</sup>Timothy Beougher, *Richard Baxter and Conversion: A Study of the Puritan Concept of Becoming a Christian* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2007), 45.

In order to find out why the Vietnamese Americans left their country, an evangelist should know the historical background of the people. Knowing the historical and cultural background will also help in sharing the gospel in ways that connect. The evangelist must plant the seed of the gospel for change. They must also water the seeds so that they will grow among the next generations of Vietnamese Americans.

There are many problems to consider regarding cultural distinctions in implementing an evangelism strategy for Vietnamese Americans in Dalton, Georgia. The first generation carries the burden of the war and its historical background. The 1.5 generation must bridge the gap between their parents' culture, beliefs, and difficulties of adjustment to a new environment. Added to this are the expectations for their own striving to adjust and accommodate themselves in a new and different world. Finally, the second generation must balance a desire to maintain their Vietnamese heritage while succeeding in the mainstream of American culture. Armed with the knowledge of the generational impact on the Vietnamese individual, the evangelist can share the gospel in relevant terms.

The long history of the three main Asian religions continues to influence thought and belief for all generations. Such ideas cannot easily be changed. Clearly, the road ahead for Vietnamese Americans is precarious because most refugees live within a narrow limit of personal relations in their community. Planning for evangelism must include learning their culture and presenting the message of Jesus with love and understanding. A sensitivity to history, culture, and religious underpinnings will help in sharing the story of Jesus to a wonderful people who need a wonderful Savior.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROJECT DETAILS

Excitement filled my spirit at the beginning of my project, “Implementing an Evangelism Strategy for the First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton, Georgia (FVBCD).” The project, conducted in the Vietnamese language, lasted fifteen weeks. Initially developed in 2010, the seminar officially started in June of 2013. Romans 15:13 served as the greeting for my beloved church family: “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” I explained the project to them. This course would explore evangelism and discipleship with the theological themes discovered throughout the Bible. Expected outcomes included a modern-day application of evangelism gleaned from the gospel perspective. A good start leads to a good finish. Church members would take their first step on the path toward success in evangelism by participating in the class.

#### **Orientation**

At the end of a special outdoor fellowship service on June 16, 2013, in Harrison Park, Tennessee, Rev. Thanh Tran, a recent pastor of the FVBCD, announced the training schedule. He encouraged church members to become involved in the tasks of the church. He told them that the orientation course would help them gain the skills necessary to minister well in the church environment. A discussion of the details followed a presentation of the concept of the project. In my role as Minister of Missions for this church, I concisely described the project. The training had the specific purpose of preparing the members of FVBCD to accomplish their goals in helping the

church to grow. Four goals formed the foundation for the course.<sup>1</sup> The goals covered the scope of the ministry project to convince the congregation of its importance. The members enthusiastically supported my project. The congregation joined me in prayer for this endeavor. We asked our Lord Jesus Christ to bless the FVBCD by pouring his authority on them, in order to expand the kingdom of God in Dalton, Georgia, where the Vietnamese diaspora resettled after a long-suffering journey. This chapter focuses on the details of evangelism and discipleship training that resulted after the initial meeting.

### **Participation in the Project**

I invited all church members of the FVBCD to assist my project in developing an evangelism and church growth strategy. They were encouraged to participate in my project. After their sign-up, I gave the participants an overview of the fifteen-week workshop at the FVBCD and handed out the schedule of evangelism and discipleship training explaining that this training would focus on evangelism and discipleship for church growth. At the end of the first training session, I explained that all participants would receive a certificate of completion for the continued commitment required.

### **Church Member Questionnaire Evaluation**

After twelve members enrolled on June 16, 2013, they attended the first training meeting at the church on the same day. I asked them to introduce themselves and share their testimonies, and then I distributed a Church Member Questionnaire, explained the project requirements, and asked them to make a strong commitment to attend all sessions. The participants filled out the questionnaire to measure their progress of the training course and sent it back to me the same day.

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<sup>1</sup>This project has four goals. The first goal is to preach a comprehensive understanding of Jesus' Great Commission to church members. The second goal is to train church members in personal evangelism. The third goal is to teach church members, including new believers, to become disciple-makers. The fourth goal is a personal one.

## **Training Sessions**

Through the fifteen weeks of training, we explored the chronological order of the development of a disciple of Christ. The first meeting, with twelve members present, took place at the church building. In the following days, we agreed to divide the class into two groups for prayer, study, and discussion. The limited time on Sunday necessitated the use of handouts that would need to be reviewed at home. To ensure better attendance and participation, seminar participants met before the church service and after lunch fellowship every Sunday. To encourage a wider variety of topics and perspectives, I provided a weekday forum for students who do not normally have a chance to attend the class. Additional help included calling on group leaders to help in the discussion of the prior session. The volunteers received tools to keep track of class assignments and other paperwork.

The participants received an overview of the fifteen-week workshop at the FVBCD, as well as handouts of the schedule of evangelism and discipleship training. This training highlighted evangelism and discipleship for church growth. During the first training session, the discussion covered the main topics and encouraged the participants to apply the best suggestions to achieve the project goals. Success in the classes also required that each member do the homework and fully participate in all sessions. In this time together, we briefly touched on all the goals of this project. I also told them that I will hand out the posttest to evaluate themselves at the end of the fifteen weeks of training.

### **Session 1: An Evangelism Sermon: The Great Commission**

On June 23, 2013, my Evangelism Sermon to the congregation of the FVBCD had the theme “The Great Commission” in Matthew 28:18-20 (see session 1 in appendix 15). This sermon, based on the tasks of the church, emphasized what the church must do for evangelism. These tasks encompassed an expansion of the purpose and creativeness

of the church. The congregation received a warning to avoid the selfish thought that the church belongs to the members when she actually belongs to Jesus and his purpose.<sup>2</sup> As the preacher, I intended for the sermon to encourage the congregation to join the project and use some of the techniques discussed immediately after the presentation of the first session.

In the sermon, God's Word led to an emphasis of three main points: to "go," to "teach," and to "baptize." Using the plan of the Great Commission in verses 19 and 20a, I asked the church to think seriously and soberly about Jesus' command to "go." The same command is found in Mark 16:16; Acts 2:42, 5:20, 10:48; and Luke 9:60. The second point directed the congregation to the scriptural mandate to "teach" based on Acts 2:42, Matthew 10:27, and 2 Timothy 4:2. The last point was to "baptize," found in Acts 10:48 and 1 Corinthians 1:14-16. Jesus charged all his followers with strong commands regarding the importance of evangelism. The Word of God directed the participants to understand the function of discipleship as they proclaim God's love to the world. The conclusion pointed to Jesus' promise from Matthew 28:20b.

Obviously, Jesus invested his ministry in his disciples. His promise of provision (Dan 6:16; Mark 16:16; John 10:27-28; Phil 4:19; 2 Cor 12:9; Rom 5:2, 8:28; 1 Cor 10:13, 15:3, 4, 57; and Acts 2:32, 38) helps all Christians have more confidence when they confront crises in the world. In my experience, a promise is of no more value than the ability of the one who makes it to fulfill it. Such a belief implies a willingness to do so. God did carry through his covenant with Abraham. Paul points out in Galatians 3:16 that it was through Christ that God intended to fulfill the promise to Abraham. In Acts 13:32-33a, the apostle says, "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again."

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<sup>2</sup>James W. Cox, *Preaching* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993), 146.

R. Albert Mohler, at his twentieth anniversary as president of SBTS, addressed the seminarians, saying, “Our task is not theological speculation; we are not called to doctrinal creativity; we are not summoned to invent a message; we neither market nor test this message, nor modify it. We received it. And as we received it, so we preach. . . . We are called to preach the Word in season and out of season.”<sup>3</sup> Believers must stand firmly on the Word of God and be Christian soldiers to share the gospel. Jesus’ relationship with his disciples is not only for a period of life, but for a long duration, even to the end of the world. From Isaiah 43:2, believers are reminded that “when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” Matthew 28:18-20 records an encounter of Jesus with his disciples after the resurrection and further emphasizes that Jesus sends his followers out with specific instructions. He commands them to go, teach, and baptize in order to make disciples.

The conclusion included a summary of Jesus’ Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). Verse 18 expressed the task of the church and Jesus’ authority. This authority is the theological foundation for the mission to expand the kingdom of God on earth. A warning was issued that without his power, disciples get weak and sometimes do nothing at all. An allusion to this truth is given when Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil 4:13). Jesus’ authority still leads this mission and fulfills his Commission elsewhere. Perhaps this motif of their labor with God offered insight into both the divine role and the personal role of the growth in this church. After the sermon, I gave the congregation another chance to join the twelve who had already signed up. A strong commitment included a promise to attend all sessions. The afternoon ended with the formation of small groups to pray for the project to succeed.

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<sup>3</sup>Aaron Cline Hanbury, “Vision for the Next Decade: A Report on R. Albert Mohler Jr.’s 20th Anniversary Convocation Address,” *The Southern Baptist Seminary Journal* 81, no. 4 (Fall 2013): 51.

## **Session 2: What Is Evangelism?**

On June 30, 2013, the lesson included some distinct images of evangelism. A prayer entreated God to bless the participants and to use this training at FVBCD for them to gain more knowledge of Jesus. There were ten students present for the class; two of the original participants were absent. After the greeting and prayer, a PowerPoint presentation detailed the information for the training session. According to the rationale section in chapter 1, I made a strong argument that the Vietnamese community in Dalton, Georgia, the subject of my project, was still wandering in the secular world after many decades. These Vietnamese are just like the diaspora in a foreign land; they live in darkness. They absolutely do not know what to do or where to go. The one goal of the Dalton diaspora is to build their happiness, concentrating only on seeking daily material needs. They are rich in material objects, but poor in spiritual ways. My intention was not to say that everybody wanted to reject our Lord Jesus Christ, but that they are influenced by traditional religions (see chap. 3). They are afraid to be rude to others or to be traitors to their ancestors.

I asked the class to consider the question, “What is evangelism?” (see session 2 in appendix 15). As leader, I gave the students some definitions of the term “witness,” including “convincing unbelievers to accept Jesus as Savior of their lives.” Witnessing is also making an announcement of the gospel to everyone or conquering souls for God.

A short tutorial informed those who were unfamiliar with the handout review process. This approach proved helpful in answering basic questions. Such methodology is included in the rest of the fifteen-week sessions in evangelism and discipleship. Participants learned how to write their personal testimony. At the end of this session, class members wrote their own responses to “What is evangelism?” on the back sheet of the handout. Individuals wrote Acts 1:8 in the Vietnamese language. They were instructed to read this verse out loud to themselves until they felt the Holy Spirit pour its relevance into their hearts.



### Session 3: Personal Evangelism

The class on July 14, 2013, helped the participants understand the purpose of personal evangelism (see session 3 in appendix 15). These tasks, based on biblical and theological directives, use their faith to build an effective partnership with the church, a partnership needed for church growth. In my role as class leader, I encouraged the class members to approach the lost naturally at the first opportunity. The participants needed to spend time studying the tasks for witnessing. They also needed to understand how much God is interested in using them in the Vietnamese community. The awareness of this obligation helped the students to know clearly God's objectives for lost Vietnamese people in Dalton, Georgia.

Most church members of the FVBCD have limited English. This fact made it necessary for me to translate into Vietnamese the book *The Master Plan of Discipleship* by Robert E. Coleman in order to teach this session. The translated book showed them that anyone who receives the grace of God can do personal witnessing about Jesus to grow the church. We discussed these ideas in the class to help the participants realize that every believer has gifts from God. A quote from Coleman about small groups started the discussion:

It does not matter how small the group is at the beginning, provided that they implant their vision in men and women who will in turn pass the word along to others, and that they also reproduce. The early church gave eloquent witness to the dynamic in the hearts of people who take God at His Word and believe that with Him nothing is impossible.<sup>4</sup>

According to Coleman, anywhere people go or live, faithful church members will go to them and testify about the Lord. The believers in the early church proclaimed the gospel more than just in the place where they worshipped God. They shared God's love on the corners, in their family dwellings, in the trial courts, and in the jails.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Discipleship* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1987), 40.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

The participants needed to focus on sharing the gospel in any place where they found lost people—the street corners in town, the banks of the river, at their homes, and even in the prisons. The gospel is shared in spite of any objections, such as Jewish or pagan ideas. The witness is always faithful in sharing the gospel. The good news is based on events that have happened, biblical events that must be explained. Examples include the day of Pentecost and the answer for the crowd in Lystra. The lost see the miracle, understand the event, and respond in amazement.

The presentation of the message depends on the audience. For example, for a Jewish person, the message should strongly emphasize the authority of the Bible; for a pagan, the revelation of nature would be more relevant. Teaching and personal witnessing are very similar in many cases. The disciples in the Bible shared the message according to the situation. The tone and approach can vary dramatically when communicating with people. In Acts, a few terms convey the notion of witnessing, from a sermon to something as simple as a chat or conversation. The teaching hints helped participants to be confident, whether they witnessed to a crowd or to an individual. Anyone who is redeemed by the grace of God can say a good word about Jesus at any convenient time.

Events in the book of Acts provide examples such as Phillip's ministry and the conversion of Paul. Acts shows that the Holy Spirit wants Christ followers to recognize that the leaders of this first church did individual work in testifying that was simpler than what they taught in front of the church. The value of testifying to individuals is as important as the experience of teaching God's Word in the church building. This pattern was seen on the day of Pentecost when the faithful were filled with the Holy Ghost and came out on the streets to preach "the power of God" (Acts 2:1-11). Acts points out that the early believers committed themselves to God's Word, to one another, to prayer, to praise and worship, and to outreach. An amazing response from the participants followed after I talked about reaching out to the lost and preaching the gospel as the first disciples did (Acts 2). Acts showed the participants that all believers, not just the apostles, were

chosen to be pioneers for preaching the gospel to the world. The Christian believers, “except the Apostles” (Acts 8:4), were scattered around the region during the time of persecution.

Spreading the gospel to the old and the young is important. Sharing can be done at any time. Witnessing for God is not an art or a special program; it is a way of life.

The book of Acts gives a lesson in realism; it expresses how social change affects the root of sin, rather than just its outward manifestation. Participants, however, should not think that this fact decreases social responsibility. A concern for the gospel cannot make believers indifferent to the cry of the lost for help with social problems. The righteous of the world, especially those who hold leadership roles in shaping community policies, must address social problems as well as spiritual ones. A person in any position of honor will also have the opportunity to speak of God to others. Silence can be sin. God called us to speak the Word at any time.

After these preliminary remarks, group discussions centered around the following questions: “What is evangelism?” and “Why do we need to do evangelism?” Many of the responses from the participants were based on strong biblical principles from their knowledge of evangelism. Individuals brought their desired outcomes into the class discussion. Fellow believers made valuable suggestions to other classmates. The class was thrilled and excited to learn that they could witness, not only in the church, but everywhere they go.

At the end of the evangelism session, participants began to learn about each other’s experiences. I shared my personal evangelism experience and gave them examples from Acts. One example featured Peter and John; they shared the gospel with handicapped people by healing the lame man in Acts 3:1-16. Those church leaders provided good examples of how to win souls for Jesus Christ. Philip talked directly to Simon (Acts 8:9-24) and gave his testimony to a eunuch from Ethiopia on the road to Gaza (Acts 8:26-40). Paul, in a confrontation with Elymas, the sorcerer, overcame

Satan by the power of the Holy Spirit. The apostle witnessed then and to numerous other individuals and groups. Paul and Silas, even in prison, used the opportunity to save the jailer and his family by direct witness through words and actions. The participants could not wait to share after hearing that direct witnessing could be so effective.

The other issue the students discussed was “obedience.” Obedience is essential according to what the Great Commission demands. William Fay points out that “Jesus told us, ‘Go!’ This was not an option; it was a command!”<sup>6</sup> I used the example of witnessing to the Vietnamese emigrants in asylum countries. Sharing the gospel is very hard when people of a different culture are involved. Their spiritual lives are still covered with the heavy, dark veil related to their traditions. There must be no doubt that the church cares for the newcomers, the poor, the sick, the blind, the widows, and the orphans. It does not matter that these people are invested in their different cultural ways. Their culture must be separated from their religions so the culture can be respected and a belief in Jesus incorporated into it. The converts do not have to abandon their culture along with their old religion.

#### **Session 4: Who Is a Disciple?**

Session 4, “Who Is a Disciple?” (see session 4 in appendix 15), occurred on July 21, 2013. The class began with an encouragement to study the twelve disciples, the avid followers of Jesus, the Son of God. A disciple is defined as one who is learning or has learned. In the New Testament, the word “disciple” describes any follower of Jesus’ teaching (Matt 10:1). During the Messiah’s public ministry, the term referred specifically to his twelve chosen aides. In the Acts of the Apostles, the original twelve are always referred to as Apostles (Acts 1:26).

The class eagerly shared their thoughts about discipleship. I used the direct method that Paul used on Mars Hill as an example of witnessing to share the gospel.

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<sup>6</sup>William Fay, *Share Jesus without Fear* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1999), 17.

This helped the participants overcome an attitude of obligation toward evangelism. They learned to share the gospel out of compassion for the lost, without fear, as sharing becomes a natural part of their daily Christian lives. Understanding the demographics of the Vietnamese population in Dalton, Georgia, serves as an encouragement to witness from a compassionate conviction.

Generally speaking, a disciple is a pupil, a student, and one who receives the teachings or instructions of another. He is one who believes in the teachings and is active within its belief system. Although this definition applies to areas beyond religion, this question was categorically related to the use of the word “disciple” in the Bible. Within the application of Scripture, Jesus’ definition of a disciple is this: “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed” (John 8:31b). Jesus’ instructions, teachings, and doctrines are found in the Bible. His disciples are required to continue to read it, study it, and be edified by it (2 Tim 3:16).

God’s plan for sharing across this nation is to approach the lost with the same compassion Jesus demonstrated. According to the Lord’s call, the fishermen on the Sea of Galilee hung up their nets to follow Jesus. In three years, they not only became disciples, but also the “fishers of men” that Jesus promised. To conclude this session, I reinforced the main point of the opening sermon: Jesus commanded that believers, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matt 28:19-20). With this Scripture, the Lord gives three orders to his disciples: first “go,” second “teach,” and third “baptize.” Without the obedience of God’s people to share the gospel, there are very limited ways for any lost soul to receive God’s redemption. William Fay points out that “Jesus told us, ‘Go!’ This was not an option; it was a command!”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

## **Session 5: Where Were the Disciples?**

This training, “Where were the disciples?” (see session 5 in appendix 15), took place on July 28, 2013. The topic had a specific emphasis of how to discover a person who needs to be a Christ follower. The class included instructions for specific ways of going out to reach the lost in Dalton, especially the Vietnamese. The seminar could not fail to impress the imperative of reaching the first generation before they pass away. Most of the first generation do not know Jesus Christ and, worse, they are not open-minded for the everlasting change to come.

A review of the original twelve disciples, who were Jesus’ followers, students, and close friends, ensued. They were active disciples. Today’s participants need to be active, too. Life is short. Believers at FVBCD must help the lost to see Jesus Christ as the perfect Lord of all dimensions of time.

Two areas exist where the church can seek new disciples. First, some candidates are already in the church. Second, some candidates are waiting for others to be friendly to them and invite them to Christ, or at least to church fellowship. Acts 1:8 calls attention to the fact that witnesses will spread the gospel all over the world. In the last moment before his ascension to heaven, the Lord allowed his disciples to not only claim redemption through him for the Jews, but also to broaden the redemption opportunity to everyone across the world.

“Disciple” means that a person who believes in the Son of God shall have the duty to go and share Christ’s story. Their responsibility is to persuade people to have faith in God and to lead them to accept Jesus as the Savior of their lives. Every participant must assume the responsibility to expand the kingdom of God, even though they have never seen it on earth. When the church began to expand to the Gentiles, the situation required new methodology. Bill Hull writes, “A disciple was and is a person of concrete action and commitment. . . . It means more than just a believer, but a person

who demonstrates belief by action.”<sup>8</sup> Michael J. Wilkins writes, “A disciple of Jesus is one who has come to him for eternal life, has claimed him as Savior and God, and has embarked upon the life of following him.”<sup>9</sup>

Acts records that those who responded to the call of the gospel immediately joined with many others of the same faith. Disciples of the Lord must see themselves as people in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. The next logical step is for them to help others grow in individual faith. Disciples join with other disciples in sharing the good news. The class reviewed Acts 1:8.

In the group discussion, each group read a part of the book *Back to Jerusalem*.<sup>10</sup> They focused on three questions: (1) Why are there too many Vietnamese people living in spiritual darkness? (2) How could they personally become a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ? and (3) Do they want the church to grow?<sup>11</sup> Discussion centered around the need for disciples of Christ to carry the cross themselves. A disciple has the ability to help more people know the Lord and thus becomes part of a line to the end of the world.

### **Session 6: What Do Disciples Do?**

The topic on August 4, 2013, was “What do disciples do?” (see session 6 in appendix 15). The simple answer is they spread the word of the Lord all around the world. Disciples have ability and strength. They must use these resources to develop their church. Adherents of Jesus use their gifts and skills to serve God and expect their efforts

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<sup>8</sup>Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1988), 56-57.

<sup>9</sup>Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 41.

<sup>10</sup>Paul Hattaway et al., *Back to Jerusalem: Three Chinese House Church Leaders Share Their Vision to Complete the Great Commission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 113-19.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 63-70.

to produce good results in the harvest field. A phrase of encouragement reminded them, “You can do it!” The church waits for this kind of disciple who likes to demonstrate the message: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matt 4:17).

The participants needed to understand that the task of missions, which they have today, comes from God. Jesus chose, trained, and gave his authority to those who became church leaders. God helps them to understand what he meant when he said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt 7:21). The session began by emphasizing that discipleship comes after conversion. Their attempt to perform the acts of discipleship makes a change in their church. The Scripture reminds witnesses that “wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor 5:9-10).

Disciples do more than just believe in Jesus for Scripture says even “the devils also believe” (Jas 2:19). Disciples are to be imitators of Jesus as our perfect model. Students learned of the many requirements for a disciple.

Disciples must do their duty in their church. They must continue to develop their gifts and skills to influence other people’s lives. They must completely surrender to God. Disciples require training. God puts people’s eternal lives into the hands of disciples. Disciples must not only know, but also follow, the correct training. Second Timothy 2:15 and 3:16 remind the disciples of the necessity of training.

Disciples must love one another. Even in the book of Acts, of the apostles demonstrate this phenomenon. Disciples must pay attention to goals set by the commands of Jesus, such as, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). The opportunity to present the gospel of Christ must come from the heart to reflect love and concern for people.



Disciples must have the capacity to serve. The Lord's disciples are pioneers in learning to rely on God, knowing the limit of their power and understanding. It is evident that the source of their power to lead others comes from God. Their aim is to become disciple-makers.

Disciples must know how to explain their responsibility and be willing to report to the church what they do. Disciples are looking for better things to do (2 Cor 5:10), such as praying more, helping their families, and serving the Lord. As church leaders, they know how to influence their teams to complete the common tasks and the church's pastoral needs. Students learned that the purpose of this strategy is to keep things in order to allow new disciples to team with others who already have a natural plan of evangelism. Students also learned that a disciple of Christ humbly receives God's help in the development of these strategies and their implementation.

Disciples must always show loyalty. They must be loyal to the core group as they are committed to creating far-reaching influence because they are consecrated to Jesus Christ as Lord. Faithful disciples produce faithful members. The faithful disciples of God are devoted to working in harmony in the service of the Lord.

Disciples must maintain their integrity. The apostle Paul spoke of an integrity that is an essential quality of Christian leaders. Integrity is fundamental, not only to let others respect the disciples of the Lord, but also to cause them to believe and follow. With a strong commitment, disciples must inform others that the time of Jesus' return is near. Each disciple must preach the gospel in a natural way to help the church grow. Participants in the class learned a valuable lesson from the early church: many disciples came out of their church ready to testify about Christ in the community.

Disciples must take time for prayer. The Lord's disciples need to pray from the heart for willing obedience under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They must pray to be wise and to employ the use of the power and benefits received from their Heavenly Father.

At the end of this session, group leaders conducted discussions, under my directions, using three questions: (1) What did you learn about disciples in the early church? (2) Why is integrity fundamental for disciples and nonbelievers? and (3) What does praying from the heart mean?

After the discussion, the summary included answering the following question: “What does a disciple do?” The participants confronted what they needed to do for church growth. The best answers indicated that most Christ followers depend on the loyalty and durability of the example of faithful disciples. That loyalty, however, can vary in basis, strength, scope, legitimacy, and attitude, even while serving the Lord. Jesus called disciples to follow him. He still calls them today. Believers who grow in Christ must have a clear vision and unmistakable identity with him. Disciples are in a union with Jesus, taking on the nature, pattern, and lifestyle of their living Lord.

### **Session 7: What Was the Role of the Disciples?**

The material on August 11, 2013, answered the question: “What was the role of Disciples?” (see session 7 in appendix 15). The learners viewed Jesus Christ’s life as a servant until the Romans crucified him. One role of the disciples was to watch Jesus die on the cross. They had to bear witness to his death, so they could then bear witness to his resurrection as they went from town to town and from city to city to win the lost. They witnessed about Jesus and won people to Christ spreading the Word of God and the news of Jesus’ forgiveness. They stood as witnesses to his life, as they preached the gospel to the Jews and to the Gentiles after the majority of Jews rejected the messiah; and they recorded his story to continue to bear witness after their deaths.

Christ followers were given the Holy Spirit after his death and became witnesses to all they had seen and heard from Jesus. This allowed them to effectively witness to and lead the unsaved to believe. They were faithful servants during Jesus’ life and after his death. The original Twelve Apostles added two more. After Judas the Traitor

killed himself, the eleven remaining apostles prayed and gave Matthias apostleship with them (Acts 1:25-26). Later, Jesus chose Saul, the persecutor of Christians, and converted him. He was then called Paul, his Gentile name, and he wrote most of the New Testament.

The qualifications for discipleship are not as strict as those for apostles; so many modern-day disciples are learning and spreading the gospel. Personal preparation is the key to becoming a successful witness. This lesson taught participants about the qualifications needed to be a witness for Jesus.

I kept the group focused on preparation and responsibilities for discipleship. After a review of the basics of the Christian faith, the guide topics for group discussion included: (1) Are you willing to study the Bible diligently? (Acts 17:11; Ps 1:2; 2 Tim 2:15; and 3:16-17); (2) Are you willing to pray regularly? (Phil 4:6; 1 Pet 5:7; Matt 6:9-13; and 1 Thess 5:17); and (3) Can you commit yourself to the local church? (Acts 9:26-28; 11:26; Heb 13:17; 1 Cor 1:2; and Eph 4:16).

The class discussion stressed the necessity of experiencing regeneration and of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Class members learned of the need to consecrate their lives based on Romans 1:1: “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.” Such a person brings the courage to serve God despite the cost of the circumstances and the challenges of the ministry. Disciples are determined to complete their mission with honor and blessing for God, as well as for the people they serve. The service of God requires devotion. Details in Scripture supported the discussion of a disciple’s responsibilities.

Disciples have responsibility for the kingdom of God. Disciples must rely on Jesus’ rule and the peace of the Lord (Isa 9:7) to have the power of God. They must serve with the confidence of Jesus, filled with his promises. Disciples need to know that Jesus is the main object of the whole Bible (Luke 24:46-47). This knowledge sheds light on the purpose of the cross. The class heard the news that God’s gift is always in harmony with

their ability (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:4-11, 28-30; Eph 4:7-12; Phil 4:10) and that those who become more confident and proficient receive greater opportunities. Individuals had time to share their experiences concerning the call of God on their life.

Disciples are responsible for sharing the gospel. Believers must use several different methods to share the gospel in the community, such as energized preaching, the fellowship of the church, or meeting the social needs of the community. The church and its members can draw upon copious research into the strategies and tactics involved in setting up and running a successful social ministry. However, the church must keep in mind that researchers might not know the real motives for participation in the social outreach. If the congregation can understand what motivates social outreach participants, the congregation can understand why some church communities have outreach programs that are more successful than others. The class discussed these topics under my guidance.

To conclude this session, I reminded the class that the book of Acts is the key that gives the church a lesson on how social change affects the root of sin. The book combines the excitement of enthusiasm with the benefits of responsibility. I asked the class not to wait too long to study the Word of God. Study leads to religious fervor and to methods for ministry to share with others. Scripture study will cause believers to share the gospel directly with friends who might not hear all of the believer's reflection, but will still learn more about finding the truth of life through Jesus Christ.

### **Session 8: Disciples: Responsibility and Disciplined Life**

Session 8 took place on August 25, 2013. The material focused on preparation and responsibilities for discipleship (see session 8 in appendix 15). The lesson alluded to the basics of the Christian faith.

On August 25, 2013, the members confronted four issues: (1) A description of living faith, (2) The value of life, (3) Following Christ, and (4) Expectations from God's Word. Apparently, everyone in the session appeared to love God and wanted to become

a disciple, but discipleship requires that they pattern their lives after Christ and lead a disciplined life, learning from the Bible how to structure their lives to be close to Jesus.

In class, participants had the opportunity to learn that it is not unusual to see disciples make covenants with the Lord to change their personality and lifestyle. The Holy Spirit furnishes the strength for them to have a personal, living faith and a corporate fellowship in the church. Living faith, as described in the Bible, transforms a Christian's life, enabling him to have a close relationship with God. This relationship results in freedom from the shackles of worry, doubt, and fear.

Students learned that biblical faith teaches the value of every individual; that the value of life is a law as certain as any law of logic or physics. We humans did not invent it or create it, God did. The value of life is enhanced when we submit ourselves to worship God.

Disciples lead productive lives. Those who grow as believers are completely changed; they are new creations. Jesus went through the crisis of the cross on behalf of sinners so that they could be changed. Disciples continue on Jesus' path by daily obedience. It is easy to make concessions in life. Believers can rationalize to such an extent that the Word is ignored. We let our guard down and desensitize ourselves to right and wrong. Our faith must inform every area of our lives; it filters everything we take in and everything we send out. One of the students shared this in class:

Sometimes this is not easy to discipline myself when I follow Jesus. It means my life has to change from doing things the way I have always done them to doing them more like Jesus would do them. Things like showing love when I just want to hate someone or talk bad about them. Choosing to become a disciple is to do what is right even when everyone else is doing what is wrong. The good news is the Holy Spirit now lives inside of me and Jesus helps me to follow him as he said, "Come follow me."

Christians often do not allow others to witness the resurrection of Christ in us. Others might not see that our actions are consistent with what we say we believe. I, as the leader, gave the participants an example. I have felt uneasy about some of my decisions now that I am a widower. I told my children that I am making a change. These changes

are based on what my morals and values should be as a church pastor. God has clearly set the standard for our lives. It is time to start regaining the territory we have lost by once again behaving consistently with who we say we are. Now is the time we start regaining a purity that has been so easily given away. Nothing should enter into our homes or hearts that God could ever construe as vile. If ungodly behaviors do come in, we cannot expect Jesus' blessings.

Disciples should be faithful to the Lord by respecting the authority of the Bible. I helped them distinguish between the true, powerful authority of the Bible and the manipulative or crassly confrontational use of Scripture by those who are using it for their own ends. Participants received a reminder of the Lord's message of salvation to us in the verse from Acts that says: "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent" (Acts 13:26). The Savior suffered for our sins and gave his life for us. Christians receive forgiveness and are cleansed from their sins when they repent. Repentance, however, is more than simply acknowledging wrongdoings. It is a change of mind, heart, and actions and includes turning away from sin and to God for forgiveness. Repentance is motivated by love for God and the sincere desire to obey his commandments. Individuals shared experiences about two issues during the discussion time that concluded the session. These issues are (1) how Satan wants you to think that you cannot repent, and (2) what the Savior has promised if you humble yourself and repent. The quicker we repent of our sins, the quicker we return to the peace and joy that comes with forgiveness. If believers delay repentance, they lose blessings, opportunities, and spiritual guidance. They become further entangled in sinful behavior, making it more difficult to find their way back.

### **Session 9: Disciples and Prayer Reflection**

The session (see session 9 in appendix 15) on September 1, 2013, dealt with prayer, using Luke 18:1 as an example of a foundation for prayer. "And he spake a

parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” In the first step, the participants memorized this verse in Vietnamese during class time. In the second step, they practiced praying without fear as if they had experienced persecution (Acts 4:24; 12:5; 16:25; and 18:9-10). Prayer is the response of each individual in the presence of the Lord. Christians come to God humbly with a heart to listen. Christians feel the presence of God while praying and gratefully respond to God’s love. The focus is always on God and what he is doing (Acts 1:24; 9:11; and 22:17-18).

In the third step of a prayer foundation, the class learned why we need to pray when a heavy burden comes. Every Christian should know that Satan’s plan is for the church to substitute other activities for evangelism. A burden for service, however, can only be received from God when our spirits are open to him when praying. An open spirit to God is the condition for receiving his guidance. A burden received when praying must be discharged faithfully through action. When the first burden is lifted, a second is received. When the second is discharged, a third burden comes. This “law” illustrates the importance of having an open spirit to God. If we feel we should pray for something, we should do so immediately. These feelings may be faint initially, but they gain strength as we go on. If we quench the Spirit and do not release our burden through prayer, the burden is lost. Sharing the gospel with nonbelievers comprises a major burden for believers. The pastor of the church must set a good example by praying to lead church members to share the gospel message.<sup>12</sup> He illustrates the role of the Holy Spirit in bringing about conviction and conversion to unbelievers.<sup>13</sup> Praying for the spiritual needs of others and for all those who reject Jesus as Savior and Lord (Acts 8:15; 19:6) is always appropriate for Christians. Sometimes we feel powerless in trying to help others, but praying is always beneficial.

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<sup>12</sup>Delos Miles, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman, 1983), 49.

<sup>13</sup>John Mark Terry, *Church Evangelism: Creating a Culture for Growth in Your Congregation* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1997), 3.

The participants received some specific prayer tips. One tip is writing the concern down and then reading it over to absorb the reason for praying. A second help is to gather thoughts and reflections with the specific words that you use to ask for your special request or intention. For a more enriching experience, go down on your knees to pray or take it one step further and prostrate yourself while praying. We should also pray for the lost and desperate man (Acts 9:30; 16:16; 14:8). The habit of praying together for the lost can be developed as we name them from a list. We can add some special prayer time if one of our team of witnesses is experiencing an anxious time or crisis.

In this session, talking with the Lord about lost people drew particular attention. This prayer flows from a relationship with God. Sometimes specific help is the reason for praying. At other times, there is an expression of gratitude. Prayer time is sometimes begging for the gift of faith for the church. The Bible says that God knows everything; nothing is hidden from him (Acts 20:36; 21:5). The purpose of prayer is not to inform God, but rather to benefit the petitioner by focusing on needs, problems, and wounds. Not knowing when one needs help is a dangerous thing.

An example of the need for prayer is some Vietnamese people who got divorced when they came to the United States. About ten divorced Vietnamese couples live in Dalton. A few of them remarried and collectively had at least seven children. Their children live in separate places with their divorced parents. Options surfaced as to how to help them find hope when they are separated. Couples are forced to work on their marriage. They must also be reconciled to God. Reconciliation is definitely worthwhile, no matter what has happened. Discouragement is so prevalent that they no longer feel like working to improve their marriage. They are encouraged to continue to work on a solution. The couple must trust that God wants to bestow blessings on both spouses if they are willing to work on their marriage. God should be asked to give them the courage and the strength required for the journey.



In the culture of this asylum country, the darker the circumstances, the brighter the light of praise for the Lord. Using the Vietnamese language helps them to reduce their struggle with prejudice against people who are different. God's unconditional love paves the way in their church. Members remain in God's hands today. In the evangelical world, answered prayer is not a distant goal; rather, it is a current experience. All participants received the value of this lesson and applied it to their individual prayer lives.

**Session 10: *The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert E. Coleman**

The sessions on September 8 and 15, 2013, came from material found in the book, *The Master Plan of Discipleship* by Robert E. Coleman.<sup>14</sup> This book has six chapters: "The Vision to Fulfill," "The People to Win," "The Fellowship to Cherish," "The Ministry to Give," "The Discipline to Take," and "The Power to Become." Coleman's books are published in seventy-five languages. I translated some parts of this book into the Vietnamese language for the training at the FVBCD (see session 10 in appendix 15). The session began with a repetition of the Great Commission:

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Matt 28:18-20).

A pattern of God's power, seen in verse 18, is also described in Luke 1:32-33: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." God poured his power on Jesus. Jesus did the same for his followers. All who gathered in the class at the FVBCD had promised to respond to the call to "go," "baptize," and "teach." I shared that the Great Commission is not a special calling or a gift of Spirit; it is a command. The class had many things to

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<sup>14</sup>Coleman, *The Master Plan of Discipleship*.

learn about the Great Commission as a lifestyle. The command of Jesus enlists every Christian to bring the kingdom of God to each person. A study of The Master Plan of Discipleship concentrated on a set of theological concepts. Someone prayed that we could learn the lesson Jesus taught in a small group, as written in Luke 6:13: “And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.” This passage is one of the best examples of how Jesus used the concept of a small group taking responsibility to direct disciples in church growth.

The emphasis of my pastoral role guided the church into a fresh encounter with Jesus. The whole church could respond to God by applying Jesus’ pattern. Jesus requires his disciples to become his instruments to reach a lost world. He molds and shapes his followers into the instruments he uses to care for his people in times of spiritual crisis.

After the session, small group leaders guided their teams to apply what they learned from each chapter of Coleman’s book. Through a study of Jesus’ pattern for selecting and developing a small group of disciples, others could be trained to become disciple-makers. As a result, members would improve their relationship with Jesus. They could apply what Coleman wrote about helping others. Each class member needed to commit to helping the FVBCD to grow in the three dimensions of growth. These areas are numerical, spiritual, and missional growth (see chap. 2).

### **Sessions 11 and 12: A Plan of Discipleship Training in the Church**

A plan to start and maintain a discipleship program in the church provided the corpus of study for September 22, 2013 (see sessions 11 and 12 in appendix 15). I reiterated to participants that they needed to learn from the Lord as to how to plan for discipleship in their church. Biblical discipleship results in service for Christ. The urgency of making disciples grows with the heavy damage the church is suffering from the lack of understanding of biblical truth among God’s people.

Questions framed the next part of the study. One question was phrased in this manner: “If the gospel is so grand, then why is it that God’s people tend to gradually fall away from the faith?” This falling away of God’s people from the Father’s grace has become so commonplace that it is clearly traced back to the book of Judges (Judg 2:10-19; 3:10-17).

Jesus commanded all disciples to make disciples. Paul gave the church a concise plan of discipleship in 2 Timothy 2:2, “And 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.” The class received an outline on how to start and maintain a discipleship program in the church. It is a ten-point plan, as described in chapter 4. This plan, while not complicated, is crucial. Those in training must remember that part of their success or failure depends on how well they follow this pattern. The ten-point plan, while not a new method, is an unfolding of what has always been so clearly described in the Scriptures.

Paul, in 2 Timothy 2:2a, wrote about “the things.” “The things” are also mentioned in 2 Timothy 1:13-14. Paul spoke to Timothy: “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.” The phrase, “the things,” summarizes all of Christian teachings and their benefits for God’s people. These teachings are entrusted to any Christian to pass on, much like a family heirloom.

The class discussed how we could apply this information to our church’s plan for discipleship training today. They needed to identify those things that God has passed on to us. Key questions included: “Do I know him? Am I teachable? What have I learned? What more do I need to learn? and What is Jesus trying to teach me now?” This is a series of very hard questions that all Christians are fully accountable to answer before God.

The church of God is still winning in spite of cunning assaults by satanic forces. Matthew 16:18 records Jesus’ words, “And I say also unto thee, That thou art

Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Nothing can stop disciples from spreading the good news to the world. The gospel is shown through the words and lifestyles of the people who practice discipleship.

In conclusion, I told participants that even if everything else in our society changes, the command to go conquer the world for Christ is still the same. The book of Acts clearly says that taking the good news to every person is God’s plan; it can be done in tandem with the work of his disciples in the church. Worldwide witnessing is part of the vision for God’s kingdom. Sharing Christ is the purpose of God for every Christian. The task is absolutely achievable. Whether an individual believes it or not, someday the good news of God will be preached throughout the earth (Matt 24:14). The God of all the universe never lets his purpose fail. Any activity, however, that is not in tune with his purpose for mankind is just frivolous. The session ended with a reference to the ten-point plan for discipleship and practice sessions for witnessing.

### **Sessions 13 and 14: Effective Evangelism in the Church and Community**

On October 6 and 13, 2013, participants heard me describe the best practices for effective evangelism in the church and community (see sessions 13 and 14 in appendix 15) and learned that they would practice the behaviors today. When asked, “What should our church do for evangelism?” their answers were more profound than expected. Their consensus was that we must share a compelling vision that is based on discerning the will of God for our ministry. In order to do this well, we must study the demographics of the Vietnamese community in Dalton, Georgia, and engage in relationships with local community leaders. We can then plan our ministries in a manner that is relevant to the needs of the communities.

Students learned that a church does not transform a community through activities and events. These efforts do not necessarily produce converts. Too many special events produce administrative tasks and add additional burdens on the pastor in trying

to get people to attend. While outreach events do have their place, one of the biggest mistakes we make in evangelism is trying to measure a church's faithfulness to the Great Commission by the attendance at outreach events.

The class members heard about effective relational follow-up practices for all who visit our congregation. We will regularly schedule opportunities for new people to learn about, grow in, and find a home for their faith. We also discussed the students' need to grow in their personal prayer lives; in their use and appreciation of the Bible; in the faithful stewardship of their time, talents, and treasures; in the discipline of daily vocations; and in giving attention to the needs of the wider community, where there are creative ways to deepen Christian friendships through networks of small groups, fellowship opportunities, and service experiences.

I urged participants to be active in evangelism, using Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:37, and John 20:21, and demonstrated that all four gospels end with Jesus commanding believers to be witnesses to the lost. Jesus' last earthly words were another repetition of this same command to bear witness to the gospel (Acts 1:8). I prayed that all the students in our class will begin to practice "life cycle" ministries with care for faith and leadership development for people of all ages to discover, develop, and deploy their spiritual gifts.

I encouraged the students to share the gospel with those whom the Lord has already put into their lives, where their practical evangelism will be more effective than spending their time leading evangelistic programs. I stimulated participants to develop relationships with those around the church for the purpose of sharing the gospel, telling the fearful that evangelism gives them the opportunity to trust God for courage, and telling the timid that evangelism gives them an opportunity to trust God for confidence.

After the prayer, I shared some final thoughts for the session before their group leaders sent them into the field: Christians are slaves to Christ, soldiers in his service, and children of God. Our Master has given us our orders: to reach the lost with the hope of

the gospel. I gave the students information about the roles of military command, which is the management of field forces and combat between them and the enemy. As believers, we love what God loves, and God loves the lost (Luke 19:10). Five things we must do (Luke 19:1-10) as we become more and more sanctified and we become more and more like Christ: (1) We must look for people, (2) We must go to people, (3) We must share the gospel, (4) We must care for people, and (5) We must live for Christ. This maturation causes us to grow in our love for those who are still God's enemies. The FVBCD impacts our community because our members love those in our community. This love results in us reaching out to the lost, presenting the gospel to them, and seeing some of them saved. As we do this, our church grows and our evangelism results in changed lives. In fact, 2 Corinthians 4:15 says "that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God." In other words, the more we evangelize, the more God's grace extends to our community.

Although we do have structured events for evangelism, and a smart pastor will find those who have a particular love for evangelism and give them specific opportunities to use their gifts, what has consistently produced more fruit than any of our programs is the faithfulness of individuals who express their love for their neighbors through evangelism. The simple truth is that "what we do for evangelism is evangelize."

The session ended with role-playing exercises to allow participants to practice the techniques of personal evangelism they had studied. I handed out the Personal Witnessing form (see session 9 in appendix 15) to the students and guided them in how to fill it out each time they returned from a witnessing experience. I also handed out the posttest questionnaire and asked the participants to answer all the questions. The posttest questionnaire showed the changes in the participants' understanding of evangelism and church growth after receiving the training.

## **Session 15: An Evangelical Harvest Service**

**Sermon: Theme: “God Is Love”**

**Scripture: 1 John 4:7-10**

On October 20, 2013, I preached an Evangelical Harvest Service Sermon with the theme: “God Is Love” (see session 15 in appendix 15). After the sermon, we prayed together that God would help the participants to be effective in their witnessing. I shared with the audience the important information about what Jesus has done for them (us), and that right now we stand condemned to an eternity in hell. Then, I gave them my invitation: “It doesn’t matter who you are or what you’ve done. You don’t have to clean up your life first. God is passionately in love with you and is waiting with open arms for you to run to him. You can make that decision right now, wherever you are and whatever you’re doing.”

One elder from Chattanooga, Tennessee, Hiep Nguyen, shared his profession of faith in person with Pastor Thanh Tran to receive Jesus Christ as his Savior. Recently, Hiep’s brother-in-law, Hai Tran, a depressed man from Calhoun, Georgia, shared his profession of faith with me that he wanted to surrender to Jesus Christ. He has gone through a long-suffering spiritual warfare period with Satan. I guided him to do the following:

1. Confess to God you are a sinner. Then, I guided him to pray: “God, I admit I’m a sinner.”
2. Tell God you believe Jesus died to pay the penalty for your sin and rose from the dead to give you new life. Then, I guided him to pray: “God, I trust you to forgive my sins and give me a fresh start.”
3. Ask God to come and live in you through his Spirit. Then, I guided him to pray: “God, please come and live in me by your Holy Spirit.”
4. Commit your life to following Jesus and his ways. Then, I guided him to pray: “I commit my life to follow Jesus’ way, not my ways. Please help me to do that. Amen.”

## **Conclusion**

FVBCD approved and encouraged my project, including the fifteen-week training program for evangelism and church growth. Although instructions for church growth, such as new methods and new materials, do reach individuals via the initiative of individual leaders, they are not usually implemented in a coordinated way because church councils do not actively support many new ideas. This project provided disciple-maker training to fill a need to expand the church's knowledge of church growth in a way that could be applied and practiced. For the FVBCD training to be a vehicle of change, not only to the participants in the project, but also to everyone in the church, open-minded innovators are required.

The time and preparation involved in the project bore fruit in many ways. The project helped me in my role as a pastor of FVBCD. My personal knowledge grew through the Training Follow-up Evaluation Form (see PHỤ BẢN 4 in appendix 15), as did my use of new and innovative teaching methodologies. The participants gained evangelism expertise, confidence in their sharing of the gospel, and an overall appreciation for the necessity of evangelism. I believe that many others in the membership of FVBCD will be motivated to share as they see their friends become effective witnesses and I hope that they will also be motivated by the excitement and joy that comes when nonbelievers respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ.



## CHAPTER 5

### PROJECT EVALUATION

The evaluation of the project is based on statistics derived from the concluding survey taken by the participants. Each class member evaluated the project on the provided form (see PHỤ BÀN 4 in appendix 15) and the church survey (see appendix 3). I reviewed the resulting statistics to determine the value of the project for the participants and the likelihood of it leading to church growth.

I evaluated the project outcomes in four areas: the project's purpose, the project's goals, the project's methodology, and the project's effectiveness. Additional attention included the evaluation of this project with theological foundations and personal reflections. Finally, conclusions are drawn as to what I would do differently to improve future presentations of the project.

#### **Evaluation of the Project**

The evaluation of the project's outcomes included four areas: purpose, goals, methodology, and effectiveness. In addition to the statistical analysis, I concluded my evaluation of this training program with my theological and personal reflections, and also considered what changes would improve the course in any future utilization. Finally, I drew conclusions as to what I would do differently to improve future presentations of the project.

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

The project intended to train a small group in evangelism, with the goal of church growth. At critical decision points, the participants used internal and external

reviews to determine if the project was ready to proceed and could produce qualitative and quantitative improvements. Their evaluation measures were integrated into the practices and procedures of the presentation. Their learning experiences, based on a sequence of activities and interactions, formed a part of their oral evaluation. The members responded to the question, “Did the project fulfill its purpose?” In the group evaluation session, I explained to the participants that the purpose of the evaluation measurement was to help improve future presentations. Their responses aided my understanding of needed adjustments. Following the training event, the twelve participants evaluated it individually and voted in class for the overall effectiveness. Eighty-three percent (ten votes out of twelve) agreed that the project fulfilled its purpose.

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

This project had four goals. Personal evaluation centered on the question of “Were the goals met?” Those enrolled in the course dealt with the same question. I asked them to evaluate the materials and outcome.

The first goal focused on leading participants to a better understanding of the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). This goal’s major component was a sermon from the Great Commission that I preached to the whole congregation. I continued to use the Great Commission throughout the fifteen-week project. The aim of the sermon was to reveal to the participants that Jesus gave his followers a command (“Follow me”) and a promise (“And I will equip you to find others to follow me”) in Matthew 4:19. I asked participants (and all church members) to spread the gospel locally in Dalton, Georgia. This allowed anyone in the FVBCD to accomplish the first goal. In the class, with a show of hands, 50 percent (six of the twelve participants) wanted to step into the mission field in Dalton to share the gospel and bring the lost to the church.

The second goal was to train church members in personal evangelism. Participants received my commendation for their desire to evangelize. I then read

Proverbs 11:30: “He that winneth souls is wise.” I warned that where someone spends eternity very well depends on whether or not believers follow this wisdom. Those desiring to hear the gospel, but who do not know what it is, will never know unless Christian evangelists teach them. Participants learned how to win the lost to Christ so that formerly lost souls can be saved and go to heaven.

Participants received evangelism-related Scriptures in the fifteen-week training program (week 2, sessions 1-2, and section 13). These verses allowed them to respond appropriately to various scenarios and to practice sharing their personal testimonies. Included in this goal was a lesson plan of Bible study to teach others the gospel of Christ. A follow-up lesson provided a plan to continue the study with new Christians. Another lesson allowed participants to help those who had fallen away. Participants seemed thrilled to share their thoughts to help improve this goal. In the session on discipleship training for the second goal, the group leaders divided into small discussion groups to make sure that participants had the opportunity to practice. The whole group received information that churches that have strong outreach and discipleship programs are often the churches that grow. Overall, the contributions by the participants were excellent. They really wanted to put their faith into action to show they love God and people. From now on, they will not go to church, but will be the church.

The third goal was to teach church members, including new believers, to become disciple-makers. The project participants formed the first group taught. With the theme “Who Is a disciple?” I helped the students to understand the difference between a disciple and a disciple-maker. A disciple is a pupil, a student, and one who receives the teachings or instructions of another, believes in the teachings, and is active within the movement. A disciple-maker leads others to become students of the Word of God and to act on what they have learned. Those involved in the class voted that they like to invest time in the spiritual growth of another person. Five participants made the commitment to become disciple-makers.

I promised to pray together with them daily. Additional support came from daily calls. I often called the group members, prayed with them, and asked them to concentrate on the pattern of Jesus when he made disciples of the Twelve. In the Sunday sessions, I reminded them that the divine truth takes root in human hearts through reading the Scriptures and listening for the voice of God's Spirit. Relationships grow closer where there is a safe and open environment that allows people to be authentic. Struggles are shared and sins are confessed. Closeness begins when growing disciples pray for lost souls. In fact, discipleship training is a process that is circular with a disciple-maker always seeking others to become disciples.

The Training Follow-up Evaluation Form (see PHỤ BẢN 4 in appendix 15) marked progress with the third goal, as five of the twelve participants agreed to train in disciple-making, a vital component to the life and growth of the church. The fourth goal is that of personal evaluation.

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

I recruited participants from among church members to sign up for the course. Participation included a commitment to attend all seminars. Fourteen participants enrolled. Two (a couple) dropped out for personal reasons, making the class total twelve. This dozen demonstrated loyalty to God in learning his Word through the training class. All twelve attended most of the sessions. Two missed the June 30 class (which came during the Fourth of July holiday week).

I divided the class into two groups, each with a group leader, and they met every Sunday at the FVBCD from June 23, 2013, to October 6, 2013. The first class began with a twenty-five-question survey and questionnaire (pretest). The handout came with clear instructions to, first, think about their overall experiences with each question. The individuals then checked the box or filled in the blank that best represented their opinion. Questions 1 through 6 asked about their individual history. Questions 7 through 25 asked about participants' faith and commitment. The pretest helped the participants

to evaluate themselves, to determine how much time they would commit to serve God in their church, and how much they wanted to improve their knowledge through the workshop training.

All sessions met at the church on Sundays, and all training was in Vietnamese. The sessions focused on evangelism and discipleship, and also concentrated on delivering quality training to people who wanted to learn. In each class, I tried to balance two distinct ways of teaching—instructions for learning on the one hand, and activities and discussion for internal and external spiritual growth on the other hand.

This methodology proved to be effective. All twelve participants completed the course, with attendance at 100 percent for all but one session. My evaluation was supported by oral and written feedback from participants at the project's conclusion.

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

Any activity that takes more than one step at a time could be considered a project. There are four things that can be evaluated: the questionnaire, the evaluation, the strengths, and the weaknesses of the project. Some of the written evaluations and discussion sought participants' input. This evaluation breaks the project into smaller components.

**The questionnaires.** The questionnaire, or survey, had twenty-five questions or statements that focused on evangelism and church growth. Typical questions inquired about the effectiveness of the processes toward completion of the project's goals, the current status of the project in comparison to the end objective, the resources available to achieve the goals, and the time lines. At the beginning, the participants received an explanation of the necessity to complete the questionnaire and how to do it. First, each question or statement should be completed in light of their overall experiences. Next, they should check the box or fill in the blank that best represented their opinions. Later, they used this information for helping their church to grow.

The questionnaire proved to be an effective way to finalize and review the training, enhance the participants' love of God, and develop a compassion for the lost. The participants' answers also increased my zeal for evangelism to share the gospel and motivated me to work for active participation and ownership in the project. Their responses added more resources for evangelism and church growth.

**Evaluation results.** At the project's conclusion, the students evaluated the project via the subjective outcome evaluation approach. The participants used their personal experiences during the training sessions to share orally or in written evaluations. I encouraged them to be honest so they would improve implementation of the material for future use. Participants gave positive statements. The responses have been translated from Vietnamese to English below.

Evaluating the first goal, one person said, "I felt much better after hearing the sermon. I think the Holy Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. Before, no one had told me that I am led by the Spirit. I love the truth enough to seek it out." Another participant nodded her head and said, "I do agree!" An elder participant indicated agreement with a smile. Referring to the sermon, a young student said this:

Understanding the Great Commission is the first step. God expects me to do my part. It is good to be able to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit, but I must go on to seek God for what my part is and then do it. This sermon showed that our church members will not diminish significantly in the next generation. I think it will be a powerful addition to steps forward for a long-term work in reaching lost people through the Great Commission.

To evaluate the second goal, one lady, who was enrolled late for the class, said, "This goal should promptly help the FVBCD congregation to evangelize, but in the Vietnamese way. If someone thinks the pastor should do this task by himself, it is unfair to him. A pastor only sets up an example by evangelizing. People must understand evangelism is more caught than taught."

Another young man said, "Personal evangelism has the advantage of being direct and personal. With the potential of sharing the gospel, any person needs to step

out and strongly tell Jesus' story. Individuals reach out to those who would never hear the message or never go to a church to hear it. That's all we can do." A young lady said, "Personal evangelism is directly involved in presenting the gospel to those who have not heard it. I agree, and support this idea by arguing that training helps a believer to go out individually to win souls."

In the session on discipleship training (the second goal), the group leaders divided their teams into smaller discussion groups to make sure participants had the opportunity to speak. An active participant commented in the class,

Disciples catch on to evangelism by going to evangelize with more experienced witnesses. It is good to learn the basics of evangelism in a classroom, but most personal evangelistic skill is learned through practice. When an experienced witness evangelizes together with a less experienced disciple, the fledgling disciple can participate in witnessing when he feels comfortable in doing so.

One participant strongly suggested, "When a believer becomes a disciple, he needs to learn more with each household visited. In many places, door-to-door personal evangelism does not produce many converts, but in other places, different forms of evangelism may be more effective."<sup>1</sup>

This study had several distinctive characteristics. First, a small number of participants were involved. Second, different datasets collected at various times were analyzed in this study. Third, subjective responses of participants were collected, and the subjective outcome evaluation was positive. Fourth, this is the first known project on evangelism and church growth at the FVBCD. The project pioneered the way for future sessions. Finally, this is also the first study using subjective outcome evaluation from such a small sample of participants in the FVBCD context. The results of the evaluation helped me see the strengths and weaknesses of this effort and also of this church.

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<sup>1</sup>This statement was not based on anything taught in the seminar, so I do not know the source of this participant's opinion.

## **The Project's Strengths**

The teaching time maintained a balance between the net results and a practical, workable, and effective training method that maximized participants' strengths and minimized their weaknesses. The strongest part of the project was the new method of witness practice in class. The extremely high rate of class attendance reflected the church's sense of the project's importance. As participants spent more time in witnessing practice in the class, they formed witnessing couples. These couples became proficient in verbal conversations with the "lost" in the classroom dramas. Witnessing skills allowed participants to take responsibility to visit the lost Vietnamese people in the Dalton community, regardless of where they lived or what their schedules may have been.

The team approach to sharing Jesus' story appealed to the shy Christians and allowed the participants to witness with courage. The sessions taught participants to use simple words in conversation with the lost and to allow time for everyone contacted to respond to the questions being discussed. During the witness practice times on September 22 and 29, 2013, the interactions of the participants created a synergistic effect and resulted in high-quality dialogue with their partners. Practicing in front of the class and sharing the witnessing experience became more personal, resulting in students becoming active participants and taking on more of the responsibility for learning. The teacher became more creative with his teaching as this delivery method challenged the old paradigms.

The church facilities were another great asset to the program: the schoolroom's thirty-person capacity easily accommodated the class during the fifteen-week program. The church library, where members could obtain books to strengthen their understanding and skills, was also an asset to the students taking the course.

An additional strength of the project was learning to research demographics. Developing this skill was new for the participants in the FVBCD program. The discovery of this information generated much interest for the church members. This method helped



participants to examine the demographics of their area and to create a list of the lost in the community. The list can be used for both visitation lists and a personal prayer list.

### **The Project's Weaknesses**

The greatest weakness in the implementation of the evangelism strategy came from limitations in the church itself. The only evangelistic adult structure in the church is the small, open group. Currently, there are no functioning groups. The women of the church are more interested in traditional women's activities than in stepping out to win souls. The men of the church are uninvolved. There is a general resistance to change in the church. A small group of people in the church does not like the church's new, disciple-making direction. Another weakness in the church is the fact that the impact of the youth ministry, especially toward young men, is diminished by the small number of male leaders. A further limitation of the church is its location in a rural area. Most members drive between fifteen and twenty-five minutes to get to the church building.

That the classes required note-taking, study, and active participation proved to be a hindrance for a few of those involved. Some participants did not want to take lecture notes. They expected to do nothing but accept handouts and stay seated. The class required independent or self-directed learners who completed the work and studied the information presented. Another difficulty in implementation was that a participant's success rested on his or her availability for fifteen consecutive Sundays.

While the training effort did have good prayer support and encouragement for the group participants, I found several areas for improvement in future training. One need is to consider the time limitations faced by families in the community. A second consideration is that family crises may arise and limit participation. Perhaps future group members can work collaboratively, or perhaps the sessions can be spaced farther apart in time. The women of the church need to be encouraged to put their enjoyment of fellowship second to seeking the lost. The men of the church need to pray sincerely before they go out to witness to increase their effectiveness. Both men and women need

to be more conscientious about filling out the information form for each person they contact (see appendix 3) and to collaborate with others toward the goal of witnessing. Finally, our youth need to join a future project to help the ministry team create an inter-generational culture at the church.

### **Theological and Personal Reflections on the Project**

Shortly after I finished an assignment for the Theological Baptist Seminary in Thailand, which assigned me to teach the Bachelor of Arts degree in Biblical and Theological Studies to fourteen students in Hanoi, Vietnam, in April 2013, I came back to America and started the fifteen weeks of evangelism training in June 2013 at the FVBCD. I did not expect to be able to do so much teaching, but the project went smoother than I ever imagined. I am passionate about the subject and am very thankful to the FVBCD church council for giving me this opportunity

#### **Theological Reflection**

As the Minister of Missions for FVBCD, my job description included making contact with people in the different areas around Dalton. I encountered people who were influenced by Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. My evangelism experiences enabled me to dedicate my life to leading people to Christ. As a Christ follower, I must stand on a strong theological foundation. This foundation includes doing what starts from the Bible and living with a deepened awareness of God's presence

The fifteen-week seminar focused on the participants and on their different cultural backgrounds. In an attempt to make theology applicable, I taught a simple, practical theology for the doctrine of the Christian life. The ultimate objective was to train believers to contextualize their evangelism according to the culture of their prospects. This approach became apparent as the lessons and training unfolded.

Another focus was on helping to prepare the students to translate the knowledge learned into effective ministry to people. Practicing the lessons involved personal and

family life, as well as the administration and educational ministries in the church. The stated goal of theological reflection is to develop effective communicators of Scripture who have a vision for the spiritual growth of believers while being servant-leaders.

Some consider theological reflection to be a more technical name for the doctrine of the Christian life. Its emphasis is on how all the teaching of Scripture should affect the believer's life in this present world. The emphasis on theological reflection is not simply to contemplate or comprehend doctrines, but to move beyond that to applying those doctrines in everyday Christian life. Life applications allow a disciple to contribute to the world becoming what God intends it to be. The premise behind theological reflection is that future ministry needs to be equipped not only with theological knowledge, but also with the professional skills necessary to minister effectively in the modern world.

### **Personal Reflection**

Preparation and implementation of the project not only helped me see personal strengths, but also related to life every day. Personal evaluation was difficult. It centered on my own personal goals. I have my own unique strengths and weaknesses. For some reason, I do not know how to take advantage of my strengths. A critique of one's own work is a painful process. Honesty is an essential requirement. I kept my goal statement taped to my mirror to be a constant reminder throughout the day.

Sometimes, I was so consumed with the need for resourcefulness and intentionality that I needed to be reminded of the necessity of humility. Group leaders and participants could freely express their observations and criticisms, even if they were painful. Their feedback required an honest confrontation with facts and perceptions. The personal focus remained on Jesus. This experience impacts improvement in three areas: preaching, teaching, and writing. Individual competencies improve work processes throughout the FVBCD. Knowledge, skills, and abilities are among the competencies that

have become the building blocks of leadership selection and development processes. The requirement of personal evaluation, rather than job or task analysis techniques, is more difficult because it provides a more general description of responsibilities associated with my position in the project. In the critical intention of the process of personal reflection, awareness arose that I must care for others deeply and pray for them intensely, that I must make a commitment to lead the congregation by God's Word, and that I must live my life reflecting what I have heard from the Word of God.

**Personal strengths.** The heavenly father has blessed me with personality strengths. I need to evaluate how my existing strengths can be used for furthering my leadership career. I am trustworthy, loyal, and confident. It is quite natural for me to encourage ministers to grow, take risks, and excel in their positions. All of these have had a great influence on my leadership. People trust me because of my honesty, reliability, and faithfulness. Being considered trustworthy provides benefits in the way people deal with me. It impacts my own self-esteem. This reputation must be guarded. For example, many Vietnamese Baptist churches in Atlanta like to invite me to preach. Some of their church members have personal knowledge of my honesty. Their pastors like to have a reliable relationship with me. They see the trust that the FVBCD has for their Minister of Missions. Trust provides more opportunities for ministry. Personal integrity guards against negative influences. The trust of others builds my self-respect. Trust also encourages others to continue relationships with me. Other positive traits include being open-minded, having an ability to break barriers in forming relationships, and helping groups to become teams. Teams provide a safe environment for people to share. They begin to consider the church their second meaningful home. Communication, in all of its channels, is an absolute essential for trust and effective ministry. I believe that I am a good example of sharing and trust that fosters communication in the process of working in my group.

**Personal weaknesses.** A primary weakness for me is in the area of verbal and linguistic communication. I hope to transform these limitations into strengths over time and through continued efforts to improve. A second weakness is that I have little patience with Christians, especially leaders in my church, who still think a pastor must do everything. The biggest barrier to my leadership is getting upset about some church leaders who do tasks in the wrong ways instead of reaching the lost effectively. It is also difficult to be tolerant with those who are afraid of change or who want change for change's sake. My emotions can be damaging not only for leadership but for their impact on relationships with the congregation and community as well. Allowing unvalued missions to happen discourages new ideas from emerging.

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

If I do the project again, I will use my past leadership influences to prepare the leadership course for evangelism leading to church growth, so that every portion of the project will include an in-depth inquiry into the past and future of the First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton. My intention is to put the participants in training to be effective leaders and help the church members so they become productive followers. Because of the closeness of the Vietnamese community, the members of the FVBCD should be making friendships before sharing the gospel.

I learned from the participants that leadership is only effective and helpful when people learn to follow. Leadership, of course, is much more than individuals and their decisions and actions. Leadership, as a quality, may be more innate than acquired. Some qualities and characteristics can be identified and consciously improved during complex and difficult times. Potential improvements for my leadership abilities include vision and sources.

The most helpful passage about leadership is Hebrews 13:7: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith

follow, considering the end of their conversation.” A leader will never be successful without knowing precisely what “leadership” means. Leadership is not only reached by those who keep their fires of desire burning strong and who keep trying and trying again until they succeed, but it is also reached by those who know what they influence. Those who attain greatness display the winning character trait of perceptiveness because they know what “leadership” means to them. Hebrews 13:17 instructs, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.” My joyful goal for evangelism and church growth is starting new leadership that helps people: (1) to find their way to work together in the church, (2) to understand God’s call, (3) to increase leadership knowledge, and (4) and to maintain a strong faith in God.

### **The Vision**

A church leader must to have a vision of an ideal church. He must conceive of original ways to make progress towards his goals. He cannot be content to live on the accumulated visions of the past. Old ideas must be repackaged and infused with new substance to meet the changing needs of the present. When the imagination produces new ideas and points toward new directions, another dimension emerges. Ideas and concepts can carry a vision far in time and space. But ideas are not, in themselves, enough. Ideas must be woven together into a vision and coherent strategy. The vision must fit into a larger scheme, and it is necessary to test the scheme to determine if it is workable. The vision, however, may fail to solve the present problem and may even worsen the problem. In the absence of a vision and coherent strategy, leaders will be unable to resolve conflicts between incompatible goals that contend against each other. Even though a perfect ideal is unattainable, the vision provides a goal or destination for those involved and also leads to a plan for drawing closer to the ideal—a roadmap to the desired destination.

## **The Sources**

The sources of leadership style include inspiring and influential experiences and events, especially help from great leaders, as well as from books and courses. Leadership, of course, is much more than individuals and their decisions and actions. My evangelism project worked to shape my role in the church. I can improve my ability to work effectively with the FVBCD in helping church members to learn from great leaders in the Bible, from the example of Jesus, and from my example of practicing leadership skills.

**Learning from great leaders in the Bible.** The most important aspect of shaping one's leadership style is to obey God's call, as did the following: Abraham (Gen 12), Isaiah (Isa 6), and Philip (Acts 6). If the leaders truly are called by God, they will do the work described in Ephesians 4:11-12: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Equipping others for the work of the ministry means that the staff must view their roles differently, and the people of the church must view the staff and themselves differently, from the usual top-down model. Because accepting a nontraditional leadership model is hard to do, since many members and leaders still have preconceived understandings of what the "pastor" is, that misconception also needs to be re-taught. This approach requires a healthy leadership culture where people serving are truly cared for and supported and not just used by the church and become burned out. I firmly believe that God calls pastors not only to lead the church members, but also to be a leader of leaders, as church members are nurtured to become role models, decision-makers, and teachers of others.

**Learning from the example of Jesus.** Jesus described his leadership style when he said, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). Jesus used words that influenced and attracted would-be imitators.

Many writings about Jesus discuss his leadership style, and the Bible itself presents his example. When Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd,” he was saying that the best leadership style for the sheep to thrive is shepherd-like care and protection. Therefore, church leaders should practice shepherd-like care for the church members. However, Jesus also equipped others to spread his message and to care for others, so church leaders should also be training members to become leaders. As Jesus did both, so should the church leaders.

**Learning from my example.** My vision of leadership training extends from team building to improving the leadership qualities within each individual. My goal is to practice the Twelve Steps for Developing Leaders.<sup>2</sup> Leadership training courses do not use a one-size-fits-all approach, so I will work with the FVBCD to provide custom training resources. I have four ideas why leadership training is important to realize. First, leadership is never divorced from an organization. Second, leadership arranges people in certain ways to accomplish their goals. Third, the trainer should know his strengths and weaknesses before beginning the classes, and should review his knowledge about and experiences with leadership to take advantage of that knowledge. Fourth, the trainer should search the Scriptures.

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<sup>2</sup>These are the Twelve Steps for Developing Leaders:

1. Observe the gifts of those in your core group and select them for training.
2. Cultivate those with potential.
3. Concentrate on those with the greatest potential.
4. Model leadership in all your actions.
5. Create a plan of studies for each of your leaders.
6. Adopt a hands-on training program with your supervision.
7. Empower them with your trust, and always encourage them.
8. Hold on to high expectations for each of the potential leaders.
9. Meet with them periodically to exchange ideas.
10. Evaluate where they are in the process on a monthly basis.
11. Have them participate in workshops and other training activities.
12. Ask them to teach what they have learned to other potential leaders.

*Basic Training Journey for Church Planting Facilitator*, 4BTJ (Atlanta: North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 2009), 6-1.



## **Conclusion**

Seeing sinners come to faith in the Lord raises feelings of passion and compassion, especially for those who have suffered for the loss of their country. The diaspora in the twenty-first century split North and South Vietnam, whose people had been fighting each other for over a thousand years, and forced many to emigrate to other countries. God cares for and loves the Vietnamese lost people, but they are dying each day without knowledge of him. The evangelism students at FVBCD had an opportunity to learn from the apostle Paul the direct method of sharing the gospel without fear. What happened on Mars Hill is important because of the many lessons that it teaches. One learns not only from how Paul presented the gospel and presented a biblical worldview directly to the audiences, but also from how he received varied responses as he used different tactics. For example, with these pagan philosophers, he told them we are created beings, countering the Greek thought that men were gods.

In taking this project to the FVBCD members, they could learn to use God's Word to rescue the lost, such as by offering a gift to someone who needs encouragement, as found in Galatians 5:13, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." These "new evangelists" can be Jesus' hands and feet, to serve, and to grow deeper in leadership. Faith is exciting, and this project could help others to feel the same excitement through devotions and through knowing that they have the power to influence someone's walk with Jesus.

The evangelism course was designed to define the Vietnamese culture and its people and to investigate ways to counter the three religions that they have held for thousands of years, so that they can become children of God and learn to win others for Christ. R. Albert Mohler Jr. writes, "We may not know exactly what the future will hold, but we do know what is required of us: to be ready to train, educate and prepare

the next generation of faithful God-called ministers and missionaries.”<sup>3</sup> This evangelism course can become a common tool for fruitful evangelism and church growth as it may enlighten, challenge, and increase collaboration with missionaries in their future work with Vietnamese people.

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<sup>3</sup>R. Albert Mohler Jr., “Whatever the Future Holds, Southern Seminary Will ‘Train, Educate and Prepare the Next Generation,’” *The Southern Baptist Seminary Journal* 81, no. 4 (Fall 2013): 1.

## APPENDIX 1

### CHURCH MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE

#### **Invitation to Participate**

You are invited to assist the minister of missions of the First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton in developing an evangelism and church growth strategy that will help the congregation understand and affirm the value of the church. The minister of missions is conducting this research for the purpose of partially fulfilling the requirements for his Doctor of Ministry studies at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. In this research, you will answer basic questions about evangelism, church growth, and your understanding of the implications of the Great Commission.

You will be asked about some of your beliefs and your understanding of evangelism and church growth. Please read each statement carefully. Respond according to your own conviction by taking a few minutes to check your choices in this survey. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. Your answers will be kept completely confidential. I hope you choose to accept my invitation to participate. I look forward to working with you and truly appreciate your thoughtful attention to my project. Please accept my gratitude for your help with this project.

#### **Church Member Questionnaire**

**Instructions:** Think about your overall experiences with each question and each statement. Please check the box or fill in the blank that best represents your opinion. Once you are finished and return it to the church office, you will receive your results soon. You can use them to help determine if you are ready to become a project participant with your pastor. Your participation in the survey is greatly valued!

1. How long have you been a member at the First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton?  
 Less than 1 month     1-12 months     1-5 years     5-10 years     Longer
2. How long have you lived in Dalton?  
 Less than 1 month     1-12 months     1-5 years     5-10 years     Longer

3. Do children or teenagers in your household participate in a church?

Yes       No       Not applicable

4. In which church(es) were you a member before FVBC?

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5. Check your age below:

under 18       18-25       26-35       36-45  
 46-55       56-65       66-75       over 75

6. I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Strongly Agree     Agree     Undecided     Disagree     Strongly Disagree

7. Good people who never hear of Jesus will go to hell.

Strongly Agree     Agree     Undecided     Disagree     Strongly Disagree

8. God's power and Satan's power are the same.

Strongly Agree     Agree     Undecided     Disagree     Strongly Disagree

9. I believe that the Great Commission was and is for all believers.

Strongly Agree     Agree     Undecided     Disagree     Strongly Disagree

10. Evangelism is primarily the pastor's responsibility.

Yes       No

11. Prayer gives me courage to do evangelism.

Yes       No

12. I enjoy visiting people in hospitals or nursing homes.

Strongly Agree     Agree     Undecided     Disagree     Strongly Disagree

13. My favorite method to witness in person is:

Individually       Visit with a pastor       Visit with a group leader

14. I have a desire to meet lost people, even when they are total strangers, in order to share the gospel with them.  
 Almost always     Occasionally     Not very often     Never
15. How often do you witness to someone?  
 Never     Very rarely     Sometimes     Often     Very often
16. Whom do you need to help you to understand the ministry of the First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton?  
 Friends     Deacons     Pastor     Pastor's wife     Others
17. Do you like to share Jesus' story?  
 Yes     No     Sometimes
18. How would you rate your personal involvement in evangelism?  
 Very good     Good     Adequate     Inadequate     Poor     Very poor
19. How would you rate the evangelistic ministry of the First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton?  
 Very good     Good     Adequate     Inadequate     Poor     Very poor
20. How important are the worship services?  
 Very important     Important     Not necessary
21. How important is the Sunday school?  
 Very important     Important     Not necessary
22. How important is the general leadership of the church?  
 Very important     Important     Not necessary
23. Community demographics are important to understand the number of prospects for our church.  
 Strongly Agree     Agree     Undecided     Disagree     Strongly Disagree
24. Our church needs to provide more training for personal evangelism.  
 Strongly Agree     Agree     Undecided     Disagree     Strongly Disagree
25. Would you like to enroll in evangelism training in your church?  
 Yes     No

## APPENDIX 2

### EVANGELISM QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Evangelists know that Jesus Christ is to be known.  
 True       False
2. An evangelist's focus is to win people to Jesus Christ.  
 True       False
3. Making personal visits are to win souls for the Lord.  
 True       False
4. Making a visit to share the gospel should take place if we have the time.  
 True       False
5. Evangelism should be sensitive and relevant to the recipient.  
 True       False
6. Evangelism should include the preaching of repentance and remission of sins.  
 True       False
7. The Lord wants us to present the gospel to the civilized people.  
 True       False
8. Christians should to be a witness of Jesus Christ in the local church.  
 True       False
9. Many persons shy away from making personal visits.  
 True       False
10. The Word of God should be used during evangelism.  
 True       False

APPENDIX 3  
SURVEY RESULTS

1. What is your church doing to make first-time guests feel welcome?  
[10/12] Yes                      [2/12] No
2. Does your church have a well-organized greeter ministry?  
[8/12] Yes                      [4/12] No
3. Do people of all ages in your church greet visitors?  
[6/12] Yes                      [6/12] No
4. Do members offer to sit with visitors during the worship service?  
[12/12] Yes                      [0/12] No
5. Do church members invite first-time guests attending your church to Sunday dinner at a restaurant at the expense of the church or church members?  
[0/12] Yes                      [12/12] No
6. Does your church have a new converts Sunday school class?  
[8/12] Yes                      [4/12] No
7. Does your church practice Sunday school evangelism techniques?  
[6/12] Yes                      [6/12] No
8. Does every Sunday school class have one or more persons to follow up on first-time visitors?  
[2/12] Yes                      [10/12] No
9. Does every Sunday school class have persons in charge of its social/community events that are designed for evangelism?  
[4/12] Yes                      [8/12] No

10. Does each Sunday school class offer discipleship training for its members?  
[2/12] Yes [10/12] No
11. Do Sunday school classes function as small cell groups for evangelism?  
[12/12] Yes [0/12] No
12. Does your church have cell groups outside the Sunday school classes designed for evangelism?  
[12/12] Yes [0/12] No
13. Do a large percentage of your church members and regular attenders know your church's vision or mission statement?  
[12/12] Yes [0/12] No
14. Does a layperson visit all first-time guests who attend your church within 36 hours of their visit?  
[8/12] Yes [4/12] No
15. Have you looked at the possibility of changing your worship music and style to assist in reaching the unchurched people in your community?  
[2/12] Yes [10/12] No
16. Does your church plan the worship service and other activities to reach minority populations in your community?  
[10/12] Yes [2/12] No
17. Does your church adequately communicate to and successfully reach the younger populations in your church and community?  
[8/12] Yes [4/12] No
18. Does your church minister to the five significant generations (seniors, builders, boomers, busters, and mosaics or millennials) in light of their unique identity factors and global perspectives?  
[1/12] Yes [11/12] No



## APPENDIX 4

### MAP TO DALTON, GEORGIA

From Atlanta, GA: I-75 North 80 miles  
From Chattanooga, TN: I-75 South 25 miles



APPENDIX 5

DALTON CITY, GEORGIA, STATISTICS AND  
DEMOGRAPHICS (U.S. CENSUS 2000)

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b>Dalton Population:</b>	<b>27,912</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Sex and Age</b>		
Male	14,232	50.99%
Female	13,680	49.01%
Under 5 years	2,474	8.86%
5 to 9 years	2,054	7.36%
10 to 14 years	1,869	6.7%
15 to 19 years	2,137	7.66%
20 to 24 years	2,434	8.72%
25 to 34 years	4,748	17.01%
35 to 44 years	3,716	13.31%
45 to 54 years	3,180	11.39%
55 to 59 years	1,157	4.15%
60 to 64 years	941	3.37%
65 to 74 years	1,556	5.57%
75 to 84 years	1,145	4.1%
85 years and over	501	1.79%
Median age (years)	31.1	
18 years and over	20,305	72.75%
Male	10,232	36.66%
Female	10,073	36.09%
21 years and over	18,912	67.76%
62 years and over	3,768	13.5%
65 years and over	3,202	11.47%
Male	1,101	3.94%
Female	2,101	7.53%

<b>Race</b>		
One race	27,141	97.24%
White	18,468	66.17%
Black or African American	2,153	7.71%
American Indian and Alaska Native	123	0.44%
Asian	478	1.71%
Asian Indian	168	0.6%
Chinese	70	0.25%
Filipino	11	0.04%
Japanese	10	0.04%
Korean	41	0.15%
<b>Vietnamese</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>0.41%</b>
Other Asian	64	0.23%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	15	0.05%
Native Hawaiian	5	0.02%
Guamanian or Chamorro	2	0.01%
Samoan	0	0%
Other Pacific Islander	8	0.03%
Some other race	5,904	21.15%
Two or more races	771	2.76%

<b>Hispanic or Latino and race</b>		
Total Population	27,912	100.00%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	11,219	40.19%
Mexican	9,431	33.79%
Puerto Rican	170	0.61%
Cuban	76	0.27%
Other Hispanic or Latino	1,542	5.52%
Not Hispanic or Latino	16,693	59.81%
White alone	13,867	49.68%

<b>Relationship</b>		
Total Population	27,912	100.00%
In households	27,227	97.55%
Householder	9,689	34.71%
Spouse	4,833	17.32%
Child	8,089	28.98%
Own child under 18 years	6,467	23.17%
Other relatives	2,910	10.43%
Under 18 years	872	3.12%
Nonrelatives	1,706	6.11%
Unmarried partner	426	1.53%

In group quarters	685	2.45%
Institutionalized population	508	1.82%
Non-Institutionalized population	177	0.63%

### **Households by Type**

Total Households	9,689	100.0 %
Family households (families)	6,515	67.24%
With own children under 18 years	3,322	34.29%
Married-couple family	4,833	49.88%
With own children under 18 years	2,496	25.76%
Female householder, no husband present	1,113	11.49%
With own children under 18 years	588	6.07%
Non Family households	3,174	32.76%
Householder living alone	2,672	27.58%
Householder 65 years and over	1,047	10.81%
Households with individuals under 18 years	3,745	38.65%
Households with individuals 65 years and over	2,231	23.03%
Average Household size	2.81	
Average family size	3.43	

### **Housing Occupancy**

Total housing units	10,229	100.00%
Occupied housing units	9,689	94.72%
Vacant housing units	540	5.28%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	24	0.23%
Homeowner vacancy rate (percent)	1.5	
Rental vacancy rate (percent)	5.3	

### **Housing Tenure**

Occupied housing units	9689	100.00%
Owner-occupied housing units.	4641	47.9%
Renter-occupied housing units.	5048	52.1%
Average household size of owner-occupied units	2.71	
Average household size of renter-occupied units	2.9	

SOURCE: "Dalton City, Georgia Statistics and Demographics (U.S. Census 2000)." *Area Connect* [on-line]; accessed 12 June 2012; available from <http://dalton.areaconnect.com/statistics.htm>; Internet.

APPENDIX 6

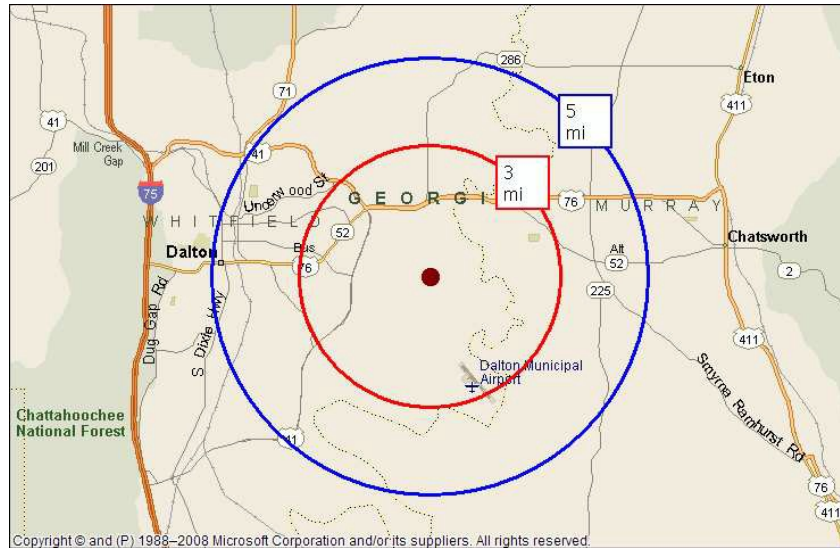
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT PROFILE (FVBCD)

Community Assessment Profile  
First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton

Prepared by:  
Bryan Nowak, Research Services,  
Georgia Baptist Convention

Study Areas:

- #1: 3-Mile Radius
- #2: 5-Mile Radius



## APPENDIX 7

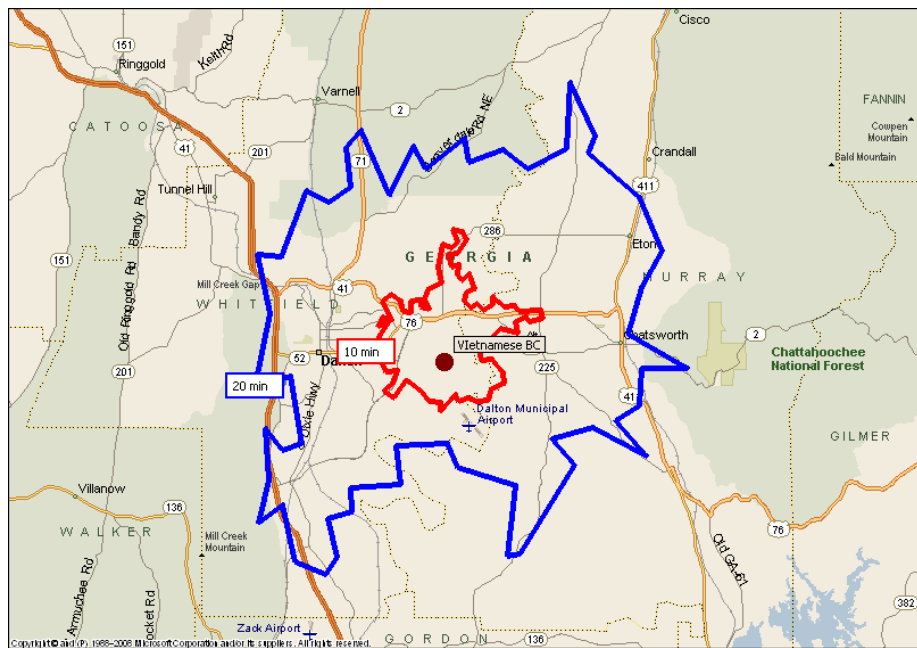
### VIETNAMESE BAPTIST CHURCH STUDY AREAS

#### Vietnamese Baptist Church Study Areas

Prepared by:  
Kathleen Harris, Research Services,  
Georgia Baptist Convention  
June 2012

#### Study Areas:

- #1: 10-minute drive-time contour
- #2: 20-minute drive-time contour



## APPENDIX 8

### CHURCH GROWTH CHART

#### The First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton, Georgia 1999–2011

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total Members	3	10	14	34	34	30	35	33	46	34	36	37	38
Adult Members	3	9	13	32	32	22	20	23	14	24	28	26	30
Baptisms	0	7	4	20	0	0	5	0	13	0	2	1	1
Youth/Children Members	--	1	1	2	2	8	15	10	12	10	8	11	8
Baptism	--	--	--	--	--	--	4	8	0	0	0	2	1
Small Group Member	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	6	8	5	3	4	4
<b>Bible Study/Seminars</b>													
S.S. Enrollment	3	10	15	12	25	25	28	30	35	32	31	28	30
Avg. S.S. Attendance	3	8	15	12	25	23	17	20	28	25	28	26	28
Discipleship Seminars	0	0	12	12	10	8	10	10	10	10	10	8	10
Church Planter Seminar	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	3	1
<b>Missions Participation</b>													
WMU	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	2
Brotherhood/Men	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	5	0	1	2
Mission Project/Participant	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	2

APPENDIX 9

DEMILITARISED ZONE





APPENDIX 10

STATISTICAL PROFILE OF REFUGEES

Table A1. Southeast Asian American statistical profile of refugee arrivals to the U.S. from 1975 to 2002

Fiscal Year	Cambodia	Laos	Vietnam	Total
1975	4,600	800	125,000	130,400
1976	1,100	10,200	3,200	14,500
1977	300	400	1,900	2,600
1978	1,300	8,000	11,100	20,400
1979	6,000	30,200	44,500	80,700
1980	16,000	55,500	95,200	166,700
1981	38,194	19,777	65,279	123,250
1982	6,246	3,616	27,396	37,258
1983	13,041	2,907	22,819	38,767
1984	19,727	7,218	24,856	51,801
1985	19,175	5,195	25,222	49,592
1986	9,845	12,313	21,700	43,858
1987	1,786	13,394	19,656	34,836
1988	2,897	14,597	17,571	35,065
1989	2,162	12,560	21,924	36,646
1990	2,329	8,715	27,797	38,841
1991	179	9,232	28,396	37,807
1992	163	7,285	26,795	34,243
1993	63	6,944	31,401	38,408
1994	15	6,211	34,110	40,336
1995	6	3,682	32,250	35,938
1996	5	2,203	16,107	18,315
1997	9	915	6,612	7,536
1998	7	9	10,266	10,282
1999	0	19	9,622	9,641
2000	0	64	2,839	2,903
2001	23	22	3,109	3,154
2002	0	18	2,855	2,873
Totals	145,172	241,996	<b>759,482</b>	1,146,650

Sources: Washington, DC: Office of Refugee Resettlement, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. © 2003 Southeast Asia Resource Action Center ([www.searac.org](http://www.searac.org)).

APPENDIX 11

A BRIEF COMPARISON CHART

<b>CHRISTIANS</b>	<b>BUDDHISTS</b>
<b>GOD</b>	
God is Omniscient and Omnipotent (Job 42:2; Ps 115:3; Matt 19:26)	Deny existence of a personal God.
<b>JESUS CHRIST</b>	
He is the unique Son of God who died for men's sin (Matt 14:33; 16:16; John 1:34; 1 Cor 15:3; Rom 5:6-8).	He was a good teacher, less important than Buddha.
<b>SIN</b>	
Sin is any thought or deed contrary to the will of God. Man is spiritually dead in sin (Rom 3:10, 23; 5:12; Eph 2:1).	Sin is anything that hinders man's progress. Man is responsible for his own sin.
<b>SALVATION</b>	
Salvation is through Christ's effort only only. (Acts 4:12; Titus 3:5; Eph 2:8-10).	Man is saved by self-effort

Source: Fritz Ridenour, *So What's the Difference? A Look at 20 Worldviews, Faiths and Religions and How They Compare to Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1979), 92.

APPENDIX 12

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

Georgia Baptists join in recognition of

*Vietnamese Mission of Dug Gap  
North Georgia Baptist Association*

as the church in the association baptizing the leading ratio of  
baptisms per resident member during 2002

The churches of the Georgia Baptist Convention and  
those of your association join you in praising the Lord  
for those who were won to Christ.

*J. Mike Minnix*  
J. Mike Minnix  
Vice-President  
Executive Office for Evangelization



*J. Robert White*  
J. Robert White  
Executive Director

APPENDIX 13

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

CERTIFICATE OF  
**COMPLETION**

This certificate is awarded to

Mr. Mrs. Ms.

---

**Thank you for assisting the Minister of Missions of the  
First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton, George, in  
implementing an Evangelism and Church Growth  
Strategy the continued commitment required.**

**Your participation in our Fifteen Weeks  
Training is greatly valued!**

**You made the difference!**

---

**Date**

**Vu Nguyen  
Minister of Missions**

APPENDIX 14

ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE CLASS  
IN THE VIETNAMESE MISSION AT  
DUG GAP BAPTIST CHURCH

Whitfield-Murray

# Advertiser

◆◆ DALTON, GEORGIA ◆◆ AUGUST 8, 1999 ◆◆

**SUNDAY SERVICES**

**Churches list activities**  
◆ Whitfield and Murray County churches set services, Page 4

**Award presenter**  
◆ Dalton's Feller House receives restoration award, Page

**Struggles of past help in vision for future**

**By ANNELLE COUCH**  
*Special to the Advertiser*

A few months ago, the members of Dug Gap Baptist Church voted unanimously to sponsor a Vietnamese Mission at the church. The mission began June 5.

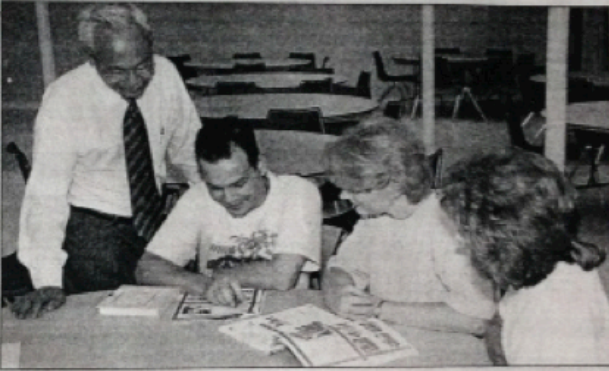
Vu Nguyen sponsored Guyton's acceptance of the call to start the Vietnamese mission at Dug Gap. Vu is 50 years old and he and his wife, Tamvan, have two sons and a daughter. He is an MVA instructor for Georgia State University in Atlanta. Vu previously served as assistant pastor of Faith Vietnamese Baptist Church in Atlanta.

Tamvan is at his side each week as they read and build the membership of the mission. Besides, July 18 was the first day of teaching English as a second language to the Vietnamese. This will be held each Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m. at Dug Gap Baptist and will last for approximately two hours. At least 12 Vietnamese are attending from Dalton, Calhoun and Chattahoochee, Tenn., and at least eight more from Dalton. Dug Gap Baptist is teaching. Several people are still needed to teach English one-on-one to the Vietnamese.

After 1975, South Vietnam was divided by the Communist regime. Vu was a general lieutenant of the Army Republic of Vietnam and he was taken to a concentration camp to be "re-educated." It was at this time that Tamvan and their children want to live with her parents in Saigon. She worked for the government, but the Communist didn't let her, so she had to raise their children. Tamvan and the children were forced to leave Saigon to go to the countryside, which was called a "new economic zone" as a punishment for being associated with the South of Vietnam.

In 1978, Vu was released. The local government did not allow him to live in Saigon. He had to obey their laws and moved to where his family was living. He remained with his wife and children at a small village. They were controlled by the Communist regime and Vu and his family lived in suffering and fear under the annual taxes.

Every morning they woke up very early and worked three miles through the woods to arrive at a rubber plantation by 4 p.m. They worked very hard for food, but they were always hungry. It was a chain of sorrow for the Nguyen family. Vu



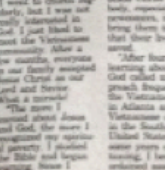
**THEY'VE GOT A PLAN:** Pictured from left are Vu Nguyen, Baptist Church in Dalton. The Vietnamese Sunday School at 9:45 a.m. at Dug Gap and their worship service on his wife, Tamvan, have begun a Vietnamese mission at Dug Gap 11 a.m. For more information call the church.

was a general lieutenant of the Army Republic of Vietnam and he was taken to a concentration camp to be "re-educated." It was at this time that Tamvan and their children want to live with her parents in Saigon. She worked for the government, but the Communist didn't let her, so she had to raise their children. Tamvan and the children were forced to leave Saigon to go to the countryside, which was called a "new economic zone" as a punishment for being associated with the South of Vietnam.



Vu Nguyen

was a general lieutenant of the Army Republic of Vietnam and he was taken to a concentration camp to be "re-educated." It was at this time that Tamvan and their children want to live with her parents in Saigon. She worked for the government, but the Communist didn't let her, so she had to raise their children. Tamvan and the children were forced to leave Saigon to go to the countryside, which was called a "new economic zone" as a punishment for being associated with the South of Vietnam.



Tamvan Nguyen

was a general lieutenant of the Army Republic of Vietnam and he was taken to a concentration camp to be "re-educated." It was at this time that Tamvan and their children want to live with her parents in Saigon. She worked for the government, but the Communist didn't let her, so she had to raise their children. Tamvan and the children were forced to leave Saigon to go to the countryside, which was called a "new economic zone" as a punishment for being associated with the South of Vietnam.

APPENDIX 15

HANDOUT: EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING

HỘI THÁNH BÁP TÍT  
VIỆT NAM TẠI DALTON, GA

CHỨNG ĐẠO  
VÀ MÔN ĐỒ HÓA

MỤC SƯ NGUYỄN VŨ

## Session 1: Evangelism Sermon

### Bài 1: SỨ ĐIỆP TRUYỀN GIÁO

#### Đề Mục: ĐẠI MẠNG LỆNH CỦA CHÚA JÊSUS

Kinh Văn: Ma-thi-ơ 28:18-20

Chúa Nhật 2/2/2014

<sup>18</sup>Đức Chúa Jêsus đến gần, phán cùng môn đồ như vậy: Hết cả quyền phép ở trên trời và dưới đất đã giao cho ta. <sup>19</sup>Vậy, hãy đi dạy dỗ muôn dân, hãy nhân danh Đức Cha, Đức Con, và Đức Thánh Linh mà làm phép báp-têm cho họ, <sup>20</sup>và dạy họ giữ hết cả mọi điều mà ta đã truyền cho các người. Và này, ta thường ở cùng các người luôn cho đến tận thế (Ma-thi-ơ 28:18-20).

#### I. PHẦN DẪN NHẬP

#### II. PHẦN NỘI DUNG

##### 1. Kế Hoạch Của Chúa

Vậy, hãy đi dạy dỗ muôn dân và dạy họ giữ hết cả mọi điều mà ta đã truyền cho các người hãy nhân danh Đức Cha, Đức Con, và Đức Thánh Linh mà làm phép báp-têm cho họ, và dạy họ giữ hết cả mọi điều mà ta đã truyền cho các người. (Mat. 28:19-20a).

##### (a) Giảng Tin Lành

Ngài phán cùng các sứ đồ rằng: Hãy đi khắp thế gian, giảng Tin lành cho mọi người (Mác 16:16).

Đi đi, hãy chường mặt nơi đèn thờ, mà rao giảng cho dân chúng mọi lời này của sự sống (Công 5:20).

Nhưng Đức Chúa Jêsus phán rằng: Hãy để kẻ chết chôn kẻ chết; còn người, hãy đi rao giảng nước Đức Chúa Trời (Lu. 9:60).

##### (b) Giữ Lời Dạy

Vả, những người ấy bền lòng giữ lời dạy của các sứ đồ, sự thông công của anh em, lễ bẻ bánh, và sự cầu nguyện (Công 2:42).

... hãy giảng đạo, cố khuyên, bất luận gặp thời hay không gặp thời, hãy đem lòng rất nhịn nhục mà bẻ trách, nài khuyên, sửa trị, cứ dạy dỗ chẳng thôi (II Tim. 4:2).

### (c) **Làm Báp-têm**

Người lại truyền làm phép báp-têm cho họ nhân danh Đức Jêsus Christ (Công 10:48).

Tôi tạ ơn Đức Chúa Trời, vì ngoài Cơ-rít-bu và Gai-út, tôi chưa từng làm phép báp-têm cho ai trong anh em, hầu cho chẳng ai nói rằng anh em đã nhân danh tôi mà chịu phép báp-têm. Tôi cũng đã làm phép báp-têm cho người nhà Sê-pha-na; ngoài nhà đó, tôi chẳng biết mình đã làm phép báp-têm cho ai nữa (I Côr. 1:14-16).

## 2. **Lời Hứa Của Chúa**

Và này, ta thường ở cùng các ngươi luôn cho đến tận thế (Mat. 28:20b).

### (a) **Trên Đường Theo Chúa**

Lòng các ngươi chớ hề bối rối; hãy tin Đức Chúa Trời, cũng hãy tin ta nữa. Trong nhà Cha ta có nhiều chỗ ở; bằng chẳng vậy, ta đã nói cho các ngươi rồi. Ta đi sắm sẵn cho các ngươi một chỗ. Khi ta đã đi, và đã sắm sẵn cho các ngươi một chỗ rồi, ta sẽ trở lại đem các ngươi đi với ta, hầu cho ta ở đâu thì các ngươi cũng ở đó. Các ngươi biết ta đi đâu, và biết đường đi nữa (Gi. 14:1-3).

Khi ngươi vượt qua các dòng nước, ta sẽ ở cùng; khi ngươi lội qua sông, sẽ chẳng che lấp. Khi ngươi bước qua lửa, sẽ chẳng bị cháy, ngọn lửa chẳng đốt ngươi (Ês. 43:2).

### (b) **Không Mất Linh Hồn**

Đến ngày tận thế cũng như vậy: Các thiên sứ sẽ đến và chia kẻ ác với người công bình ra, ném những kẻ ác vào lò lửa; ở đó sẽ có khóc lóc và nghiền răng (Mat. 13:49-50).

Người nào nếu được cả thiên hạ mà mất linh hồn mình, thì có ích gì? Hay là có người nào lấy chi mà đổi linh hồn mình ư? (Mác 8:36-37).

## III. **PHẦN KẾT LUẬN VÀ KÊU GỌI**



## Session 2: What Is Evangelism?

### Bài 2: TÌM HIỂU CHÚNG ĐẠO

#### 1. Nguồn Gốc Của Chứng Đạo

- (a) Định Nghĩa Chứng Đạo
- (b) Lý Do Chứng Đạo
- (c) Mục Đích Chứng Đạo
- (d) Điều Kiện Chứng Đạo

#### 2. Cách Tiếp Cận Khi Chứng Đạo

- (a) Tiếp Cận Người Lớn Tuổi
- (b) Tiếp Cận Người Trẻ Tuổi
- (c) Tiếp Cận Qua Nhu Cầu Từng Gia Đình
- (d) Tiếp Cận Qua Nhu Cầu Trong Xã Hội
- (e) Tiếp Cận Người Nòng Cốt Trong Cộng Đồng

#### 3. Lập Chương Trình Chứng Đạo

- (a) Chứng Đạo Khắp Mọi Nơi
- b) Chứng Đạo Theo Cơ Hội
- (c) Chứng Đạo Theo Đối Tượng
  - i. Người lương
  - ii. Người Công Giáo
  - iii. Người Phật Giáo
  - iv. Người không tôn giáo

#### 4. Lập Chương Trình Cầu Nguyện

- (a) Ghi Rõ Chương Trình Cầu Nguyện Cho Thân Hữu
- (b) Ghi Chi Tiết Các Nhóm Chứng Đạo Trong Năm Trên Lịch Hằng Tháng

## Session 3: Personal Evangelism

### Bài 3: CÁ NHÂN CHỨNG ĐẠO

#### 1. Bài Làm Chứng Cá Nhân

- (a) Trước Khi Tin Chúa
- (b) Trong Khi Tin Chúa
- (c) Sau Khi Tin Chúa

#### 2. Chứng Đạo Vì Yêu Thương

- (a) Cho Người Hư Mất (Mat. 9:36-37; 23:37)
- (b) Cho Người Lân Cận (Mat. 22:37-39; Lu. 10:29-39)
- (c) Cho Người Cổ Chấp (Xuất 4:21)
- (d) Cho Người Không Quan Tâm (Rôm. 3:23; Gi. 3:36)
- (e) Cho Người Trì Hưỡn (Gia. 4:13-14)

#### 3. Chứng Đạo Theo Mạng Lệnh (Mat. 28:19, 20)

- (a) Minh Giải Về Tội Lỗi (Rôm. 3:23; I Vua 8:50; Thi 51:3, 4; Ôsê 4:7)
- (b) Nói Rõ Sự Cứu Rỗi (Rôm. 6:14, 18; 8:2; I Gi. 1:7; Tít 2:14; Êph. 2:8)
- (c) Trình Bày Sự Tái Sinh (II Côr. 5:17; Gi. 3:5-7; I Phi. 1:2-3)
- (d) Ý Niệm Cõi Đời Đời
- (e) Ý Niệm Về Con Người
- (f) Can Đảm Và Nói Thẳng (II Sam. 19:9; II Sứ 6:37)
- (g) Chống Mọi Kẻ Lừa Dối (Ôsê 6:7); I Vua 8:46; Châm 20:9; Truyền 7:20)
- (h) Giải Thích Thần Không Tên (Công 17:1-34)
- (i) Khuyến Cáo Kẻ Chế Diểu (Giu-đe 1:7-8)
- (j) Tin Chúa Thì Được Cứu (Gi. 3:33; 5:24; 6:47)
- (k) Căn Nguyên Của Sự Chết (Hêb. 9:27; Khải 21:4)
- (l) Chúa Kẻ Chết Và Người Sống (Rôm. 14:9; Êph. 4:9-10; Gi. 5:26-29)
- (m) Không Thờ Cúng Thần Tượng (I Côr. 10:19-20)
- (n) Tìm Kiếm Chúa Vinh Quang (Rôm. 2:6-11)

## Session 4: Who Is a Disciple?

### Bài 4: MÔN ĐỒ LÀ AI?

Khi chúng ta suy nghĩ về “Môn Đồ Của Chúa Jêsus,” có những câu hỏi căn bản hiện ngay lên trong trí. Môn đồ là ai? Tại sao cần phải có môn đồ? Làm thế nào để một người có thể trở thành môn đồ? Tìm môn đồ ở đâu? Môn đồ phải làm gì? Và khi chúng ta nghiên cứu nhiều về cách đào tạo môn đồ của Chúa Jêsus trong Kinh Thánh thì chúng ta biết chắc Chúa Jêsus Christ chúng ta là người lãnh đạo và đào tạo môn đồ khuôn mẫu. Phương cách Chúa thực hiện là chọn mười hai môn đồ để huấn luyện họ tiếp nối xây dựng vương quốc của Ngài trên đất. Theo như Kinh Thánh ghi lại và thực tế minh chứng đã có nhiều người trở thành môn đồ của Chúa, họ đã đem vinh hiển cho Ngài.

#### 1. Định Nghĩa Môn Đồ

##### (a) Môn Đồ Là Học Trò

- i. Là người ham học hỏi.
- ii. Là người tin nhận Chúa.
- iii. Là người tôn trọng một người nào đó làm thầy của mình (Mat. 4:19; Gi. 6:45).

##### (b) Môn Đồ Là Người Theo Chúa Và Tận Hiến

- i. Là người sẵn sàng ra đi truyền giáo cho công việc Chúa.
- ii. Là người biết huấn luyện người khác để cùng nhau phát triển Hội Thánh Chúa.
- iii. Là người có sự thôi thúc muốn sống giống như Thầy của mình.
- iv. Là người không sợ có sự sai trật nào khi tự bỏ mình để hy sinh cho công việc Chúa.

#### 2. Phần Thảo Luận Nhóm

- (a) Mỗi nhóm thảo luận câu hỏi “Môn Đồ Là Ai?” khoảng mười phút rồi cho một định nghĩa về danh từ môn đồ. Năm phút còn lại chia sẻ cho cả lớp.
- (b) Bạn có ước mong sẽ trở thành là người đào tạo môn đồ cho Chúa không?

## Session 5: Where Were the Disciples?

### Bài 5: MÔN ĐỒ Ở ĐÂU?

#### 1. Tìm Môn Đồ Ở Trong Hội Thánh

- (a) Là Người Gieo Trồng Phúc Âm
- (b) Là Người Tìm Kiếm Kẻ Hư Mất
- (c) Là Người Mong Muốn Phục Vụ Chúa

#### 2. Tìm Môn Đồ Qua Sự Thông Công

- (a) Cùng Làm Việc Chung
- (b) Cùng Nhau Nuôi Dưỡng
  - i. Trong gia đình
  - ii. Nơi Hội Thánh
  - iii. Ngoài cộng đồng

#### 3. Bài Đọc Thêm

### MÔN ĐỒ HAY CHỈ LÀ TÍN ĐỒ<sup>1</sup>

Còn ai không vác thập tự giá mình mà theo ta, thì cũng không được làm môn đồ ta . . . Như vậy, nếu ai trong các ngươi không bỏ mọi sự mình có, thì không được làm môn đồ ta (Lu. 14:27, 33). Từ lúc ấy, có nhiều môn đồ Ngài trở lui, không đi với Ngài nữa (Gi. 6:17, 66).

Có hơn hai tỉ Cơ-đốc nhân đã xưng nhận đức tin trong thế giới hôm nay. Con số thật khiêm nhường nhưng cũng tạo ra ấn tượng kinh ngạc nếu so với tỷ lệ số dân trên thế giới là 6,777 tỉ người. Đối với vô số triệu người theo Chúa Jêsus, đời sống của họ chỉ hơi khác là muốn sống theo văn hóa và có phong thái đạo đức một chút. Họ quan niệm gia nhập Hội Thánh cũng gần giống như gia nhập một câu lạc bộ, là nơi người ta gặp gỡ, tìm bạn mới, và trao đổi sở thích về những vấn đề vụn vặt. Trong giờ học tại Trường Chúa Nhật hay trong giờ thờ phượng, những câu Kinh Thánh nếu có được đọc lên, hình như đó chỉ là bốn phận, đơn điệu. Tự thân, nó không có liên hệ mật thiết ngọt ngào với Chúa một cách thật lòng, sống động và thay đổi đời sống của người đọc cũng như người nghe. Thậm chí ngay cả bài giảng cũng không giúp ích tăng trưởng tâm linh bao nhiêu!

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Hattaway, Brother Yun, Peter Xu Yongze, and Enoch Wang, *Back to Jerusalem: Three Chinese House Church Leaders Share Their Vision to Complete the Great Commission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 63-70.

Đối với tín đồ chưa thật lòng tin Chúa, dường như Chúa Jêsus chỉ được xem là nhân vật lịch sử chết trên thập tự giá để cứu độ thế gian, là nhân vật trong tương lai sẽ tái lâm, nhưng có rất ít Cơ-độc nhân thật sự có ý thức dẫn thân để bước theo Chúa Jêsus, họ chưa thật sự dám thực hiện giấc mơ của họ, họ kính sợ Chúa như một Đấng yêu thương, một người bạn, và cũng là Chúa của họ, nhưng vẫn đứng xa xa Chúa.

Hàng triệu Hội Thánh trên thế giới ngày nay đã bị ràng buộc bởi quá nhiều luật lệ. Họ vâng theo luật pháp của thế gian nhưng không muốn gìn giữ luật pháp Chúa và bước đi với Ngài. Đời sống Cơ-độc nhân trở thành một thử thách chịu đựng, và những dấu hiệu vui mừng dường như đã dần dà biến mất trong đời sống của họ.

Anh chị em ơi, xin đừng tự lừa dối, một Hội Thánh bị trói buộc như thế chẳng khác gì hơn công việc của một câu lạc bộ; Hội Thánh đó chỉ gom nhóm lại những tín đồ không bao giờ có thể làm chứng đem người đến với Chúa cho vương quốc của Ngài. Thỉnh thoảng họ có dẫn được một người đến thăm viếng Hội Thánh nhưng chưa làm được việc chứng đạo có hiệu quả để cầm giữ được “khách thập phương.” Có chăng là khi nan đề trong cuộc sống phủ đầy, khách mới tìm đến Chúa để tìm phương “thuốc” giải độc. Thật sự, chẳng mấy người khao khát giá trị của Lời Hằng Sống. Làm sao một người có thể đưa một linh hồn lạc mất con đường đi đến một nơi yên tịnh mà chính họ cũng chưa chắc đã nhận ra được ý nghĩa của sự cứu rỗi linh hồn, ý nghĩa của tội lỗi và giá trị của sự tái sinh.

Một điều chắc chắn: gần bảy tỷ người chưa có Chúa trên thế giới, mà chúng tôi nhắm vào qua khái tượng hoàn thành Đại Mạng Lệnh, sẽ chạm vào lòng của những tín nhân nguội lạnh, nếu họ đáp ứng các công tác chứng đạo trong Hội Thánh, và trở thành những môn đồ năng động của Chúa Jêsus; là những người dám từ bỏ tất cả những bã hư danh để dẫn bước theo Ngài Đức Chúa Trời muốn họ trưởng thành và Ngài muốn họ trở nên những môn đồ sống có kết quả trong Hội Thánh và ngoài xã hội.

Những Cơ-độc nhân thuộc dạng “tín đồ theo thời” cũng có thể đang mang loại siêu mầm bệnh tâm linh có thể gây nhiễm sự chết chóc cho người khác – như tham vọng ích kỷ và huyênh hoang niềm tin; những người đó sống mà giống như chết (Khải 3:1b), trong họ không còn sự khao khát sống vinh hiển cho Chúa và nhìn thấy Hội Thánh phát triển.

Thật chẳng may nhiều Hội Thánh Việt Nam dường như đang chứa chất loại tín đồ có siêu mầm bệnh tâm linh đó; họ có thể làm suy yếu khái tượng hoàn thành Đại Mạng Lệnh của Cứu Chúa Jêsus Christ. Hàng chục ngàn Hội Thánh đã trở nên tự mãn với những gì họ tạo ra, và họ hãnh diện khoe khoang về thành tích hơn là bước chân ra tiếp xúc với cộng đồng. Họ chống lại người sáng lập, họ quên công sức của người tiên phong, và họ sẵn sàng phá bỏ các nền tảng Thánh Kinh để lèo lái Hội Thánh theo ý muốn riêng: “Chúa có phán rằng: Vì dân này chỉ lấy miệng tới gần ta, lấy môi miệng tôn ta, lòng chúng nó thì cách mà xa ta lắm; sự chúng nó kính sợ ta chẳng qua là điều răn của loài người, bởi loài người dạy cho” (Ês. 29:13).

Cơ-độc nhân được kêu gọi sống bằng “đức tin, hy vọng và tình yêu” (I Côr. 13:13), nhưng đối với “tín đồ theo thời” đi nhà thờ nhưng trong tinh thần thì chứa đầy những tuyệt vọng, hy vọng không chống nổi ảo tưởng, và tình yêu bị nuốt mất bởi yếm thế và sợ hãi. Nếu bạn là tín đồ như trên, bạn cảm thấy bị dòn trong thất



## Session 6: What Do Disciples Do?

### Bài 6: MÔN ĐỒ LÀM GÌ?

#### 1. Phần Phân Tích

##### (a) Phải Tự Dẫn Thân

- i. Trong sự phân chia phần hành và tiếp tục sự phát triển.
- ii. Huấn luyện đời sống của nhiều người khác cho đến khi họ hoàn toàn đầu phục chúa.

##### (b) Phải Được Huấn Luyện

- i. Chúa đặt một công việc nào đó trong đời sống của môn đồ, nhưng người đó luôn luôn phải theo đúng sự huấn luyện của Ngài.
- ii. Tầm vóc của một Hội thánh không thể chỉ là con số tín hữu, hội viên, vào cách điều hành, quản trị hành chánh, vào các chương trình, mà chính là sự chịu huấn luyện để trưởng thành thuộc linh của tín hữu trong Hội thánh.

##### (c) Phải Yêu Thương Nhau

- i. Trong sách Công Vụ Các Sứ Đồ, hiện tượng này được chứng tỏ mạnh mẽ. Chú ý đến mục tiêu đi liền theo mạng lệnh của Chúa Jêsus: “Nếu các con yêu thương nhau, thì nhờ đó mọi người sẽ nhận biết các con là môn đệ Ta” (Gi. 13:34-35).
- ii. Cơ hội trình bày Phúc Âm của Đấng Christ thành lời sẽ phải phát sinh tự nhiên từ tấm lòng để phản ánh tình yêu thương và quan tâm đối với mọi người.

##### (d) Phải Có Năng Lực

- i. Môn đồ của Chúa là những người tiên phong trong sự học hỏi nhiều để trở thành những người lãnh đạo giàu năng lực từ các giáo sư tốt.
- ii. Người ta thường nói rằng năng lực lớn nhất của một môn đồ của Chúa là sự trông cậy nơi Đức Chúa Trời.

##### (e) Phải Biết Quyền Hạn

- i. Môn đồ cần hiểu rằng quyền hạn lãnh đạo thuộc linh của họ đến từ Đức Chúa Trời.
- ii. Thẩm quyền của họ trong cương vị người lãnh đạo đã được chính nhóm người mà họ lãnh đạo trao cho.
- iii. Những phước hạnh về việc làm gương tốt là nhằm để gây dựng cho nhóm và thực hiện mục đích môn đồ hóa.

- iv. Môn đồ nào lạm dụng quyền hành của mình phải gánh chịu những hậu quả cho chính mình và không quên rằng sự lãnh đạo của mình đặt trên nền tảng trách nhiệm tương xứng với thẩm quyền đó (II Côr. 5:9, 10).

(f) Phải Tự Giải Trình

- i. Môn đồ của Chúa là những người lãnh đạo Cơ-đốc có trách nhiệm.
- ii. Họ cần phải yêu thích việc tường trình và lượng giá những việc mình làm.
- iii. Là những người luôn hướng đến điều tốt hơn (II Côr. 5:10).
- iv. Họ cầu nguyện nhiều và quyết định đồng thời gánh lấy trách nhiệm về quyết định của họ.
- v. Đời sống, gia đình và thậm chí cuốn sổ tay của họ cũng mở ra trước những người mà họ phục vụ và giải trình về công việc của mình (II Côr. 5:10).

(g) Phải Có Chiến Lược

- i. Môn đồ của Chúa biết cách thực hiện một chiến lược Chúa ban là người có thể ảnh hưởng các thành viên trong nhóm của họ để hoàn tất những công việc chung và hoàn tất các mục vụ của Hội Thánh cần.
- ii. Họ làm việc với những nhóm mà họ cộng tác như những người lãnh đạo gương mẫu, tích cực và phục vụ nhằm đạt được những mục tiêu Đức Chúa Trời ban cho họ.
- iii. Môn đồ của Chúa khiêm cung nhận biết sự giúp đỡ của Đức Chúa Trời trong việc phát triển các chiến lược có thể thực hiện được nhằm đạt được các mục tiêu đã hoạch định.
- iv. Môn đồ của Chúa này không xây dựng một tượng đài cho riêng mình bèn là một làn sóng “làm điều thiện cho mọi người” (Gal. 6:7-9).

(h) Phải Luôn Trung Thành

- i. Những môn đồ trung tín của Chúa thành công có lòng tận tụy làm việc với người đồng lao của mình trong sự hài hòa, hiệp nhất có chủ đích.
- ii. Vì công việc Ngài; vai trò của người đó được chính nhóm mà người đó khẳng định và trao thẩm quyền làm chứng trong việc rao giảng Tin Lành.
- iii. Mục vụ của Chúa đòi hỏi những môn đồ phải chắc chắn về sự kêu gọi của mình là những người lãnh đạo cho công việc của Ngài và làm công việc với lòng tận tâm. “Phao-lô, tôi tớ của Đức Chúa Jêsus Christ, được gọi làm sứ đồ, để riêng ra đặng giảng Tin Lành Đức Chúa Trời...” (Rôm. 1:1). Lòng trung thành đối với nhóm nòng cốt là phẩm chất của môn đồ cần có để khởi đầu và phát triển một công việc kết quả.
- iv. Lòng trung thành đối với nhóm nòng cốt là phẩm chất của môn đồ cần có để khởi đầu và phát triển một công việc kết quả.



- v. Lòng tận hiến của họ đối với Đức Chúa Jêsus Christ là Chúa và Cứu Chúa trong chức vụ của họ tạo ảnh hưởng rất sâu rộng.
- vi. Những môn đồ trung tín làm sản sinh những hội viên trung tín! Họ khởi sự và kết thúc công việc với nhóm của họ.
- vii. Những môn đồ trung tín làm sản sinh những hội viên trung tín! Họ khởi sự và kết thúc công việc với nhóm của họ.

(i) Phải Giữ Liêm Chính

- i. Sứ đồ Phao-lô kể sự liêm chính là một phẩm chất cần thiết của những người lãnh đạo Cơ-đốc.
- ii. Sự liêm chính là nền tảng không chỉ để cho người khác tôn trọng môn đồ của Chúa, mà còn là để họ tin và đi theo.

(j) Phải Giảng Tin Lành

- i. Với sự xác quyết này, các môn đồ rao báo rằng thời kỳ ứng nghiệm đã đến, đó là “thời kỳ phục hồi muôn vật” (Công 3:21).
- ii. Môn đồ cần rao giảng Phúc Âm một cách tự nhiên như trở thành lời chứng của Hội Thánh.

(k) Phải Phát Triển Hội Thánh

- i. Những bài học từ Hội Thánh ban đầu.
- ii. Phát triển vì nhờ có rất nhiều người đi ra làm chứng về Đấng Christ.

(l) Phải Có Giờ Tĩnh Nguyện

- i. Môn đồ của Chúa là những người lãnh đạo Cơ-đốc có trách nhiệm tương giao với Chúa qua sự tĩnh nguyện.
- ii. Môn đồ của Chúa cần phải tĩnh nguyện bằng tấm lòng và sẵn sàng vâng phục theo sự hướng dẫn của Chúa Thánh Linh để duy trì sự thông công bằng tâm trí khôn ngoan để hưởng được những năng lực và phúc lợi do Chúa ban cho.

## 2. Phân Thảo Luận

- (a) Bạn học được gì về “Môn Đồ Làm Gì” nơi Hội Thánh ban đầu?
- (b) Tại sao sự liêm chính là nền tảng không chỉ để cho người khác tôn trọng môn đồ của Chúa, mà còn là để họ tin và đi theo?
- (c) Sự liêm chính là nền tảng không chỉ để cho người khác tôn trọng môn đồ của Chúa, mà còn là để họ tin và đi theo. Đối với bạn thì câu này có nghĩa gì?
- (d) Tĩnh nguyện bằng tấm lòng khác tĩnh nguyện bằng tâm trí khôn ngoan như thế nào?

Học xong bài này, chúng ta tự hỏi: Môn đồ phải làm gì cho Hội Thánh phát triển? Câu trả lời thích ứng nhất của chúng ta đều tùy thuộc vào lòng trung thành và tính bền lâu của những môn đồ trung tín khi phục vụ Chúa; đó là lý do khiến Hội Thánh phát triển cách lành mạnh, nhanh chóng và sản sinh ra nhiều Hội Thánh khác.

Tự viết một phân đoạn diễn tả lòng mong muốn làm việc tích cực cho Hội Thánh bạn:

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## Session 7: What Was the Role of Disciples?

### Bài 7: MÔN ĐỒ VÀ BỔN PHẬN

“Phao-lô, tôi tớ của Đức Chúa Jêsus Christ, được gọi làm sứ đồ, để riêng ra giảng Tin Lành Đức Chúa Trời...” (Rô-ma 1:1).

Ý thức này của một người được kêu gọi làm môn đồ của Chúa sẽ đem đến một niềm tin và lòng can đảm để phục vụ bất chấp cái giá phải trả, hoàn cảnh và những thách thức của công việc. Người đó quyết tâm hoàn thành nhiệm vụ của mình với lòng tự trọng và phước hạnh đối với Đức Chúa Trời cũng như những người mà mình phục vụ. Sự kêu gọi cá nhân thiêng liêng để phục vụ Đức Chúa Trời. Mục vụ của Chúa đòi hỏi những người muốn theo Chúa phải chắc chắn về sự kêu gọi của mình là những người chu toàn công việc của Ngài và làm công việc với lòng tận tâm.

#### 1. Đối Với Khải Tượng

##### (a) Có Tầm Nhìn Lên

- i. Công Vụ 1:9, 11
- ii. Phi-líp 2:10
- iii. Công Vụ 2:23; 4:28
- iv. Khải Huyền 5:9; 7:9; 11:15; 17:14; 19:6

##### (b) Vương Quốc Sẽ Đến

- i. Công Vụ 1:3
- ii. Thi-thiên 86:9
- iii. Ê-sai 43:21
- iv. Khải Huyền 4:11
- v. Rô-ma 1:20-25
- vi. Ê-sai 45:22
- vii. Sáng 12:1-3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; Công 3:25
- viii. Sáng 49:10; Ê-sai 49:6
- ix. Ê-sai 9:7
- x. Đa-niên 7:13, 14; Xa-cha-ri 9:10
- xi. Sáng 49:10; Ê-sai 49:6
- xii. Ê-sai 9:7
- xiii. Đa-niên 7:13-14; Xa-cha-ri 9:10

## 2. Đối Với Quyền Năng

### (a) Chúa Jêsus

- i. “Quyền cai trị và sự bình an của Ngài cứ thêm mãi không thôi” (Ês. 9:7).
- ii. Chúa Jêsus phục vụ với niềm tin chắc chắn đầy vui mừng về lời hứa này.
- iii. Mỗi giai đoạn Ngài bước đi trên đất đều báo trước về ngày đó; âm vang của các sứ thần ngợi khen Đức Chúa Trời về ngôi trời luôn rung động mạnh mẽ trong Ngài.
- iv. Nhưng Chúa Jêsus cũng biết rằng trước khi sự cai trị đời đời của Ngài được diễn ra, thế giới phải được phục hòa với Đức Chúa Trời bởi của lễ hy sinh của Đức Chúa Con.

### (b) Các Sứ Đồ

- i. Là những người được Chúa lựa chọn để dẫn đưa nhiều người đến tin nhận Ngài (Gi. 17:20-21).
- ii. Là những người cần hiểu được mục đích của thập tự giá để có thể hoàn tất công tác của Ngài. Vì Ngài là đối tượng chính của cả Kinh Thánh (Lu. 24:46-47).

## 3. Đối Với Sự Kêu Gọi

### (a) Để Phục Vụ

- i. Một môn đồ phải được kêu gọi cá nhân thiêng liêng để phục vụ Đức Chúa Trời theo mục đích Ngài.
- ii. Một môn đồ phải đến trước sự kêu gọi nhằm đáp ứng nhu cầu của một nhóm người.

### (b) Để Lãnh Đạo

- i. Một môn đồ phải được kêu gọi để làm người lãnh đạo cho Đức Chúa Trời.
- ii. Một môn đồ phải đem đến cho cá nhân người đó một khao khát, một niềm tin và sự bảo đảm chắc chắn về mục vụ phát triển Hội Thánh của mình.

## 4. Đối Với Các Chức Vụ

### (a) Được Chăm Sóc

### (b) Được Sai Phái

### (c) Được Hòa Thuận

### (d) Được Ân Tứ

- i. Do Chúa ban cho (Rôm. 12:6-8; I Côr. 12:4-11, 28-30; Êph. 4:7-12; I Phi. 4:10).
- ii. Có những ân tứ khác giúp phục hồi niềm hy vọng bằng cách nhận lấy lời khôn ngoan, phân biệt các thần, thông giải tiếng mới, hoặc những ân tứ khác cần thiết giúp giải quyết tình huống trong cuộc sống.

## 5. Đối Với Gương Phục Vụ

### (a) Chúa Jêsus

- i. Để lại một tấm gương tuyệt đẹp để chúng ta noi theo.
- ii. Tâm tình phục vụ là thước đo trong Hội Thánh của Ngài.

### (b) Người Lãnh Đạo

- i. Giữa vòng những người lãnh đạo không có chỗ cho người độc tài.
- ii. Mọi người đều ở dưới thẩm quyền của Chúa là Đấng Christ.

## 6. Phản Thảo Luận

- (a) Những ân tứ khác (có thể) giúp phục hồi niềm hy vọng bằng cách nhận lấy lời khôn ngoan, phân biệt các thần, thông giải tiếng mới, hoặc những ân tứ khác cần thiết giúp giải quyết tình huống trong cuộc sống. Trình bày quan điểm của bạn.
- (b) Các ân tứ được ban cho không phải để người nhận kiêu ngạo, nhưng để làm trọn vẹn thân thể của Đấng Christ và từ đó dâng vinh hiển cho Đức Chúa Trời. Khi vận dụng các ân tứ theo quan điểm này, cá nhân người nhận và cả Hội Thánh đều được ích lợi. Tình yêu thương là ân tứ lớn hơn hết. Bạn nghĩ câu này có điểm gì không đúng chăng?
- (c) Xin cho biết kinh nghiệm cá nhân của bạn khi nhận được sự kêu gọi thiêng liêng của Chúa.

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Khi các môn đệ trở nên tự tin và thành thạo về các ân tứ được ban cho, họ có thể được ủy thác nhiều công việc khó hơn, như hướng dẫn lớp học Kinh Thánh, hướng dẫn việc đi thăm viếng hoặc phục vụ trong một ủy ban quan trọng. Cuối cùng, những nhân sự trưởng thành tiến dần đến các vị trí lãnh đạo, có lẽ là chấp sự hay trưởng lão. Tại thời điểm những người này đang giữ vai trò quan trọng trong Hội Thánh, chính họ nên tham gia nhiều hơn trong công việc môn đệ hóa những người mới, nhờ đó họ nêu gương cho Hội Thánh noi theo.

Xin viết một phân đoạn trình bày các vị trí lãnh đạo nào bạn muốn đảm nhận:

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## Session 9: Disciples and Prayer Reflection

### Bài 9: MÔN ĐỒ VÀ CẦU NGUYỆN

“Phải cầu nguyện luôn, chớ hề mệt mỏi” (Lu-ca 18:1)

#### 1. Can Đảm Cầu Nguyện

- (a) Cầu Nguyện Khi Bị Áp Bức (Công 12:5; 16:25)
- (b) Cầu Nguyện Có Sự Hướng Dẫn Của Chúa (22:17, 18)
- (c) Cầu Nguyện Khi Có Gánh Nặng (Mat. 11:29-30)
- (d) Cầu Nguyện Cho Nhu Cầu Tâm Linh Của Người Khác (Công 8:15; 19:6)
- (e) Cầu Nguyện Cho Người Bệnh Và Người Tuyệt Vọng (9:40; 16:16; 28:8)
- (f) Cầu Nguyện Cho Một Số Người Lãnh Trọng Trách Đặc Biệt (6:6; 13:3; 14:23)
- (g) Cầu Nguyện Khi Chia Tay Nhau (20:36; 21:5)
- (h) Cầu Nguyện Khi Đối Diện Với Sự Chết (7:59, 60)

#### 2. Đốc Tâm Bày Tỏ

- (a) Họ Giữ Phong Cách Cầu Nguyện Trong Đền Thờ (3:1; 16:16)
- (b) Họ Thường Cầu Nguyện Ở Tại Nhà (1:13, 14; 9:11; 12:12; 14:23), Tỉnh Thoảng Trên Mái Nhà (10:9)
- (c) Họ Cầu Nguyện Bên Bờ Sông (16:13)
- (d) Họ Cầu Nguyện Trên Biển (21:5)
- (e) Họ Cầu Nguyện Trên Tàu (27:35)
- (f) Họ Cầu Nguyện Trong Tủ (16:25)
- (g) Họ Cầu Nguyện Vào Giờ Trưa (10:9), Buổi Chiều ( 3:1); Và Thậm Chí Lúc Nửa Đêm (16:25)

#### 3. Tầm Gương Cầu Nguyện

- (a) Như Các Tín Hữu Ở Giê-ru-sa-lem
- (b) Khi Họ Nghe Những Lời Đe Dọa Đối Với Phi-e-rơ Và Giăng (4:23-31)

#### 4. Thời Điểm Kiên Ăn

- (a) Chúa Jêsus Kiên Ăn
- (b) Trong Bốn Mươi Ngày

## 5. Trong Mọi Hoàn Cảnh

- (a) Họ Biết Ném Trái Khi Dư Thừa Hoặc Lúc Thiếu Thốn (I Phi. 4:12)
- (b) Thậm Chí Họ Nhận Chịu Bị Thế Giới Đối Xử Tội Tệ

## 6. Tử Vì Đạo Chúa

- (a) Như Chúa
- (b) Như Sứ Đồ (Công 5:18; 12:3-5; 16:24; 23:35)

## 7. Trong Trận Tâm Linh

- (a) Thách Thức “Quyền Lực Sa-tan” (26:18)
- (b) Trận Chiến Diễn Ra Cho Đến Cùng
  - i. Chúng ta phải kỷ luật thân thể, tâm trí và linh hồn cách nghiêm khắc.
  - ii. Trong cuộc chiến này không có chỗ cho sự lưỡng lự hoặc lười nhác.
  - iii. Chỉ những ai chịu đóng đinh với Đấng Christ mới kinh nghiệm được sự chiến thắng thế gian.

## 8. Phản Thảo Luận Nhóm

- (a) Suy nghĩ câu “Phải cầu nguyện luôn, chớ hề mệt mỏi” (Lu. 18:1).
- (b) Trình bày sự hiểu biết của bạn về ý của Chúa khi dạy điều này cho các môn đồ.
- (c) Tại sao trong cuộc chiến tâm linh sẽ không có chỗ cho sự lưỡng lự hoặc lười nhác?
- (d) Bạn có vui mừng trong nghịch cảnh khi bị thế giới đối xử tội tệ không?

Sự cầu nguyện không phải là mục tiêu xa xôi mà môn đồ nhắm đến, nhưng đúng hơn đó là một kinh nghiệm hiện tại và tiếp diễn. Lời cầu nguyện này nói về sự khai thị của Đức Chúa Trời trong Kinh Thánh, nhấn mạnh đến sự biết trước của Ngài về tất cả mọi việc, kể cả thái độ thù nghịch của các vua và những bậc cầm quyền đối với chính Ngài và những người chịu xúc dầu của Ngài. Mong rằng tất cả học viên đều lãnh hội được bài học và áp dụng nó vào đời sống cầu nguyện của mỗi cá nhân. A-men.



**Session 10: *The Master Plan of Evangelism*  
by Robert E. Coleman**

**BÀI 10: PHƯƠNG PHÁP ĐÀO TẠO  
MÔN ĐỒ CỦA CHÚA JÊSUS  
By Robert E. Coleman**

Vậy, hãy đi dạy dỗ muôn dân, hãy nhân danh Đức Cha, Đức Con, và Đức Thánh Linh mà làm phép báp-têm cho họ (Ma-thi-ơ 28:19).

**1. Phát Triển Theo Chiều Sâu**

(a) Tập Trung Vào Một Số Ít Người

Đến sáng ngày, Ngài đòi môn đồ đến, chọn mười hai người gọi là sứ đồ: Si-môn, Ngài đặt tên là Phi-e-rơ, Anh-rê em ruột của Phi-e-rơ, Gia-cơ và Giăng, Phi-líp và Ba-thê-lê-my, Ma-thi-ơ, và Thô-ma, Gia-cơ con của A-phê, Si-môn gọi là Xê-lốt, Giu-đe con của Gia-cơ, và Giu-đa Ích-ca-ri-ốt là kẻ phản Ngài (Lu. 6:13).

- i. Đặt nền móng đòi hỏi và tập trung nỗ lực vào thì giờ và khả năng của một vài người.
- ii. Bằng cách tập trung vào một số ít người như vậy, Chúa Jê-sus có thể làm vững bền sứ mạng của Ngài.
- iii. Chúa Jê-sus dành rất nhiều thì giờ của Ngài cho mười hai môn đồ vì đó là cách duy nhất để Phúc Âm đến được với đông đảo người hiện nay.

(b) Thận Trọng Trong Sự Chọn Lựa Người

- i. Trong đám đông đồ xô theo Ngài vì những dấu kỳ phép lạ. “Nhưng Đức Chúa Jê-sus chẳng phó thác mình cho họ, vì Ngài nhận biết mọi người, và không cần ai làm chứng về người nào, bởi Ngài tự hiểu thấu mọi điều trong lòng người ta” (Gi. 2:24-25).
- ii. Chúa Jê-sus cứu nhiều người nhưng Ngài biết họ chưa hiểu rõ về Ngài.
- iii. Họ nhẹ dạ và dễ dàng thay đổi niềm tin. Họ tung hô Chúa “Hô-sa-na” (Mác 11:9) nhưng chỉ năm ngày sau, chúng la hét “hãy đóng đinh hắn đi” (Mác 15:19).
- iv. Huấn luyện môn đồ không phải là một việc làm trao đổi những món hàng, nhưng là kết quả của sự đầu tư gần gũi trực tiếp. “Việc đào tạo kỹ lưỡng, dày công đã khiến cho ảnh hưởng của Người Đào Tạo trên thế giới sẽ trường tồn; làm cho vương quốc Ngài sẽ được xây dựng trên tâm huyết của lòng tin chắc chắn không phải trên suy nghĩ cạn cợt, hay dời đổi như cát trước gió của đám đông.”

**2. Phát Triển Theo Chiều Rộng**

(a) Chúa Jê-sus Chú Ý Đến Đòi Sống Của Những Môn Đệ Trưởng Thành

- i. Không phải khi gia tăng nhóm nhỏ.
- ii. Chúa Jê-sus chú ý đến việc gia tăng số lượng môn đồ cần cho nhu cầu truyền giáo.

- (b) Khải Tượng Của Chúa Jêsus Là Dùng Nhóm Nhỏ Để Đào Tạo Ra Nhóm Lớn
- i. Khi Chúa thăng thiên thì chỉ có 11 môn đồ. Chính 11 môn đồ này đã tạo thành 11 nguồn cung cấp nhân lực thật lớn để tiếp nối công việc của Chúa sau này.
  - ii. Chúa Jêsus không quan tâm chuyện thực hiện chương trình để tiếp cận với đám đông, nhưng Ngài quan tâm đến việc đào tạo người mà đoàn dân đông muốn theo.

### 3. Thảo Luận Và Làm Bài Tập

(a) Phần Thảo Luận Nhóm

- i. Tại sao Chúa Jêsus không tiếp tục gia tăng đám đông theo Ngài thành một phong trào đông đảo? (15 phút).
- ii. Tại sao Chúa Jêsus thận trọng đối với nhiều người đang đổ xô theo Ngài? (15 phút).
- iii. Tại sao Chúa Jêsus chỉ dùng 11 môn đồ để gia tăng môn đồ cho nhu cầu truyền giáo rộng lớn sau này? (15 phút).
- iv. Ý kiến riêng của bạn về nhóm nhỏ trong Hội Thánh.

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(b) Phần Trả Lời Câu Hỏi

Mỗi Câu Hỏi Có Một Câu Trả Lời Đúng, Xin Đánh Dấu Vào Ô [ ]

- (1) Hầu hết các môn đồ đều xuất thân từ Ga-li-lê nhưng có một môn đồ đến từ Giu-đê, người đó là ai?  
 Tho-ma [ ]      Giu-đa [ ]      Phi-e-rơ [ ]
- (2) Trong số các môn đồ được chọn, có ba người gần gũi với Thầy mình nhất. Một trong số ba người đó là ai?  
 Anh-rê [ ]      Ma-thi-ơ [ ]      Giăng [ ]
- (3) Mối quan tâm của Chúa Jêsus không phải là các chương trình để tiếp xúc.  
 Đúng [ ]      Sai [ ]      Cả hai đều sai [ ]
- (4) Mục tiêu đầu tiên trong kế hoạch của Chúa Jêsus là tuyển mộ những người có thể làm chứng nhân về đời sống của Ngài và tiếp tục công việc của Ngài đã làm sau khi Ngài trở về cùng Cha.  
 Tuyển mộ [ ]      Tiếp tục công việc [ ]      Cả hai đều đúng [ ]
- (5) Khi Chúa thăng thiên thì Ngài có bao nhiêu môn đồ?  
 11 [ ]      12 [ ]      120 [ ]

**Session 11: A Plan of Discipleship  
Training in the Church (1)**

**Bài 11: THIẾT LẬP MỘT KẾ HOẠCH  
MÔN ĐỒ HÓA CHO HỘI THÁNH (1)**

Đây là một kế hoạch môn đồ hóa. Nó có thể không những chỉ đòi hỏi sự tái kết ước sống tận hiến, nhưng cũng là định hướng đường lối hầu việc Chúa của chúng ta; và một số người, bằng lòng với hiện tại, sẽ không hiểu cho rằng từ trước đến giờ họ chưa bao giờ làm như thế. Sự thay đổi sẽ diễn ra cách chậm chạp và nhưng không phải là không có chiến đấu.

**1. Theo Lời Dạy Của Phao-lô**

Phao-lô dạy: "... Hãy thận trọng giữ gìn nếp sống, đừng như người dại, nhưng như người khôn, hãy lợi dụng thì giờ vì những ngày là xấu" (Êph. 5:15-16).

**2. Để Ngắm Xem Chiến Thắng**

(a) Nơi Điểm Bắt Đầu Sẽ Là Điểm Kết Thúc

Khi xem thấy Hội Thánh được trọn vẹn trong thời điểm chung kết của muôn vật. Chúa Jêsus đã hứa rằng Hội Thánh Ngài thành lập sẽ kết thúc (Mat. 16:13-18; Mác 8:27-30; Lu. 9:18-20).

(b) Hội Thánh Của Ngài Sẽ Chiến Thắng

Mặc dù bị các chúa quỷ xảo quyết tấn công hoặc bị kẻ thù quậy phá. Hội Thánh Chúa vẫn chiến thắng. Cơ bản là không có điều gì hạ gục được việc môn đồ hóa để truyền bá Tin Lành cho thế giới.

**3. Tập Trung Vào Hội Thánh**

(a) Tránh Những Đề Án Không Thực Tiễn

(b) Cần Thực Hiện Một Việc Làm Cụ Thể

(c) Phải Thấy Phúc Âm Được Thể Hiện Cách Kiên Định Trong Nếp Sống Của Những Người Muốn Trở Thành Môn Đồ

(d) Các Môn Đồ Trưởng Thành Trong Vai Trò Lãnh Đạo Của Họ

**4. Bền Vững Kết Hiệp Nhau**

(a) Những Buổi Họp Mặt

(b) Thể Hiện Tình Đoàn Kết

(c) Cảm Nhận Thuộc Về Nhau

**5. Tạo Động Cơ Hầu Việc**

(a) Tạo Tinh Thần Phục Vụ

(b) Tránh Ăn Không Ngồi Rời

(c) Làm Chứng Trong Cộng Đồng

(d) Môn Đồ Hóa Người Mới

**Session 12: A Plan of Discipleship  
Training in the Church (2)**

**Bài 12: THIẾT LẬP MỘT KẾ HOẠCH  
MÔN ĐỒ HÓA CHO HỘI THÁNH (2)**

**1. Sống Trật Tự Kỷ Cương**

- (a) Nhắc Nhau Vâng Lời
- (b) Rèn Tập Tinh Nguyện
- (c) Kiên Quyết Giúp Nhau
- (d) Chống Mưu Sa-tan
- (e) Vui Thỏa Khi Khen

**2. Cương Quyết Sống Kỷ Luật**

- (a) Trên Đời Sống Môn Đồ
- (b) Trên Phương Diện Tâm Lý

**2. Nhận Quyền Năng Của Chúa**

- (a) Để Thực Hiện Kế Hoạch Môn Đồ Hóa
- (b) Để Đức Tin Trở Càng Nên Sống Động
  - i. Bằng quyết tâm vâng lời
  - ii. Bằng quyết tâm sống đạo
- (c) Để Thách Thức Người Được Sai Phái
  - i. Sống cho Chúa
  - ii. Yêu kính Chúa
  - iii. Tôn cao Ngài

**3. Câu Hỏi Khảo Sát:**

Điền Đúng Hay Sai Hoặc Có Hay Không Vào Khung/Ô [ ]

- 1. Môn đồ cần phải có lòng đam mê về Đấng Christ không?  
Có [ ]      Không [ ]
- 2. Môn đồ cần phải có tấm lòng hướng về Đấng Christ không?  
Có [ ]      Không [ ]
- 3. Môn đồ cần sự tin tưởng vào Lời của Đấng Christ không?  
Đúng [ ]      Sai [ ]

4. Môn đồ cần phải phó thác đời sống mình cho Đấng Christ không?  
Đúng [ ] Sai [ ]
5. Bạn có muốn trở thành môn đồ của Chúa không?  
Có [ ] Không [ ]
6. Chúa Jêsus có quyền tuyệt đối trên đời sống của môn đồ không?  
Có [ ] Không [ ]
7. Chúa Jêsus có quyền làm chủ mọi điều tôi có không?  
Có [ ] Không [ ]
8. Ngài có quyền tối thượng trên các cảm xúc của tôi không?  
Đúng [ ] Sai [ ]
9. Tại sao người Do-thái xem mình là môn đồ của Mô-i-se còn người mù là môn đồ của Chúa Jêsus trong Giảng 9:28?  
Đúng [ ] Sai [ ]
10. Người mù kia trở thành môn đồ Đấng Christ bằng cách nào?  
Can đảm nói về Chúa [ ] Rất sợ bị người Do-thái ghét bỏ [ ]
11. Chúng ta có thể trở thành môn đồ của Chúa qua tánh hiếu kỳ trí tuệ của một người hiếu kỳ không?  
Đúng [ ] Sai [ ]
12. Chúng ta có thể trở thành môn đồ của Chúa qua sự thuyết phục không?  
Đúng [ ] Sai [ ]
13. Chúng ta chỉ có thể trở nên môn đồ của Chúa sau khi được Chúa thuyết phục?  
Đúng [ ] Sai [ ]
14. Chúng ta có thể trở thành môn đồ Đấng Christ sau khi chúng ta thì phó thác đời sống mình hoàn toàn và đầy đủ cho Chúa để trở nên môn đồ của ngài không?  
Đúng [ ] Sai [ ]
15. Làm thế nào để hướng dẫn người khác trở thành môn đồ Đấng Christ?  
Cầu nguyện trước khi làm [ ] Phải có bằng cấp cao [ ]

## Session 13: Effective Evangelism in the Church

### Bài 13: Thực Tập Chứng Đạo Tại Hội Thánh

#### 1. Thực Tập Cách Làm Chứng

- (a) Trình Bày Tầm Hiểu Biết Về Sự Cứu Rỗi (Gi. 5:24)
- (b) Trình Bày Về Sự Thông Hiểu Thánh Kinh (II Tim. 4:2)
- (c) Trình bày về tâm tình yêu người hư mất (Mat. 23:37; Giê. 9:1; Công 20:31)
- (d) Trình Bày Về Tấm Gương Cầu Nguyện (Gia. 14:26; Công 26:18)
- (e) Trình Bày Về Vai Trò Của Chúa Thánh Linh Trong Việc Chứng Đạo (Ês. 44:3; Êxê. 39:29; Công 2:28-29; Giôs. 2:28-29; Xa. 12:10)

#### 2. Thực Tập Khi Chứng Đạo

- (a) Người Mẫu: Tôi Chứng Đạo, Anh Chị Xem
- (b) Cố Vấn: Chúng Ta Cùng Nhau Chứng Đạo
- (c) Trưởng Nhóm: Tôi Chứng Đạo Anh Chị Xem
  - i. Gõ cửa nhẹ nhàng
  - ii. Lui lại vài bước
  - iii. Không nói chuyện riêng
  - iv. Không hút thuốc
  - v. Sắc diện vui vẻ tươi mới
  - vi. Tìm cách khen căn nhà
  - vii. Tìm cách khen khu vực

#### 3. Giải Quyết Các Tình Huống

- (a) Khi Được Chủ Nhà Mời Vào
  - i. Vui vẻ tự giới thiệu
  - ii. Tìm cách để khen căn nhà đẹp
  - iii. Đừng bị ảnh hưởng nếu chủ nhà đang xem TV
  - iv. Đừng quan tâm những bề bộn của căn phòng
  - v. Tìm hiểu sở thích của chủ nhà
  - vi. Tránh bàn tán về tín hữu trong Hội Thánh của mình
  - vii. Tránh hỏi chủ nhà đang nhóm tại Hội Thánh nào
  - viii. Đừng chờ đợi quá lâu để tìm cách làm chứng
  - ix. Dùng bài làm chứng cá nhân thật ngắn gọn
- (b) Khi Không Được Chủ Nhà Mời Vào
  - i. Không tỏ thái độ bực dọc
  - ii. Xin phép được thăm viếng khi khác
  - iii. Vui vẻ để lại danh thiếp của Hội Thánh
  - iv. Không bao giờ làm chứng qua khung cửa

## Session 14: Effective Evangelism in the Community

### Bài 14: Thực Tập Truyền Giáo Trong Cộng Đồng

#### I. Chia Nhóm Chứng Đạo

#### II. Chọn Tổ Trưởng

#### III. Cầu Nguyện Trước Khi Đi

#### IV. Dùng Kinh Thánh Để Chứng Đạo

1. Giăng 1:12	Tiếp Nhận Chúa
2. Giăng 3:16	Tình Yêu
3. Rô-ma 3:23	Tội Lỗi
4. Rô-ma 6:23	Án Phạt
5. Sáng-thế Ký 6:6	Đau Buồn
6. Thi-thiên 78:40-41	Bị Thách Thức
7. Ê-sai 43:24	Bị Làm Phiền
8. Ê-xê-chi-ên 16:42, 43	Phẫn Nộ
9. Công Vụ 4:12	Chúa Gánh Tội
10. Khải Huyền 3:20	Chúa Chờ Đợi

#### V. Điền Phiếu Cá Nhân Chứng Đạo

#### VI. Lưu Trữ Hồ Sơ

## Session 15: Evangelism Message

### ĐỀ MỤC: ĐỨC CHÚA TRỜI LÀ SỰ YÊU THƯƠNG Kinh Văn: I Giăng 4:7-10

<sup>7</sup>Hỡi kẻ rất yêu dấu, chúng ta hãy yêu mến lẫn nhau; vì sự yêu thương đến từ Đức Chúa Trời, kẻ nào yêu, thì sanh từ Đức Chúa Trời và nhìn biết Đức Chúa Trời. <sup>8</sup>Ai chẳng yêu, thì không biết Đức Chúa Trời; vì Đức Chúa Trời là sự yêu thương. <sup>9</sup>Lòng Đức Chúa Trời yêu chúng ta đã bày tỏ ra trong điều này: Đức Chúa Trời đã sai Con một Ngài đến thế gian, đặng chúng ta nhờ Con được sống. <sup>10</sup>Này, sự yêu thương ở tại đây: ấy chẳng phải chúng ta đã yêu Đức Chúa Trời, nhưng Ngài đã yêu chúng ta, và sai Con Ngài làm của lễ chuộc tội chúng ta (I Gi. 4:7-10).

#### I. PHẦN DẪN NHẬP

#### II. PHẦN NỘI DUNG

##### 1. Nguồn Gốc Của Sự Yêu Thương

Hỡi kẻ rất yêu dấu, chúng ta hãy yêu mến lẫn nhau; vì sự yêu thương đến từ Đức Chúa Trời, kẻ nào yêu, thì sanh từ Đức Chúa Trời và nhìn biết Đức Chúa Trời (I Gi. 4:7).

###### (a) Đến từ Chúa

Nhưng Đức Chúa Trời tỏ lòng yêu thương Ngài đối với chúng ta, khi chúng ta còn là người có tội, thì Đấng Christ vì chúng ta chịu chết (Rôm. 5:8).

###### (b) Sanh Từ Chúa

... Và, lời rao truyền mà các con nghe từ lúc ban đầu, ấy là chúng ta phải yêu thương nhau (I Gi. 3:11).

###### (c) Nhìn biết Chúa

Nhìn xem Đức Chúa Jêsus, là cội rễ và cuối cùng của đức tin, tức là Đấng vì sự vui mừng đã đặt trước mặt mình, chịu lấy thập tự giá, khinh điều sỉ nhục, và hiện nay ngồi bên hữu Ngài Đức Chúa Trời (Hêb. 12:2).

##### 2. Đặc Tính Của Sự Yêu Thương

Lòng Đức Chúa Trời yêu chúng ta đã bày tỏ ra trong điều này: Đức Chúa Trời đã sai Con một Ngài đến thế gian, đặng chúng ta nhờ Con được sống. Này, sự yêu thương ở tại đây: ấy chẳng phải chúng ta đã yêu Đức Chúa Trời, nhưng Ngài đã yêu chúng ta, và sai Con Ngài làm của lễ chuộc tội chúng ta (I Gi. 4:9-10).

###### (a) Hy Sinh

Vì Đức Chúa Trời yêu thương thế gian, đến nỗi đã ban Con một của Ngài hầu cho hễ ai tin Con ấy không bị hư mất mà được sự sống đời đời (Gi. 3:16).

###### (b) Chuộc Tội

... là Đấng Đức Chúa Trời đã lập làm của lễ chuộc tội, bởi đức tin trong huyết Đấng ấy (Rôm. 3:25a).

#### III. PHẦN KẾT LUẬN VÀ KÊU GỌI



## PHỤ BẢN 1

### HỒ SƠ CÁ NHÂN CHÚNG ĐẠO

- Tên Họ: \_\_\_\_\_ Giới tính:  Nam  Nữ; Tuổi Tác: \_\_\_\_\_
- Địa Chỉ: \_\_\_\_\_ Thành Phố: \_\_\_\_\_ Tiểu Bang: \_\_\_\_\_
- Điện Thoại: Nhà: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_
- Điện Thoại: Sở Làm: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_
- Điện Thoại: Di Động: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_
- Thời Giờ Thuận Tiện Để Liên Lạc:  Sáng  Chiều  
 Tối  Cuối Tuần  Không Có Thời Giờ  Có Rất Ít Thời Giờ
- Địa Chỉ Điện Thư (e-mail): \_\_\_\_\_
- Facebook e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_
- Tình Trạng Gia Đình:  
 Độc Thân  Có Gia Đình  Số Con Trai  Số Con Gái
- Trình Độ Học Vấn:  
 Biết Đọc Biết Viết  Tiểu Học  Trung Học  Đại Học
- Tôn Giáo:  
 Phật Giáo  Công Giáo  Thờ Cúng Ông Bà  
 Cao Đài  Hòa Hảo  Mặc Môn  
 Chứng Nhân Giê-hô-va  Không Tôn Giáo
- Đang Thờ Phụng Tại:  Nhà Thờ  Chùa  Tu Tại Gia
- Ăn Chay Trường:  Có  Không
- Địa Chỉ Nơi Tế Tự: \_\_\_\_\_ Thành Phố: \_\_\_\_\_ Tiểu Bang: \_\_\_\_\_
- Nghề Nghiệp: \_\_\_\_\_
- Thời Gian Sống Tại Thành Phố Dalton:  
 6 Tháng  12 Tháng  1 Năm  2 Năm  Lâu Hơn
- Bà Con Thân Thuộc:  
 Không  Có (Nếu Có Xin Vui Lòng Điền Vào Phần Dưới Đây)
- Tên Họ: \_\_\_\_\_ Điện Thoại: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_
- Địa Chỉ: \_\_\_\_\_ Thành Phố: \_\_\_\_\_ Tiểu Bang: \_\_\_\_\_

**PHỤ BẢN 2**

**BILLY GRAHAM SCHOOL OF MISSIONS,  
EVANGELISM, AND CHURCH GROWTH**

**Evangelistic Outreach Report # \_\_\_\_\_**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Box: # \_\_\_\_\_

**I. CONTEXT**

A. Person(s) with whom you shared: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Accompanied by: \_\_\_\_\_ [ ] alone

D. This outreach opportunity came as a result of:

[ ] an appointment (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[ ] a referral (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[ ] a “way of life” situation (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[ ] talking with individuals “at random”

[ ] other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

**II. INTERACTION**

A. What did you learn about this person’s spiritual condition?

B. What key issues and/or questions surfaced during your conversation?

C. Were there any hindrances to your conversation (television set blaring, children, etc.)? How did you address them?

D. Which of the following statements best describes your witnessing encounter with this person?

[ ] I gave a complete/thorough presentation of the gospel.

[ ] We had a Christ-centered religious discussion, but I did not present the gospel because \_\_\_\_\_

[ ] We did not discuss religion or Christ because \_\_\_\_\_



### PHỤ BẢN 3

## BẢNG LƯỢNG GIÁ VỀ CHUYÊN MÔN, NGHIỆP VỤ, ĐẠO ĐỨC, NHÂN CÁCH CỦA GIÁO VIÊN

Tên Giáo Viên: \_\_\_\_\_ Môn Học: \_\_\_\_\_

Tên Học Viên: (Không bắt buộc) \_\_\_\_\_

**Chỉ Dẫn:** Khoanh tròn câu trả lời phù hợp với kinh nghiệm của giáo viên này cho mỗi mục. Bỏ trống nếu không phù hợp:

**1 = Hiếm Khi | 2 = Một Vài Lần | 3 = Đôi Khi | 4 = Hầu Hết | 5 = Luôn Luôn**

#### A. LIÊN QUAN ĐẾN GIÁO TRÌNH

1. Giáo viên có chuẩn bị trước khi lên bục giảng:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
2. Giáo viên thông hiểu chủ đề của môn dạy:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
3. Giáo viên gọn gàng và ngăn nắp:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
4. Giáo viên có hoạch định thời gian cho môn học và chuẩn bị các bài tập để giúp học viên giải quyết vấn đề và tư duy biện lý. Giáo viên cung cấp các hoạt động hữu ích cho môn học:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
5. Giáo viên linh hoạt trong việc giúp đỡ cho các học viên có nhu cầu:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
6. Giáo viên giải thích rõ cách thức và yêu cầu của các bài thi trắc nghiệm (nếu có):  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
7. Giáo viên khuyến khích học viên phát biểu ý kiến và chủ động trong lớp học:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
8. Giáo viên quản lý thời gian tốt:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
9. Giáo viên hoàn trả bài tập đúng thời hạn:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

10. Giáo viên đã giải thích thủ tục lớp học rõ ràng để học viên không lãng phí thời gian:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
11. Giáo viên chấm điểm công bằng (nếu có):  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
12. Giáo viên đã giúp học viên đã thu hoạch tối về chủ đề này:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
13. Giáo viên cho ý kiến phê bình trên các bài tập và các dự án nhằm giúp học viên hiểu rõ thêm vấn đề:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
14. Giáo viên sáng tạo trong việc soạn thảo các bài giảng và các hoạt động cho lớp học:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

## **B. KHÔNG LIÊN QUAN ĐẾN GIÁO TRÌNH**

15. Giáo viên giữ lời. Học viên có thể tin vào lời nói của giáo viên:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
16. Giáo viên lắng nghe và thông hiểu quan điểm của học viên. Dù không được đồng ý, nhưng học viên cảm nhận được giáo viên đã thấu hiểu quan điểm của mình:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
17. Giáo viên tôn trọng ý kiến và quyết định của học viên:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
18. Giáo viên sẵn sàng nhận lấy trách nhiệm cho những lầm lỗi của mình:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
19. Giáo viên sẵn sàng học hỏi từ các sinh viên:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
20. Giáo viên nhạy cảm với nhu cầu của học viên:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
21. Giáo viên nói có đi đôi với việc làm:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
22. Giáo viên là người có thiện cảm:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
23. Giáo viên quý mến và tôn trọng học viên:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

24. Giáo viên sẵn lòng giúp đỡ khi học viên yêu cầu:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
25. Giáo viên nhất quán và công bằng trong kỷ luật:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
26. Giáo viên có tạo lòng tin nơi các học trong lớp học này:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
27. Giáo viên là người gương mẫu để học viên noi theo:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
28. Giáo viên công bằng và kỷ luật nhưng không quá khắt khe:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
29. Giáo viên có đời sống theo Lời Chúa dạy:  
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
30. Giáo viên sẽ được tiếp tục mời dạy cho Hội Thánh trong những dịp thuận tiện khác:  
Tiếp tục [ ] Không tiếp tục [ ] Có thể có hoặc không [ ]

## PHỤ BẢN 4

### TRAINING FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION FORM

Rating scale for the project:     3     2     1     0

3: Meets most all of the criteria in the dimension of evangelism.

2: Meets many of the criteria in the dimension of evangelism.

1: Meets some of the criteria in the dimension of evangelism.

0: Does not meet the criteria in the dimension of evangelism.

1. The project presents a balance of procedures and deeper conceptual understanding about discipleship training in the First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton, Georgia.

3     2     1     0

2. The project goals have visible connection to the major work of the grade and are sufficiently brief.

3     2     1     0

3. The project training is responsive to varied student learning needs to share the gospel.

3     2     1     0

4. The lesson/unit regularly assesses whether students are mastering standards - based content and skills of personal witnessing.

3     2     1     0

5. The project's methodology fulfills its purpose.

3     2     1     0

6. The project's effectiveness fulfills its purpose.

3     2     1     0

7. The project cultivates student interest and engagement in personal evangelism, and speaking about Jesus Christ.

3     2     1     0

8. The project provides for authentic learning, application of witnessing skills, student-directed inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and/or reflection.

3     2     1     0

9. The project focuses on challenging and engaging students in a productive struggle through discussion questions and other supports that build toward independence.

3     2     1     0

10. The project uses technology and media to deepen learning and draw a best way of helping the church to growth.

3     2     1     0



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## ABSTRACT

### IMPLEMENTING AN EVANGELISM STRATEGY FOR THE FIRST VIETNAMESE BAPTIST CHURCH OF DALTON, GEORGIA

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014  
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The project details the office of deacon as presented in Acts and 1 Timothy. The project seeks to design training processes that develop a biblical and theological understanding and department of church leaders in the First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton. Methods include a synergistic approach to training in evangelism, character development, and leadership through service.

Chapter 1 presents the purpose, goals, context, rationale, definitions, limitations, and delimitations of the project. It describes the context of ministry for the First Vietnamese Baptist Church of Dalton and includes a history of the church and the present situation of the church. This chapter includes a detailed demographic analysis of the community of the church. It also describes the context of the ministry project, which comes from the rationale for evangelism and church growth.

Chapter 2 formulates the biblical and theological basis. It addresses the biblical and theological foundations for evangelism and church growth. Without biblical and theological foundations, the church's growth will be weak. Standing on theological truth helps church members be stronger in fighting against the schemes of Satan in the spiritual warfare for their souls.

Chapter 3 examines the scriptural principles of spiritual authority. It relates the theoretical and practical issues concerning Vietnamese history, culture, religions, and

immigration to the United States as they apply to the project. This chapter describes the effective communications needed to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with Vietnamese Americans, who are often unprepared to meet God. Sound theology for cross-cultural evangelism will help church leaders improve their capability to do missions effectively.

Chapter 4 presents the curriculum and practicum administered during the course of the project. It presents the guidelines for the implementation of the project, which includes twelve weeks for training, two weeks for outreach practice, and one week for evaluation. This chapter is to be seen as a template for evangelism and church growth, which may be transferred and tailored to other small Vietnamese American communities in the United States.

Chapter 5 presents an evaluation of the effectiveness of the project. It includes the results from the participants' survey, which the author evaluated. The purpose, goals, strengths, and weaknesses of the project are presented, along with personal reflections on the project. An assessment addresses appropriate changes for improvements to this project.

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