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EQUIPPING LEADERS FOR MISSIONAL LIVING  
AT FARMDALE BAPTIST CHURCH,  
IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

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

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

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by  
Stephen Louis Weber  
December 2014

**APPROVAL SHEET**

EQUIPPING LEADERS FOR MISSIONAL LIVING  
AT FARMDALE BAPTIST CHURCH,  
IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

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To Edgar and Jeannie Fritz

Thank you for modeling lives of everyday missionaries.

You were the examples behind this effort.

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## PREFACE

The completion of this project is the direct result of God's grace, leading, and power. God brought many people into my life that made this project possible. Edgar and Jeannie Fritz are at the top of the list, though they would both prefer I not bring attention to them in any way.

Many loving saints at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary equipped me to equip my church for missional living. In addition to his godly teaching, Dr. Hal Pettegrew spoke words of encouragement that motivated me to complete this project rather than abandon the effort. Dr. Chuck Lawless taught me to pray and to prepare for spiritual battle. Dr. Timothy Beougher modeled a zeal for biblical evangelism that I seek to emulate every day. Dr. Jeff Walters modeled the heart and life of a true missionary. Dr. Troy Temple, my project supervisor, provided much needed discernment and direction. I thank God for the impact of the entire staff at Southern, and my fellow students, have made in my life and the lives of those to whom I minister.

The people of Farmdale Baptist Church were the tools God used to bring me from spiritual death to eternal life. I consider it an honor to invest my life as a reproducing disciple at this church. Dr. Douglas Strader and soon-to-be Dr. Will McCartney have pastored, loved, and equipped me to God's greater service. I pray that God chooses to use my life to expand his kingdom by equipping the members of this church to live as every day missionaries, to His glory.

Stephen Louis Weber

Louisville, Kentucky

December 2014



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to lead and equip the church staff and key leaders to model more effective missional lives before the church. The project led participants through specific processes God has used in hundreds of church settings to strengthen his church.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Goals**

Before the specific goals of becoming missional leaders could be accomplished, leaders were encouraged to wholeheartedly embrace two foundational teachings of Jesus. First, leaders committed to making it a priority to seek first the kingdom of God (Matt 6:33). Participants prayerfully searched their hearts and minds to identify their level of commitment to Jesus' radical call to seeking God's kingdom above worldly interests. Secondly, participants were led to consider making any necessary life changes to love God with all their hearts, souls, and minds while loving their neighbors as themselves (Matt 22:37-39). Seeking God's kingdom and loving others were key to unlock the door to missional living.

#### **Goal 1: Mission Clarity**

The specific goal of missional "clarity" was that every participant would make plans to grow as a missional leader. The goal was measured by a Clarity Survey that was administered pre- and post-project (see appendix 1). The goal would be successfully

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<sup>1</sup>Thom S. Rainer and Art Rainer, *Simple Life* (Nashville: B & H and LifeWay Research, 2009), 7.

accomplished when (1) every participant developed a personal mission statement aimed at the goal, (2) every participant developed a personal priority list and specific goals, and (3) every participant developed an individualized plan to move toward the goal.

**A biblical foundation.** The project had four primary goals. The first goal and step in the process of becoming more effective missional leaders was to bring clarity to the mission. Each aspect of developing clarity was consistent with biblical principles. These principles will be shared in chapter 2 in order to articulate the foundational principles that guided every action. The perfect truth of God's Word was the authority for each aspect of the project. I then led the participants to clarify their values in light of Scripture.

A Christian's desire to live passionately on mission for God may flow from a genuine commitment to the total truth of Scripture and to live out its precepts. The message of the Bible focuses on God and his glory. The Bible reveals God's plan of redemption of his fallen creation. If the Christian does not accept the Bible's clear teaching on the nature of Scripture, God, man, salvation, the kingdom, and evangelism and missions he will not likely sacrifice his life to live out its precepts. Biblical infidelity may be predictive in Christians that fail to take up their cross and follow Jesus.

The participants completed a survey to establish their personal convictions as they relate to the biblical topics mentioned above (see appendix 2). Participants that held a high regard for Scripture in general, and a high level of agreement with the biblical teaching regarding salvation and missions specifically, were expected to show higher levels of success in terms of this project. The survey was administered based on excerpts from the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message.

In addition to a solid biblical foundation, missionaries should also possess a burden and passion to be used by God to reach those lacking a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Love for God and love for mankind should motivate Christians to go to the lost and engage them with the Gospel. The degree to which participants love people was

expected to correlate with their level of missional living. Participants were challenged to consider radical changes to simplify their lives to be on-mission for God's kingdom.

**Mission statements.** Participants developed mission statements consistent with the biblical foundation. Participants developed their unique mission statement that aligned with the overall purpose statement of the project and the mission statement of the church. The heart of each mission statement focused on the participants growing as every day missionaries in the context of the scattered church.

Participants developed an individualized mission statement that involved becoming a more effective missional Christian by making statements similar to those I have made:

I will earnestly seek God's will and direction for my life and this church through Scripture reading and prayer at least 30 to 60 minutes every morning. I commit this time to seeking God before I engage people. This activity will begin immediately.

I will begin my day one hour earlier than in the past. Beginning my day earlier will allow more time for kingdom activity.

I commit to making any possible sacrifice and to do everything in my power to develop a plan and carry it out to move toward being a more missional Christian. My trust in God's provision will allow me to reduce the amount of time spent in employment-related activities to 40 hours per week. I will also limit television viewing to 2 hours or less per week. These commitments begin immediately.

I will actively be aware of daily opportunities that God has prepared for me to bless others and engage the lost in open discussions about faith/spirituality. In the power of the Holy Spirit, I will intentionally engage those people in love to bless them and advance God's kingdom. I will seek a minimum of three such opportunities each week. I will record the key elements of each encounter to document my growth as a missionary and to prepare for future engagement with this person(s). This commitment and activity begins immediately.

**Priorities and specific goals.** Many Christians have never prayerfully considered their specific priorities in life. I attempted to lead the participants to develop godly priorities consistent with their mission statements. These priorities helped clarify the most important goals and activities in their lives. The process of clarity demanded that priorities be developed, articulated, and pursued to accomplish the mission of the project.

Participants completed a simple two-part exercise to help facilitate their priority development. The first stage recorded the reality of their current use of time, effort, and resources. Participants were asked to carefully document their activity over several days that represented their typical day. This log encompassed approximately three days per week for two weeks. I offered to analyze the results from the log with the participants to gain an understanding of their existing activities and priorities.

The second part of the exercise encouraged participants to list their true and desired priorities even if their current schedules did not reflect them. This project focused on equipping participants that sought to prioritize missional activity in their lives. This priority development exercise combined the existing reality of their lives with their newly identified missional priority to develop and articulate a God-honoring list of priorities.

I led participants to set specific and measurable godly goals that align with biblical principles, their values, their mission statement, and their priorities. Personal inventories were part of the goal development process. I asked participants to list any existing goals previously recorded. Participants and I considered their goals in relation to their new goals to be developed in this project. I expected that few, if any, participants have previously documented goals that were meaningfully directing their current activities. Human nature mitigates against effectively accomplishing meaningful goals without the goals being clearly defined, documented, and intentionally pursued. This exercise prepared participants to develop godly goals to become more effective missional leaders.

Goals were vitally important in the participant's growth toward kingdom-focused life changes. They provided direction and served as an evaluation tool to assess their progress. Participants regularly reviewed and considered their goals as working targets that would directly impact their daily activities. Goals were in the context of time and included immediate, short-range, and long range.

**Plans to move toward the goal.** I led participants to develop individual plans for their lives as they sought to grow in Christlikeness as everyday missionaries. These plans served as blueprints to guide participants in their everyday lives. Understanding and implementing the actions that God helped them set was critical. Participants clearly defined a path stating where they believed God intended they go.

It is impossible to plan God's sovereign activity on a calendar or to-do list. There is no way to organize the movement of the Holy Spirit into a neat set of plans. That being true, God does choose to use his followers that actively plan and prepare to be usable. This aspect of the project set the course for each participant to become a more capable tool in his hands. It is true that failing to plan is planning to fail. This project aimed to succeed by leading and equipping participants to plan for success.

Each goal of this project was measured by administering a detailed survey of the participants' pre- and post-project activities as they specifically related to each process. A written survey was administered with four to eight questions before and after the project. These questions were very specific in terms of each individual process. These surveys were designed to produce an ideal tool that participants may use in the future to continue growing as a missional Christian. The first survey was titled the Clarity Survey.

I met with each participant individually before and after the project to discuss their answers to the surveys. The pre-project survey conversation helped me tailor the project somewhat to each individual participant. The post-project conversation helped me evaluate their growth as well as areas in the project that need to be adjusted before church wide implementation. I also led a focus-group discussion of the participants as a group to compare and contrast their input. The group dynamics was expected to produce insights that did not surface in the surveys and individual meetings.

## **Goal 2: Movement to Become Missional Leaders**

The specific goal of missional “movement” was that every participant would take steps to create movement toward the goal by reducing barriers. The goal was measured by a Movement Survey that was administered pre- and post-project (see appendix 3). The goal was successfully accomplished when (1) every participant identified key barriers that hindered them from reaching the goal, (2) every participant identified and implemented actions steps that moved them toward the goal, and (3) every participant demonstrated growth in the depth and breadth of their evangelistic prayer life.

**Reducing barriers.** The second goal and phase of the process was to create movement toward achieving the goal of becoming more effective missional leaders, while reducing any barriers. I led participants to identify the key barriers in their lives that may have blocked their pathway to more missional living. It was vital to identify barriers in order to overcome them. It was intended that participants would experience a transformation as they overcame barriers and moved through each stage of the project. Regardless of the degree of each participant’s current missional engagement, growth was the goal. I employed the Movement Survey, personal meetings, and focus group comments to measure if the goal of moving toward becoming a more missional leader was achieved.

**Action steps.** I led participants to develop action steps designed to lead to progress toward their goals of more effective missional living. Participants intentionality moved toward growth during each phase of the process. Movement from one phase to the next also required intentional effort. I encouraged participants to develop self discipline. The process of movement must begin and continue with prayer. Effective missional living requires prayer for God’s direction and power. Nothing creates

movement and removes barriers like prayer.<sup>2</sup> Supernatural guidance and empowerment are prerequisites for effective missional living. The absolute necessity of prayer cannot be overstated. Evangelistic prayer, in particular, is vital for missional success.

This project sought to encourage and foster a deeper prayer life for every participant. Prayer was offered for both non-Christians and for the Christians who reach out to the lost. Too often, Christians fail to understand the importance of prayer for living on mission. I led participants to engage God for the non-Christians and then follow their prayers with actions that go to them in love with the gospel.

Accountability was important to develop the habits involved with becoming a more missional leader. Mutual accountability served to solidify the participants new habits. I provided accountability for each participant, who also chose a second person to act as an accountability partner. The senior pastor and the associate pastor served as my accountability partners.

### **Goal 3: Alignment of Life Behavior**

The specific goal of missional “alignment” is that every participant’s activities and priorities match their personalities and move them toward the goal. The goal was measured by an Alignment Survey that was administered pre- and post-project (see appendix 4). The goal was successfully accomplished when (1) every participant aligned their mission statement and goals to match their personality, demeanor, gifts, background, and abilities, (2) every participant identified the specific items and issues that may take them off course, and (3) every participant reported they have put on the full armor of God and committed to live in that armor daily.

**Matching and aligning plans with each individual.** This project was designed with the realization that each participant is unique. Participants matched their

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<sup>2</sup>Rainer and Rainer, *Simple Life*, 274.

activities to their individual set of spiritual gifts, talents, abilities, and life experiences. In order to affect long-term and significant behavioral changes, participants must align the activities with their uniqueness. I employed the Alignment Survey as the primary tool to measure if the goal of aligning participant's activities with more effective missional living was achieved.

**Avoiding getting off course.** Since Christians still possess a sinful nature and live in a fallen world, clarity and plans to live on mission will get off course. The third goal and phase of the process in becoming more effective missional leaders was to identify and eliminate bad habits of the participants that interfered with their growth. I led participants to identify practical issues that may take them off their course toward missional living.

I led participants to structure their lives so they stay on course to missional living. Participants developed plans to reduce or eliminate aspects of their lives that do not align with missional living. Any activity that steers participants away from their goal to live on mission was to be identified and then minimized. This aspect of alignment required genuine self-assessment.

**Spiritual warfare.** Perhaps the greatest problem that interferes with any church seeking to equip every day missionaries is spiritual warfare. Evangelism, by nature, is spiritual warfare. The enemy prowls around like a lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet 5:8). While Jesus was clear: "I will build My church, and the forces of Hades will not overpower it" (Matt 16:18), the enemy still exerts tremendous influence that must be resisted.

Equipping missionaries must first include their awareness of the reality of the spiritual battles that occurs every day. Awareness of the battle is only the first step; preparation for battle is also paramount. Missionaries must proactively prepare for battle and not merely react after the enemy has prevailed. God has provided his full armor to

his people to protect them in warfare (Eph 6:10-20). Every believer who seeks to advance the kingdom must be aware of the battle and properly prepare with God's armor.

Too many Christians do not live with a strong and urgent sense of the reality of spiritual warfare. These Christians do not threaten the enemy and are powerless to advance the kingdom. This project threatened the enemy and required each participant to understand and employ the spiritual weapons provided by God (2 Cor 10:4). Prayer and preparation for spiritual warfare equipped participants to be used mightily for God to shine His light into a dark world. Chuck Lawless writes, "No one would think of putting an untrained civilian at the controls of a state-of-the-art warplane, but we think nothing of sending troops into spiritual battle without a proper understanding of God's arsenal to live victoriously."<sup>3</sup>

I led participants to consider and document key spiritual issues in their lives, including the reality of spiritual warfare. This project holds such great potential for God to transform the lives of the participants—and the entire church—the level of spiritual attack intensified. Participants were encouraged to call on the Holy Spirit and put on the full armor of God. We sought to stand against and overcome the enemy through prayer, Scripture reading, and other spiritual disciplines.

#### **Goal 4: Focus on the Best**

The specific goal of missional "focus" is that every participant would eliminate less important activities in favor of more missional ones. The goal was measured by a Focus Survey that was administered pre- and post-project (see appendix 5). The goal was successfully accomplished when (1) every participant made noticeable changes in the use of their time to become more missional, including reducing busyness, and avoiding the tyranny of the urgent, (2) every participant eliminated or reduced at least one or two non-essential activities, and were to allot that time for a more missional activity, and (3) every

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<sup>3</sup>Chuck Lawless, *Disciplined Warriors* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 105.

participant reported they intended to carry on a personal policy after the project to abandon non-essential activities in order to reach the primary goal God will have them set in the future.

**Changes in using time.** The fourth goal and final phase of the process in becoming more missional Christians was to eliminate less important, yet good activities. Too many good activities can actually hinder becoming the type of missional leader that God desires. This phase of the process proved to be the most difficult for participants to master. Focus was absolutely vital to the success of each of the processes up to this point. Without focus, living an effective missional life is difficult if not impossible to do well.

Building on the significant self-examination and skill development to this point in the project, I led participants to strategically develop their time management skills. In God's sovereignty, he has provided each Christian the time to accomplish his goals. I led participants to make the most of their time by employing proven principles. Participants were encouraged to take the actions necessary to move toward missional activities that are most important, yet not urgent.

**Elimination of non-essential activities.** Participants were asked to strive to eliminate good activities to make room for the best activities to help them achieve God's best goals for their lives. I led participants to simplify their lives by being willing to document and let go of good activities in favor of God's best activities. Although challenging, participants focused on God's higher purposes in their lives. A simpler life helped participants focus on God's highest calling to live as an everyday missionary. A simple measure included the number of good activities eliminated or reduced to allow time for God's best activities.

**Long-term focus on missions.** A key goal of the project was to produce more effective missional leaders over the long-term. Short-term changes are of limited value to

the church. Sustainable life changes through developing new life-long habits was the goal. The next phase of this project will follow this initial project that equips the leaders for more effective missional living. The ultimate goal is to equip every member of the church to live more effective missional lives. This goal will be continual and hopefully part and parcel with membership at this church throughout its lifespan.

The comparison of the pre- and post-project Focus Survey helped measure the degree of success for each participant's growth in their ability to focus on becoming a missional leader. Individual meetings and the focus group conversation also helped measure success in this specific process of the project. The focus on missional living is one that is biblical and brings glory to God. A Post-Project Survey was administered as an overall evaluation of the project itself, and the growth of the participants.

### **Ministry Context**

Farmdale Baptist Church is a doctrinally conservative Southern Baptist church in central Louisville, Kentucky. The church was founded in 1930 and moved to its present location in 1973. The average attendance of the Sunday morning worship over the last year is 135 while Sunday school attendance is 100. A Sunday evening discipleship program averages 20 participants each week. Historically, the average worship attendance and Sunday school attendance peaked at approximately 450 in 1975. Seniors over the age of 60 currently compromise about 70 percent of the typical attendees to the Sunday worship service and Bible study.

The church is located one quarter mile from the Louisville International Airport. In the late 1980s, plans were announced for a major airport expansion project. Many homes were lost in the neighborhoods surrounding the church. The *Courier Journal* newspaper reported that as of 1993 that 1,600 homes within three miles of the church were lost to a mandatory relocation program. Since that time, an additional one thousand homes

have also been lost in a voluntary relocation program, for a total loss of 2,600 homes.<sup>4</sup>

The loss of homes in the nearby community amount to approximately 7.6 percent of the 34,000 households within a three mile radius of the church.<sup>5</sup> Church records show attendance has declined approximately 62 percent over the same time period. While the airport expansion displaced many families that attended Farmdale, it cannot explain the majority of the losses in church attendance. Several church members erroneously attribute the airport expansion as the key reason for the decline of the church.

The plateaued growth pattern over the last five years is seen by many long-term members as a success. Church members have reported they felt exhausted and discouraged through the years under the leadership of the two previous pastors. The number of people added to the church over the last five years has averaged only 3 baptisms and 3 transfers of membership by letter per year. Biological growth accounts for approximately half of the baptisms in recent years. The church is struggling to halt the decline and stabilize attendance. These patterns expose a weakness in that the church is not effectively reaching the lost. The rate of conversions compared to transfer growth is almost identical.

I serve as the minister of education and outreach on a volunteer basis and have served in this position for seven years. I began attending the church in 1973 for more than two years spanning the church's physical relocation period. While I did not become a Christian at that time, I was introduced to Jesus and the love of God through the people of Farmdale. My spiritual journey began because many mission-minded people at Farmdale recognized and were faithful to their call to reach the lost. Members intentionally reached out and loved lost young people enough to serve as bus drivers,

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<sup>4</sup>Charlie White, "Airport Nears End of Voluntary Relocation Program," *Courier Journal*, February 11, 2010, sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>North American Mission Board Center for Missional Research, "Know Your Community: 3-Mile Radius of Farmdale Baptist Church, Louisville, KY" (Alpharetta, GA: North American Mission Board, 2011), 12.

leaders of the Royal Ambassador program, teachers, and coaches of athletic programs. After a twenty-year absence, I returned to Farmdale and God gloriously saved me about one year later.

The church campus is spacious and includes an inviting sanctuary, ample classroom space, plenty of parking, a gymnasium, and a soccer field. The location is in a residential area of central Louisville near the intersection of two major interstates, I-65 and I-265. Recent renovations to the facilities include a complete remodeling of the sanctuary, a new welcome center, sound system, audio-visual projection system, signage, completely remodeled kitchen, new restrooms, and carpeting and paint in all major hallways.

There are multiple contextual factors at work in the church that are generally negative. Attendance has dropped over the last 35 years by 75 percent. Financially, the church struggles to make its budget. People are not being effectively reached in proportion to the size of the church. Efforts to disciple members seem to show little fruit. A general sense of spiritual malaise is just below the surface for many members. The church membership seems to suffer from a negative inward focus.

Despite several negative contextual factors, the church shows promising signs of life in several key areas. The church staff and many lay-leaders have a heart for missions. The church has sent teams on short-term international mission trips in the last two years. The generosity of the membership in prayerful and financial support has been significant for a church this size. A third such mission trip is planned for the coming year.

The church has conducted several major community-focused mission projects in the last several years. Several homes in the community, one of a member's home and two of nonmembers, have received major remodeling and renovation performed and funded by church members. Annual mission-focused major events are also conducted by the church. Vacation Bible School, Easter, and Christmas events are conducted with the

purpose of ministering to the immediate community. These three events are intentionally community-focused and have made significant inroads and endeared the church to the community.

Although the church staff and many lay people conduct mission-focused initiatives such as international, community, and outreach events; a daily sense of being “on-mission” is lacking. Mission-focused events, as good intentioned as they are, cannot reach the community as effectively as infiltrating the community every day. This project will build on the staff and lay leaders’ hearts for missions, while equipping them for everyday missional living. The leaders should experience significant personal growth through participation in this project, which should translate to more effective leadership in this vital area.

The project intends to equip the ministerial staff and deacon body of the church. The staff includes the pastor, associate pastor, minister of education and outreach (myself), minister of music, children’s minister, activities director, and financial secretary (former youth and children’s minister). The deacon body is a ministering group of men that will influence church members to also fulfill their mission to make disciples.

### **Rationale**

The church is experiencing significant numeric decline that threatens its long-term existence. It has lost over 75 percent of its membership. The church is dying and if something supernatural does not occur soon, it may be forced to close. The prevailing view of the majority of the church members seems to be inwardly focused. A siege mentality of sheer survival exists with many members.

For the most part, the community surrounding the church is not impacted with the gospel. While the church enjoys very good relations with most of the community, there is a greater need for the church to go out to those outside its campus. A solid foundation exists between the church and community, but actual inroads are very limited. The greatest need for members of the community is for their salvation, and that need is

not being met by the church.

As a church leader, I have failed to equip the church to be proactively “on-mission” for the kingdom. For all its good people and actions, the church lacks clarity in its mission. There appears to be no specific mission or plan to achieve the churches’ mission. As leaders, we desire great things for this church. Unfortunately, desire without specificity typically leads nowhere.<sup>6</sup> Much of the church’s decline can be directly attributed to a lack of specific leadership and little strategic planning. The people of the church may not be living out a missionary lifestyle because they have yet to see their leaders live that way. Leaders should become missionary examples to the people.<sup>7</sup> The very existence of this church in the next few years will likely depend on if she finds her mission and how to accomplish that mission.

Thankfully, a remnant of faithful staff and church members still remains. A core group exists who are mission-minded and kingdom-focused. This church absolutely must have specific and proactive leadership to become equipped to be effectively on mission. This project appears to be God’s plan to lead this church to not only survive, but to make a significant and eternal impact on the community and the world.

Church leaders must first live as missionaries to lead others to live on mission most effectively. Leading the church to live missional lives begins when God’s will is understood and followed by the leaders of the church. God’s will should have a profound impact on the leader’s daily lives. When leaders are passionately living on mission and are available to be used by God, they are then prepared to lead members to follow their examples. After completion of the project, the participants will become more effective role models and equippers of the church to emulate their processes. These

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<sup>6</sup>Rainer and Rainer, *Simple Life*, 256.

<sup>7</sup>Ed Stetzer and Thom S. Rainer, *Transformational Church* (Nashville: B & H, 2010), 222.

processes can be repeated in the future to accomplish the current vision as God leads the church.

### **Definitions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

*Inward-focus.* Inward-focus typically refers to churches that are not making disciples and not reaching the community with the gospel:

They may continue to exist more as a religious social club than a true New Testament church. Its members and constituents are willing to fund the congregation since it meets their perceived needs and desires. Most of the ministries and programs are focused on meeting the desires and needs of the members. There is little to no focus on evangelism, reaching out to the community, and getting the gospel to the nations.<sup>8</sup>

*Missional.* The word missional is based on the term ‘Missio Dei,’ which means, ‘sending of God.’ To be missional is to “live sent,” and being missional means to “live on mission for God.” God is a God who is on mission. He is a God who sends; He is a sender by nature. The sending God sent His Son into the world to reconcile the world to Himself.<sup>9</sup>

A limitation for the project included the inability to judge the heart of the people impacted by the participants. Every effort was made to observe and quantify outwardly measurable evidence as to the effectiveness of the participant’s actions.

The fifteen-week duration of the project limited reporting of the results. Participants were encouraged to develop a reproducible process to model mission-focused lives. The intent was that participants develop the tools to take the steps necessary to move toward a life-long process for reaching the lost that will far outlast the short duration of the project.

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<sup>8</sup>Thom Rainer, “Established Churches and Inward Drift,” November 26, 2012, accessed July 4, 2013, [http://thomrainer.com/2012/11/26/established\\_churches\\_and\\_inward\\_drift/](http://thomrainer.com/2012/11/26/established_churches_and_inward_drift/).

<sup>9</sup>Ed Stetzer, “Musings on the Missional Manifesto, Part 4: The Mission,” accessed July 1, 2013, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2011/may/musings-on-missional-manifesto-part-4-mission.html>.

A delimitation of the project was to involve only staff leaders and deacons. The rationale for this delimitation is that these groups are called in a special way to live on mission before the church. Their roles as servant-leaders in the church also make them ideal participants. This group also provided invaluable feedback before the project is instituted churchwide.

## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR EQUIPPING MISSIONAL CHRISTIANS

The Bible commands Christians to become equipped to function as every day missionaries. The process of equipping for missions is multi-faceted and dedicated to the glory of God. The biblical command to love God completely provides the ultimate foundation for missions. A Christian's love for God should flow naturally to a love for their neighbor. Jesus Christ commands his followers to make disciples of all nations. Evangelistic prayer is also commanded by Jesus and vital to advance his kingdom. Paul models a missionary mentality as he avoids adding unnecessary offense to the gospel message. The Bible likewise commands missional Christians to prepare for spiritual battle by putting on the full armor of God. The Bible provides a solid foundation from which Christian leaders are commanded to equip and develop missional Christians.

#### **Scripture's Command to Love**

The Bible is clear that love for God and love for others should radically change the lives of those seeking to be more effective missional Christians. Love is the key to properly relating to God and to being on mission with him. The mission of the church will not be accomplished without love. The substance of the entire Old Testament and New Testament might best be summarized in one word, and that word is "love."

#### **Matthew 22:34-40**

In Matthew 22, Jesus is tested by a Pharisee to answer what may have appeared to be an impossible question regarding which commandment is the greatest (v. 36). Jesus' answer to the question reveals the key element in successful missional living, not

to mention the meaning and purpose for life itself. Loving God and loving all people is the ultimate response to God. God's love calls every Christian to be on mission to advance his kingdom through love.

The ten commandments provide God's revelation of how his people are to order their lives (Exod 20:1-17). The first four commandments written on the first table commands the ways God's people are to relate to him. Commandments 5 through 10 on the second table concern proper relations to one's fellow man. There are natural reasons to group and qualify commands in this way. The Pharisees and rabbis had identified 613 commandments in their law and divided them into the light and weighty.<sup>1</sup> Jesus' answer to their question forces the Pharisees to radically re-examine the significance of love over legalistic obedience; it should force modern Christians to do the same.

Jesus quotes from the Shema (Deut 6:5) and answers the question: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (v. 37). The extent of the call to love God is extraordinary. God calls for complete and absolute love from his followers. The call to love him with all one's heart, soul, and mind is a call on the entirety of one's being. To be an effective missional leader, one must wholeheartedly pursue him with abandon. The command to love God should pervade Christians' thoughts and actions. God's claim is on the entire person to the extent one responds by loving him with every aspect of their life.

Jesus told the Pharisees that loving God was the greatest and most important commandment (v. 38). It is entirely reasonable that absolute love of God be the greatest command. He is God and Christians are merely his children. Charles Haddon Spurgeon writes, "As our Creator, Preserver, Provider, and Judge, he commands us to yield to him all our heart's affections; to love him first, best, heartiest; out of all comparison to the

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<sup>1</sup>J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Paternoster, 2005), 910.

love we have to any fellow-creature, or to ourselves.”<sup>2</sup>

In teaching that love was the ultimate command, Jesus identified the greatest motivation to advancing his kingdom. Love should empower and propel Christians to greater missional living. J. C. Ryle writes,

Love is the grand secret of true obedience to God. When we feel towards him as children feel towards a dear father, we shall delight to do his will . . . we shall take pleasure in trying to keep his laws, and mourn when we transgress them. No one works so well as those who work for love: the fear of punishment or the desire of reward are principles of far less power. But how can we obtain love for God...and love towards our neighbor? This is no natural feeling. . . . We cannot have love of God and man without faith in Christ, and without regeneration. The way to spread true love in the world is to teach the atonement of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

Jesus turns the tables on the Pharisees who would have been very familiar with his previous words based on the Shema. He quotes from Leviticus 19:18 and adds a second great command, to “Love your neighbor as yourself” (v. 39). Loving God in the abstract is much easier than practically loving one’s neighbor as one’s self. Effective missional Christians understand that “Christ is not satisfied with propounding an abstract proposition; he shows how this great precept is to be made practical, how one command involves and leads to the other.”<sup>4</sup>

Jesus concludes his answer to the Pharisees in verse 40 where he makes yet another astonishing claim: “All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.” Jesus reveals that the entire Old Testament and New Testament hangs on loving God completely and loving others as oneself. In essence, the Bible must be viewed through the lens of love. To view the Bible properly, hermeneutics must be

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<sup>2</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *The Gospel of the Kingdom: A Commentary on the Book of Matthew* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1893), 202.

<sup>3</sup>J. C. Ryle, *Matthew*, Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1993), 211.

<sup>4</sup>H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Matthew*, The Pulpit Commentary, vol. 2 (London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1909), 365.

pervaded by love for God and love for all mankind. The entire Bible, and specifically the Gospels, hang suspended on these two commands. The Bible would lose its true meaning, significance, and purpose without love.<sup>5</sup>

The Bible is first and foremost a divine book that focuses on God, his glory, and his nature as he redeems his chosen people. God is the originator of love and commands that his people love him and their neighbors as themselves. God's mission begins and ends in love. The fact that "God is love" (1 John 4:8) in no way detracts from his holiness, glory, perfection nor his character as Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, and the one who will consummate all creation.

God's love is on display in every book and chapter in the Bible. The Old Testament declares that God loves his creation and creatures, he calls man to love him, and calls all mankind to love one another. The call to love God has a strong Old Testament pedigree; it occurs no fewer than ten times in Deuteronomy alone.<sup>6</sup> The New Testament makes God's love unmistakably and most explicitly apparent in his Son. The greatest living example of God's love came in the person of Jesus Christ: "For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). This love did not originate in man, but in God who first loved us" (Rom 5:8).

Jesus gives his followers a new command, to love one another (John 13:34). Loving one another is not optional, it is a direct command from God himself. All people are to recognize Jesus' disciples by their love for one another (v. 35). Visible expressions of love serve to build God's kingdom. The apostle Paul presents love as the primary duty of the Christian: "The one who loves another has fulfilled the law" (Rom 13:8). All the commands are summed up in "love your neighbor as yourself" (v. 9). To fulfill the

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<sup>5</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), 880.

<sup>6</sup>Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 912.

ultimate law and commands of God requires love.

The New Testament makes it clear that love must not be limited to a select group of people. God's love is to be shared universally with all people. Luke records an encounter with Jesus and an expert in the law that asked, "Who is my neighbor" (Luke 10:29). This question has an enormous impact on the life of the modern day missionary. Jesus' parable of a good Samaritan left no doubt that God's love is intended to be shown to every person (vv. 30-37). The great and small are to experience God's love. Jesus taught that "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me" (Matt 25:40).

Lovable people are not difficult to love when contrasted with one's enemies. God commands universal love be expressed to every person, including enemies. Jesus expanded his hearers concept of love when he commanded, "I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt 5:44). Jesus clearly implies that all believers are to engage and greet, not only brothers, but those who are not yet their brothers. The application for Jesus' words are clear to understand, but often difficult to follow. John Calvin wrote that love of God, like love of neighbor, is not firstly an attitude or affection, but a way of life, "the free service of our wills."<sup>7</sup> This is why, unlike an emotion, it can be commanded.<sup>8</sup>

### **First Corinthians 13:1-13**

An entire chapter in the New Testament drives home the primacy of love. Paul's teaching regarding the significance of love in chapter 13 is in direct relation to his treatise on spiritual gifts in chapters 12 and 14. He encourages the Corinthians to seek love as a corrective to potential self-serving interests for the more visible and outward

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<sup>7</sup>D. C. Allison, *The Lectionary Commentary: Theological Exegesis for Sunday's Texts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 3:135.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

spiritual gifts. While Paul positions his teaching on love in relation to spiritual gifts, his admonition to love still applies to every aspect of Christians lives today.

It is a biblical fact that a life characterized by love is superior to any other characteristic. First Corinthians 13 is a pinnacle passage to once and for all settle any question regarding the priority God places on love. All human actions are meaningless without love. No amount of good works will be acceptable to God without love. Biblical love is others-focused. Faith and hope are admirable characteristics, but the greatest is love (v. 13). The effective Christian missionary must personify love for God and love for others.

### **First John**

John, the disciple Jesus *loved*, writes often about God's love toward man, man's love toward God, and man's love toward others. First John 4:8 and 4:16 simply declare, "God is love." John also addresses the sins of those who fail to love: "Whoever does not do what is right is not of God, especially the one who does not love his brother" (1 John 3:10). John declares, "The one who does not love does not know God" (1 John 4:8). The Bible reveals a loving God that commands his people to love him and love the world. God left absolutely no doubt in his Word that effective missional Christians are to love God whole-heartedly and love their fellow man as themselves. The most loving thing any Christian can do for another person is to share with them the love of God.

### **Scripture's Command to Be on Mission**

The God of the Bible is a God on mission for his glory. The Bible reveals that God continually sends representatives to his chosen people seeking their redemption. The theme of sending is found throughout the pages of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. The culmination of God's mission came to earth in the form of the God-man, Jesus Christ. Matthew records the final words of his Gospel with what is known as the Great Commission. Leon Morris writes, "No part of the Bible, with the possible

exception of the letter to the Romans, has done more to give Christians the vision of a world-wide church.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Matthew 28:16-20**

Jesus begins his commission by proclaiming his limitless authority not only to make the command, but to bring it to fruition. Jesus makes clear allusions to the authority of the heavenly Son of Man figure of Daniel 7:13-14.<sup>10</sup> Jesus leaves no doubt that he possesses all authority and power to enable his disciples to carry out his commission. Jesus’ sinless life, substitutionary death and atonement, and his resurrection validated his authority. Jesus possessed the authority to lay down his life and to pick it up again (John 10:18). As Jesus was sent by the Father to his lost sheep, he sends his disciples under his authority to the world (John 20:21). In this commission, Jesus’ authority ensures the ultimate success of the mission.

Jesus’ commission takes the form of one central command and three actions to accomplish the mission. Making disciples is the main command of Christ’s commission (v. 19). Jesus’ main focus is on the task of all believers to duplicate themselves wherever they may be.<sup>11</sup> Jesus commissions Christians to reproduce disciple-makers with the ultimate goal of multiplication. The thrust of the Gospels can be seen in the responsibility of every Christian to make disciples. Specifically, the heart of the disciple’s mission is the reproduction in others of what Jesus has produced in their lives: faith, obedience, growth, authority, compassion, love, and a bold, truthful message as his witnesses.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>L. Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1992), 745.

<sup>10</sup>C. Bloomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 430.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 431.

<sup>12</sup>S. K. Weber, *Matthew*, Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 1

Disciples are commanded to go to the world as Christ's ambassadors. The word translated as "go" is best rendered as "when you have gone," and is the first of three means to fulfill the commission.<sup>13</sup> Going is at the heart of missionary engagement. Going involves movement such as going across the world or across the street. To go means moving beyond an inward focus to an outward focus. This aspect of the commission commands disciples to actively move and to take the initiative to reach out to the world. Disciples are to go every day to all people.

The second means to make disciples involves baptizing new believers. Baptism closely relates to evangelism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 2:41, 8:13, 8:36-39, 9:18, 22:16; Gal 3:26-27; Col 2:12). New Testament converts were typically baptized soon after their confession of repentance and belief. Preaching the Word in both formal and informal contexts bears fruit of regeneration that should be followed by obedience of believer's baptism. The New Testament records that when new believers were baptized they identified with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Biblical baptism was by immersion and followed a profession of faith in Jesus. Baptism identifies the new believer with the visible local church. Jesus highlighted baptism's importance and became an example when he instructed John the Baptizer to baptize him (Matt 3:15).

Jesus' commission is to all nations (v. 19). The word Jesus used for "nations" is *ethnos* and signifies people groups. In a significant departure from his earlier instructions to his disciples to go only to the Jewish people, Jesus makes it explicit that his disciples are to go to all nations.<sup>14</sup> The New Testament makes it clear that Jesus' commission is universal in scope. Disciples are to go to all nations, to both Jews and Gentiles. Selectively excluding people groups for the gospel is a clear violation of this

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(Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 483.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 485.

<sup>14</sup>Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1265.

direct command by Jesus himself.

The church often follows Jesus' example from this passage to baptize new converts to Christianity in the Trinitarian name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (v. 19). Matthew is specific to record the name of God in the singular. No other passage in the Bible more clearly reflects the triune nature of the godhead. At Jesus' baptism the Father speaks of his pleasure in the Son as John sees the Holy Spirit descend like a dove onto Jesus (Matt 3:16).

Teaching plays an important role in successfully carrying out the Great Commission. Evangelism should be followed immediately by discipleship. Jesus makes it clear that new believers are to receive sound teaching in order to grow toward their responsibility in carrying out the on-going commission. To neglect to teach and disciple those who are baptized fails to fulfill Jesus' command. Teaching in Jesus' time meant far more than dispensing knowledge. Teaching is to involve a whole-life commitment to teaching, leading, guiding, and mentoring new believers. Everyday life provides some of the most meaningful teaching opportunities for both new and more mature followers of Christ. God's Word is to be the ultimate source and foundation for effective teaching.

The Great Commission demands obedience on the part of both those sent, as well as to their hearers. The obedience Jesus expects is that of the entire person by observing everything he has commanded (v. 20). Jesus made it clear that "if you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15). Observing God's decrees shows evidence of genuine faith and dependence on God. Paul revealed that knowledge alone may lead to pride, but love builds up (1 Cor 8:1). True devotion produces obedience. Jesus ends his commission with the glorious promise that as he sends his followers into the world, he will be with them continually.

Acts 1:8 records Jesus' words to his disciples that they would receive the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out his commission. Disciples today must rely completely on the Holy Spirit's empowerment to advance the kingdom. The worldwide

scope of the mission is confirmed in that they were to be his “witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” The book of Acts provides conclusive evidence that the early church was a church on mission. It might accurately be said that the mission of the church is missions.

### **Old Testament Commissions**

The Old Testament begins the biblical theme of missions. The basis for the first Great Commission in the Bible is recorded in Genesis 3:15 where God declares to the serpent, referring to Jesus, “He will strike your head, and you will bruise your heel.” Genesis 12:3 has been called the “Great Commission” of the Old Testament: “All the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you [Abraham].”<sup>15</sup> Galatians 3:16 recounts the promise of God in Abraham’s “seed” to bless the world through His coming Messiah.

God sent Prophets throughout the Old Testament to carry out his mission to glorify himself by redeeming his lost people. The book of Psalms displays God’s missionary purpose. The Psalms can be considered as one of the greatest missionary books in the world because more than 175 references of a universalistic note relate to the nations of the world.<sup>16</sup> God called Israel to be a light to the nations and a kingdom of priests (Isa 49:6; Exod 19:6). The case can be made for worldwide missions from the book of Isaiah.<sup>17</sup> While the New Testament explicitly presents Jesus as the Messiah, God’s mission is declared in both the Old and New Testaments. He continues to send his people to be on mission today.

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<sup>15</sup>Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Mission in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 7.

<sup>16</sup>George Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody, 1972), 115.

<sup>17</sup>Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 55. Kaiser makes the argument that this position is substantiated by Bernard Wodecki who identified the Servant of the Lord with the Messiah, whom he believed Isaiah taught, will bring the Law and teaching of Yahweh to the ends of the earth through the witness of his people Israel.

## Scripture's Command to Pray Evangelistically

Scripture reveals that evangelistic prayer is foundational and key to living a successful missional life. The depth and breadth of a Christian's prayer life will have an enormous impact on if, and to what extent, God uses them as his means of salvation. A disciple's prayer life connects them to God in such a way as to become an available instrument of the gospel. The Bible calls on leaders to set the example in prayer before the church (1 Tim 2:1-4, 8). God chose to use followers such as Paul, Timothy, and James as evangelists who lived prayer-filled lives.

The Old and New Testaments reveal that prayer connects believers to God's power who alone brings salvation. Salvation is a sovereign and supernatural work of God alone. Even so, the Bible makes it clear that followers of Christ are to cry out to God earnestly to be useful as he brings about salvation (Col 4:2-4, 2 Thess 3:1-2, 1 Tim 2:1-4). Christians are responsible to plant the seeds of the gospel, but only God can make them grow (1 Cor 3:6-7). Scripture commands prayer for the lost as well as for the believers that seek their salvation. Spurgeon preached that the soul winner must be a master at the art of prayer and that souls cannot be brought to God if one does not go to God himself.<sup>18</sup>

### Luke 10:2

Missional Christians are to pray to God for a bountiful harvest. The Evangelist Luke records Jesus' words to his disciples in Luke 10:2: "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest." Matthew 9:37-38 records a parallel passage to Luke 10:2. This passage has been called "The Kingdom's First Mission" because Jesus has been training his harvesters from the beginning of his ministry to go out on their own.<sup>19</sup> This passage has

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<sup>18</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1948), 10.

<sup>19</sup>L. Lawson, *Matthew: Unlocking the Scriptures for You* (Cincinnati:

also been called “The Sermon on Mission: To the Jew First and Then Also the Greek.”<sup>20</sup> The mission is to spread the gospel to the world, and the means involve the prayers and actions of God’s people.

The world’s need for salvation is enormous. Missional leaders must ask God to give them the compassion to make the world’s need for salvation very real in their lives. Jesus tells his disciples that the harvest is plentiful and significant. Believers should be encouraged that God has prepared many for salvation. Disciples are not responsible for the salvation of the lost, but to pray first to God on their behalf, and to then be willing to go to them. Interest in spirituality across America today may be evidence that he is preparing many hearts to receive the gospel. At a minimum, many Americans consider themselves as spiritual and are open to discussions about spiritual issues. Missional leaders must be keenly aware of the primacy of evangelistic prayer as the church goes out to the lost.

Jesus informs his followers that the workers for the kingdom are few. Sadly, the same can be said of the majority of the members in North American churches today. Disciples should understand that God calls every believer to be on mission and that only God will bring the harvest. Perhaps workers need a better understanding that God is sovereign in salvation, but does call all believers to pray evangelistically. There is a great need for more everyday missionaries that pray passionately for the lost.

The fact that God uses workers as a means of salvation should motivate believers to action. It is logical that since God calls and sends workers as instruments in his hands that their actions have some type of an impact on the kingdom. Missionaries today can find encouragement and motivation in the idea that God, the primal cause, uses

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Standard, 1986), 134.

<sup>20</sup>Bloomberg, *Matthew*, 167.

believers and their prayers, the secondary causes, and does not discard them.<sup>21</sup>

Jesus' term interpreted as pray in verse 38 is also translated by various English translations as ask, earnestly crying out, and begging God in prayer on behalf of the lost. Jesus' reference to "the Lord of the harvest" clearly indicates God's sovereignty over salvation. Any missionary that works only in their power is destined to failure, if not also causing great harm to the kingdom. The field, the crop, and the harvest all belong to God. It is a disciple's tremendous honor and joy to be invited to join God as he glorifies himself through expanding the kingdom.

Disciples are to pray earnestly for God to thrust out mission-minded followers into the world. Prayer is a driving force behind God's activity of sending out workers. The work is beyond the ability of man's power and efforts. Spurgeon wrote, "God only can thrust out laborers. Man-made ministers are useless. Still are the fields encumbered with gentlemen who cannot use the sickle."<sup>22</sup>

Missional leaders must ensure the local church is intentionally and consistently praying for God to call laborers from the congregation. The focus of evangelistic prayer must be for God's glory and not simply to increase attendance at a particular church. In commenting on the application of Luke 10:2 to the modern church, Chuck Lawless warns that, "An inward focus says, 'God give us laborers to grow our church,' but an outward focus says, 'God, send us out to the fields to grow your church.'"<sup>23</sup>

Evangelistic prayer has a profound impact on the success of the Christian church. Robert Stein makes a keen observation that holds great wisdom for modern day missional leaders, "Since the mission involves carrying out God's orders, it is appropriate

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<sup>21</sup>Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel*, 386.

<sup>22</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *The Gospel of the Kingdom: A Commentary on the Book of Matthew* (New York: Baker & Taylor Company, 1893), 66.

<sup>23</sup>Chuck Lawless, "Diagnose Your Church's Health," accessed January 15, 2013, [http://www.chucklawless.com/files/question-3\\_great-commission.pdf](http://www.chucklawless.com/files/question-3_great-commission.pdf).

to pray to him for the tools necessary to accomplish the work.”<sup>24</sup> This teaching of Jesus clearly commands evangelistic prayer to carry out the mission of the church.

#### **Colossians 4:2-4**

Paul, often considered the greatest missionary of all time, was inspired by the Spirit on many occasions to write about the absolute necessity of prayer for many aspects of living a missional life. One example of Paul’s emphasis on evangelistic prayer is contained in his letter to the church at Colosse as recorded in Colossians 4:2-4: “Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the message, to speak the mystery of the Messiah, for which I am in prison, so that I may reveal it as I am required to speak.”

Prayer was to be earnestly and continually offered without growing weary. They were to also stay alert and pray intentionally. It is absolutely imperative that church leaders today be men and women of this type of missional prayer. Church leaders should not expect members to rise above their leaders in terms of prayer. Strict devotion to praying alertly for the lost is clearly commanded in this passage.

Paul also teaches that prayer must be offered for fellow believers to prepare themselves to recognize God-ordained opportunities for evangelism and then to act upon them. Too often, God prepares people and situations for the gospel, but believers fail to pray and act. Paul adds that not only is prayer needed to recognize an evangelistic opportunity, but also for the boldness to share. The vast majority of sincere followers of Christ appear to lack the courage to engage the lost clearly and boldly. Evangelistic prayer can keep believers alert and make them ready tools in God’s hands to be used with boldness.

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<sup>24</sup>R. H. Stein, *Luke*, The New American Commentary, vol. 24 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1991), 305.

### **First Timothy 2:1-8**

Paul highlights the need for evangelistic prayer for all people in 1 Timothy 2:1-8. Paul communicates that prayer is a vital component in God's sovereign work of salvation. This passage emphasizes the urgency of evangelistic prayer. Paul advises his protege, Timothy, to not neglect the first priority of prayer for every lost person. Verse 1 urges prayer for "everyone," while verse 3 states, "This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved."

In a recent sermon entitled "Evangelistic Prayer," John MacArthur preached on 1 Timothy 2:1-8. He said,

Paul is not saying He's just the Savior of those of us who are already saved. No, no, He will have all men. You say, "You mean God wants all men to be saved?" That's right. He wants all men to be saved. The word "saved" means delivered, rescued from divine wrath and judgment. You say, "You mean God really wants all men to be saved?" That is His desire.<sup>25</sup>

Ezekiel 18:32 supports this position and makes it clear that God takes "no pleasure in anyone's death. . . . So repent and live!"

### **Matthew 6:9-13**

The greatest model of prayer is Jesus himself who taught his disciples to pray evangelistically. Matthew 6:10 records Jesus teaching his disciples the model prayer, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Jesus wants his disciples to pray to God to bring about the kingdom on earth. The gospel going into all the world is related to God's ushering in the new kingdom. God blesses the work of the disciples of Christ that live on mission and pray evangelistically. Jesus put such a priority on prayer that he said, "It is written, My house will be called a house of prayer" (Matt 21:13).

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<sup>25</sup>John MacArthur, "Evangelistic Prayer, Part 1," accessed May 15, 2013, <http://www.gty.org/resources/Sermons/54-11>.

## **Acts 2:42**

The early church recognized and acted on the absolute necessity of prayer, and prayed evangelistically. Acts 2:42 records that the church devoted themselves to prayer, and that prayer was followed by many signs and wonders. Prayer was nonnegotiable in the life of their church—and it should be in today’s church as well.<sup>26</sup> The New Testament knows nothing of believers that do not pray and share the good news with others. Acts 1:8 confirms that God’s power, through the Holy Spirit, will come on his people as they witness for him. Prayerful connection with the Holy Spirit empowers disciples for missional living.

## **James 5:13-18**

James, the brother of Jesus, writes about the power of prayer as it relates to potential physical healing, but more importantly, spiritual healing. The passage reveals, “Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray . . . the prayer of faith will save the sick person . . . if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (v. 15). James continues his instruction on prayer by making the emphatic statement that “the urgent request of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect” (v. 16). He concludes the teaching on faithful prayer by citing God’s response to Elijah’s prayers to withhold and to bring the rain (v. 17-18). God is absolutely sovereign, yet somehow, he responds to the prayers of his people, including prayers for the salvation of the lost.

## **Old Testament Evangelistic Prayers**

God commands evangelistic prayers in the Old Testament. Followers of God sin against the Lord if they do not continue to pray for unredeemed people, as recorded in 1 Samuel 12:23. Daniel offered evangelistic prayer in Daniel 9:19 when he prayed for the people: “Lord, hear! Lord, forgive! Lord, listen and act! My God, for Your own

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<sup>26</sup>Chuck Lawless, *Disciplined Warriors, Growing Healthy Churches That Are Equipped For Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 152.

sake, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.” The Psalms contain many evangelistic prayers and pleas to God for the redemption of Israel. Psalm 25:22 records the writer praying: “God, redeem Israel, from all its distresses.”<sup>27</sup>

God historically honors his peoples’ evangelistic prayers to build his church. In a sermon by John Piper, a man named Jeremiah Lanphier was put forward as an example of a missional leader that God used to summon the people to prayer. The church in America was in significant decline, but in July of 1857 the people prayed for God to save the lost: “Within six months, ten thousand business men were gathering daily for prayer in New York, and within two years, a million converts were added to the American churches.”<sup>28</sup>

Evangelistic prayer is the foundation for missional success. The biblical and theological foundation for evangelistic prayer is pervasive. God makes it clear that the expansion of the church is to be built upon the prayers of his people. The supernatural work of God is empowered and released by prayer. The Bible is clear that without a passionate devotion to evangelistic prayer, leading the church to successful missional living is impossible.

### **Scripture’s Command for a Missionary Mentality**

The Bible never minimizes the offensiveness of the gospel. God’s message to the world does not pander to public opinion or water down the hard truth of man’s depravity, sin, judgment, and the reality of unending torment and punishment for those who die without Christ. Scripture presents itself unashamedly for what it is, God’s chosen method for revealing the nature of God, man, and salvation. God is unchanging (Heb 13:8) and his message of the only way to be made right with him is the same past,

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<sup>27</sup> MacArthur, “Evangelistic Prayer, Part 1.”

<sup>28</sup> John Piper, “Prayer at Harvest Time: Now!” accessed June 15, 2013, <http://desiringgod.org/resource-library/sermons/prayer-at-harvest-time-now>.

present, and future. God will accomplish what he pleases, and his Word will not return to him empty (Isa 55:11).

Some theologians bristle at the thought of cultural adaptation when preaching the gospel and evangelizing the lost, and with good reason. Friendship with the world is hostility toward God, and whoever wants to be the world's friend becomes God's enemy (Jm 4:4). The gospel is, in many ways, anti-cultural and will always be rejected more often than it is received (Matt 7:13-14). The apostle Paul never advocated changing the *message* of the gospel. There is no foundation for a proper relationship with God other than through Jesus Christ (1 Cor 3:11). Paul warns followers of Christ to not be conformed to this age (Rom 12:2). Scripture provides boundaries to prevent "over-contextualization" of the message.

While the Bible never changes the *message* of how to be rightly related to God, it does advocate a missionary mentality in choosing the *methods* to advance the kingdom. Paul makes an emphatic argument that Christians should not add unnecessary offense to the gospel on indifferent matters. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul presents his philosophy of appropriate cultural adaptation, within scriptural limits, when spreading the gospel to the lost world. Paul is careful to avoid anything that might needlessly arouse his hearers antagonism. As evidenced at Mars Hill (Acts 17:22-31), Paul interacted with people in culturally appropriate ways and began ministering to people at their present station in life. Effective missionaries today must understand that traditional actions and behaviors are not necessarily synonymous with orthopraxy.

### **First Corinthians 9:19-23**

Paul is the cross-cultural missionary par excellence. He makes the necessary cultural adaptations with sensitivity to the cultural context.<sup>29</sup> Paul is willing to give up his

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<sup>29</sup>D. A. Carson et al., eds., *New Bible Commentary*, 21<sup>st</sup> century ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1994), 1:100.

rights and freedoms in order to be a more effective missionary. Paul enjoys the freedom of a life found in Jesus Christ, but refuses to exercise those freedoms if they may hinder the spread of the gospel. Paul makes himself like a slave in order to win more people (v. 19). Paul restricts himself to avoid creating unnecessary barriers for his message. The apostle Peter concurs with Paul regarding missionaries as free slaves with self-imposed limitations: “As God’s slaves, live as free people, but don’t use your freedom as a way to conceal evil” (1 Pet 2:16).

Paul demonstrates accommodation and flexibility in dealing with people in various cultures on indifferent matters. Being a Hebrew of Hebrews (Phil 3:5), Paul is God’s ideal example in relating to the Jews. When Paul was with Jews, he often followed Jewish customs. Paul had Timothy circumcised in part to avoid unnecessary barriers toward the Jews (Acts 16:3). Paul agreed to go through purification rights and paid for others to do so to avoid the misconception that he did not respect the law of God (Acts 21:26).

Paul was not under the law (v. 20), but when with those under the law, he became like one under the law. He did this to win those under the law. To the Gentiles without the law he became as like one without God’s law. He identified with them and adjusted his methods to avoid creating undue barriers to the gospel. Paul makes it clear that he is not under the law, but grace, while adapting his behavior to align with those under the law.

Paul was spiritually mature and given special discernment by God, yet he accommodated himself to those weak in discernment. He related comfortably with the socially vulnerable including those at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale. His guiding principle was consistently to win the lost despite their particular situation in life. With perfect liberty, Paul uses ceremonial regulations when he is among Jews, and with the same perfect liberty he discards all such regulations when he is among Gentiles; he

follows both courses of conduct in order to win as many as possible for the gospel.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps the key principle to Paul's missionary mentality is presented in verse 22 when he proclaims he has "become all things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save some." Calvin and Pringle write, "To become all things is to assume all appearances, as the case may require, or to put on different characters, according to the diversity among individuals."<sup>31</sup> Paul's love for the people sets boundaries to his Christian freedom. Paul is flexible and adapts his approaches to others in light of their diversity. He is willing to forego his own concerns and preferences for the goal to win others to Christ.

Paul was a master missionary and realized it was essential that he became all things to all men. One of the greatest lessons for missionaries to learn is the art of getting alongside people; and the trouble so often is that Christians do not even try.<sup>32</sup> Missionaries must be ready to engage people in terms of what is important to them with culturally appropriate methods. "We can never attain to any kind of evangelism or friendship without speaking the same language and thinking the same thoughts as the other man."<sup>33</sup> Missionaries must be able to get alongside anyone and attempt to understand and engage others. Relationships develop best when matters of indifference are met with accommodation. Too many Christians today mistake secondary and indifferent issues as primary and refuse to be flexible.

Paul's motivation to live with a missionary mentality is rooted in the Gospel

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<sup>30</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1963), 380.

<sup>31</sup>J. Calvin and J. Pringle, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003; Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 10.

<sup>32</sup>W. Barclay, ed., *The Letters to the Corinthians*, The Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1975), 85.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, 90.

and his desire to partake in its benefits (v. 23). His overriding desire is to glorify God through expanding his kingdom. Living a mission-minded lifestyle will be rewarded in this life and the next. While missionaries often forego their freedoms, they may still experience the joy of the gifts and rewards God shares with those living on mission for him.

Paul employed cultural accommodation when he preached to the Jews and Gentiles. When Paul preached to the Jews, he started with the Old Testament patriarchs; but when he preached to the Gentiles at Mars Hill, he began with the God of Creation. Likewise, Jesus related to people where they were in life. Jesus and Paul were flexible and adaptable. It is vital that today's disciples emulate their New Testament missionary mentality.

Naturally, there are scriptural limits to "accommodation." Subjection to Christ should rule the behavior of the missionary. The truth of biblical principles must never be forsaken or compromised. Scripture does not contradict itself by advocating unlawful and self-centered activity. Paul never engages in, or promotes self-indulgence. First Corinthians 9:19-23 has sometimes been misused to justify a variety of ill-conceived and theologically flawed missiological perspectives.<sup>34</sup> Paul never accommodated himself to the point he did something displeasing to God. He refused to accommodate or capitulate on several issues. While Paul had Timothy circumcised as a concession, he later refused to have Titus circumcised because it was demanded as a matter of necessity.<sup>35</sup> Missionaries must constantly be on guard to remain flexible in their *methods* while avoiding the error of changing the *message* by over-contextualization and going beyond the spirit of God's Word.

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<sup>34</sup>John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians* (New York: Christian Literature, 1889), 2:130.

<sup>35</sup>J. P. Lange, *I Corinthians: A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960) 100.

Paul's rebuke of Peter at Antioch serves as a warning and as a corrective to missionaries today (Gal 2:11-21). The warning is that cultural accommodation must be governed by the truth of the gospel. Biblical missionaries live in subjection to Christ, not in hypocrisy before men. Paul always sought to bring glory to God by his actions. Today's missionaries must guard against doing anything which in itself is sinful or contrary to any express command of God.<sup>36</sup> Today's missionaries must examine their motives for their behaviors to ensure God's glory is the prime motivation to their actions.

### **Scripture's Command to Prepare for Spiritual Battle**

Being an effective missional Christian always involves spiritual warfare. The mission of advancing the gospel is ultimately a supernatural work of God. The Bible is clear that Satan battles against God and his followers as they seek to bring the gospel light into a dark world (Rom 1:21; 2 Cor 3:14; Eph 4:8). The Bible is also clear that Christ has defeated the enemy (Col 2:15). Although Christ has conquered the enemy, the battle must be waged for every individual person to see whether he will accept the victory for himself.<sup>37</sup> The effective missionary must understand that the Bible proclaims the reality of spiritual warfare and God's provision for his followers to withstand it and be victorious.

### **Ephesians 6:10-20**

Paul, likely the greatest missionary of all time, wrote clearly to the church at Ephesus regarding spiritual warfare and God's provision of protection in his armor. Paul exhorts the church to be strong in the Lord and to be empowered through their union with him (v. 10). Christians are not powerful enough in themselves to live victorious missional lives. The Lord empowers his followers to overcome the enemy's attacks. Christians

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<sup>36</sup>C. Simeon, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, *Horae Homileticae*, vol. 16 (London: Holdworth and Ball, 1833), 210.

<sup>37</sup>K. L. Boles, *Galatians & Ephesians*, *The College Press NIV Commentary* (Joplin, MO: College, 1993), 460.

must be prepared and equipped in the Lord's strength for battle through their close union with God. Without God's empowerment, spiritual defeat in the battle is assured.

The Christian is responsible to "put on" the full armor of God to allow them to stand up to the devil (v. 11). Too many Christians fail to appropriate God's full armor. God supplies the armor. Putting on the armor is similar to putting off the old self and putting on the new self (Eph 4:22, 24). Believers are engaged in a life and death spiritual war and need all the protection God offers. This passage admonishes and puts the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of each and every Christian to put on God's armor.

The devil uses expert strategies and methods to fight against effective missional living. He corrupts the truth, is a subtle murderer, and the father of lies (John 8:44). The devil's tactics include cunningly deceitful methods and plans: H. Spence-Jones writes, "Our chief enemy does not engage us in open warfare, but deals in wiles and stratagems, which need to be watched against and prepared for with peculiar care."<sup>38</sup> Effective missional Christians must be constantly aware of the skillful deceptiveness of the enemy and prepare for his evil tactics.

Missionaries "wrestle" in close hand-to-hand combat with supernatural spiritual forces (v. 12). Many contemporary Christians seem to be unaware that there is a war in progress, or if they are, they consider it to be fought at a purely human level, and therefore assume earthly resources will be entirely adequate.<sup>39</sup> Nothing could be further from the truth. Spiritual battles are every bit as real as worldly battles and must be fought with spiritual weapons (2 Cor 10:4). Christians that do not battle the enemy may already be defeated and surrendered without putting up a fight.

The Bible presents the key to successful spiritual warfare not as a mystical

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<sup>38</sup>H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Ephesians*, The Pulpit Commentary (London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1909), 258.

<sup>39</sup>P. T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 460.

encounter, but as living out the Christian life everyday by keeping in close union with God. Ephesians 6:10-20 must be read in the light of the whole of Ephesians, as a call to live out the gospel of cosmic reconciliation, not as an appendix for those with a special interest in demons and spiritual warfare.<sup>40</sup> K. S. Wuest writes, “The Christian is to take up and put on all the armor of God as a once-for-all act and keep that armor on during the entire course of his life, not relaxing the discipline necessary for the constant use of such protection.”<sup>41</sup>

Spiritual armor is needed because the missional Christian has a powerful and treacherous enemy: “Be serious! Be alert! Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. Resist him and be firm in the faith” (1 Pet 5:8-9). The enemy spiritually blinds his victims: “In their case, the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Cor 4:4). Christians that fail to prepare and equip themselves before the battle by putting on the full armor of God are guaranteed casualties in spiritual warfare. Thankfully, the Christian that walks daily in the full armor of God is a guaranteed victor.

The specific pieces of armor are presented in verses 14-17. A summary of the armor and the corresponding application to the believer are described by Chuck Lawless:

The belt of truth means to know Jesus, know His Word, and to live the Word. The breastplate of righteousness means to live like Jesus, make right choices, and to resist temptation. The shield of faith means to stand ready in the faith, be at peace with God, be at peace with others, and to share your faith. The helmet of salvation means to understand who you were prior to salvation, appreciate God’s grace, mediate upon God’s love and holiness shown in the cross, and to live in the assurance of Christ’s return. The sword of the Spirit means to read, know, and live the Word of God, and to speak the good news to others.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Carson et al., *New Bible Commentary*, 1:110.

<sup>41</sup>K. S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 120.

<sup>42</sup>Chuck Lawless, *Putting on the Armor* (Nashville: LifeWay, 2012), 126, 127.

The Christian that puts on the belt of truth is able to withstand Satan who is the father of lies (John 8:44). The belt of truth pictures the large leather belt the Roman soldier wore (v. 14). To put on the belt of truth can be understood as accepting the truth of the Bible and choosing to follow it with integrity.<sup>43</sup> Truth and righteousness are associated with the believer's own godly living. Fitting one's feet for battle implies a firm-footing of readiness and preparation (v. 15).

The shield of faith (v. 16) describes that of a heavy infantry; a large oblong shield, four by two and a half feet with wet hides to protect from flaming arrows.<sup>44</sup> To take up the shield of faith can be understood as rejecting temptations to doubt, sin, or quit, while telling the truth and choosing on the basis of the truth to do the right thing.<sup>45</sup> The shield of faith can extinguish the flaming arrows from the enemy. D. A. Carson writes,

The fiery darts Paul has in mind would include anything from direct occult attacks to devilish persecution, but above all the steady rain of temptations to fear, bitterness, anger, and division that could break up the unity of the church. These darts are to be countered with faith.<sup>46</sup>

The final piece of armor is the helmet of salvation (v. 17) to protect the soldier's head, one of his most vital parts. In this verse the author says to accept or receive the helmet of salvation, which is particularly appropriate because salvation is a gift from God.<sup>47</sup> The Christian's helmet is salvation. To know salvation as a reality makes it possible for the Christian to follow God's leading in battle. Anticipating the

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<sup>43</sup>M. Anders, *Galatians-Colossians*, Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 8 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1999), 190.

<sup>44</sup>M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), 3:410.

<sup>45</sup>M. Anders, *Galatians-Colossians*, 191.

<sup>46</sup>Carson et al., *New Bible Commentary*, 1:112.

<sup>47</sup>R. G. Bratcher and E. A. Nida, *A Handbook of Paul's Letter to the Ephesians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 156.

salvation of the lost is an inspiration to move forward in battle.<sup>48</sup> Carson also writes, “To put on the helmet of salvation, in the context of this letter, is to assure our hearts of our union with Christ—that we are already seated with him and so secure in him.”<sup>49</sup>

The effective Christian missionary must be Word-centered. God provides the sword of the Spirit, which is God’s Word (v. 17). Prayer and God’s Word are the only offensive tools against the enemy. God’s Word holds special power for taking the battle to the enemy by speaking truth into the darkness: “For the Word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart” (Heb 4:12). Boles comments, “This sword, the only weapon provided for the Christian warrior, is the ‘proclaimed word’ (*rhema*) of God, the gospel. By using *rhema* instead of *logos*, Paul calls attention to the word of God in proclamation, not just to a written word lying on the shelf.”<sup>50</sup>

The fact that the devil attempted to defeat Jesus by twisting God’s Word points to its tremendous power. Jesus defended his rightful place as Lord by properly using Scripture three times in this exchange. Jesus further elevated God’s Word when he answered the devil, “It is written, man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God (Matt 4:4).” The entire church is given the weapon of God’s Word to defend itself as well as to attack the enemy. Effective missional Christians must know God’s Word intimately and use it to defend themselves and to fight the enemy.

The Bible makes it clear that spiritual warfare is an absolute reality; and that prayer is the key to victory. Prayer is a non-negotiable for the believer to prepare for

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<sup>48</sup>B. B. Thurston, *Reading Colossians, Ephesians, and 2 Thessalonians* (Macon, GA: Smith and Helwys, 2007), 146.

<sup>49</sup>Carson et al., *New Bible Commentary*, 1:113.

<sup>50</sup>K. L. Boles, *Galatians & Ephesians*, 465.

spiritual warfare successfully, and to be deployed on mission. Prayer connects Christian soldiers to the Commanding Officer. In verses 18-20, Paul makes it clear that prayer is foundational for the deployment of all the other weapons and is crucial if Christians are to stand firm in their struggle. The apostle wants his readers to realize that a life of dependence on God in prayer is essential if they are to engage successfully in their warfare with powers of darkness.<sup>51</sup> The Bible presents prayer as the essential weapon and is foundational for the deployment of all the others.<sup>52</sup>

In closing this passage, Paul uses the word “all” four times for emphasis in verses 18-20 in relation to prayer. Christians are to pray at all times, in all manners, to always pray, and to pray for all the Lord’s people. Prayer in the Spirit is mandatory for effectiveness. Spirit led prayer is powerful: “In the same way the Spirit also joins to help in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with unspoken groanings” (Rom 8:26). Missional Christians must be alert and persevere in prayer. Believers are to pray for one another for boldness and fearlessness in living on mission. By prayer and by putting on the full armor of God, Christians will be victorious in spiritual warfare.

### **Old Testament Spiritual Warfare**

The Old Testament makes several references to Satan and his attacks on God’s people. The fall of Satan himself is not clearly explained in Scripture. Attempts have been made to apply Isaiah 14:12-21 and Ezekiel 28:12-15 to Satan’s fall, but much doubt exists if these passages actually refer to this subject. Moses passes over Satan’s fall when relating the fall of man in Genesis 3. Moses relates that men have fallen by the impulse of Satan, and yet never by a single word explains how the tempter himself had revolted

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<sup>51</sup>O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 488.

<sup>52</sup>Thurston, *Reading Colossians, Ephesians, and 2 Thessalonians*, 74.

from God.<sup>53</sup>

The clearest example of spiritual warfare in the Old Testament is contained in Genesis 3 when Moses reveals how Satan seduced Eve, then Adam, to sin. The Bible does not record that Adam and Eve had ever encountered Satan before this event. Eve's innocence and naiveté may have contributed to her fall. For whatever reason, she was not prepared for the enemy's attack. Eve said to God, "It was the serpent. He deceived me, and I ate" (Gen 3:13). Satan cast doubt on God's nature and specifically his Word to her (vv. 1-5). Eve failed to trust in God's nature and his Word. Adam and Eve fell into sin as a result of the plans and actions of a cunning and powerful adversary. Genesis 3:15 records God's response to the attack by looking forward to Jesus: "He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." The remainder of Scripture is replete with spiritual warfare of one kind or another, as God redeems his people to his glory. Missionaries today must put on the full armor of God and prepare for spiritual battle every day.

God makes it clear in his Word that his disciples are to follow his commands to live on mission. He has sufficiently provided the materials and power to equip each follower for their task. Church leaders are responsible to ensure members translate the biblical tools to their lives. The next chapter will build on this biblical foundation with practical materials to continue building successful missional Christians.

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<sup>53</sup>J. Calvin and J. King, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, n.d.; Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 1:140.

CHAPTER 3  
THEORETICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH  
FOR EQUIPPING MISSIONAL CHRISTIANS

While this project was built first on the foundation of God's Word, extensive sociological and practical research also helped ensure its success. This project was designed with an understanding of the practical activities God employs to strengthen his church. Research in the area of strategic planning added another building block to create a successful project. The key sociological area of research in this project involved discovering a clear understanding of missional living. Participants also benefited from the research of effective time management and the discovery of practical principles for effective evangelism.

**Simple Processes to Become On-Mission**

Chapter 1 of this project examined and then applied the key theoretical and practical truths from the books *Simple Church* and *Simple Life*. These books draw on extensive sociological research and present data with an extraordinary degree of statistical accuracy. Hundreds of churches and over one thousand Christians were interviewed. The extensive research for *Simple Church* included more than four hundred evangelical churches. Growing and vibrant churches were compared to non-growing and struggling churches. One of the most significant findings is that, in general, simple churches were reaching people while complex churches were struggling. The statistical chance of this happening by accident was less than one in one thousand.<sup>1</sup> The research for *Simple Life*

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<sup>1</sup>Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville: B & H, 2006), 14.

included surveying over one thousand respondents. The questions related to what people say needed to happen in their lives for greater fulfillment. The primary result is they needed simplicity in four areas: time, relationships, money, and God.<sup>2</sup> *Simple Church* focused its study on churches, while *Simple Life* focused on individuals. Both books proved beyond a doubt that churches and individuals need to simplify their lives in key areas.

The simple processes are defined as clarity, movement, alignment, and focus. Each stage of the simple processes can direct and facilitate growth toward a healthy and on-mission church. The healthiest churches in America tended to have a simple process for making disciples.<sup>3</sup> This project builds on this research to create a simple and reproducible process to lead and equip Christians to live on-mission.

Rainer and Rainer propose an expanded definition of a simple church:

A simple church is designed around a straightforward and strategic process that moves people through the stages of spiritual growth. The leadership and the church are clear about the process (clarity) and are committed to executing it. The process flows logically (movement) and is implemented in each area of the church (alignment). The church abandons everything that is not in the process (focus). Clarity. Movement. Alignment. Focus. All are necessary.<sup>4</sup>

Growing and vibrant churches know that being simple is absolutely vital to their success and mission.<sup>5</sup> Churches that are not simple often suffer from a lack of the four aspects described in the simple process. Unfortunately, if the vision and mission are not clearly understood and pursued, the chances of a church knowing how to become successful are remote. Moving people through a simple process to make disciples requires effective leadership. Making disciples and living on-mission go hand in hand.

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<sup>2</sup>Thom S. Rainer and Art Rainer, *Simple Life* (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 8.

<sup>3</sup>Rainer and Geiger, *Simple Church*, ix.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 67.

<sup>5</sup>Rainer and Rainer, *Simple Life*, 13.

## **Clarity**

Clarity means that you know where you are going and have a plan that clearly states where you want to go, as well as how to get there.<sup>6</sup> Clarity also involves the ability of the process to be communicated and understood by the people.<sup>7</sup> A ministry blueprint to produce on-mission disciples must be developed. Strategic planning is foundational to the process of clarity. Clarity helps a church define what it seeks to accomplish and become. A vital aspect in the process of gaining clarity is that mission statements must be developed, articulated, and pursued.

## **Movement**

Movement occurs when the overall process is designed with sequential steps that flow smoothly.<sup>8</sup> Movement involves flow that leads to progress toward the ultimate goal. Movement includes such key thoughts as strategic programming, sequential programming, intentional movement and a clear next step.<sup>9</sup> Movement involves identifying and removing obstacles to success.

## **Alignment**

Alignment involves making adjustments or corrections when plans go off course.<sup>10</sup> Rainer and Rainer write, “This is alignment: when we structure our life’s activities and priorities so that the process of the simple life can be accomplished.”<sup>11</sup> The aligned person, or church, makes certain that all that is done moves people toward the

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>7</sup>Rainer and Geiger, *Simple Church*, 111.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 69.

<sup>9</sup>Rainer and Rainer, *Simple Life*, 140.

<sup>10</sup>Rainer and Geiger, *Simple Church*, 13.

<sup>11</sup>Rainer and Rainer, *Simple Life*, 64.

accomplishment of their stated purpose.<sup>12</sup> Alignment involves arranging all ministries and staff around the same simple process.

### **Focus**

The final element in the simplified process to make on-mission disciples is known as focus. Focus is the commitment to abandon everything else that falls outside of the simple ministry process. Focus requires saying “yes” to the best and “no” to everything else,<sup>13</sup> which is often the most difficult aspect to execute in the simple process. To achieve focus, it is essential to eliminate non-essential programs, limit adding more programs, reduce special events, and ensure the overall process is easy to communicate and simple to understand.<sup>14</sup> In short, focus requires eliminating things that are outside of the simple process. A failure to focus can prevent a church from moving toward accomplishing its goals to live on-mission. Most people and churches attempt to do many things poorly instead of a few things well.<sup>15</sup> Focus, properly pursued, allows Christians to achieve the goals that God would have them set, and makes the other aspects of the simple process possible. The research from *Simple Church* and *Simple Life* clearly indicate that God often chooses to work best through a simplified process of building true disciples on-mission for his glory. The project sought to equip and lead Christians to practice these God-ordained processes and activities.

### **Strategic Planning**

Systematic strategic planning and strategic action are essential to successfully

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 138.

<sup>13</sup>Rainer and Geiger, *Simple Church*, 76.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 204.

<sup>15</sup>Rainer and Rainer, *Simple Life*, 308.

equip leaders for missional living. The viability and very existence of the project's host church over the next few years may largely depend on whether or not its leaders equip its members to live on-mission and to make disciples. Aubrey Malphurs' makes a significant contribution to this project in *Advanced Strategic Planning, A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*.<sup>16</sup>

Malphurs begins the strategic planning process by examining the health of the Church in America. His observations of churches mirrors that of the church in this project. This church is in a significant state of decline and its future is in question. Attendance has steadily declined over the last forty years by more than 75 percent from its peak at that time. In addition to fewer people attending, cults and other religious groups in the community are growing. For the most part, this church has failed to keep abreast of change while conducting business as usual. Significant changes are essential to the survival of this church.

The answer to correct the problem of a declining church is revitalization by starting new sigmoid curves.<sup>17</sup> This project is supported by Malphurs' comprehensive framework for strategic planning and envisioning. Strategic planning is an ongoing process with three major phases: preparation, process, and practice of strategic planning. The key to successful strategic planning is strategic leadership.<sup>18</sup>

### **Preparation for Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning is likely to fail without a solid preparation phase. Malphurs

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<sup>16</sup>Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning, A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 24.

contends that implementation without preparation results in an abortion.<sup>19</sup> The scope of this project limited the degree to which every phase of the process could be implemented. The most beneficial aspects were employed, but all will be more fully carried out during the next phase of this project. There are six steps in the preparation phase.

**Step 1: Secure the support of the empowered ministry leadership.** This project included every ministry staff member including the senior pastor.<sup>20</sup> In addition, participants included deacons and respected Bible teachers. This group of eight individuals represented a cross-section of ages, genders, lay people, and church staff. This group was selected for their support and passion to affect revitalization by leading others to intentionally live on-mission. These participants hold both positional and personal influence with the church body. Each participant was committed to his or her active participation.

**Step 2: Recruit a strategic leadership team.** The recruiting of a strategic leadership team will be more fully implemented in phase 2 of this project.<sup>21</sup> Initially, the strategic leaders included the Minister of Education and Outreach (the author) and the senior pastor. Each participant will be considered a potential strategic leader for phase 2. Phase 2 will consist of the next group of participants, including the full deacon body.

**Step 3: Communicate constantly with the participants and the church as a whole.** Communication consisted of at least weekly encounters with each participant as

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<sup>19</sup>Aubrey Malphurs, “Strategic Planning for the Leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” *Enrichment Journal*, accessed February 1, 2013, [http://enrichmentjournal.org/201001/201001\\_056\\_strategic\\_planning.cfm](http://enrichmentjournal.org/201001/201001_056_strategic_planning.cfm).

<sup>20</sup>Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 54.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 56.

they went through the strategic planning and acting processes.<sup>22</sup> Methods of communication included in-person conversations, phone conversations, FaceBook, emails, and texting. The prayers and support of the entire church were vital to the success of the project. Communication played a key role to inform the church of both needs and victories of the participants.

**Step 4: Embrace a biblical theology of change.** Change is a prerequisite to living the Christian life. God regenerates and changes followers. Participants were reminded often of the importance to embrace a biblical theology of change. The church suffers from a degree of spiritual stagnation and an inward focus. Embracing change was vital to moving toward an outward focus and to become more on-mission. A biblical theology of change includes three aspects: function, form, and freedom.<sup>23</sup>

The functions of the church never change: to glorify God through evangelism, discipleship, worship, prayer, fellowship, etc. Form involves the timely vehicles employed that relate to a particular church's culture. Freedom to change relates to almost everything else such as the strategy, structures, and procedures. Forms must change while functions are changeless. The church function is the primary issue, not the forms.<sup>24</sup>

**Step 5: Analyze the ministry.** This project examined and analyzed the church's strengths and weaknesses.<sup>25</sup> Attendance in the worship service and Bible teaching groups were considered. By all outward appearances, the church was struggling and in urgent need of a systematic and strategic revitalization. It was imperative to invest

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 66.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 70.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 72.

time to accurately assess the reality of the state of the church before developing the strategic plan.

**Step 6: Lead the strategic leadership team through a spiritual formation process.** Participants had to operate from a solid spiritual foundation to successfully live on-mission.<sup>26</sup> It would have been a significant mistake to assume God would bless the efforts of those that were not actively seeking to walk with him, and to be vitally connected to him in prayer. This aspect of the preparation process was absolutely vital and called on throughout the project and beyond. Once the steps were taken to properly prepare for the strategic planning process, the actual process began.

### **The Process of Strategic Planning**

After careful and deliberate preparation, the actual process of strategic planning proceeded. The process of strategic planning involved intentional thinking and acting. The key word was *process*.<sup>27</sup> God designs, directs, and equips each church for its role in the larger body of Christ. Malphurs articulates the four steps in the process of strategic planning as values discovery, mission development, vision development, and strategy development.

**Values discovery.** Discovering or identifying the church's core values is the driving force behind the strategic planning process.<sup>28</sup> Identity is articulated through awareness of deeply held values. Values must be biblically and spiritually sound in order for the church to successfully become on-mission. Values help to explain why the church acts as it does, as well as why it does not do what it should. Values can be positive or

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 76.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 95.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 96.

negative, but are critical to achieving the mission of the church.

**Mission development.** One of the most edifying aspects of this project was to articulate a more clear view of the mission of the church. In the past, the question of where the ministry was going was difficult to precisely define. Scripture is clear that the primary mission of the New Testament church is the Great Commission. The pre-project mission statement for the church includes making disciples as simply one of its four aspects. Malphurs rightly elevates missional living as the primary mission of the church.<sup>29</sup> All other missions of the church are second to making disciples.

**Vision development.** Malphurs encourages a vision be developed in combination with the mission development.<sup>30</sup> The senior pastor should benefit from this project in the future as he casts a vision for this church. His heart is for the nations to be disciplined and seeks for this church to catch that vision. This project should also help the staff to see the church accomplishing its mission to make disciples.

**Strategy development.** The actual process of strategy development helped the church to accomplish several important actions. The strategy required a careful exploration of the community in which it ministers.<sup>31</sup> This project specifically promoted this exploration, while developing a comprehensive discipling process. A better understanding of the simple processes of “alignment” and “focus” flow from an effective strategy development process.

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<sup>29</sup>Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 119.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 145.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 173.

## **The Practice of Strategic Planning**

Malphurs culminates his strategic planning process by calling on disciples to take action to implement and practice their plan. He contends that implementation is the greatest problem in the entire strategic thinking and acting process.<sup>32</sup> Practicing and implementing the plan has much in common with one of the simple processes of this project known as “movement.” Every effort was made to avoid a “rubber band” effect that often occurs when churches fail to consistently practice their plan over time.

The actual practice of implementation involves removing barriers that might block movement to carry out the strategy. There are three steps to remove implementation barriers. Barriers must be clearly defined, keeping in mind most barriers lie at the emotional level. The next step is to identify an individual’s specific barrier(s). Finally, barriers must be addressed and faced head-on.<sup>33</sup> Prioritization of barriers plays a key role in overcoming them.

Malphurs outlines eight steps to accomplish the implementation process.<sup>34</sup> First, each participant should formulate implementation goals that are clear, urgent, visible, meaningful, and timely. Next, thoughtful prioritization should take place. No person can do everything at the same time, and not everything is of equal importance. Once again, this principle is so simplistic that a child can understand it, but actually carrying it out requires God’s empowering and spiritual discipline. To fail to set priorities means that everything will become a priority. The problem is that when everything is a priority, nothing seems to get done.

The next step to implement the practice of the strategic plan is to carefully communicate the goals for the implementation to each participant. Specific and

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 281.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 286.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 287.

measurable actions must be articulated. Malphurs writes, “It is not enough for a church to have a strategic plan containing specific targets. Churches—and individuals—must evidence measurable action toward meeting the goals or hitting their targets.”<sup>35</sup>

Deadlines should be developed for each stage of the individual’s and group implementation.<sup>36</sup> Some participants tend to be doers while others are procrastinators, but both need deadlines. These deadlines should include both short-term and long-term wins. Participants should consider their motivations, gifts, temperament, and behavior style. One’s plans for action must be coherent and align with their God-given attributes. To the extent possible, participants need all the resources to empower them to achieve their goals for missional living. The role of the leader is to lead and equip each participant with the specific tools they required to be successful.

Malphurs highly encourages monthly implementation review meetings. This meeting is the most important meeting of the month. Two key areas addressed during these meetings are progress and problems.<sup>37</sup> Discussions involving areas of progress provide much needed encouragement for the participants. The ability to share problems provides a tremendous time to make implementation successful. Equipping involves problem recognition and problem solving. No participant should face problems and challenges to implementation alone. Monthly review meetings also provide a critically needed sense of accountability. What gets reviewed is more likely to get done. Accountability is one of the most important aspects for the success of this project.

Malphurs final contribution to the actual practice of strategic planning involves leader and participant evaluation. Ministry evaluation asks a simple but profound

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 289.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 290.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 292.

question, “How are we doing?” “Far too many churches have offered up ministry mediocrity under the guise of ‘It’s a spiritual undertaking of God.’”<sup>38</sup> While God will accomplish building his church, he nonetheless calls on his disciples to give him their best. Evaluation is a natural and vital aspect for each person seeking to be a faithful follower of Christ. In fact, Malphurs contends that failure to measure a church’s effectiveness makes its growth nearly impossible!<sup>39</sup> *Advanced Strategic Planning* is an invaluable and comprehensive model for developing a successful church. It presents the processes and structures employed to build an on-mission church to the glory of God.

### **Characteristics of a Missional Church**

#### **Missional Living**

The heart of this project involves properly understanding and applying the sociological and practical principles of biblical missional living. The best hope to transform this declining church to health is for the leaders to manifest mission-focused growth that spreads through the church. Leaders that model effective missional lives before the church are a prerequisite to its transformation. Successful missional leaders are in a position to equip the church to follow their example. If leaders embrace and model strategic missional lives, a transformation to a Great Commission church should follow.

Many contemporary authors have aptly addressed the theoretical and sociological issues of effective missional living. Several key thinkers in this field include Thom Rainer, Chuck Lawless, Tim Keller, Tim Chester, Eric Geiger, Rick Warren, and Mark Driscoll. In addition to these authors, this project is founded primarily on contributions to biblical missional living as researched and analyzed by Ed Stetzer. Stetzer

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<sup>38</sup>Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 295.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 296.

serves as the President of LifeWay Research, a Southern Baptist organization dedicated to research that includes the most effective missional practices in today's culture. Stetzer is also the Executive Editor of LifeWay's *Gospel Project* Bible study curriculum, a gospel and mission-focused curriculum. Stetzer formerly served as the Director of Research and Missiologist-In-Residence for the North American Missions Board. Stetzer's writings are based on extensive sociological research and analysis. The quantity and quality of the research meets the highest criteria for empirically legitimate sociological research.

This project's primary source to understand and apply biblical missional living are taken from Stetzer's books: *Transformational Church* (with Thom Rainer), *Comeback Churches* (with Mike Dodson), *Planting Missional Churches*, and *Breaking The Missional Code* (with David Putman). Stetzer's website, blogs, and articles are also valuable resources. His missional philosophy dovetails nicely with those shared in *Simple Church* and other key concepts of developing simple processes to produce on-mission disciples. The missional church and simple church share many common principles and philosophies.<sup>40</sup>

Stetzer and Rainer organize the most salient aspects of biblical missional living in their book *Transformational Church*. The theoretical and sociological material studied is presented following the basic outline from that book. The single greatest theoretical and practical question that had to be answered for this project to be successful might be, "How should churches be equipped and led to contend for the biblical faith (Jude 1:3), while at the same time training disciples to be a faithful New Testament missionaries in today's culture (1 Cor. 9:19-23)?" The project sought to hold Scripture as the perfect standard for behavior while creating no unnecessary barriers or offense to the spread of the gospel, other than the offense of the gospel itself.

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<sup>40</sup>Ed Stetzer and Eric Geiger, "Simply Missional," October 23, 2008, accessed February 25, 2013, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2008/october/simple-missional-in-neue.html>

## **A Hope for Transformation**

The Christian message cannot be divorced from that of personal change. By definition, Christians are changed people that should possess dramatically new natures and desires. God is the one who brings these changes to life. Changed lives are at the heart of Christians that live on-mission. Unfortunately, established church cultures often seem to resist the very types of change that resulted in their new members' transformation from death to life. Stetzer's research indicates that sadly, most churches will not make the transformation to health for two main reasons: (1) most churches will not admit how bad it is and (2) most churches will not make the needed changes.<sup>41</sup> Change is difficult for many established churches. Changing an established church usually requires a process that takes time. Rainer and Lawless compare making significant and lasting change in an established church as eating an elephant; it must be done one bite at a time.<sup>42</sup>

As the culture in America becomes less Christian, methods must change. Methods that worked in the past are less likely to work today.<sup>43</sup> Specifically, many people are starting farther away from the cross than in the past. Christians should be sensitive to that fact and be willing to relate to people beginning where they are spiritually. A willingness to change reflects a desire for the lost to be saved more than the desire for comfort.

The opposite of transformation is stagnation. Too often the church has become a symbol of gathering for one another rather than for the sake of others.<sup>44</sup> An outward focus is essential for the church to fulfill its primary mission, the Great Commission.

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<sup>41</sup>Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too* (Nashville: B & H, 2007), 23.

<sup>42</sup>Thom Rainer and Chuck Lawless, *Eating The Elephant: Leading the Established Church to Growth* (Crestwood, KY: Pinnacle, 2003), 5.

<sup>43</sup>Stetzer and Rainer, *Transformational Church*, 206.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 6.

Church members must re-gain the biblical image of the church as God’s chosen means to go out into the world with the gospel. While the church gathers for times of worship and prayer, the church must scatter to be the church in every context in which its members live. “Stagnant churches need to ask why they are stagnant in the first place. It is amazing but consistent—churches that need to grow think they can do it without change!”<sup>45</sup>

To answer the key question posed in this project on how to present the most biblical missionary in today’s culture, the answer is to always begin with God’s Word.<sup>46</sup> Everything begins with God, including his Church being established and not being overcome. Since transformation begins with God, his will is always the place to start. Church leaders must prayerfully seek his guidance and presence. Leaders are to radically experience the presence of God to empower them to lead the church as God directs.

To effect positive change in the church, the pain from staying the same must become greater than the pain from change. Church leaders must, at times, inflict pain on its members.<sup>47</sup> Stagnation and death of the church should be far more painful than the God-honoring changes he desires. These changes can only be brought about from God’s empowering, not the willpower of church leaders or members. Unfortunately, most churches do not submit themselves to the pain required to change because they love their traditions more than they love the lost.<sup>48</sup>

Research indicates that the change necessary for declining churches to transform to health requires at least three key elements: “First, a spiritual energy in the lives of individual believers and the church family as a whole, brought about by revival. Second,

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<sup>45</sup>Ed Stetzer and David Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 137.

<sup>46</sup>Stetzer and Rainer, *Transformational Church*, 12.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>48</sup>Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 61.

the church is restructured around its missional purpose. Third, there's a long-term commitment to change."<sup>49</sup> In other words, change requires a response to the supernatural empowering of the Holy Spirit to live on mission to advance God's kingdom and on-mission leadership.

### **A Successful Church Lives On-Mission**

God-given strategies and plans to build his church are vital. God's will for a church must be earnestly and prayerfully sought because man-made blueprints always invite error. Previous ways of assessing a church's success tended to be inward-focused, program driven, and church-absorbed.<sup>50</sup> Stetzer and Rainer propose a blueprint for today's church called the "Transformational Loop" (see figure 1). The Transformational Loop consists of three categories with seven elements. These elements are not to be confused with sequential linear steps.

Stetzer's study reveals that the majority of churches that have come back to health are missional. He contends that missional churches do what missionaries do, regardless of the specific context. He writes, "If they do what missionaries do—study and learn language, become part of culture, proclaim the Good News, be the presence of Christ, and contextualize biblical life and church for that culture—they are missional churches."<sup>51</sup> However, the culture does not dictate what it means to be missional. Stetzer makes a critical distinction that thinking and acting missionally is more a matter of the

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 54.

<sup>50</sup>Stetzer and Rainer, *Transformational Church*, 24.

<sup>51</sup>Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 4.

approach than the population. The result of missional leadership must be a biblical form of the church that faithfully presents the gospel.<sup>52</sup>

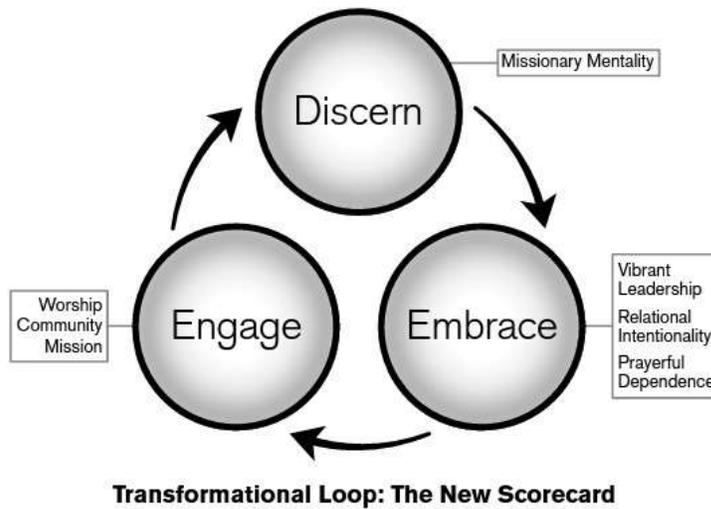


Figure 1. Transformational Loop

Accountability is essential for members that seek to be transformational Christians. The key element in which the church must strive for accountability is to become on-mission Christians that carry out the Great Commission. Human nature is such that goals that get defined and measured are more likely to get accomplished. Accountability to Christ's key command is a major aspect of faithfully living it out. Without accountability to oneself, to others, and to God; the mission will not be accomplished. Churches need to decide to measure the things that matter to the kingdom of God:

A Transformational Church is a congregation that joins God's mission of sharing the gospel and making disciples. Those disciples become more like Jesus, and the

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<sup>52</sup>Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), xxi.

church thus acts as the body of Christ transforming their communities and the world for the kingdom of God.<sup>53</sup>

The three categories in the Transformational Loop are discern, embrace, and engage. The three areas converge as opposed to being compartmentalized. Since the areas are non-sequential or non-linear, they may be entered at any point. The key aspect is not their sequence, but that all three areas are lived out by the church body. The areas are all important and must never be compartmentalized. The discerning Christian recognizes the importance of thinking broadly and strategically like a missionary in making disciples of all nations.

### **Seeking a Missionary Mentality**

The key element in the Transformational Loop category of discernment is to develop a missionary mentality. All Christians should be led and equipped to think like missionaries. Seeking to discern the cultural and spiritual aspects of the community is vital. Successful missional churches are those that realize the church should be designed to relate to the type of people that live in their community and city.<sup>54</sup> Church leaders do well to realize that ministry cannot be designed before careful consideration is given to the specific people that make up the context of the culture of that community. Churches are called first to specific communities. Stetzer makes a distinction between evangelism and missions. He writes that evangelism is telling people about Jesus; while missions involves understanding them before they are told.<sup>55</sup>

Contextual ministry is an important aspect in missional living. Methods and processes are tools used to fulfill the purpose of the church: to glorify God through making disciples. Scripture dictates *what* the church does, but culture influences *how* it

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<sup>53</sup>Stetzer and Rainer, *Transformational Church*, 42.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>55</sup>Stetzer and Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code*, 3.

carries out its mission. All ministry occurs within a certain context. The most successful churches understand that a specific cultural context surrounds each church. Stetzer contends that the activities at the most transformational churches are designed to relate to the type of people who live in the community surrounding the church.<sup>56</sup> Put another way, missional churches are both biblically faithful and culturally relevant.<sup>57</sup>

The evidence is clear that the target church in this project, as well as the majority of churches in the United States, often fails to live on-mission. Only by moving out of the church buildings and participating in God's mission, can the church become more healthy. Christians are commanded to go contextually to all nations making disciples. Many Christians are mistakenly satisfied in simply being Christians rather than actually living-out and sharing the Truth. Some Christians fail to consider and adjust their methods and approaches when seeking to advance the kingdom to their culture in context. A biblical church is a contextual church. To be faithful to its calling, the church must be contextual, that is, it must be culturally relevant within a specific setting.<sup>58</sup>

The United States today is a mission field. It is vital that Christians live out their faith, including being faithful to speak the life of the gospel into a dying world. Stetzer and Rainer explain that St. Francis Assisi allegedly said, “‘Preach the gospel at all times, when necessary, use words.’ Francis never actually said this, nor would he have done so.”<sup>59</sup> The type of Christianity that fails to make an appropriate verbal witness for the gospel falls short of Christ's commands.

Contextualization is a key aspect of an on-mission church. Stetzer contends

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<sup>56</sup>Stetzer and Rainer, *Transformational Church*, 45.

<sup>57</sup>Stetzer and Rainer, *Comeback Churches*, 8.

<sup>58</sup>Stetzer and Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code*, 181.

<sup>59</sup>Stetzer and Rainer, *Transformational Church*, 67.

that contextualization is not compromise, but a realization that different people groups and population groups have different values. The unchanging message of the gospel can be put into changing “cultural containers.”<sup>60</sup> Paul provides examples in how to best reach unbelievers. Paul contextualized the message and used any method that did not compromise the gospel. During Paul’s second missionary journey, he began to focus on contextualization. At Mars Hill in Athens, Paul took the revolutionary step of starting where the people were spiritually, beginning at the point of their search.<sup>61</sup> Stetzer contends that contextualization of the gospel is needed in every culture. Without contextualization, the average unchurched person would find many church activities incomprehensible.<sup>62</sup> In fact, he goes on to write that “those outside the church often feel like they have arrived at a convention of aliens when they attend their first church service.”<sup>63</sup>

### **Vibrant Leadership**

Stetzer defines a spiritual leader as a person involved in a process of influencing and developing a group of people in order to accomplish a purpose by means of supernatural power.<sup>64</sup> This project focused on the key leaders of the church. Each member of the ministerial staff volunteered to participate in this project. These leaders are well respected by the church and primarily lead from their personal power rather than any positional power. Most importantly, each staff person is committed to learning and then leading members under their influence to grow as every day missionaries, regardless of their particular ministry area.

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<sup>60</sup>Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 40.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 51.

<sup>62</sup>Stetzer and Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code*, 89.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 130.

<sup>64</sup>Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 37.

On-mission churches are led by transformational leaders who themselves are being transformed in the presence of the people they lead.<sup>65</sup> It is vital that leaders grow in their thinking and their actions. Expecting a single leader, such as the pastor, to lead an entire church is not ideal. Jesus assembled a team of disciples to help carry out his mission. The leadership team approach to accomplish church transformation is the biblical and sociological ideal. Dramatic and lasting change can best be fostered by several key leaders modeling effective missional living. Stetzer proposes that some church members may not be living out a missionary lifestyle because they have yet to see their leaders live that way.<sup>66</sup>

Leaders should be more concerned with the kingdom of God than with their individual church. A key question leaders—and members—must answer is, “Who are we here for?” Do the so-called “interests” of the local church take precedence over the needs and interests of the community, and ultimately the kingdom? The kingdom of God births and continues to give life to a local congregation. Any church that puts its interests and preferences above being a living and breathing example of the real Church is not biblical.

The leadership structure in the most transformational churches gives real responsibility and opportunity to its members.<sup>67</sup> Members are encouraged to consider their areas of spiritual giftedness as well as their passions and burdens. On-mission churches minimize any perceived division between the roles and actions of the staff and membership. God blesses churches where teamwork is valued. The evidence is clear that God often chooses to do great work through “common” everyday Christians that follow strong leaders.

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<sup>65</sup>Stetzer and Rainer, *Transformational Church*, 74.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 222.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 85.

## **Relational Intentionality**

Research confirms that leaders of churches that made significant returns to health and growth intentionally planned a strategy to invest time building relationships.<sup>68</sup> It is nearly impossible to effectively present the gospel divorced from at least some sense of a genuine relationship, no matter how brief the relationship. The gospel message is one involving relationships. Typically, a believer in Jesus Christ develops some degree of a relationship with another person in order to most successfully share the offer of the gospel. God made mankind relational and seeks an intimate relationship with his children. Churches that God most often blesses in terms of making disciples highly value relationships.<sup>69</sup>

Two of the key concepts in becoming a more missional church include relationships and intentionality. Relationships between Christians and non-Christians are more likely to happen intentionally rather than by chance. While non-Christians are never to be considered as a “project” or a means to accomplish “goals,” intentionality in developing relationships is important. Christians should intentionally pray that God brings them into encounters with non-Christians with the intent to share the gospel. Intentionally making oneself available to God in his mission increases the likelihood to be used by him.

The Great Commission involves both an initial and on-going relationship between a believer and non-believer. Since the process of becoming a Christian is often progressive, relationships often play a vital role in that process. Discipleship happens best in the context of healthy relationships between new believers and more mature Christians. Both evangelism and discipleship flourish most naturally among relationships, as evidenced in that non-relational Christians are rarely effective evangelists.

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<sup>68</sup>Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 44.

<sup>69</sup>Stetzer and Rainer, *Transformational Church*, 107.

## **Dependence on Prayer**

Scientific sociological research conducted on thousands of pastors and church members confirm a striking reality; namely that prayer is the engine for churches seeking to make meaningful transformations.<sup>70</sup> Churches that pray evangelistically are more successful in terms of seeing more people repent of their sins and believe in Christ for salvation. Prayer gives evidence that members maintain a close relationship with God. God seems to bless churches who put their trust in him and empower their members to evangelize and disciple people. Praying churches are more likely to experience breakthroughs, have praying leaders, commonly experience answers to prayer, pray for people by name, and have systems and processes in place to facilitate prayer.<sup>71</sup>

The third category of churches that transform to become on-mission churches is labeled “engage.” The most successful churches engage in right activities that lead to making disciples. Engagement includes a positive expectancy during worship. Small group activities foster a relational sense of community. The key finding is that the focused activity of transformational churches always led to growing disciples.<sup>72</sup>

Ideal corporate worship is described as relevant and reverent. While beyond the scope of this project, healthy congregational worship is vitally important. Relevance deals with the style of worship, while reverence is concerned primarily with holiness. Research shows that transformational churches ask for God’s guidance, involve people, study Scripture, die to self, study the community, ask new questions, and focus on revelation.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 124.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 138.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 37.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 169.

## **Community**

Churches that make transformations connect people with one another in genuine community. Small groups, such as Sunday school classes, can be the best place for life change to take place when members experience communal relationships. The key elements of a transformational small group environment includes a mission orientation, a Word-driven mentality, a multiplication mindset, stranger welcoming, and a kingdom focus.<sup>74</sup> Fostering a community of small groups is not an end in itself. Communal small group environments must move beyond simply filling social needs. Groups should be change-agents for those that God might bring into the church. While large group meetings are important, Christianity thrives best when followers experience life in small groups.

## **Mission**

The final element in the category of the “engage” concept for transformational churches is to be on mission.<sup>75</sup> Churches should point to Jesus through their words and actions. Every Christian should take actions to live as missionaries. A Christian’s words and actions must align. A mere concern for the salvation of the lost is not enough; intentions must be followed with actions. W. Clement Stone expressed that there is something more important than intentions and beliefs, namely action!<sup>76</sup>

Christians should engage non-Christians in gospel conversations in love, naturally, and often. As the Father took the initiative to engage the lost by sending Jesus, believers are to take the initiative to engage the lost. Scripture obligates Christians to share their faith story with non-Christians. One of the best ways to engage non-Christians is in every day conversations while being sensitive and responsive to the Holy Spirit’s leadership. Meaningful conversations happen best when a relationship exists or

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 195.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 199.

<sup>76</sup>Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 47.

is developing. Non-Christians should be made to feel safe when engaging Christians in gospel conversations. Missional Christians should look for appropriate and natural bridges to find connections for spiritual dialog.

An important aspect of living on-mission involves becoming incarnational. The missional approach means that members may adapt to the context and culture. While missional is the posture, the term incarnational describes what is actually happening in a missional church.<sup>77</sup> Christ dwelt bodily alongside those he came to save. His example of manifesting himself in real and tangible ways should be the model for today's incarnational church. Being missional and incarnational must be based on solid theology. Stetzer summarizes the proper balance for a healthy church: "Being high content (being biblically sound) and high culture (being culturally relevant) aren't mutually exclusive."<sup>78</sup> He comments, "Today, theology and missiology, seem disconnected. Some say today, 'We must not take our cues from culture,' but that is both unbiblical and untenable. To some degree, the church must reflect its culture."<sup>79</sup>

Indigenization is also an important concept for missional church leaders. This process means that in some ways the church must parallel their host culture. "To be indigenous means . . . to make the gospel intelligible and relevant in word and deed to the eyes and ears of men."<sup>80</sup> Stetzer makes a key observation regarding being biblically faithful in today's world: "Faithful indigenous churches take their teaching from the unchanging biblical text and apply it to the ever-changing cultural milieu."<sup>81</sup> While the

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<sup>77</sup>Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 2.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>79</sup>Stetzer and Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code*, 184.

<sup>80</sup>Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 30.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 31.

church may be influenced by a particular culture, it must never be bound by that culture.

### The Missional Matrix

Stetzer’s diagram entitled “The Missional Matrix” serves as a helpful summary of his understanding of a balanced missional approach.<sup>82</sup> Three vital theological disciplines address biblical missional thinking and acting: Christology, ecclesiology, and missiology. The diagram in figure 2 first highlights the scriptural and theological foundation that must encompass the entire matrix. While all three areas interact with each other, the Bible is the starting point and sets the agenda.<sup>83</sup> Along with the Scriptural foundation, biblical application and empowerment by the Spirit also provide a boundary for the three disciplines.

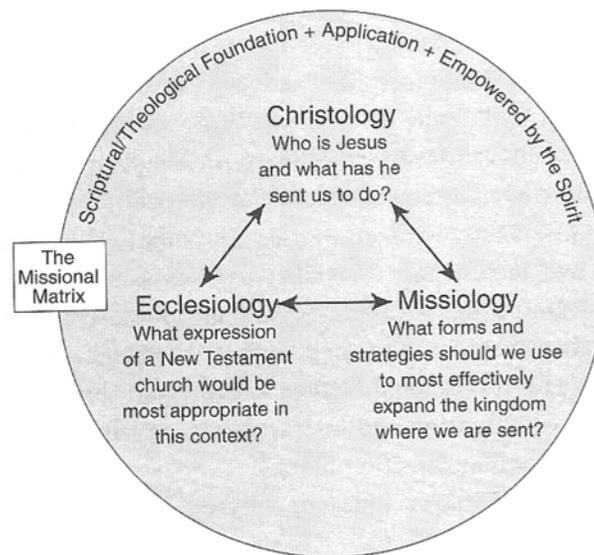


Figure 2. Missional Matrix

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 159.

<sup>83</sup>Alan Hirsch and Ed Stetzer, “Revisiting Hirsch/Stetzer Missional Ecclesiology,” January 23, 2009, accessed May 1, 2013, <http://churchplantingnovice.wordpress.com/2009/01/23/revisiting-hirsch-vs-stetzer-missional-ecclesiology/>.

The matrix represents Stetzer’s profound questions for missional church leaders to consider. Christology asks, “Who is Jesus and what has he sent us to do?” Ecclesiology asks, “What expression of a New Testament church would be most appropriate in this context?” Finally, missiology seeks to understand, “What forms should we use to most effectively expand the kingdom where we are sent?”<sup>84</sup> The matrix is not as much a specific model as it is a missional guide.

This matrix seeks to ask the questions that result in a balanced missional philosophy. If one area becomes distorted and out of balance, various misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the biblical model of the church can result. Stetzer proposes that the type of thinking that is needed involves all three areas that interact and balance the others. What is needed is “a biblically grounded expression of church that understands the person of Jesus, his call on their lives, what it means to be ‘on-mission’ in their context, and what it means to be an appropriate expression of church in their part of the globe.”<sup>85</sup> This project incorporated Stetzer’s philosophy to produce a balanced church that is on-mission for the glory of God.

### **Time Management**

Stephen Covey’s contributions to personal and time management were integral to the success of this project. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* identifies, organizes, and expands upon natural laws that Christians should employ to create changes to become more missional Christians.<sup>86</sup> Covey proposes the seven habits are reliable God-given principles. While not a

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<sup>84</sup>Stetzer and Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code*, 54.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>86</sup>Stephen Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013).

Christian, his insights are profound.<sup>87</sup> The book has sold over 25 million copies and is widely accepted as a classic in the fields of personal development and leadership, both key areas of interest for this project. The seven habits articulate key processes that align closely with other sources employed.

Natural laws and God-given principles are timeless. This project led and equipped members to identify and strategically employ these principles. As members move to higher levels of effectiveness, the church can become more healthy and on-mission. Covey points out how one sees the world has a dramatic impact on their level of effectiveness. This project sought to make long-term changes in the behavior of the participants, which requires one's realization of their basic paradigms that dramatically influence long-term attitudes and behaviors.

The habits are sequential processes that take time and build on themselves. Covey defines a habit as the intersection of *knowledge*, *skill*, and *desire*. "Knowledge is the theoretical paradigm, the *what* to do and the *why*. Skill is the *how* to do. And desire is the motivation, *the want to do*. In order to make something a habit in our lives, we have to have all three."<sup>88</sup> Life-change must come from deep held paradigms held by each person. This project employed the seven habits to produce lifelong changes in the

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<sup>87</sup>The reader is warned that Covey's contribution to this project is limited to his time management insights. Careful biblical discernment is recommended in considering Covey's thoughts because he writes from a decidedly non-Christian perspective. For example, natural laws are commonly taken to refer to principles or a body of laws considered to be derived from nature by God. In Covey's paradigm, natural laws are taken from Mormon theology and the LDS Church. In a previous book, *The Divine Center*, Covey advocates Mormons employ the vocabularies of others to communicate meanings to testify of many gospel principles. He encourages them to carefully select their words which carry the LDS meaning but come from the other person's experience and frame of mind. He contends that only Mormonism and the LDS Church provide the true and correct map and that the beliefs of evangelical Christianity provide a false paradigm or map. Stephen R. Covey, *The Divine Center* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 240. Covey's contribution to this project is helpful from a time management perspective, but certainly not from a spiritual one.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 55.

participants in order to create reproducing missional Christians long after the conclusion of this brief project.

### **Habit 1: Be Proactive**

Participants were taught that the first key habit is to be proactive. Many Christians fail to act as commanded by the Bible. Specifically, more Christians than not fail to proactively carry out the Great Commission. Covey contends that being proactive equates to a “5000 plus percent difference in one’s effectiveness”<sup>89</sup> Proactive people make love a verb and not just a feeling. By contrast, it is the nature of reactive people to absolve themselves of responsibility to carry out such activities as missional living. On-mission Christians act proactively under the authority of Christ.

Covey relates one’s personal vision as a key aspect of proactive living. Developing a vision of living on-mission is fundamental to fulfilling the Great Commission. Goal setting is part and parcel of living with a mission in mind. The mature Christian sees themselves as living out a faithful life of obedience to Christ’s Commission.

### **Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind**

Perhaps the most important habit for this project was the second habit, to begin with the end in mind. To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of the intended destination. This habit relates closely to the “clarity” process which is foundational in this project. It means to know where one is going so that they better understand where they are now and the steps necessary to take in the right direction. Covey writes, “How different our lives are when we really know what is deeply important to us, and, in keeping that picture in mind, we manage ourselves each

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 83.

day to be and to do what really matters most.”<sup>90</sup>

Covey stresses the absolute necessity of a well-crafted personal mission statement:

The most effective way I know to begin with the end in mind is to develop a personal mission statement or philosophy or creed. It focuses on what you want to be (character) and to do (contributions and achievements) and on the values or principles upon which being and doing are based.<sup>91</sup>

Mission statements must be based on correct principles. The missional Christian draws the principles from God’s Word and makes specific application to their lives as He leads. The mission statement brings clarity and allows movement to fulfill the mission.

Personal changes can best be made from a changeless base. The mission statement is fundamentally changeless. The key to the ability to change is a changeless sense of who one is, what he is about, and what he values.<sup>92</sup> These seven habits provide a changeless foundation on which actions and activities can adapt as necessary. This concept holds tremendous promise for a church that must move away from an inward focus and change to an outward one.

Covey specifically addresses details to consider in writing and using a personal mission statement. He quotes Victor Frankl who stated that one detects rather than invents their mission in life.<sup>93</sup> This key statement aligns with Scripture. The Great Commission is Jesus’ clear mission given to every disciple and stands as the unifying mission to make disciples of all nations.

The process of writing one’s mission statement is vitally important. Properly developed mission statements take time and effort to craft and cannot be rushed. The

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<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 105.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 113.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 115.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 136.

first step involves identifying roles and goals. Roles involve the various aspects of one's life, such as spiritual, mental, emotional, and social. Goals involve envisioning the desired ends while selecting both short and long-term milestones.<sup>94</sup> Targets help move one's life toward the visualized preferred future. The crafting of a well-designed mission statement is vital to the success of each participant in this project.

Covey calls for a careful analysis of each person's present location in relation to their desired destination. Participants must take stock of their current reality before planning steps to move in the right direction. Participants were asked to make a deliberate and conscious effort to document their current position in life in terms of achieving their God-given mission.

### **Habit 3: Put First Things First**

Habit 3 in the process to live a highly effective life is to put first things first. Sound values and principles form the foundation to effectiveness. After a person recognizes and identifies these principles, they should become more responsible and proactive. Prioritizing the most important purposes in life is vital for high levels of effectiveness. Covey speaks directly to participants in this project as he quotes Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: "Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least."<sup>95</sup>

Habit 3 speaks to missional Christians in that it deals with time management, or more precisely, personal management. While Covey makes many valuable contributions to participants' success in this project, none are more important than his time management quadrants (see figure 3). The four quadrants are divided by two types of activities, those that are important versus those that are not important; and activities

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<sup>94</sup>Covey, *The Seven Habits*, 145.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*, 155.

that are urgent compared to those that are not urgent. Quadrant 1 and 3 are urgent, while quadrant 2 and 4 are not urgent. Participants were taught to maximize quadrant 2 activities that are important but not urgent.

Spending time on unimportant activities is poor stewardship of one's time. While unavoidable distractions will occur, the on-mission Christian must do their best to reduce or eliminate non-important activities. Covey encourages effective people to smilingly ignore and to eliminate unimportant activities.<sup>96</sup> While developing this habit appears easy, most find it surprisingly difficult to implement.

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•crises</li> <li>•pressing problems</li> <li>•deadline-driven projects, meetings, preparations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•preparation</li> <li>•prevention</li> <li>•values clarification</li> <li>•planning</li> <li>•relationship building</li> <li>•true recreation</li> <li>•empowerment</li> </ul>
NOT IMPORTANT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•interruptions, some phone calls</li> <li>•some mail, some reports</li> <li>•some meetings</li> <li>•many proximate, pressing matters</li> <li>•many popular activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•trivia, busy work</li> <li>•some phone calls</li> <li>•time wasters</li> <li>•"escape" activities</li> <li>•irrelevant mail</li> <li>•excessive TV</li> </ul>

Figure 3. Covey's Time Management Quadrants

Pressing and urgent matters are typically *not* the most important ones. It is impossible to eliminate all urgent activities, but highly effective people learn to minimize them. Urgent but important activities (quadrant 1) must shrink to allow the important but

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 164.

not urgent actions (quadrant 2) to grow.<sup>97</sup> Each participant was equipped and encouraged to move to a lifestyle characterized by quadrant 2 activities. Urgent matters must not be ignored, but they should diminish as one spends more time with prevention and preparation actions in quadrant 2.

Covey reinforces a key principle employed in this project called “focus.” In order to say “yes” to important quadrant 2 priorities, one must say “no” to many other activities. The way to focus on the best activities over the long run is to have a bigger “yes” burning inside.<sup>98</sup> Participants must realize they are always saying “no” to many activities. Missional Christians should intentionally focus their actions on the most God-honoring activities.

Covey proposes a three-stage process to move toward a quadrant 2 lifestyle. First, the process of clarifying values and principles should lead to prioritization. Second, organization must take place in relation to priorities. Finally, quadrant 2 people discipline themselves around their priorities. Written goal setting and planning are critical. Covey writes, “The key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.”<sup>99</sup> This principle spoke directly to any participant that doubts the benefits of planning and goal setting. While God’s sovereign activity cannot be planned in detail on a calendar, Christians that genuinely prepare themselves in these processes are more likely to be used by God on-mission.

Individuals seeking to move to a more quadrant 2 lifestyle must realize that people are more important than things. Covey states, “You simply can’t think efficiency

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<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 165.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., 164.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 170.

with people. You think effectiveness with people and efficiency with things.”<sup>100</sup> Effective leadership should include a clear understanding of the desired results, as few guidelines as possible, the resources people can draw on, accountability of performance, and the good and bad consequences of their actions. Every one of the seven habits is in quadrant 2.<sup>101</sup>

### **Habits 4 through 7**

The first three habits are labeled “private victories.” The private victories were most applicable to the participants in this project. Covey’s habits 4 through 6 are categorized as “public victories.” These habits include, think win/win, seek first to understand, then to be understood, and synergy. Habit 5 identifies a foundational principle for Christians attempting to live on mission. Missionaries know that understanding those they wish to affect dramatically increases the likelihood their message will be received and understood. Just as with the other habits, its simplicity belies its difficulty to be integrated into one’s life. Finally, the seventh habit encompasses all the others. It is the habit of renewal, called sharpening the saw. Spiritual, mental, social and emotional renewal are vital for a lifelong missionary. The seven habits articulated by Covey build a strong foundational for all those seeking to become a more highly effective missional Christian.

### **Evangelism Training**

Evangelism training attempts to lead Christians to live on-mission must begin with a clear understanding of what motivates their actions. Visions, plans, processes, and strategies of church leaders are useless if Christians are not motivated to live on-mission. The wise saying is true and applicable, “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.” This project would have succeeded or failed based in large part on the

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<sup>100</sup>Covey, *The Seven Habits*, 178.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, 188.

motivation of the participants, and subsequently, the motivation of the entire church body.

### **Love as Motivation for Mission**

Paul Borthwick provides essential sociological and practical instructions that are invaluable to successfully leading Christians to live on-mission. *Stop Witnessing and Start Loving* points to his philosophy that love is the most solid foundation on which to build a missional life. A consuming love for God and his glory and a subsequent love for one's neighbor should fuel a lifetime of natural evangelism and missional living. Borthwick's message is not about external techniques, willpower, or apologetics; it is about desires, motivations, and perspectives.<sup>102</sup>

### **Passion**

A zeal for evangelism is not the starting point to live on-mission. Rekindling—or kindling—a burning passion to know and love Christ is the ideal starting point for missional living.<sup>103</sup> A Christian's passion must be ignited in order to fuel the flames of meaningful and long-term missional living. Borthwick defines passion as something a person is so intently committed to that they are willing to suffer or die for it.<sup>104</sup> Good intentions and willpower are not sufficient to make dramatic lifestyle changes to live on-mission.

### **Biblical Worldview**

Any attempt to lead others to change their lifestyles to become more missional must answer more than simply the “how” questions. Borthwick writes, “For most

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<sup>102</sup>Paul Borthwick, *Stop Witnessing and Start Loving* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2003), 15.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>104</sup>*Ibid.*, 18.

people, the question isn't 'how' the question is 'why?' . . . Developing a heart for the lost speaks first to our motivation—not our methods.”<sup>105</sup> The best place to start is to carefully consider theological convictions by asking questions: “is Jesus the only way?” “is heaven and hell real?” and “are people without Christ as Savior destined to hell and damnation?” A love for God, a love for others, and an understanding of the seriousness of impending judgment should motivate every Christian to live on-mission.<sup>106</sup>

### **Personal Worldview**

Successful missionaries must resist tendencies to view Christianity and the church as a fortress by avoiding the lost world. Engagement, involvement, and infiltration must become second nature. Christians must be willing to invest the time necessary to engage the world around them that is dying without Christ. To move toward becoming more on-mission, Christians should rebuke their excuses, stop rationalizing, and look outward.<sup>107</sup>

### **Missional Perspective**

The most effective missional Christians research their culture and realize that understanding people increases the effectiveness of their witness.<sup>108</sup> Borthwick shares several profound characteristics of secular people that may provide Christians with helpful insight as they engage the lost. He contends that “instant” evangelism is no longer possible (if it ever was).<sup>109</sup> Christians “need to ask more questions, listen, seek to

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<sup>105</sup>Ibid., 32.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 69.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., 85.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 91.

understand the worldview of others, and then respond with a relevant, understandable presentation of Jesus Christ. Most effective evangelism does not involve presenting . . . as much as conversation.”<sup>110</sup>

A missional approach requires that Christians go into the world of another person. Simply being with the lost, while looking for opportunities to present the gospel, is vital. Borthwick states,

If we want to build a heart for the lost, we need to build friendships, reach out, and go into their world. Like missionaries going into a foreign land, we need to enter the culture we’re trying to reach if we’re going to address people with the gospel in terms that speak to their needs—in words that they understand.<sup>111</sup>

Relationships with non-believers are vital to most successfully share the gospel. Making friends with lost people—not as targets or outreach goals—is needed.<sup>112</sup>

Motivation to live missional lives is enhanced when Christians remember God is at work before them in the world. God prepares people to respond to his call. Christians should develop a spirit of expectancy of being used by God to extend his kingdom. Evangelism is a sovereign work of God who chooses to use believers as instruments. Today’s Christians should take encouragement from William Carey who motivated many to live on-mission and understood that God has appointed human involvement in proclamation of the gospel.<sup>113</sup> Borthwick provides many sociological and practical perspectives that should serve to help motivate church leaders to passionately live on mission before the church.

### **Stetzer’s Evangelism Journey**

Understanding the true nature of evangelism and making disciples is essential

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<sup>110</sup>Ibid., 94.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., 121.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., 128.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 144.

for any leader seeking to equip Christians for missional living. God’s Word is unchanging, but its application in the world demands changing methods or forms that are most appropriate to the culture and context in which it operates. God’s standard for salvation is exactly the same for every person. What he does in the hearts, minds, and lives of each individual who crosses over from death to life is the same. The Bible is clear what takes place when God regenerates those whom he saves, most notably, repentance and belief. What must change in sharing the gospel is not the *message*, but the *form* it takes. Different times, places, cultures, and contexts require biblical and relevant communication of the gospel. While the substance of salvation is unchanging and revealed perfectly in Scripture, secondary aspects such as traditional methods of presenting the gospel must not be required as orthopraxy. Stetzer’s evangelism journey diagram is a helpful representation of how God often chooses to accomplish his process of regeneration.

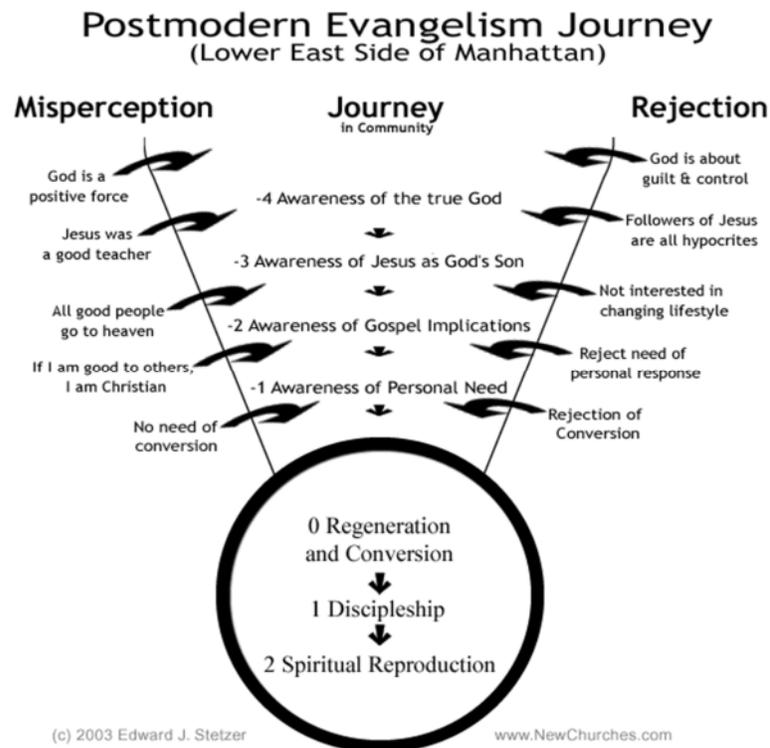


Figure 4. Stetzer’s Evangelism Journey

The sociological research and analysis of Ed Stetzer indicates that evangelism is *both* a process and an event. He presents the “Stetzer Evangelism Journey” as his understanding of a biblically faithful and missionally appropriate framework to understand evangelism and discipleship. This model serves to clarify how the gospel might most faithfully and effectively be understood and applied to any time, place, and context. Finding God’s will in terms of evangelism lies at the very heart of living out the Great Commission. True missional living will rise or fall based on a proper understanding and application of evangelism. To share the gospel with gentleness and respect mandates a missional approach.

God can, and does, radically save people that have little to no prior association with the gospel, Christians, or the church. Conversion can be instantaneous. Salvation is an event at the sole discretion and pleasure of God alone. God is not limited by any evangelism or discipleship model or process.

Stetzer’s sociological research indicates that more often than not, God brings people to salvation through a process or journey.<sup>114</sup> Stetzer contends that Scripture presents a pattern of a process God typically employs in salvation. “A pattern emerges that is consistent throughout the entire New Testament. It involves three things: (1) people have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, (2) they go back to their own community or ‘oikos’ and tell those around them, and (3) those who hear go and explore for themselves the things they have seen and heard.”<sup>115</sup> Evangelism training must include an awareness of the most missionally appropriate approaches for Christians to share the gospel. Properly relating to the lost should involve getting to know, understand, and appreciate their

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<sup>114</sup>Stetzer and Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code*, 123.

<sup>115</sup>*Ibid.*, 121.

uniqueness; and focus less on memorization of certain presentations and strategies.<sup>116</sup>

## **Two Conversions**

Stetzer's model presents evangelism in an emerging culture as a journey involving stages or steps.<sup>117</sup> There are two conversions, one is temporal and the other eternal. The first conversion is the conversion to community. With few exceptions, people come to Christ after they have journeyed with other Christians, examining them and considering their claims.<sup>118</sup> The second conversion is to Christ and his Church. The person on the journey to community might say, "I like and trust these people and want to learn with them." In the conversion to Christ, one might express, "I make a dangerous decision for Christ in a safe community of friends."<sup>119</sup> Since the culture in North America is post-Christian, many people are farther away from a saving relationship with Jesus Christ than in the past. Evangelism should take into account the way a lost person sees the message, alerting Christians that some types of approaches may be inappropriate or ineffective.

## **Journey**

Stetzer's Journey involves four primary categories or subjects; the first three include a journey in community, misperceptions, and rejections. The final category describes the Church, regeneration and conversion, discipleship, and finally spiritual reproduction.<sup>120</sup> It is important to note that the journey is different for each people group,

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<sup>116</sup>Ibid., 122.

<sup>117</sup>Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 187.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 188.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 120.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., 189.

worldview, and culture. Stetzer's concept of evangelism as a journey builds and improves upon other more linear models such as the *Engel Scale*, as well as *Gray's Matrix*, which does not take misperceptions and rejections into account.<sup>121</sup>

The "journey in community" category depicts the unchanging truths of moving toward salvation that are common to all that are saved. The journey begins with an awareness of the true God, then of Jesus as God's Son, then of the gospel implications, and finally of their personal need. The missional Christian should invest in relationships with non-Christians and attempt to discern which stage of the journey might describe their position. Understanding one's place in the journey can provide important guidance in how to best approach the person to move them toward faith in Christ. "Journey takes place when people are invited to community. The first 'line' that is breached is 'conversion to community.'"<sup>122</sup>

### **Misperception**

The process of salvation involves overcoming certain misperceptions that may be held by the non-Christian. The five basic misperceptions of many postmodern Americans might include God is a positive force, Jesus was a good teacher, all people go to heaven, if I am good to others I am a Christian, and I have no need of conversion.<sup>123</sup> Evangelism takes place every time a misperception is clarified.<sup>124</sup> Spiritual or gospel conversations between Christians and non-Christians may bring to light misperceptions that can be effectively clarified and corrected.

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<sup>121</sup>Ibid., 186.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., 187.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., 190.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 187.

## **Rejection**

The final category of Stetzer’s Evangelism Journey is titled “rejection.” Five basic concepts must be rejected as one journeys through the process of salvation. The rejection category includes rebellion against God, rebellion against Jesus, rejection of the implications, rejection of personal need, and rejection of conversion.<sup>125</sup> Evangelism takes place every time a rejection is reconsidered. The missional Christian should call for acceptance of God’s truth, while realizing that rejection is not personal, but against God. Stetzer’s Evangelism Journey beautifully brings together a comprehensive missiological framework, while at the same time providing a practical tool to engage non-Christians with the gospel.

## **GRACE Gospel Tract**

The gospel message should be communicated clearly, accurately, completely, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. No method of sharing the gospel can surpass that of sharing the perfect Word of God. The booklet, *Experiencing God’s Grace* employs Scripture to convict its hearers and shine God’s light into the darkness. This resource is arranged in a memorable format. It properly places God at the forefront in the process of salvation, while avoiding a man-centered approach. Each participant was trained in using this tool as a primary method to share the glory of God and the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The GRACE acronym spells out the plan of salvation. “G” represents God. “The vast expanse of the universe and everything in it is the work of God alone. He is the Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler of all things. All creation reflects His majestic power and glory.”<sup>126</sup> No less than ten Scripture passages communicate the fullness of God. “R”

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<sup>125</sup>Ibid.

<sup>126</sup>The Billy Graham School of Missions and Church Growth, *Experiencing God’s Grace* (Louisville: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004), 3.

represents the rebellion of man. Man's rebellion against the Creator separates man from his holy presence. The "A" represents the atonement. This theologically rich concept is explained in clear and easy to comprehend terms. This section of the booklet stresses the work of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. A very helpful illustration represents the imputation of Jesus' righteousness to man, while applying the debt of sin to Jesus. "C" stands for conversion, which is described as when the hearer repents and believes by faith. The "E" completes the grace acronym, representing eternal life. Both the joys and tribulations a new believer will encounter are shared. Finally, a call to action is made. The hearer is challenged to consider their standing in the sight of God. The question, "Are you ready?" is posed. Finally, for the person that repents and believes, the new Christian is instructed in living daily in God's grace with practical steps that should be taken.

### **Share Jesus without Fear**

Most Christians report that fear is the primary reason for not sharing the gospel. William Faye and Ralph Hodge present an enormously helpful resource to overcome any fear to presenting the Good News. *Share Jesus without Fear* provides a non-threatening, yet biblical, approach to sharing the gospel without the typical fear and trepidation.

**Developing a heart to share Jesus.** Students of the process are taught how to develop a heart to share Jesus. Faye teaches that "success is living the Christian life day by day, sharing the gospel, and trusting God for the results. Success is not bringing someone to Christ."<sup>127</sup> The truth of impending judgment for all that do not repent and believe is stressed. Passion for the lost is encouraged and rooted in obedience to God's command. The importance of prayer is magnified in the lives of those seeking to share their faith. The concept of a partnership between God and his followers inspires students

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<sup>127</sup>William Faye and Ralph Hodge, *Share Jesus without Fear* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 7.

to live boldly on-mission. Power to share the gospel comes from the Holy Spirit. Faye teaches that failure only occurs when Christians fail to be faithful to what God has called believers to do.<sup>128</sup> Preparation to respond to witnessing opportunities is vital to success in sharing the gospel.

**Learning a way to share Jesus.** Students of this book understand why they absolutely, positively cannot fail. Asking questions is the key to determine where, and if, God is working in the lives of unbelievers. Five specific questions are provided to prepare for the gospel presentation. The final question requests permission to share several targeted Scripture verses.

The power of Scripture is employed as unbelievers read aloud seven key passages. After each passage, the Christian simply asks a non-threatening—but revealing—question. The question is simply, “What does this verse say to you?” If the response is not correct, the reader is simply asked to read the verse(s) again. The verses are clear and the meaning is straight forward. After a correct answer, the person sharing moves to the next verse. The verses include several passages known as the Roman Road. The final verse elicits a call to respond to the gospel.

**Responding to the challenge to share Jesus.** The participants in the project were taught to follow up the seven Scripture verses with five questions designed to elicit a call to respond to God’s Word. Each question is a progression that begins with admitting their sin, and concluding with a direct invitation to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. If the unbeliever answers “no” to any of the final questions, the believer’s response is to be a simple question of “why?” This response serves to clarify their response which may be addressed, or left to be discussed in the future.

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<sup>128</sup>Ibid., 19.

**Post-presentation.** The process ends by providing follow-up resources for the Christian to direct the new Christian in the next steps he or she should take. New believers are to be connected to a Bible-believing church community, and to be baptized. “Spiritual parents” are encouraged to shepherd the new converts to the greatest extent possible. Believers are to continue to make themselves available to any non-believers that do not repent and believe in Jesus. Future encounters might bear fruit of salvation. A relationship with non-believers is encouraged to water and fertilize the seeds of the gospel that have been planted, as often they require time to grow.

### **Overcoming Walls to Witnessing**

God seeks to empower Christians to live on mission and to be effective witnesses of the gospel. Satan is adamantly opposed to Christians living on mission and making a verbal witness to the truth of the Good News. Timothy Beougher’s booklet, *Overcoming Walls to Witnessing*, is a brief but powerfully profound resource for those seeking to live on mission. Participants’ lives were radically empowered by understanding and applying the knowledge presented in this booklet. Readers will be prepared to break the barriers of fear, ignorance, apathy, introspection, and busyness.

#### **Fear**

Breaking the barrier of fear involves recognizing its sources.<sup>129</sup> Once the sources of fear are recognized, the biblical responses are articulated. The responses to fear involve both the choices made by the Christian, as well as God’s resources to deal with fear. God’s resources include his power, his love, and the discipline to pray and look for his opportunities to share.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup>Timothy Beougher, *Overcoming Walls to Witnessing* (Minneapolis: Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 1993), 9.

<sup>130</sup>*Ibid.*, 11.

## **Ignorance**

Breaking the barrier of ignorance begins by clarifying the gospel message and methods that may be employed. Specific methods are discussed including gospel booklets or tracts and the development and use of a Christian's testimony. God delights in using ordinary people to share his message and bring him glory. Man's feelings of ignorance can be overcome because God uses the willingness and availability of his followers in him bringing the lost to saving faith. Training opportunities exist and were made available to the participants. Even more important than extensive theological training in witnessing, is developing and employing the desire and motivation to be useful in bringing God glory.

## **Apathy**

Breaking the barrier of apathy may be the single most important wall to overcome in witnessing. Beougher teaches that both emotions and the will must be understood and directed toward God-honoring lives. A vital lesson in overcoming apathy involves choosing God's way, whether or not the individual feels emotionally comfortable at that particular time. Specific steps to develop compassion for the lost are presented. Christians must accept the truth that people outside of Christ are destined for hell. Witnesses must remember they bring Good News and that time is short. Being a faithful witness includes spending consistent time in Scripture, in evangelistic prayer, and actually being with those that are lost.<sup>131</sup>

## **Introspection**

Breaking the barrier of introspection deals with the perception that one must first get their life in order to be an effective witness for Christ. Participants were taught that no perfect human witness exists. Hypocrisy should be identified and eliminated so

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<sup>131</sup>Ibid., 33.

that followers live a consistent life. While living a consistent life is important, the life of the witness is not the gospel. God often uses the weak to express his strength. A key distinction must be made between God's role and man's role in evangelism. Only God brings salvation, but he typically uses people as his means. "Successful witnessing is simply taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God."<sup>132</sup> Lifestyle evangelism takes faith and is essential for missional living.

### **Busyness**

The final barrier to be broken is that of busyness of the witness. Breaking the barrier of busyness is more concerned with *making* time to witness than *finding* time. As with each barrier, Beougher outlines specific steps to take in overcoming them. Identification of priorities is key. The Christian should recognize time is available to witness, and that often Christians simply use their time to do other things they consider more important.<sup>133</sup> Followers of Christ should seek God's perspective on time and eternity. Steps to managing time include identifying time wasters, operating on a schedule, and being creative in how one uses their time.

### **Relationships**

Not only does *Overcoming Walls to Witnessing* provide practical steps to accomplish this task, it also encourages Christians to use their time to seek and develop relationships with non-Christians. Christians should always look to make an initial acquaintance with people around them. The goal of the on-mission Christian should be to advance daily contacts with those near them, moving toward a more significant

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<sup>132</sup>Ibid., 41.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., 43.

relationship.<sup>134</sup> Cultivating common interests and developing “contact points” with non-Christians is vital. After developing a friendship, Christians should look to take the next step and look for an opportunity to share the gospel. In Beougher’s words, “Remember, EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM IS BUILT ON RELATIONSHIPS.”<sup>135</sup> There is no better use of a Christian’s time and life than to live it as a witness on-mission for God’s glory. This booklet serves as a key instrument for Christians to break through the barriers that might otherwise block their success in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### **Conclusion**

God graciously affords a degree of wisdom to all mankind. Much of this wisdom is available through the process of research. God blessed the gathering and employing of this research through this project. The following chapter describes how this research manifested itself in both the design and implementation of the project as church leaders were equipped for missional living.

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<sup>134</sup>Ibid., 50.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid., 53.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This chapter describes the project in detail. The project was known to the church as “Operation Edgar,” named after a long-time and much-loved member of the church, Edgar Fritz, that had passed away recently. His loss served as a wakeup call to many members that asked, “Who is going to take Edgar’s place?” The intent of this project was to equip as many members as possible to emulate Edgar as he emulated Jesus. Edgar was the personification of an everyday missionary. He was a deacon who told the other deacons on many occasions they could do what he did. This project has, and will continue to, better equip the church to (humanly speaking) accept Edgar’s admonition to fulfill God’s mission in this community and beyond.

Significant military actions that entail strategic, prolonged, and coordinated maneuvers are often referred to as an operation. When military commanders label actions as an operation, both military leaders and those enlisted elevate its significance. This was the rationale for the name of this project as “Operation Edgar.” This project was the first stage of a long-term goal to carry out God’s plan for this church to become on-mission for his glory.

#### **Project Topic Selection**

Several topics for projects were seriously considered before selecting the final choice. I considered focusing on identifying and analyzing the spiritual giftedness of the entire congregation. While valuable, that topic was eventually eliminated because of the pressing need to make drastic and systematic changes in as short a time as possible. I also strongly considered focusing the project on biblical evangelism training for the entire congregation. While evangelism training is worthwhile, I have conducted similar efforts

in the past without discernible impact. The greater need of this church was for a more foundational and comprehensive intervention.

The decision to teach the “simple processes” to church leaders aimed at developing more on-mission leaders seemed a more urgent and foundational solution than other project options. Farmdale Baptist Church has struggled to identify its mission, purpose, goals, and plans to accomplish them, which made this project the most potentially beneficial in the life of this church. As a supporting minister on staff, I received confirmation this project would be welcomed by, and beneficial to, the senior pastor as he leads the church into the future. I prayed and asked several key members to join me in prayer to discern God’s will. God confirmed this project selection after much seeking of his will through Scripture reading, prayer, godly counsel, drawing close to God while listening to his still small voice, and discerning his timing.

### **Participant Selection**

It was vital to include participants that could best affect the entire membership, and that possessed the motivation and self-discipline necessary to reach the project’s goals. The ministerial staff met these two key criteria beautifully. The non-staff participants also possessed proven leadership ability and the spiritual maturity to be successful. There were a total of 9 participants, including 6 staff members and 3 other church members. Several additional candidates were approached who declined to participate at this time. As the Minister of Education and Outreach, I originally planned to invite all Bible teachers to be participants, but after further consideration I decided to wait and invite all Bible teachers to be part of the second cycle of the project to begin soon after completion of the first phase.

After finalizing the topic and the goals for the project, I made a list of all potential participants. I then made a face-to-face request to meet with each person to give them a basic overview of the project, along with a written outline of its key aspects, called the Operation Edgar Invitation (see appendix 6). Each potential participant was

asked to consider our conversation, read the written information, speak and pray with their spouse or family, and to earnestly seek God's will. I had several conversations with each participant prior to their decision to participate. The secondary purpose of this project is to create an ongoing process by which all church members will eventually be equipped with these simple processes to live more missional lives. Several members who were invited to participate and declined will be leading candidates to participate in the next phase of the implementation of the project.

The invitation included the name of the project and the rationale that brought it into being. The invitation was meant to be just that, a sincere invitation. I did not want to put any pressure on the other staff members to participate. The purpose was to inform each person about the wonderful opportunity afforded by this final component of the doctor of ministry program at Southern Seminary.

A fair representation of the time commitment the project would entail was included in the invitation, and the starting and ending dates were provided. The time and location of the four "working lunches" that served as the four primary training sessions were also included. The invitation encouraged participants to prayerfully seek God's guidance and to communicate with me regarding any questions. A "call to action" asked for a "yes" or "no" response to two questions. The first question asked, "Is becoming a more missional Christian a priority in my life to the extent I am willing to examine my life and to attempt to make changes necessary to move toward becoming a more on-mission Christian?" The second question stated, "I would like to participate in 'Operation Edgar.'" Participants were asked to sign and date the invitation to signify their commitment to work to become a more missional Christian.

The project was planned and designed to be progressive, reproducible, and ongoing, in order to equip every member in the "simple processes" to become more missional Christians. I also knew that the experience I would gain from phase 1 would teach and equip me to be a more effective leader for the second phase. An added benefit

of this project was that once the simple processes were learned, they could be employed to achieve any worthy goal of both individual church members and the church as a whole.

## **Training Tools**

### **Video as a Training Tool**

A key resource employed to train participants included the Internet. I recorded seven video training segments, posted them to YouTube, and participants were emailed the links (see appendix 7). The videos were recorded for permanent access.<sup>1</sup> The YouTube videos provided several advantages for the participants. The videos were available at any time of the day or night for convenient viewing. Video also allows advantages not possible through the written word. Many people in today's culture learn better when the message is both visual and audible. Participants benefited from both verbal and non-verbal communication, such as excitement and enthusiasm conveyed through this type of "live" instruction. Participants also benefited from being able to pause and review any sections that may have needed clarification. Each of the seven video segments averaged eight and one half minutes, for a total of sixty minutes. Each video allowed ample time to teach the most important aspects of each section. The teaching videos included an introduction to the project, the biblical and theological foundation, as well as an overview of the simple processes of clarity, movement, alignment, and focus.

### **Training Outline**

Participants were provided with a handout that went along with each video training segment and was known as the Training Outline (see appendix 8). The outline provided an easy-to-follow tool with a logical progression through each topic being taught. The outline also engaged participants in order to hold their attention throughout each segment. Participants were encouraged to make additional notes in the margins.

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<sup>1</sup>The videos may be accessed via the electronic links listed in appendix 7.

The completed outline also provided a written record participants could refer to for review, either with or without re-watching the videos. The videos also served to reinforce the material I presented in the live training sessions.

The training outline began with a brief introduction that described the overall purpose of the project. Participants were told that an undertaking of this magnitude would require great effort. Participants were encouraged to count the cost before committing to the project. The philosophies behind the books *Simple Church* and *Simple Life* were discussed.<sup>2</sup> A key principle to the project explained that “desire without specificity typically leads nowhere.”<sup>3</sup> Participants were encouraged to move from being a “wandering generality” to become a “meaningful specific.”<sup>4</sup> The *purpose* of the project was to equip participants to more effectively make disciples, while the *process* provided the instructions to achieve the purpose.

The training outline then addressed the process of clarity. One effective technique to help participants gain clarity involved taking a cemetery perspective.<sup>5</sup> Psalm 39:4 speaks to a proper attitude toward our lives: “Lord, reveal to me the end of my life and the number of my days. Let me know how short-lived I am.” To this end, I researched each participant’s birthday and calculated the number of days they had already lived as of the first training session. I then took the average life span of men and women in our area and calculated the number of remaining days each participant might expect to live. This exercise made it clear to each participant that time is indeed short, and living on-mission is an urgent matter!

The clarity outline asked participants to consider their God-given purpose,

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<sup>2</sup>Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville: B & H, 2006); Thom S. Rainer and Art Rainer, *Simple Life* (Nashville: B & H, 2009).

<sup>3</sup>Rainer and Rainer, *Simple Life*, 256.

<sup>4</sup>Zig Ziglar, *See You At The Top* (Gretna, LA: Pelican, 1979), 165.

<sup>5</sup>Rainer and Rainer, *Simple Life*, 21.

along with their goals and plans to achieve them. Developing a strategy, a blueprint, and a plan were encouraged. Mission statements are absolutely critical to living on-mission. Participants learned that a mission statement states where one intends to go, and how they intend to get there. Mission statements are starting points that must be intended to be accomplished. Good mission statements must include a plan and process to make progress, include accountability, and be unique to each person.<sup>6</sup> The final training regarding missional clarity taught that priorities must be identified. Specific goals must be identified, measurable, and written down. Finally, one's activities must be in line with their priorities.

The training outline addressed the process of movement. Participants learned that while clarity involves intentions and plans, movement involves actions. Movement involves the sequential action steps that flow from one's mission statement. Movement requires removing or reducing congestion that blocks the missional life. Two key blockages to living on-mission include non-focused activities and selfishness or self-consuming desires. Participants learned that movement is prayerful, forgetful, intentional, incremental, immediate, and resilient.<sup>7</sup> Accountability to both man and God are vital to create missional movement.

The training outline addressed the process of missional alignment. To communicate the concept of alignment, I shared an analogy of driving a car that is out of alignment. This would cause a car to veer away from its intended destination. Alignment calls on Christians to make an honest self-assessment, accountability, to match one's personality with their plans and goals, and to remain flexible while accepting human imperfections.<sup>8</sup>

The final process addressed in the training outline dealt with missional focus.

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 256.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 272.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 289.

Participants learned that focus involves deciding what really matters, saying “yes” to the best, and “no” to the rest. The missional Christian strives to eliminate the “good” to focus on the “best.” Focus involves refusing to postpone necessary actions and avoiding the tyranny of the urgent.

### **Survey Development**

The most important tools developed for the project were the pre- and post-project surveys. These surveys served several vital functions. The study and preparation involved in producing the surveys proved invaluable to my ability to equip the participants. As a Christian educator, I appreciate the importance of determining the needs of my students, to carefully exegete God’s Word, and then to apply that Word to the lives of my students. Developing these surveys first required I learn the simple processes and internalize their principles. This process required several re-readings of these two “simple” books. The simple processes became clearer to me and allowed me to impart this knowledge in the most appropriate form to each participant.

Four primary surveys were developed and each survey highlighted the most important aspects of each process, including clarity, movement, alignment and focus. All surveys began with a brief summary of the key aspects of each process. Each pre-project survey dealt with beliefs and practices of the participants before their participation in the project. The surveys employed a response scale following the Likert model. Participants were instructed to carefully consider each question and to respond by selecting “strongly disagree,” “disagree,” “disagree somewhat,” “agree somewhat,” “agree,” or “strongly agree.” Participants were also invited to briefly comment to clarify their answers. Each survey concluded with an affirming and encouraging comment to participants as they sought to implement each process in their lives.

The pre-project Clarity Survey asked participants for their level of agreement with four statements. Participants were asked to respond to statements including, “My life is intentionally mission-focused, I know specifically where to begin to live a more

effective missional life, I have a written personal mission statement that guides my daily activities, and I currently have a specific plan that I can articulate to live a missional life.” Each question forced participants to deeply consider their lives in terms of its clarity to live on-mission. The post-project survey asked the same questions, with the slight adjustment to their positions after completing Operation Edgar.

The pre-project Movement Survey began by offering a solid overview of the key aspects of this process. The first three questions dealt with the movement participants experienced over the previous year as they sought to move toward being a more missional Christian. The next three questions addressed issues surrounding participants’ prayer lives, specifically, their evangelistic prayer lives. The final two questions involved being intentional and incremental to move toward growing as a missional Christian. The post-project survey simply re-phrased the questions to reflect their post-project positions.

The pre-project Alignment Survey began with a brief overview of the process. The first three questions required participants to think deeply about the congestion, blockages, and challenges they face in living a more missional life. Participants were asked to briefly identify and address each obstacle with comments. The final two questions included, “I was continually aware of the reality of spiritual warfare in my life last year,” and “Daily I put on the full armor of God last year.” The survey concluded with positive affirmations related to obstacles and Christ’s victory over the enemy. The post-survey simply re-phrased the comments to measure responses after the project.

The final process to be surveyed dealt with participants’ ability to focus on missional living. Participants were asked to comment on their level of missional living last year, as well as any attempts to take an inventory of how they used their time. The survey sought to determine participants’ willingness to re-prioritize their activities to focus on missional living and eliminating “good” activities. The final questions involved their consideration of good intentions that failed to materialize last year. The post-survey

measured any changes in their positions after the project.

### **Chronological Implementation**

Six weeks prior to the launch of Operation Edgar, very basic promotion began to the church as a whole. I made a special announcement at the beginning of the Sunday morning worship service sharing that this effort would begin in six weeks. While participants in the first round of the project were limited to specific staff members and three other members, the prayers of the entire church were vitally important to its success. A core group of prayer partners included myself, the pastor, and a person acknowledged as the prayer leader in the church.

A photograph of Edgar at a recent church outing was produced and included the words, “Operation Edgar.” This photograph served as the primary icon or logo for the project. The photo was of Edgar engaging a child with a wonderful smile that communicated his love and Christlike concern for others. The image was projected each Sunday morning as one of the slides in the pre-service announcements. The image was also posted at several high visibility locations inside the church building to help keep the project in the hearts and minds of all church members.

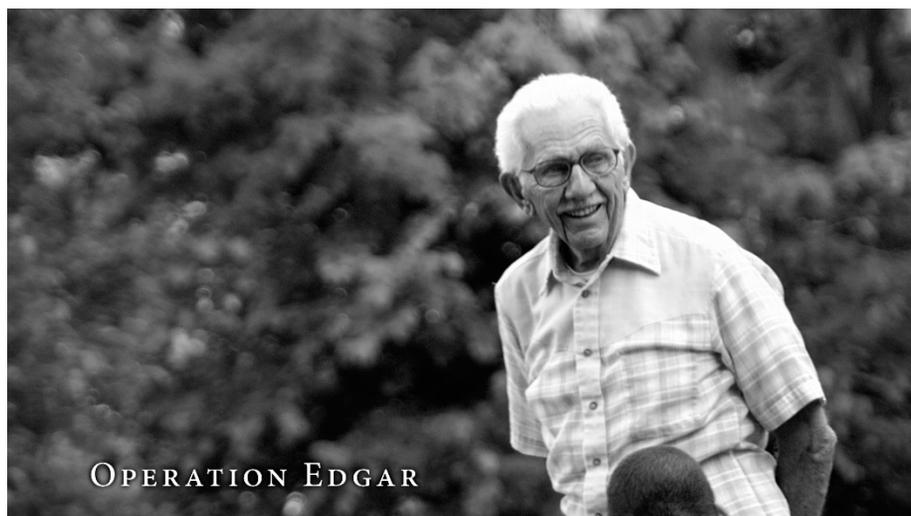


Figure 5. Operation Edgar logo

Five weeks prior to the launch, basic promotion continued with a special request for members to consider adopting a project participant as a prayer partner. Potential participants were encouraged to keep their prayer partner(s) informed throughout the project regarding their activities and specific needs for prayer. Prayer partners were also asked to serve as encouragers to their specific participant.

Four weeks prior to launch, prospective participants were given specific details as to the purpose, goals of the project, and expectations of participants. A Pre-Project Survey, known to participants as the Operation Edgar Invitation, served to invite participants. This tool provided an initial explanation of the project and asked questions to determine if potential participants were willing to seek God's will for their lives and make the necessary sacrifices to grow as an everyday missionary. This survey helped eliminate potential participants who, for whatever reason, did not feel called to participate at the time. Dates were provided for the four required training meetings to be held the first four weeks of the project.

Three weeks prior to the launch of the project, promotion continued and general prayer was again be requested. Potential prayer partners were encouraged to seek God's will if they should become a specific participant's prayer partner. Sunday school classes were also informed of these issues and invited to participate through prayer and encouragement.

Two weeks prior to launch of the project, nine participants were confirmed. I provided additional information to each participant at that time that expanded on the processes of clarity, movement, alignment, and focus. This material included pre-project surveys that prompted participants to take an inventory of their lives in light of these specific processes. The surveys were re-administered to participants at the conclusion of the project. The pre- and post-surveys served as a foundation in each area that participants were encouraged to build upon. These surveys were important tools to help evaluate the effectiveness of the project.

One week prior to the launch of the project, promotion, prayer, and preparation continued and intensified. Participants and prayer partners were reminded of the upcoming four training meetings beginning the following week immediately after the Sunday morning worship service. All four training meetings were one and a half hour “working lunches.” The church provided lunch for all participants. I provided a more detailed outline of the plan for first meeting with additional material at this time.

### **The Launch**

The day of the launch of the project began with a churchwide special Sunday school lesson focusing on one of the key biblical texts that make up the theological foundation of this project. These verses included The Great Commandment (Matt 22:34-40), the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20), Jesus’ instruction to pray for workers or harvesters to be sent out (Luke 10:1-2), Paul’s teaching to put on spiritual armor (Eph 6:10-20), and Paul’s teaching about a missionary’s mentality of becoming all things to all people to save more (1 Cor 9:19-23).

The morning worship service included a special “Commissioning Service” as participants were set apart and sent out as missionaries to our community. The sermon included an exposition of Luke 10:1-2 to pray for harvesters to be sent out into the ripe harvest fields. This passage was selected because it spoke to the church as a whole and offered the most immediate impact on the church to begin bringing about a missionary focus and missionary success.

The entire worship service, including the songs, prayers, offering, and sermon was planned around the theme that all Christians are sent out as missionaries to the world. Prayer was presented as the key and foundational element to becoming an on-mission church. An elderly couple that had served as lifelong foreign missionaries gave the charge to all participants to embark on this project as missionaries to the community. At the end of the service, the congregation filed past the participants in the front of the sanctuary and offered their prayers, encouragement, and appreciation to each participant.

It was a meaningful and stirring launch to the project.

The first training meeting took place immediately after the morning “Launch service.” Each participant and prayer partner were expected to be in attendance at the first training meeting. Prayer partners were invited to gain a much more realistic preview of how they might best pray for their particular participant. Any church members that were interested in learning more about “Operation Edgar” were also invited to sit in as observers. The meeting was attended by the nine participants.

The first meeting opened, continued, and ended in a spirit of prayer and pleading for God’s will to be done, as was every meeting. Prayer was the key activity as participants and the church strived to become more on-mission with God. Edgar’s widow, Jeanne, is an acknowledged prayer warrior. She was asked to lead in the opening prayers of this project named for her husband. Jeanne’s prayer served to inspire and launch the project on a positive trajectory.

The first meeting included a full overview of the project and included exercises to examine the theological and biblical values of the participants. Participants completed a survey to measure their level of agreement with biblical positions set forth in the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. The Baptist Faith and Message is a group of principles and positions that attempts to summarize what the members of the Southern Baptist Convention believe.<sup>9</sup>I addressed each question and provided sound biblical exposition of the key texts. The key principle was that no “wider hope” existed outside of repentance of sin and belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

I also presented a time of “shock therapy” depicting the urgency for church transformation to missional living. Complacency and inertia were met with an exhortation to love people, pray for the power of the Holy Spirit, and go on the offensive for the kingdom. It was vital to break the pre-occupation of the status quo and “jolt”

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<sup>9</sup>Southern Baptist Convention, “The Baptist Faith and Message,” accessed February 2, 2013, <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp>.

participants into an awareness of the need to become a missional church.

The final activity at the first training meeting was to hand out the assignment to be completed before the next training meeting. This material included preparation and development of personal mission statements and plans to begin achieving them. Prayer was offered as participants were “sent out” to begin living out their new focus as missionaries to the community.

The second training meeting began with a brief review including questions and answers from the preceding week. The first new training topic addressed mission statement development. Training on formulating effective plans was the next primary topic. I shared material to assist in preparation for the next meeting to address time management.

The third training meeting began by addressing any remaining questions or issues up to this point. Participants were asked to work to hone and improve their mission statements if necessary. I led a time of discussion as participants formulated and worked to complete their written plans. Plans were to meet the simple requirements of being actions steps that were intentional and incremental. We also discussed lines of accountability. The final topic for the third meeting involved time management.

The fourth and final scheduled training meeting was a time of reviewing the details of implementing the sequential and simple processes. Each process was once again summarized and discussed. New topics for this meeting included basic evangelism training, overcoming obstacles to witnessing, and reporting techniques (see appendix 9).

As the leader, I attempted to keep in regular contact with each participant throughout the project. Participants were encouraged to document their activity and progress throughout weeks 5 to 14. Week 15 was to include a churchwide time in Sunday school for participants to share their experiences with their class. The worship service was to feature pre-recorded video segments where participants shared their experiences with the entire church. These videos and the training outline will be placed

on the church website. I asked the church body to prayerfully consider participating in the next phase of Operation Edgar.

We planned a celebration for what God had done through the participants at a final luncheon. I will continually welcome and encourage input to improve any aspect of the project. The church is seeking God's guidance on how and when to proceed. With God's leading and empowerment, it is our prayer that he will continue to lead us to transform to a more missional church for his glory.

### **Leading by Example**

As the leader of this project, I agree with the old adage that more is caught than taught. The most effective teaching occurs when a leader sets an example, not simply speaks. Another wise and true saying is that "your actions speak so loudly, people cannot hear what you are saying." I participated in every aspect of this project alongside the official participants.

I strive to make Scripture my foundation and anchor for every thought and action. One of my first actions was to consider and identify what is often referred to as one's "life verse." I identified two of the most well-known passages as my key life verses. The first is the Great Commandment, to love God with all my heart, soul, and mind, and to love my neighbor as myself. My other key life passage is the Great Commission, to go and make disciples, under the authority of Christ, while teaching others to obey God's commands. My written primary life goal is to glorify God by seeking (a) to continually grow in my love relationship with him, (b) moving me to develop relationships with non-Christians, leading them toward, and into, saving relationships with Jesus, (c) while developing loving relationships with new Christians, leading them toward greater Christlikeness.

I defined "relationships" as those which are (a) immediate and may involve only a single interaction with a stranger (i.e., a person sitting next to me on an airline flight), (b) sporadic relationships with acquaintances, (c) regular relationships with

friends, and (d) ongoing relationships with family and close friends. My attempt to find “clarity” in my life led me to identify my primary life goal of loving God, loving people, and making disciples.

My attempt to see “movement” toward continually growing in my love relationship with God included a plan to grow in the depth and breadth of my Scripture reading and prayer life. This happened by prioritizing Scripture reading, meditation, and prayer. Ten specific actions steps included a consistent time and place to read Scripture and pray before I engaged any person at the beginning of each day. I made an intentional decision to think deeply about how God’s Word applies to my everyday life. I committed to read and listen to Scripture and pray at creative times, such as when doing other activities, including driving on the interstate.

I gave significant time and consideration to things in my life that created congestion and barriers to moving toward my goal to love God and my neighbor completely. A key distraction to my relationship with God and others involved materialism and worrying about finances. My relationship with God and others also suffers from my natural tendency to be introverted and self-centered.

I resolved to take over a dozen specific action steps to overcome or minimize my barriers. A key action was to regularly pray through, and trust in, God’s promise to provide for mine and my family’s needs. I regularly read and mediated on Matthew 6:25-34 where Jesus teaches his followers to not worry about their lives, but to first seek his kingdom. I also regularly asked God to help me be more outgoing and aware of where he was working in my midst.

I made an action plan with specific steps to develop relationships with non-Christians, leading them toward, and into, saving relationships with Jesus. I specifically committed to engage at least two people each week to (a) understand each person’s spiritual standing before God, (b) ascertain if God was working in their lives, and (c) be willing and ready to share the love of God, and his truth, up to and including a full gospel

presentation.

The final aspect in “clarifying” my primary life goal and plan was aimed at developing loving relationships with new and weaker Christians, leading them to greater Christlikeness. A key aspect to move toward that goal included an intentional decision to engage new and weaker Christians. I aligned my life with this goal by doing my best to match my mission statement with my personality, demeanor, spiritual gifts, background, and abilities. I focused my attention on this aspect of my mission by acknowledging that wasting time is a sin, and I made a solemn commitment to not wasting any time God chooses to provide. Full participation in this project gave me a much deeper and accurate sense of how best to lead the participants through the process of becoming a more missional Christian.

### **Post-Project Survey**

The most important survey of the entire project was the Post-Project Survey (see appendix 10). Participants were asked to respond with their level of agreement to five statements, including, “I am better equipped to live a life that is more missions-focused as a result of participation in this project.” Participants were also asked to write brief comments after each statement to clarify their responses. Plenty of space for comments was provided. This single question was the key question in the project. The second question sought to assess the participants’ degree of expectation that they would—in fact—live a more missions-focused life as a result of their participation. The third statement asked participants to complete this thought, “In terms of living a more missions-focused life, the most helpful aspect of my participation in this project included . . .” Participants were reminded that a key goal of this project was to ultimately equip every member of the church to live more missions-focused. The fourth question asked, “What changes to this project do you suggest in order to help ensure that its goal is met for future participants?” The final question asked participants to provide any additional comments concerning this project and/or their thoughts for how our church might become

more on-mission for Christ in our everyday lives.

A post-project focus group meeting was also planned. The rationale behind this meeting was that the group dynamics might produce a synergy prompting new and previously unconsidered insights. The focus group meeting also benefitted from the verbal nature of the meeting, while not requiring the formality of written comments. Non-verbal communication could also be assessed in this type of forum. While this chapter described the key aspects of the project, the following chapter carefully evaluates the degree to which its goals and purposes were achieved.

## CHAPTER 5

### PROJECT EVALUATION

Evaluation of any ministry activity is vital to get a sense for its alignment with God-given principles, processes, and activities that He most often chooses to bless. In my ministry, evaluation has far too often been undervalued, ignored, and even avoided. The opportunity to participate in the doctor of ministry program, culminating in this ministry project, deserves and demands careful evaluation. I desire that this evaluation leads to growth in every aspect of my life as a minister, and to growth in the church in which I serve. In this chapter, success and failures are identified with an eye to equip missional leaders. I believe the old adage is true, “Something worth doing, is worth doing poorly, until one learns to do it well.” This chapter evaluates the fulfillment of the project’s purposes, goals, strengths and weaknesses, and how future efforts will be changed to better honor God. This chapter also considers lessons I learned about God and his church. Finally, I share personal reflections of what I learned as a minister.

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

The primary purpose of this project was to develop a process to equip the leaders of the church for greater missional living. The project may be decisive in terms of the long-term future, and even existence of this church. God sovereignly orchestrated events to bring this project to this church at exactly this time. The secondary purpose of the project was to create a continual cycle of leading groups of church members through the process of a course of re-vitalization and healthy growth. I am more confident than ever this specific project was God’s desire for this church.

The simple answer to the question, “Did the project fulfill its purpose?” is

“yes.” The church is on its way to transitioning to an on-mission church, in part, because of this project. Early evidence indicates that the foundation has been laid on which the church can build a much stronger and healthier on-mission church. This chapter summarizes the evidence for this conclusion.

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

The simple processes that formed the structure of this project made the evaluation of the project straight forward. While not perfectly sequential, each of the four processes naturally leads to the next. Establishing incremental goals for each process also provided a built-in evaluation tool. The training tools I developed also helped the participants understand the processes involved in developing missional clarity, movement, alignment and focus. These tools not only served as a blueprint for the participants, but even as a more detailed road map within each major process.

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

The initial process to determine the actual project topic was sound and achieved its goals. It was encouraging to have an assurance this project was, in fact, God’s desire for this church. I made every effort to hear from God and what he was doing at our church, and then to get on-board. I did everything possible to avoid doing just another “seminary assignment.” Feeling confident this project was God’s desire made the sometimes long and challenging process more meaningful and enjoyable.

The initial process of determining the potential participants worked well. Asking for such a significant commitment of time and energy was served well by face-to-face meetings with all potential participants. The fact that several non-staff leaders in the church declined to participate, may have been a result of not approaching them in the best way. While I have not specifically followed up with several members who declined to participate, I assume they did not see the vision of the church changing to become more missional. While I was discouraged by their decision not to participate at that time, I now

believe it was a blessing. The time and effort involved in this project was more than I had envisioned. Any potential participant that was not totally committed may have chosen to drop out of the project. Thankfully, 9 participants completed the project.

The “Operation Edgar Invitation” tool effectively served its purpose. It did an excellent job of clearly providing a realistic preview of the entire project. The concept of living everyday as a missionary had never been proposed as clearly and comprehensively as in this document. The invitation helped to provide church leaders with a vision of where God was calling the church to be—and more importantly—how the church might get there.

### **Evaluating the Pre-Launch and Launch**

The pre-launch activities did a reasonably good job of preparing the participants and the church for the project. Preparing for the launch six weeks before it occurred helped in its success. The church was aware that a significant effort was about to take place. The logo for the project featuring Edgar helped raise visibility and awareness. The fact that Edgar Fritz was much-loved by the entire church helped create a positive perception of the project. The pre-launch process allowed potential participants to have time to pray and consider their involvement. Prayer partners also were developed during this period.

The actual launch of the project went beautifully. The Sunday school lesson in every class that morning helped build the theological foundation. The teachers were asked to intentionally connect their passage with the application of this project. The worship service was a wonderfully moving and God-honoring experience. Every person in attendance that day could not miss the urgency and excitement of a new missionary endeavor. It was particularly symbolic that an elderly missionary couple from the church gave the charge to each participant. I believed this symbolized an elderly church passing

the baton to a new generation of missionaries. The congregation experienced a Spirit-filled sense of expectation.

### **Evaluating the Training**

The first training session immediately followed the special commissioning service. Edgar's widow offered an emotional and glorious prayer that this effort would bring much glory to God. Each of the four training meetings addressed the subjects as I had planned. Participants were very complimentary after each session. While already good friends, a deeper sense of camaraderie developed between the participants. Each training session appeared to have been successful in reaching its goals.

The training videos were recognized by several participants as the most helpful aspect of the training. I had never recorded video segments for training purposes until this time. The advent of easy-to-use computers, video cameras and software, and the internet all came together to train participants effectively. I will absolutely supplement my future training programs with this type of tool.

Four surveys constituted the key method of evaluating the project itself and the results of the project. Each survey served its purpose well. The first survey asked participants to consider their theological foundation by means of their level of agreement with key aspects of the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message. The second survey provided a detailed account of how the participants thought about, and lived out, the simple processes of being more missional Christians. The third survey identified the incremental goals and actions that made up each of the processes of clarity, movement, alignment and focus. The fourth survey asked several questions, including the most telling question in the entire project, "Am I better equipped to live on mission as a result of participating in this project?" The Likert scale proved to be a valuable tool in collecting, analyzing, and evaluating a large amount of diverse data.

**The survey of theological beliefs.** The survey of the participants' theological

positions proved to be helpful in assessing the effectiveness of their performance in this project. I had predicted that growing as an everyday missionary would correlate with one's theological assumptions. While not perfect, the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message provides a fair and reliable standard by which participants' theological foundations could be evaluated. The final results did tend to match my prediction that those which held a higher view of Scripture exhibited more growth than those with a slightly lower view. The teaching I provided against any "wider hope" held by participants challenged some, but ultimately encouraged them to engage lost people they encountered every day. Unlike the other surveys, not every participant completed and returned this survey.

**The simple process surveys.** The pre- and post-simple process surveys produced the most information during the project. This tool also provided insights not only to the actual level of missional living, but also exposed participants' true value they placed on missional living. This survey did an excellent job of identifying the level of missional activity as well as any growth as a result of the project. Individual Christians have different levels of living on-mission. The overriding goal of this project was to take every participant from their current level of missional engagement, and equip them for growth. God gives each Christian different spiritual gifts and aptitudes, but he calls every Christian to be obedient to make disciples.

The post-project survey showed that every participant displayed some degree of missional growth. The process of clarity showed the highest level of growth, which I had expected. Of the four major processes, clarity received the most time and attention during training. This stands to reason because clarity is the foundation of the other simple processes. The most growth in a specific aspect of clarity involved development of personal mission statements. This project asked each participant to prayerfully develop a mission statement that expressed their desire to grow in missional engagement, along with plans to achieve their mission. It was helpful to stress the absolute necessity

for a well-developed mission statement. Allowing participants time to discuss and work on mission statements during the training sessions also contributed to their success.

The second greatest growth as measured by the pre- and post-simple survey was that of focus. I had predicted the implementation of this process would prove the most difficult for participants, but was very happy to see that I was wrong. Focus is essential because without it, the other processes are useless. Participants were able to show healthy growth by giving up at least one “good” activity in order to focus on a “better,” more missional activity.

The next most successfully implemented process was that of missional movement. Participants showed healthy growth in terms of actually making progress toward becoming more on-mission every day. All but one participant grew in regard to movement. The participants showed healthy growth in terms of their evangelistic prayer lives. While my teaching on prayer was not limited to this process, the entire process of movement did stress the value of evangelistic prayer.

The process of participants aligning their lives with those of a missionary showed the least growth, which brings to light an area where the leaders may need additional training. Perhaps a spiritual gifts assessment might help participants better match their desire to make disciples with their God-given gifts. I stressed during the project that missional living should take on many various forms because God designed each person as a unique individual. For example, the missional living of a worship leader might look entirely different from that of an outreach leader.

**The survey of process details.** The third survey helped participants intentionally and incrementally grow to be more on-mission (see appendix 11). All participants showed at least some growth in each of the four major processes. This survey closely reflected the results from the more comprehensive survey, but served to guide and hold participants accountable to specific actions. The survey indicated slightly

more growth in the process of clarity than the other processes.

**The survey of post-project comments.** Perhaps the most enlightening survey was the final survey asking open-ended questions and for comments. This survey also asked the pointed question, “Am I better equipped to live a more mission-focused life as a result of my participation in this project?” The average response by all participants showed significant growth. As with all surveys, I quantified respondents’ growth, or lack of growth, by attributing a value to each answer on the Likert scales: strongly disagree 1, disagree 2, disagree somewhat 3, agree somewhat 4, agree 5, and strongly agree 6. In response to this question, participants reported an average growth of 5.25, which corresponds to an average beyond simply “agree,” while not to the point of “strongly agree.” The responses to this question indicate real missional growth has occurred.

The final three questions of the last survey asked participants to comment and to evaluate the project itself, as well as their performance. Participant 3 made comments that mirrored several others: “The most helpful aspect of my participation in this project included putting my goals into words, and recognizing my shortcomings as an everyday missionary.” This person went on to write that a suggestion for future projects might include more practical application, accountability, group discussion, and to highlight people in the church who are being missional. Finally, this participant shared that “the church needs to see missional action in its leaders, not just hear about it from the pulpit or in a Sunday school class.” I whole-heartedly agree with these comments. I am confident participants are now better equipped to live on-mission before the church.

## **Strengths of the Project**

### **A Great Commission Focus**

While far from perfect, there were several strengths of this project. The greatest strength was to bring the Great Commission to the forefront of the culture and purposes of this church. The accepted culture and existing church mission statement

presents the mission of the church as worship, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, and service. This project clearly taught me that the overriding mission of the church is the Great Commission. While the church does, in fact, worship together, fellowship, and serve, its highest and most clear mission is to make disciples. I am sorry to say that this church had lost its primary mission, among the many good activities of the church.

A related strength of the project was that it caused me, as a leader, to identify and make the necessary commitment to tackle the most significant problem of the church. The largest problem faced is that we are failing to live out the Great Commission in our everyday lives. As a church, and even as leaders, I am concerned that we had lost our way in terms of making disciples. This project forced me to follow God's leading as he prepared me to equip the staff to live more on-mission. Now that we, as leaders, are becoming better examples, we are more empowered to lead others to follow in our footsteps.

### **Theological Research**

Chapter 2 of this process called on me to more carefully examine the Scriptures to help me determine God's will and plan for this church. The theological research gave me a broader and deeper understanding of God's will for his church than I had ever experienced. I believe the passages God led me to study were exactly the foundation necessary to build and carry out this project. I have an even deeper appreciation for the perfection of God's Word and its power to radically change individuals and churches.

### **Sociological Research**

I now have a more broad understanding of how sociological, theoretical, and practical research can benefit the local church. The most profound aspect of this research is that of God-ordained processes. I now appreciate the importance of the word "process" in terms of how God often chooses to accomplish his work in this world. He is a God on-mission through processes. His greatest process is to bring himself glory through the

process of redeeming his fallen creation to himself.

A strength of the process of this project was to gain a better understanding of the nature of an on-mission Christian. I have studied the tension between contending for the faith, while keeping the mentality of a missionary. I do not claim to understand the exact relationship, but I am on my way to gaining more of God's insight to this question. God is continuing to teach me through both lessons as I seek to be a more faithful disciple and church leader.

A strength of the project included me completing the finest theological training available anywhere and applying it in a real and vitally important context. This project has allowed me an ideal opportunity to move theological training from my head to my hands and feet. Eternity has been changed because of this chance to carry out this project. As I draw near the end of my formal seminary training, I am convicted of the need to apply what I have learned, even more than gaining additional theological education. Knowledge without application is useless.

A related strength of the project was that it helped me to determine where God was leading our church, and how he called us to follow him. This church has been declining for many years. As the minister of education and outreach, God has called me to serve under our pastor to help lead the church. I have served in this role for eight years. During that time, I had never stepped back to plead with God to give me the full vision of how to better serve this church. I have been intensely motivated to see revitalization of the church that I love; the church where I became a Christian twenty years ago. However, until beginning this project, I was at a loss as to how best to help lead and equip the church to become healthy. I now believe I will be applying the principles God taught me during this project for the rest of my ministry career.

The thought behind the old saying, "Do as I say, not as I do," has no place in ministry. A significant strength of this project was that it forced me to lead by example. If I were not exhibiting the lifestyle of an everyday missionary, I would have no

credibility in attempting to lead and equip the church in this way. While there are many changes I will make in the next phase of this project, the key element I will never change is that any person leading a church to live on-mission must be able to say, “Follow me as I follow Christ.”

The church benefited from the participants learning how to break down barriers to spread the gospel. Participants now have a much higher sense of the need to identify and minimize unnecessary barriers to the gospel. A key strength of the project involved raising the awareness of the biblical command to engage culture with the love and truth of God. The spiritual discipline of evangelism and growing disciples is now prominent in the lives of the participants. Participants’ higher recognition of the Great Commission, combined with the equipping they received during this project, is an important strength of the project.

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

This project was far from perfect. The key weakness involved my inability to distill what began as an enormous amount of study and research into a “simple” process to make disciples. It is somewhat ironic that the “simple” processes I sought to implement, far too often failed to seem “simple” to both myself and the participants. Several participants felt overloaded with the sheer amount of data with which they were given. This project often times seemed more complex than simple. Complexity often found its way into the teaching, and the learning, of the project. A key principle of the simple processes is that “simplicity is in, and complexity is out.” I failed to make the project simple rather than complex.

A significant weakness of the project involved too little attention to address why leaders should be motivated to participate in the project. While every member “bought in” to the project, a much stronger foundation should have been built before the actual building process commenced. I failed to realize that several of the participants did

not begin with the same level of commitment to the goals of the project. More than half the members, including the author, were over the age of fifty. These participants may have been more conditioned to continuing to live their lives in pretty much the same way they had in the past. Old habits are hard to break.

I failed to appreciate how dramatically I was asking participants to change. Spending more time on the need for change would have served the participants well. As my research revealed, change is often difficult to embrace. In total, the simple processes entailed making dramatic changes. The ability to change is influenced directly by long standing beliefs and life patterns of the participants. I should have worked harder to allow participants to change to become more missional at their own pace.

A related weakness of the project included trying to complete a process that should have taken a year or more, in a fifteen-week period. From the outset, I realized the fifteen-week limitation would be a challenge and likely weakness of the project. While it did constitute a weakness, I am still convinced this is the project God called me to perform. The weakness is that such significant and dramatic changes are difficult to facilitate in such a short timeframe. I will stress to participants that the next phase of the project will include at least twice the time to allow for each stage of the process to not be rushed. The fifteen-week limitation may have added to the sense of complexity of the project.

A weakness of the project involved only planning four formal training sessions. The four sessions did not allow the participants enough time to adequately pray, think, and work through the processes as they needed. The limited training time left many questions and issues unresolved. The fact that we combined time for prayer, and time to each lunch during the one and one half hour meetings left some participants with questions but without time to address them. Insufficient time was also appropriated for group discussion. Participants may have gotten the impression that their questions and concerns were undervalued. As the leader of the meetings, I tended to monopolize the limited time

by lecturing in order to cover the pre-determined subject matter.

The project lacked the necessary level of accountability. Several participants commented that they would have benefited from more accountability. As the leader, I should have invested more time in individual discussions with each participant and included more intentional accountability. Prayer partners were to also serve as accountability partners. While the prayer support was vital, their practical ability to hold their participant accountable was limited. I believe that an accountability partner should have a closer working knowledge of the individual processes. For the most part, prayer partners did not have a good understanding of the many individual components for each process. Participants may have failed to provide clear instructions to their prayer partners as to how to most effectively provide accountability. As the leader, I should have sought greater accountability for myself. I failed to not only provide the proper level of accountability to the participants, but also to take advantage of my pastor's offer for accountability. I relied too heavily on self-accountability.

### **What I Would do Differently**

The topic of what I would do differently if I were to do the project again is not merely theoretical or academic. This project is intended to be ongoing at this church. I have already begun discussing making changes to Operation Edgar for the next group of participants. The entire evaluation process is ongoing. I will meet again with each participant to ask for input regarding changes that need to be made.

Perhaps the most important change to make is to simplify the approach of structuring the process. The process should be so simple that participants can summarize and communicate the key aspects in just a few sentences. The future leaders of the project should have a simple outline, structures, and tools to equip Christians for missional living.

A key change will be to offer different levels of depth for those participants that desire to "go deeper" in their efforts to live on-mission. The current structure might

be considered as a “level 3” involvement. Perhaps participants will all be introduced to a version of the project that provides the basic tenants of the simple processes to develop more missional Christians. A second level might entail slightly more detailed instruction. Each of the potential levels would also correlate to the time available and commitment level of each participant. The primary model might be the simplest version, while the leader would individually let participants know that there are more detailed training packages available. Group training time would focus on the simplest model, and other training opportunities would be made available for those seeking additional training.

The participants in the next phase of this project will change. The church staff will be invited to go through the simple processes again if they would like to reinforce and build upon their experience in the initial project. Members from this group may also lead their own group through the processes. The deacon body will be prime candidates for the second phase of the project. Bible teachers will also be invited to participate. These two groups should possess the motivation and spiritual maturity to benefit from this opportunity. These groups also serve as leaders of the church in many ways. Eventually, every member will be encouraged to participate in Operation Edgar.

A key change to future projects will be to encourage participants by highlighting their joys and success stories as they go through the project. The leader of the next phase should make it a priority to build-up and celebrate even the smallest victories. This should be done appropriately by using as many types of communication as possible, including video clips, announcements from the pulpit, the church newsletter, the church website, and social media.

Each identified weaknesses of the project should be addressed and changed where possible. The foundation of the motivation for the project should be made as clear as possible. The important role of change in the Christian’s life should also be stressed. The timeframe of the project should be extended to allow more time to implement each process. There should be more planned training sessions. Accountability should be

greatly improved. Finally, more attention should be focused on the absolutely necessity for prayer in all aspects of this endeavor. God alone uses the weak to shame the strong. He alone advances his kingdom and mission on the earth. Prayer is the engine of the church seeking to live on-mission.

### **Theological Reflections**

I have learned several exciting things about God as a result of this project. While at some level I already had a knowledge of many aspects of who God is, this project brought several characteristics into greater focus. Perhaps the greatest lesson that I learned about God is that he is on-mission. God is glorifying himself through a missionary process that points to his character. He desires the worship of all his creatures. He revealed himself as a perfect, holy, and loving God that is on-mission to redeem a people to himself. Jesus is the pinnacle of God's missional heart. He was sent into the world as Immanuel, to manifest God among us.

Through this project, I learned that God often sovereignly ordains human means to accomplishing his will of bringing him glory. God sent every believer into the world to represent him and share the truth of who Jesus is and how he came to seek and save the lost. No Christian can avoid the fact that God calls them to love their neighbors, share the gospel, and make disciples.

The experience from this project taught me about God's Church. I am learning that the local church requires leadership. Our church, like any church, is made up of weak and frail members that need godly leadership. God has called me and others to lead this church to accomplish the goals that He has set. Churches without missional leadership are not likely to faithfully carry out the Great Commission. Leaders must do their best to discover God's mission and then equip his people to carry out that mission. Christian leaders have been called by God to equip the church to recognize and accomplish his will. Humanly speaking, the church will rise or fall with the level of missional leadership.

I learned that God's church can benefit by employing strategic processes. While God will build his church, he often chooses to build his church where leaders seek out and employ God-given principles and processes. I learned that God will share his plans and processes with leaders that humbly seek his will. I also learned that many Christians long for godly leadership that seeks to equip them for higher levels of service.

This project experience taught me about God's Word. I now see God's mission on every page of Scripture. The story of God cannot be understood apart from a proper view of God's mission. Christians are to be a sent people. This truth must go beyond simply an intellectual ascent to become a reality in their everyday lives. Scripture calls on church leaders to lead and equip the church to be faithful to go to the lost and make disciples.

I learned that God's Word is the bedrock for both faith and practice. The theological research portion of this project taught me to balance God's love, holiness, sovereignty, and desire that all be saved. Believers are called to defend the faith delivered to the saints while also maintaining a missionary's perspective. I do not understand all the implications of these truths, but I see them in Scripture and believe them.

### **Personal Reflections**

The experience of this project taught me many things about myself as a minister. It taught me that without God, I can do nothing. No amount of good intentions and hard work will mean anything if God is not at work. I must fight the temptation to work for God in my own power and neglect to follow his leadership. God allowed the enemy to block progress on this project until I completely sought God's will. I must always strive to find where God is working, and then join him.

I learned during this project that spiritual warfare is very real. Periods during this project have been the darkest in my lifetime. God allowed spiritual attacks on me

because I was working with the wrong motives and in my own power. I learned that God desires a humble spirit. I began this doctorate of ministry program with self-serving purposes. I forgot that life itself is all about God and not me. It is His glory that is important, not mine. He used me to this point only because I confessed my sin of serving self and committed to only serving him. I know in a very real sense that apart from God I can do nothing. Not only can I *do* nothing apart from God, I *am* nothing apart from him.

### **Conclusion**

Equipping the leaders of Farmdale Baptist Church for missional living has been one of the highlights of my life. The process has been exciting, rewarding, draining, discouraging, and ultimately honoring to God. He used this process to help lead a church back toward health. The church now has a stronger foundation on which to build the type of church God desires. I am confident God will bless all the efforts of the participants. Their example to me has been inspiring.

This effort would not have taken place if members of this church had not reached out to love me as a lost teenager over forty years ago. Many members modeled missional lives and shared the love of Jesus. They loved the Lord and used their lives to glorify God by being everyday missionaries. Many of these people are already with the Lord. Some, like Edgar and Jeannie Fritz, may never know the impact they have had on my life and my family's life. It is my honor to have been blessed by their presence. They were, and are, everyday missionaries whose Christlike examples pointed to the Maker and Sustainer of faith, the Lord Jesus Christ. To God be the glory.

APPENDIX 1  
CLARITY SURVEY

**What Does “Missional” Mean?**

This survey uses words like “missional Christian,” “missional living,” “mission minded,” “mission focused,” and “kingdom focused.” These terms are simply describing a way of thinking and living we might normally associate with those of a missionary. Missionaries are ambassadors for Christ wherever they find themselves. In America today, missionaries are needed every day at home, as well as in foreign countries. Missionaries are people that love God and the people they encounter in their communities. Their ultimate goal is to share the love of Jesus with the world outside the walls of the church.

Clarity, movement, alignment, and focus are processes that have been shown to be present in the lives of the most effective churches and individual Christian’s lives. These four processes will serve as the framework for our actions in this project.

Clarity involves developing a plan for the path we need to travel to become more missional Christians. This plan is a blueprint for how we intend to accomplish this goal. Clarity means we state clearly where we want to go, and begin to plan how to get there.

Please answer each statement using the scale below, and then briefly comment to clarify your answer.

Strongly Disagree SD	Disagree D	Disagree Somewhat DS	Agree Somewhat AS	Agree A	Strongly Agree SA
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**Pre-Project Statements**

1. My life is intentionally mission-focused. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I know specifically where to begin to live a more effective missional live. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I have a written personal mission statement that guides my daily activities. \_\_\_\_\_

4. I currently have a specific plan that I can articulate to live a missional live. \_\_\_\_\_

If we desire greater clarity in living a missional life, God may use our participation in this project to bring clarity, a mission, and a plan to be a more faithful ambassador for Him!

### **Post-Project Statements**

1. During the period of my involvement in Operation Edgar, my life has been intentionally mission-focused. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I know specifically where to begin to live a more effective missional live. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I have a written personal mission statement that guides my daily activities. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I currently have a specific plan that I can articulate to live a missional live. \_\_\_\_\_

Our prayer is that as a church we desire greater clarity in living a missional life. We pray that God has used our participation in this project to equip us to bring clarity, a mission, and a plan to be a more faithful ambassador for Him!

## APPENDIX 2

### SURVEY OF AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS FROM THE BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE

The following survey is designed to measure your level of agreement on several topics as put forward in the Baptist Faith and Message (BFM). The BFM is a group of principles and positions that attempts to summarize what the members of the Southern Baptist Convention believe.<sup>1</sup>

Baptists historically deny the right of any group or authority to impose a confession of faith upon a church or group of churches. The committee that writes the BFM are charged with identifying and affirming certain doctrines that Southern Baptists believe. The BFM is an attempt to set forth certain teachings held in common by Southern Baptists.

This survey is optional and any answers will be kept in confidence of the leader of the project. Participants may also elect to remain anonymous and submit their survey without identifying themselves.

Please answer after each topic using the scale below to signify your personal level of agreement with the overall statements. Please include any clarifying comments if you like.

Strongly Disagree SD	Disagree D	Disagree Somewhat DS	Agree Somewhat AS	Agree A	Strongly Agree SA
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#### I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>1</sup>Southern Baptist Convention, "The Baptist Faith and Message," accessed February 2, 2013, <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp>.

## II. God

There is one and only one living and true God...God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. \_\_\_\_\_

## III. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image...In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. \_\_\_\_\_

## IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer...There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. \_\_\_\_\_

## IX. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. \_\_\_\_\_

## X. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord. \_\_\_\_\_

## XI. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ. \_\_\_\_\_

## XV. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ...Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 3

### MOVEMENT SURVEY

Movement involves making progress toward goals. It includes removing things in our lives that create barriers that block plans to become more missional Christians. Participation in this project will help us focus on taking intentional and incremental steps in the right direction in light of barriers that need to be addressed.

Please answer each statement using the scale below and then briefly comment to clarify your answer.

Strongly Disagree SD	Disagree D	Disagree Somewhat DS	Agree Somewhat AS	Agree A	Strongly Agree SA
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#### **Pre-Project Statements**

1. I made significant progress in becoming a more effective missional Christian last year. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I identified key barriers that hindered me from reaching the goal of being a more effective missional leader last year. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I identified and implemented action steps that helped me move toward becoming a more effective missional Christian last year. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Evangelistic prayer is one of the highest priorities in my life. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I am confident my evangelistic prayer life was powerful and effective last year.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. I believe that my prayers absolutely matter in terms of me being a more effective missionary. \_\_\_\_\_

7. Being intentional means we have decided to take action toward our goals. I took actions over the last year to grow as a missional Christian. \_\_\_\_\_
  
8. The concept of incremental action refers to short term steps we have taken to move toward our goals. I took incremental steps last year to make progress toward becoming a more missional Christian. \_\_\_\_\_

If your answers reflect a life that needs more movement toward becoming a more missional Christian, participation in this project may change your life! Prepare to allow God to remove barriers and lead us to grow intentionally as every day missionaries!

### **Post-Project Statements**

1. As a result of my participation in Operation Edgar, I have made significant progress in becoming a more effective missional Christian. \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. I identified key barriers that hindered me from reaching the goal of being a more effective missional leader during this project. \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. I identified and implemented action steps that helped me move toward becoming a more effective missional Christian over the last few months. \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Evangelistic prayer is one of the highest priorities in my life. \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. I am confident my evangelistic prayer life has become powerful and effective last year over the last 3 months. \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. I believe that my prayers absolutely matter in terms of me being a more effective missionary. \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. Being intentional means we have decided to take action toward our goals. I took actions over the last few months to grow as a missional Christian. \_\_\_\_\_

8. The concept of incremental action refers to short term steps we have taken to move toward our goals. I took incremental steps during this project to make progress toward becoming a more missional Christian. \_\_\_\_\_

We pray that every member of our church seeks to move toward becoming a more missional Christian. This project was designed to facilitate that movement. We ask God to continue to empower us to remove barriers and move toward becoming more effective every day missionaries.

## APPENDIX 4

### ALIGNMENT SURVEY

Alignment involves looking at bad habits and problems that interfere with our progress toward becoming more missional Christians.

Please answer the statements and questions using the scale below and then briefly comment to clarify your answer.

Strongly Disagree SD	Disagree D	Disagree Somewhat DS	Agree Somewhat AS	Agree A	Strongly Agree SA
----------------------------	---------------	----------------------------	-------------------------	------------	-------------------------

#### Pre-Project Statements

1. I carefully considered if there are any bad habits or problems in my life that may have steered me away from becoming a more missions minded Christian last year.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Please take time to carefully consider specific factors in your life that may be responsible for leading you away from your goals or desires to become a more missional Christian last year. These factors include areas where you may have gotten away from the path you would like to follow. Did this happen to you last year?  
\_\_\_\_\_ If so, please list and comment briefly on the most significant factor(s) here.
3. I made plans to overcome the items listed in #2 above to stay on course last year. \_\_\_
4. I was continually aware of the reality of spiritual warfare in my life last year. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Daily, I “put on the full armor of God” last year. \_\_\_\_\_

As God brings increased clarity and movement to our Christian lives, He will also allow us to identify and reduce bad habits that lead us away from our goal of missional living. Together, we will structure our activities and priorities to align with our desire to live a

life that truly counts for the Kingdom!

### **Post-Project Statements**

1. I carefully considered if there are any bad habits or problems in my life that may have steered me away from becoming a more missions minded Christian over the course of Operation Edgar. \_\_\_\_
2. Please take time to carefully consider specific factors in your life that may be responsible for leading you away from your goals or desires to become a more missional Christian in the last 3 months. These factors include areas where you may have gotten away from the path you would like to follow. Did this happen to you during this project? \_\_\_\_ If so, please list and comment briefly on the most significant factor(s) here.
3. I made plans to overcome the items listed in #2 above to stay on course over the last few months. \_\_\_\_
4. I was continually aware of the reality of spiritual warfare in my life during Operation Edgar. \_\_\_\_
5. Daily, I “put on the full armor of God” during this project. \_\_\_\_

As God brings increased clarity and movement to our Christian lives, He will also allow us to identify and reduce bad habits that lead us away from our goal of missional living. We pray that participation in Operation Edgar has equipped us to structure our activities and priorities to align with our desire to live a life that truly counts for the Kingdom!

APPENDIX 5  
FOCUS SURVEY

Focus refers to eliminating good activities in our lives that may hinder success in reaching our best goals that God would have us set. Too many good intentions may keep us from achieving the very best God intends for us.

Please answer the statements and questions using the scale below and then briefly comment to clarify your answer.

Strongly Disagree SD	Disagree D	Disagree Somewhat DS	Agree Somewhat AS	Agree A	Strongly Agree SA
----------------------------	---------------	----------------------------	-------------------------	------------	-------------------------

**Pre-Project Statements**

1. While it is important to live an overall balanced Christian life, last year I narrowed my attention to focus on becoming a more missional Christian \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. I took an inventory of my time and activities by using a log over a several day period last year \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. I am willing to consider “re-prioritizing” my activities and use of time to focus on living a more missional life. \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. I eliminated good activities in my life to become a more missional Christian last year. \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. I have prayerfully considered my good intentions in terms of missional living that I may have failed to put into action last year. \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. I considered good activities in my life that I believe may be holding me back from becoming a more missional Christian last year. \_\_\_\_\_ Please list and briefly comment on one or two of them.

## Post-Project Statements

1. While it is important to live an overall balanced Christian life, during Operation Edgar I narrowed my attention to focus on becoming a more missional Christian.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. I took an inventory of my time and activities by using a some form of detailed record keeping during this project. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Over the last few months I have “re-prioritized” my activities and use of time to focus on living a more missional life. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I eliminated good activities in my life to become a more missional Christian during this project. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I have prayerfully considered my good intentions in terms of missional living that I may have failed to put into action in the last 3 months. \_\_\_\_\_
6. I considered good activities in my life that I believe may be holding me back from becoming a more missional Christian during Operation Edgar. \_\_\_\_\_ Please list and briefly comment on one or two of them.

If you are like most Christians, eliminating good activities will be difficult—but critical—to successfully living on-mission for Christ. We pray that participation in this project has freed us from many “good” activities in our lives to give our “best” to Christ!

## APPENDIX 6

### INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN OPERATION EDGAR

Thank you for considering participation in this effort. The project will equip and lead the staff and deacons of Farmdale Baptist Church to become more “on mission” for Christ in their everyday lives! We believe God will bless our efforts to become more useful tools in His hands through our participation. Our hopes are that those who participate in this effort will learn “how” to become more missional Christians, and in turn, become better equipped to lead the people of Farmdale in the same pursuits.

As you know, this project is called “Operation Edgar” in honor of Edgar Fritz who lived an exemplary life as he sought to advance God’s kingdom here on earth. We are blessed to have his memory as a life we may emulate as we continue to follow Christ and make His name known in our community, region, and the world.

I will provide each potential participant with several pieces of information that will help you determine if God is calling you to participate in this effort. This information will include the project’s purposes, goals, rationale, and methodology. I will also share surveys that participants will use to simplify their lives and move through the processes of becoming a more missional Christian. These processes are described as clarity, movement, alignment, and focus. This information should give you an accurate preview of what participants may expect.

After you have taken time to read this material and spend significant time in prayer, please answer the following questions:

1. Is becoming a more missional Christian a priority in my life to the extent I am willing to examine my life and to attempt to make changes necessary to move toward becoming a more missional Christian?”

Yes No

2. I would like to participate in “Operation Edgar.”

Yes No

If you answered affirmatively to these questions, you are invited to participate in “Operation Edgar.” We expectantly await what God has in store for us and his church at Farmdale! If you cannot answer affirmatively to these questions at this point in your life, we pray that you may be able to answer affirmatively in the future.

## APPENDIX 7

### VIDEO TRAINING INTERNET LINKS

The first training video welcomes participants and shares an introductory overview of the purpose and methods involved in Operation Edgar. Playing time for this segment is 5:13.

Weber, Steve. "Operation Edgar: Introduction." Published September 9, 2013.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fM5\\_4E3nv34](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fM5_4E3nv34).

The second training video shares an overview of the first two biblical foundations for missional living, the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. Running time is 8:34.

Weber, Steve. "Operation Edgar: Biblical Foundation 1 and 2." Published September 9, 2013. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vuc5qczP6s8&feature=youtu.be>.

The third video segment gives participants the last three biblical foundations for the project. The three foundations include Scripture's commands to pray evangelistically, to possess a missionary mentality, and to prepare for spiritual warfare. The video takes 10:27.

Weber, Steve. "Operation Edgar: Biblical Foundation 3, 4, and 5." Published September 9, 2013. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sj4Lzqjbxql&feature=youtu.be>.

The fourth training video session discusses the first of the four "simple processes." Clarity involves identifying one's purpose, as well as their goals, plans, and processes to accomplish their purpose. The video time is 12:42.

Weber, Steve. "Operation Edgar: Clarity." Published September 10, 2013.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ih0Lz4fQilU&feature=youtu.be>.

The fifth video presents the key principles relating to the process of movement. This stage involves identifying action steps to move toward one's goals. Key barriers are also examined. The time for the video is 9:20.

Weber, Steve, "Operation Edgar: Movement." Published September 10, 2013.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7J0XHCPuSA&feature=youtu.be>.

The sixth video summarizes the process called alignment. Alignment involves structuring one's goals and activities to match one's priorities and personal uniqueness. The segment runs 4:37.

Weber, Steve. "Operation Edgar: Alignment." Published September 10, 2013.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYwiDN9nIno&feature=youtu.be>.

The final video discusses the process of focus. This process calls for eliminating "good" activities in favor of the "best" activities. The segment lasts 10:43.

Weber, Steve. "Operation Edgar: Focus." Published September 10, 2013.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2wgDeY92CE&feature=youtu.be>.

## APPENDIX 8

### TRAINING OUTLINE FOR OPERATION EDGAR: “EQUIPPING CHRISTIANS FOR MISSIONAL LIVING”

#### **BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR OPERATION EDGAR**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vuc5qczP6s8&feature=youtu.be>

(1) Greatest Commandment, Mt 22:34-40 = **LOVE!!!**

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.”

Love God completely

God is love (1 Jn 4:8)

Love others, enough to engage them in everyday life

1 Corinthians 13 The greatest of these is LOVE.

(2) Great Commission, Mt 28:16-20

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Make disciples!

Go	Engage people
Baptize	Share the Gospel
Teach	Discipleship

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sj4LzqjbxqI&feature=youtu.be>

(3) Evangelistic prayer, Mt 9:37-38, Luke 10:2

“The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.”

Prayer matters!

Prayer works!

God commands prayer

(4) Missionary mentality, 1 Cor 9:19-23

v 22 I have become all things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save some. (v 19 made myself a slave to win more people, 20 I became like a Jew, I became like one under the law, 21 I became like one without the law, 22 I became weak in order to win the weak.)



- unnecessary barriers to the Gospel? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Finally, am I willing to put on the full armor of God everyday, and to prepare for the spiritual battles that will come as I seek to live a more missional lifestyle? \_\_\_\_\_

**CLARITY** > Movement > Alignment > Focus  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ih0Lz4fQilU&feature=youtu.be>

A cemetery prospective.

“Lord, reveal to me the end of my life and the number of my days.

Let me know how short-lived I am. (Ps 39:4) ...

Based on averages, my life expectancy is \_\_\_\_\_ days.

As of today, I have lived \_\_\_\_\_ days.

I may expect to live \_\_\_\_\_ more days.

Where does God want you to go? Your **purpose**.

How do you intend to get there? Your **goals, plans and processes**.

A strategy is required, a blueprint, a plan.

Plans do not **create** energy, but they can **release** and **channel** energy.

God most often uses people who **prepare** and **plan** to be usable.

A **mission statement** states **where** you intend to go, and **how** you intend to get there.

A mission statement is a **starting point** and must be:

- (1) Intended to be completed
- (2) A plan to make progress, a process
- (3) Include **accountability**, first to God and then to man
- (4) Unique to each person

**Priorities** must be identified.

Specific **goals** must be identified, measurable, and written down. (Howard Hill)

Current **activities** must be identified.

The difference between our **priorities** and our **activities** must be compared, then adjusted.

## CLARITY CHECKLIST

1. I commit to make the most of whatever remaining time God gives me to become a more missional Christian? \_\_\_\_\_
2. I have examined my life and attempted to identify the key **purposes** in my life by writing them down, with a special sensitivity to becoming a more missional Christian?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. I have written down a **list of priorities** in my life, and made an effort to rank them?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. I have considered **specific goals** that are **measurable** that will help me progress

toward becoming a more missional Christian? \_\_\_\_\_

5. I have formulated a **mission statement** that relates to (who God would have me become), **what** He would have me do (in terms of being a more missional Christian), and 2 to 3 aspects of **how** I believe He would direct me to get there? \_\_\_\_\_

6. I have made the necessary effort to document my activities during 3 of my typical days in an upcoming week? \_\_\_\_\_ This process will require recording my activities in an hourly detail in order to get an accurate evaluation of where I am currently spending my time, energy, and resources.

7. I have compared my stated priorities and my actual activities so that I might determine if there are any aspects of my time use that should change to become a more missional Christian? \_\_\_\_\_

8. I have identified and secured a prayer and accountability partner who will encourage me regarding the foundational aspects of Operation Edgar (i.e. my prayer and devotional Bible reading/meditation), as well as all aspects of the Clarity process?

### CLARITY SUMMARY:

1. Knowing who God wants me to be, the goals He will have me set, and how He intends me to get there.
2. Having a plan/blueprint to get there.
3. PRIORITIES
4. Activity awareness
5. MISSION STATEMENT (that includes an action plan, a process with steps)
6. Intentions
7. Accountability
8. Easy to understand
9. Immediate, realistic, achievable
10. A plan without legalism, but from a heartfelt desire
11. Desire without specificity leads nowhere
12. If you are too busy for God, you are too busy.

Clarity > **MOVEMENT** > Alignment > Focus  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7J0XHCPuSA&feature=youtu.be>

While, clarity involves intentions and plans  
Movement involves **actions**

Sequential **action steps** that flow toward achieving the mission statement

Movement requires you to remove **congestion**, blockages:

- (1) Activities Martha and Mary (Lk 10:38)
- (2) Selfishness, self-consuming desires Gain life loses it. What profit? (Mt 16:25-26)

Movement is:

- (1) Prayerful Jesus in Luke, Luke 10:2
- (2) Forgetful, of previous failures Forgetting what behind, reaching forward (Ph 3:13)
- (3) Intentional (acting on your plan), & Incremental (eat the elephant one bite at a time)
- (4) Immediate, not “soon” Eliminate procrastination, just do it!
- (5) Resilient, don’t give up

Accountability is required, to God and to man

### MOVEMENT CHECKLIST:

1. I have identified the **action steps** necessary to move toward my goals? \_\_\_\_\_
2. I have written down specific action steps I am taking to move toward achieving my goals. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I have identified and written down the **key barriers** in my life that hinder me from moving toward achieving my missional goals? \_\_\_\_\_
4. I have considered and written down specific actions I can take to **minimize/overcome** the barriers I face? \_\_\_\_\_
5. I am growing in the depth and breath of my prayer life, especially in my **evangelistic prayer life**? \_\_\_\_\_
6. I have an **accountability** partner that will help encourage and hold me accountable to carrying out my action steps to move toward being a more missions-minded Christian?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### MOVEMENT SUMMARY:

1. Remove barriers and congestion to reaching the goal(s)
2. Intentionality and Incremental
3. Eliminate self-absorption, humility is needed
4. ACTION STEPS and ACTIONS

Clarity > Movement > **ALIGNMENT** > Focus  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYwiDN9nIno&feature=youtu.be>

A car out of **alignment** takes it off course.

Alignment involves making certain that all we do (under our control) moves us **toward** accomplishing our **purpose**.

Alignment requires:

- (1) Honest self-assessment (eliminating bad habits)
- (2) Accountability
- (3) Match your personality with your plans and goals
- (4) Flexibility, accept our human imperfections

### ALIGNMENT CHECKLIST:

1. I understand that alignment involves making certain that all I do moves me toward accomplishing my purpose? \_\_\_\_\_
2. I am willing to make an honest self-assessment of my life, and to potentially reducing or eliminating habits that take me off the course that God desires for me? \_\_\_\_\_
3. I have identified the specific issues that may take me off the course to grow as a

missional Christian? \_\_\_\_\_

4. I have an accountability partner with whom I can share my goals, plans and ways I intend to align my life to grow as a missional Christian? \_\_\_\_\_

5. I am working to match my personality, demeanor, spiritual gifts, background and abilities with my mission statement and my activities? \_\_\_\_\_

6. I daily put on--and walk in-- the full armor of God, and intentionally prepare for spiritual warfare? \_\_\_\_\_

### ALIGNMENT SUMMARY

1. Structure goals and activities to MATCH your priorities and personal uniqueness

2. Be aware of, and appreciate individual differences

3. Five words:

a. Self-assessment

b. Accountability

c. Personality match (personality awareness, personality/spiritual gift testing)

d. Flexibility

e. Accept humanity (mistakes and errors)

4. Play to your strengths

5. "Write words that describe your personality. Reflect how these characteristics might influence you as you seek to accomplish your mission statement.

Clarity > Movement > Alignment > **FOCUS**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2wgDeY92CE&feature=youtu.be>

Focus involves deciding what really matters, saying yes to the best, and no to the rest.

Eliminating the "good" for the "best"

"Most of us attempt to do many things poorly instead of a few things well. If most of us were honest with ourselves, our relationship with God is often neglected as we yield to the demands of many voices."

Focus involves:

(1) Acknowledging some things have to go

(2) Avoiding postponing necessary actions (tyranny of the urgent)

(3) Be brutally honest with yourself and others, this requires self assessment

(4) Sacrificing materialism for the eternal

(6) Asking yourself, what REALLY matters

(6) Be creative in discovering alternatives

(7) Keep your focus!

Change or die. 90% of heart bypass patients don't change their lifestyles. They would rather die. Change is that hard. Many churches choose to die rather than make changes.

### FOCUS CHECKLIST:

1. I have examined my life in an attempt to determine what **really matters** in my life?  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. I am doing my best to say no to the "good" in order to say yes to the "best?" \_\_\_\_\_

3. I am examining my life to see if there are things in my life that I should reduce or eliminate to help me become a more missional Christian? \_\_\_\_\_  
I have written them down to help hold myself accountable to follow through with them? \_\_\_\_\_
4. I have eliminated or reduced at least one non-essential activity to become a more missional Christian? \_\_\_\_\_
5. I am willing to sacrifice my desire for material possessions in order to seek first the kingdom of God? \_\_\_\_\_
6. I intend to maintain my focus on missional living beyond the end of Operation Edgar?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**FOCUS SUMMARY:**

1. Eliminate the “good” for the “best.”
2. Focus is unbalanced
3. Abandon everything (possible) that interferes with your purpose and goals.
4. Sacrificing the material for the eternal.
5. Eliminate busyness
6. Focus is difficult!
7. Five principles
  - a. Deal realistically with the messy world
  - b. Avoid tyranny of the urgent
  - c. Be brutally honest with yourself and others
  - d. Acknowledge things have to go
  - e. Be creative

Life Expectancy (78 men/80 women)	Days Lived	Days Remaining
Participant 1	28,470	9,660
Participant 2	28,470	1,524
Participant 3	28,470	16,326
Participant 4	28,470	16,869
Participant 5	28,470	5,980
Participant 6	29,200	5,356
Participant 7	29,200	13,866
Participant 8	29,200	15,420
Participant 9	29,200	< 812 >

APPENDIX 9  
CONTACT REPORT

This Contact Report form will facilitate input and feedback during the project. This form provides a template to record the key bits of information needed to document interaction with the others. The form will also be an important record keeping tool as missionary-minded relationships continue to develop. Please use this form to record information regarding your attempts to spiritually bless others and be a more missional Christian.

Date of contact \_\_\_\_\_ Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Name (and/or description) of person contacted \_\_\_\_\_

1. Describe the situation:

2. Describe your initial (and following) interaction:

3. Did your interaction/conversation include a spiritual aspect? Yes No

Please describe:

4. Did your contact include any aspect of the gospel? Yes No

Please describe:

If yes, did your contact include a complete gospel presentation? Yes No  
If not, why not?

If yes, what was the person's response?

5. Did you offer to follow up or discuss spiritual issues at their convenience in the future if they were interested? Yes No

6. Regardless of the spiritual aspect of your contact, how else did you seek to love and bless this person(s)?
  
7. Do you expect to have the opportunity to interact with this person in the future?
  
8. What did you do well during this contact?
  
9. What would you do differently?

APPENDIX 10

POST-PROJECT SURVEY

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement using the scale below and then briefly comment to clarify your answer.

Strongly Disagree SD	Disagree D	Disagree Somewhat DS	Agree Somewhat AS	Agree A	Strongly Agree SA
----------------------------	---------------	----------------------------	-------------------------	------------	-------------------------

1. I am better equipped to live a life that is more missions-focused as a result of participation in this project.
2. As a result of participation in this project, I fully expect to live a life that is more missions-focused.
3. Please complete this thought: In terms of living a more missions-focused life, the most helpful aspect of my participation in this project included:
4. A key goal of this project is to equip every member of our church to live lives that are more missions-focused. What changes to this project do you suggest in order to help ensure that goal is met for future participants?
5. Please provide any additional comments concerning this project and/or your thoughts for how our church can become more on-mission for Christ in our everyday lives.

APPENDIX 11

DETAILED EVALUATION BY PARTICIPANTS  
OF OPERATION EDGAR

Now that you have completed the fifteen-week project stage of Operation Edgar, please answer the statements below with one of the following choices:

Strongly Disagree SD	Disagree D	Disagree Somewhat DS	Agree Somewhat AS	Agree A	Strongly Agree SA
----------------------------	---------------	----------------------------	-------------------------	------------	-------------------------

In relation to **the goal of becoming a more missional Christian**, and as a result of participating in this project . . .

Regarding **Clarity**: I...

1. Developed a personal mission statement aimed at the goal to become a more missional Christian. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Developed a personal priority list and specific goals. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Developed an individualized plan to move toward the goal. \_\_\_\_\_

Regarding **Movement**: I...

4. Identified key barriers that hindered me from reaching the goal. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Identified and implemented steps that moved me toward the goal. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Demonstrated growth in the depth and breadth of my evangelistic prayer life. \_\_\_\_\_

Regarding **Alignment**: I...

7. Aligned my mission statement and goals to match my personality, demeanor, gifts, background, and abilities. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Identified the specific items and issues that may have taken me off course. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Put on the full armor of God and committed to live in that armor daily. \_\_\_\_\_

Regarding **Focus**: I...

10. Made noticeable changes in the use of my time to become more missional, including reducing business, and avoiding the tyranny of the urgent. \_\_\_\_\_
11. Eliminated or reduced at least one or two non-essential activities, and allotted that

time for a more missional activity. \_\_\_\_\_

12. Intend to carry on a personal policy after the project to abandon non-essential activities in order to reach the primary goal God will have me set in the future. \_\_\_\_\_

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## ABSTRACT

### EQUIPPING LEADERS FOR MISSIONAL LIVING AT FARMDALE BAPTIST CHURCH, IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

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Chapter 1 provided the purpose for this effort, namely, to equip the leaders of this church to live and model lives as every day missionaries before the people of the church. The second purpose of the project was to create an on-going strategy and mechanism to equip every member for missional living.

Chapter 2 laid the biblical and theological foundation on which this effort was built. Scripture commands followers of Christ to love, to be on mission, to pray evangelistically, to possess a missionary mentality, and to prepare for spiritual battle.

Chapter 3 described the theoretical and sociological research involved to equip missional Christians. The key research included understanding the simple processes God often uses in healthy churches to make disciples. The second primary area of research involved the balance of living as a missionary in today's culture while maintaining biblical fidelity.

Chapter 4 described the project in detail. It presented the planning, design, and implementation of the effort to equip church leaders for on mission living. The project sought to equip leaders to develop missional clarity, movement, alignment, and focus.

Chapter 5 evaluated the project and centered on the project's purpose, goals, strengths and weaknesses. Attention was given to the changes that could be made to improve the project. Finally theological and personal reflections conclude the chapter.

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