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EQUIPPING HISPANIC LEADERS OF TATTNALL-EVANS BAPTIST
ASSOCIATION IN SOUTHEAST GEORGIA FOR
CROSS-CULTURAL EVANGELISM

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

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

by
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May 2017

APPROVAL SHEET

EQUIPPING HISPANIC LEADERS OF TATTNALL-EVANS BAPTIST
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CROSS-CULTURAL EVANGELISM

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To the SBTS faculty for allowing me to grow through this journey and to my supervisor,
Dr. Shane Parker, for his understanding, patience, and grace—may God continue to use
you all to equip those He calls!

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PREFACE

This project has been completed in large part due to the love and support of many people God has placed in my life. God sent servants who love Him and love me. They include co-laborers, family members, and especially our Lord Jesus Christ.

First, the Lord gave me special servants to be there for me in the toughest times of ministry and used them to encourage me during some of the toughest days of ministry. First, I want to thank my brother in Christ, who is like a biological brother, José López. I thank God for your life, for going the extra mile, and for being there for me always. Second, I want to thank Rev. Leonel Reyes for his encouraging words always. Brother Leonel, you always had a word for me. I learned the meaning of “grace” through you! Thank you for being my pastor and being there for me. I want to thank you, Brother Aroldo Vargas, for your prayers and longtime friendship. Brother Aroldo, your time invested was not in vain. Thank you for taking me under your wing! I want to thank Brother Jerry Baker for his wise counsel. Thanks, hermano, for all that you do and for seeing me as a son. I also want to thank Brother Moses Valdes for seeing a missionary in me. I thank God for your life and for your “modeling” servanthood before my eyes. I want to thank the Lord for Dr. Pham. I thank you for your dedication to the Lord and for always wanting the best for me.

I also want to thank my content editor, Dr. Mike Brandenburg, for all his advice and encouragement throughout this project. Thank you for your prayers and love! Gracias, Doctor! I want to thank all of the Tattnell-Evans Baptist Association for their heart for reaching Hispanics in their communities. Thank you, Brother Roman, for all that you do and your passion to see the kingdom grow. A special thanks goes to Dr. Victor Lyons for all the long hours needed to revise this project and for making suggestions.

God put you in my path to bless me. I want to thank Chris Bosson for his patience and encouragement during this whole process. Thank you for editing this work! I appreciate you, Hermano! I especially want to thank the Esquivel family for allowing God's leadership to come to Georgia to plant these congregations and instill in the leaders to multiply. Hermano Alex, your work was not in vain. You left a legacy!

Second, the Lord blessed me with a wonderful family. First, I want to thank my wife, Rossey, who inspired me with her encouraging words and prayers. She is the love of my life. I want to thank you for all your hard work and patience while I was going to seminary. Thank you for always pushing me to go the extra mile. God brought you to my life to bless me. Second, I give thanks for our three wonderful boys, Dennis, Joshua, and Jacob, for always inspiring me. Thank you guys for all your support. God uses you to make life fun! Third, I want to thank my mom for her prayers and encouragement throughout life. She always has had the best for me and gave her best in tough times. Thanks, Mom! Thank you for being mom and dad at the same time! I want to thank my brothers Oscar, Alfredo, Armando, and Aldo, whom I love and pray for every day.

Finally, I am thankful to the Lord for opening the doors and guiding me. He saved me and set me apart for ministry. Looking back I see his hand and grace all over my life. I am grateful for this wonderful privilege.

My hope and prayer is that this project will serve to grow the kingdom and will help reach the growing Hispanic community in the Tattall-Evans Baptist Association and throughout the state of Georgia. I pray that thousands and thousands of Hispanics will be equipped to win others for Christ. To God is the glory!

Dennis J. Rivera

Warner Robins, Georgia

May 2017

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip the Hispanic leaders of Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association for cross-cultural evangelism.

Goals

This project sought to accomplish three goals. These three goals served as the criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of the project. The first goal was to assess the knowledge and practices of the Hispanic leaders of Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association in cross-cultural evangelism. This assessment used the pre- and post- test survey, which provided a picture of the strengths and weaknesses of personal and cross-cultural evangelism being done by the Hispanic leaders (see appendix 7). This goal will be considered successfully met when at least 90 percent of the Hispanic leaders complete the survey (see appendix 1). The survey will be analyzed to give a clearer picture of the group's initial knowledge and practice of personal and cross-cultural evangelism.

The second goal was to develop a teaching series on personal and cross-cultural evangelism. The series included Livermore's six values for distinguishing cultures as well as descriptions of his three domains where cultural values originate.¹

¹David A. Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2009), 123-41.

Furthermore, the series will teach basic personal evangelism and then introduce cross-cultural considerations. This goal will be measured by the use of a rubric (see appendix 1) that will evaluate the twelve lessons. A two-person panel—Mike Brandenburg, pastor at First Baptist Church in Butler, Georgia and Victor Lyons, pastor of Second Memorial Baptist Church in Perry, Georgia—will evaluate the twelve lessons and make modifications where necessary.

The third goal was to equip the Hispanic leaders in cross-cultural evangelism using the teaching series. The equipping took place during most Saturday mornings and Monday evenings for an eight-week period. The participants modeled evangelistic encounters among each other and then went into their communities in groups of two or three. The evangelistic encounters took place on Fridays or Saturday afternoons and depended on the work schedule of the participants. The students participated in the teaching series, and the pre- and post-test survey was re-administered at the end of the series (see appendix 7). This third goal was considered successfully met when the results demonstrated a positive statistically difference between the pre- and post-text survey scores and the evangelistic teams were able to share their faith with at least eight people. A positive statistical difference of 75 percent indicated improvement.

Ministry Context

The ministry project took place in the context of Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association located in Southeast Georgia. The four Hispanic churches sponsored by the association are located in three counties: Tattnall County (Nueva Vida Hispanic Mission in Reidsville and Emanuel Hispanic Mission in Glennville), Evans County (Agape Hispanic Mission in Claxton), and Emanuel County (Arca de Noé en Aline).

Baptist work with Hispanics began in the Tattnall-Evans Association under the leadership and vision of former Associational Missionary Lawrence Garrett in 2002.² The Association called Alex Esquivel from Plainview, Texas, as their Hispanic Church Planter. His first Bible study started on March 1, 2002, in Reidsville. Ten people were present. The first worship service occurred on June 30. Glennville followed Reidsville with the first Bible study on March 28 and the first worship service on July 28. Claxton became the third site beginning with a Bible study on June 5 and a worship service on June 30. Several years later in 2010 a work was begun in Aline. In June 2012, Alex Esquivel was forced to resign as Church Planter due to serious health issues. He moved back to Plainview, Texas, and on February 16, 2013, he went on to be with the Lord. The absence of Alex Esquivel has revealed the lack of trained leadership in the Hispanic work of the Association.

The demographics from the Research Ministries Department of the Georgia Baptist Convention show significant fluctuations in the Hispanic presence within the three counties that contain the four churches, in reality small missions, of the Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association. While work began in 2002, these population statistics focus on the period 2008-2012.³

Some Hispanic leaders and members dispute these statistics. Church member Jorge Andrade, a resident of Reidsville, insists that there are 900 Hispanics in Reidsville and not 2,000 or more. Of those 900, 34 percent are fifty years or older and now have

²James Bland, Associational Missionary, letter to Dennis Rivera, Associational Missionary for Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association, Claxton, GA, October 1, 2013.

³Bryan Nowak, "Population Data, 2008-2012 for the cities of Reidsville, Glennville, and Claxton, plus the community of Aline," Research Services, Georgia Baptist Convention.

children and grandchildren. Ninety-five percent of Hispanic adults came from Mexico and some 5 percent from Texas. Eighty percent are undocumented.⁴

Leonel Cisneros, a local resident in Glennville, suggests that the number of Hispanics in Glennville is closer to 3,600.⁵ Of those, 3,000 are from Mexico, 30 from Honduras, 20 from Nicaragua, and some 500 from Texas who come and go as crops are harvested. He estimates that there are some 400 second-generation, English-speaking youth and some 600 additional children. Ninety percent of Hispanics are undocumented.

The low population estimate for the city of Claxton needs upward revision according to Roman Rodriguez, who resides there.⁶ He estimates a population there of 2,500 Hispanics, significantly more than the three hundred plus estimate. He identifies 80 percent as undocumented. Sixty-five percent are adults, 30 percent are children under the age of twelve, and 5 percent are youth. The population is primarily first-generation Mexicans with small children. Like other areas in South Georgia, Hispanics are attracted to the area because: of the poultry plants, the agricultural produce, including cotton, tobacco, and onions, and construction work. According to Cisneros, the two major reasons for the fluctuation in the Hispanic population in the area can be attributed to the enforcement of stricter immigration laws, which used roadblocks to check drivers, and the lack of work in the area.⁷

⁴Jorge Andrade, telephone interview by author, October 17, 2013.

⁵Leonel Cisneros, telephone interview by author, October 17, 2013.

⁶Román Rodríguez, interview by author, July 19, 2013.

⁷Cisneros, interview.

According to the Annual Church Profile, statistics in the four missions are unremarkable in the past five years.⁸ In Reidsville, the Baptist work, Nueva Vida, has reported no baptisms and a lack of any type of growth. Indeed worship attendance has decreased from 60 to 29 and average Sunday School attendance is now 16 people. Ramon Rodriguez, pastor of Nueva Vida, attributes this decrease to a moral issue in the congregation, which produced a church split in 2010, a lack of work in the area, and stricter immigration laws.⁹ In Glennville, the Baptist work, Emanuel, averages 12 in worship, but they have had 7 baptisms in the past five years. These 7 have all been under the age of eleven. First Baptist Church in Glennville has been working with the second-generation youth on Wednesday night and in the summers in the site where the Hispanic mission is located.¹⁰ In Claxton, Agape Hispanic Mission has shown a consistent worship attendance of 45 for the past five years. In 2011, an upper deviation of 69 occurred. Surprisingly, baptisms have totaled 35 for the past five years. Rodriguez underscores the migration to North Carolina and the return to Mexico as the causes of the current attendance numbers.¹¹ The mission at Aline, Arca de Noé, average 34 in worship service. Initial attendance was 8 in 2010 and has steadily grown year by year. In 2011, there were 3 baptisms and already there have been 4 professions of faith. The future seems bright for the mission.

⁸Tom Crite, e-mail message to author, June 18, 2013.

⁹Rodriguez, interview by author, July 19, 2013.

¹⁰James Bland, interview by author, Claxton, GA, July 20, 2014.

¹¹Rodriguez, interview.

Hispanic Leadership

The Association named Rodríguez as the Hispanic overseer and pastor of the three missions located in Reidsville, Claxton, and Aline. Rodríguez was trained and ordained under the ministry of pastor Esquivel. Also, lay preacher Miguel Angel, who was license to preach serves as associate pastor for Rodríguez. They share preaching and teaching responsibilities at all three missions. Lay leader, Leonel Cisneros serves as preacher and moderator at the Glennville work. While Rodriguez, a native of Raymondville, Texas, is fluent in Spanish and English, his assistant, Miguel Angel, and lay preacher Leonel Cisneros are first-generation immigrants and only communicate in Spanish.

Observations

Three observations spring forth in the context of the Hispanic work. First, the need for leadership training is critical. Second, there is a need to be more aware that the Hispanic community is not a “melting pot” but a community of multiple and unique cultures with a common language, Spanish, even though it may not be the maternal tongue of Hispanic immigrants from indigenous communities. Moreover, the one-and-a-half-generation and second-generation, create new challenges in evangelism for the traditional first generation church. The third observation within the Association is that few materials are readily available.

Rationale for the Project

Three contextual factors above indicate that the Hispanic leaders in the Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association are fit for a concerted effort to train them in cross-

cultural evangelism. The three factors include the absence of church growth, the lack of training, and the need for an assimilation process for new believers.

First, an absence of church growth exists. There are no growth plans in mind. The missions remain with similar attendance as years past. Also, the leaders have an absence of a vision for evangelism. They do not have a plan to reach the lost. Presently, those attending the regular Sunday services come and go from Sunday to Sunday. The need to have a clear vision to evangelize their communities is great.

The Hispanic leaders do not have training to do evangelism in their communities. The lack of trained leaders in evangelism is critical. The present leadership and new believers have had little or no exposure to evangelistic tools to do evangelism. They do not know how to do it. Also, there is a lack of understanding of their communities. The Hispanic communities are in transition. As mentioned earlier, the communities are made up of various nationalities and languages. The language spoken in the communities is not just Spanish, but English as well.

The Hispanic leaders have the absence of church growth goals and lack evangelism training, but they also have some specific needs. The leaders do not visit people in their communities. They need to understand that in order to grow they must go and visit people. They do not have an official visitation program. The visits are being done sporadically or when an emergency arises. The leaders have not been trained to do visitation.

Another area that needs development is the need for discipleship. The congregations are not discipling new believers and most of the present leaders have not been disciplined. Finally, there is the need for motivation and encouragement. The leaders

need motivation and encouragement to do evangelism. Some of the lack of motivation comes from the belief that only those who possess education are fit to do and can become effective evangelists.

Definitions

The following definitions of key terms are used in this ministry project:

Cross-culture evangelism. This term refers to “evangelizing and planting new churches among people groups culturally different from the evangelizing Christians.”¹²

Cross-culture. This term represents “people who come from two or more cultural traditions that provoke a clash of worldviews.”¹³

Culture. Culture can be defined as “a system of meanings and values that shape’s one’s behavior.”¹⁴

Evangelism. Evangelism is defined as “preaching or delivering to others the good news about Jesus. Such communication is not limited to a pulpit or a stadium but can happened anywhere, at any time, among any people.”¹⁵

E-Scale. The term “E-scale”

compare[s] the cultural distances that Christians need to move in order to communicate the gospel with others. E0 refers to evangelism of church-going Christians. E1 extends to the very same culture through one barrier, that of ‘church

¹²“Cross-cultural evangelism,” accessed September 17, 2016, <http://www.lausanne.org/docs/lau2docs/170.pdf>.

¹³Sherwood G. Lingenfelter, *Leading Cross-Culturally Covenant Relationships for Effective Christian Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 20.

¹⁴Patty Lane, *A Beginner’s Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multi-Cultural World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 16.

¹⁵Jervis D. Payne, *Evangelism: A Biblical Response to Today’s Questions* (Colorado Springs: Biblica Publishing, 2011), 6-7.

culture.’ E2 evangelism presses into a close, but still different, culture. E3 evangelism pushes to very different cultures.¹⁶

Hispanic. Hispanics are those “who have a common cultural heritage and a common language originating in Spain The acceptable definition for ‘Hispanic’ or ‘Latino’ comes from the Census Bureau and ‘refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.’”¹⁷

First-generation immigrants. This term is used to describe people who “arrive in the country whose language is Spanish and their social contacts (close friends) are confined primary to their own cultural group.”¹⁸

1.5 Generation. This term is used to describe “people who arrived in the U.S. as children and adolescents.”¹⁹ Professional educators more precisely state that 1.5-generation students are

Immigrant students who move to the United States at the age of 12 or older and enroll in middle school or high school in this country. The label comes from the group's special place as first-generation Americans who migrate to this country

¹⁶Ralph D. Winter and Bruce A. Koch, “Advancing Strategies of Closure Finishing the Task: The Unreached Peoples Challenge,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* (Winter 2002): 16.

¹⁷Resource Development and Delivery Team, *Reaching Hispanics in North America: Helping You Understand and Engage One of God’s Greatest Mission Fields* (Alpharetta, GA: North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 2009), 21.

¹⁸Daniel R. Sanchez, *Hispanic Realities Impacting America: Implications for Evangelism and Missions* (Fort Worth: Church Starting Network, 2006), 81.

¹⁹Ruben Rumbaut, “Gen 1.5: Where an Immigrant Generation Fits in,” accessed September 20, 2016, <http://www.socsci.uci.edu/newsevents/news/2012/2012-03-22-gen-1-5-where-an-immigrant-generation-fits-in.php>.

during childhood and feel strong identification with the United States, yet are native to another country.²⁰

Certainly, public education is aware of the 1.5 generation while current missiological leaders include the 1.5 generation in the second-generation, which seems an oversimplification, if not misleading.

Second generation. The term refers to those who are “U.S. born, or came as children. They are bilingual (perhaps a bit more fluent in Spanish than English) and have social contacts in both cultural group groups and the predominant community.”²¹

Limitations and Delimitations

At least three limitations had an impact on this project. The first limitation dealt with the honesty of the leaders. This fact influenced the accuracy of the pre- and post-test surveys that were dependent upon the willingness of the respondents to be honest about their cross-cultural evangelism experience. The second limitation was the attendance of the participant to the equipping sessions. Thirdly, the terminology used to present concepts and procedures was simple due to the level of education of the leaders.

There were two major delimitations. First, those who attended came from a limited pool of the four missions. Second, the material shared in the twelve-weeks sessions required continual local evaluation to determine its effectiveness.

²⁰Laura C. Masterson, *Generation 1.5 Students: Recognizing an Overlooked Population* (Indianapolis: Purdue University Press, 2006).

²¹Sanchez, *Hispanic Realities Impacting America*, 81.

Research Methodology

This project had three basic goals. The first goal seeks to assess the knowledge of the Hispanic leaders in order to discover their strengths and weaknesses concerning cross-cultural evangelism. This goal was measured by a pre-test and a group survey.

The second goal was the development of a teaching series on cross-cultural evangelism. This goal was measured by evaluating the knowledge and practices assessed in the first goal. The series was developed based on the needs discovered while doing cross-cultural evangelism.

The third goal was to equip Hispanic leaders to do cross-cultural evangelism through the teaching series. This goal was measured by each student's modeling of each evangelistic and discipleship skill studied (Beginning Steps, Evangecube, Wordless Book). Finally, a post-test and a group survey was given to measure the overall success of the teaching series

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CROSS-CULTURAL EVANGELISM

Now that the local leadership and the communities have been identified, the focus turns to the Scriptures. What does the Bible say about reaching the nations? Do Christians have a responsibility to reach the nations in their backyards? What does the Bible say about reaching people cross-culturally? Cross-cultural ministry is reflected throughout the Bible through God's ministries to all peoples. First, this chapter looks at the Old Testament and examines several passages that deal with ministering to cross-culturally. The section will focus mainly on three biblical characters: Abraham, Ruth, and Jonah. The second half of this paper will examine God's inclusive ministry in the New Testament through Jesus' ministry in Samaria, the Great Commission mandate, and God's calling of Paul to reach the Gentiles and the church at Antioch.

Inclusion of all the Nations in the Old Testament

God's inclusion of all peoples is a concept that spreads throughout the OT. The inclusive concept is displayed in several passages in the OT. First, In Genesis 12, God's inclusive promise to Abram is revealed. In the book of Ruth, God brings a Moabite woman to be part of His people, and, in Jonah, God's mercy is displayed in forgiving the Assyrian people of Nineveh.

Abraham

In Genesis 12, God gives Abram a promise. He promises to bless him, and He tells him that *all the peoples of the earth will be blessed* through him. Verse 3 reads, “I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

The book of Genesis reflects God’s heart for the nations. When God called Abram, who later became Abraham, He wanted all the people groups on earth to be blessed through Abram. Romo states, “Two thousand years before Christ, God called Abram to leave his home, his business, and his relatives. The call had a purpose, namely, to make him the head of a new people through whom God would reveal Himself to the rest of the world.”¹ God’s call of Abraham shows His intent to bring all the nations to Himself. The new people mentioned was not limited to Israel alone, but rather was inclusive all nations. A provision was made to all the nations to come and be part of God’s people. Abraham would later become known as the “Father of faith.” Romo notes “the term ‘great nation’ means more than a heavily populated land. The great influence of monotheism made Israel unique.”² God’s promise offers everyone who believes eternal life and a personal relationship with Him.

God chose Israel among all the nations of the world. He determined the selection process and not the other way around. He set the criteria for choosing. The choice was not made because of Israel’s goodness or excellent behavior but rather on

¹Oscar I. Romo, *American Mosaic: Church Planting in Ethnic America* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1993), 20-21.

²Ibid., 21.

God's sole decision. God's love for them was special. He developed a covenant relationship with His people. The book of Leviticus shows some of the elements associated with this relationship through a ceremonial lifestyle of living.

The process of God's redemptive love was perfectly aligned with the meaning of the name of God's chosen servant. The name "Abraham," according to Genesis 17, means "Father of many nations."³ Here, one finds another reaffirmation that in Abraham anyone, regardless of his or her ethnicity or language, can call upon the name of the Father. The NT refers to Abraham as "the father of all those who believe (Rom 4:11).

A special focus has been given to the significance behind the names "Abram" and "Abraham," but emphasis will now be placed on Abram's nomadic experience. Abram was a Chaldean immigrant.⁴ The immigrant concept is appropriate for this study because America boasts in being a nation of immigrants. It is made up of people from all over the world. In a spiritual sense, Christians are a type of Abraham—immigrants or pilgrims on this earth. Two passages from the NT put it in perspective. First, Hebrews 13:14 reads, "For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are the looking for the city that is to come." In a spiritual sense, all Christians are nomads. Those who have trusted Jesus as their personal savior are simply awaiting the arrival of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This world is only a temporary home, regardless of one's ethnicity. The promise is for all peoples across the globe. A second passage that relates to this temporary home is 1 Peter 2:11: "Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to

³Kenneth A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, The New American Commentary, vol. 1a (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1996), 500.

⁴H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, *Genesis & Exodus*, The Pulpit Commentary, vol. 1 (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1950), 180.

abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.” Peter suggests that this world is not home; Christians are foreigners and exiles. The text does not suggest a few among many, nor does it say a select few. It does not mention racial segregation or linguistic differences; it is open to whoever is a believer without distinction. The texts examined suggest that as God’s people, believers need to share and be witnesses to all people, regardless of their language or country of origin.

Ruth

God wants to include all peoples in His work of salvation. Another biblical story in the OT that deals with the all-inclusive nature of God’s love is found in the book of Ruth. This section will study the background of the book, the history of the book, and God’s forgiveness for all. Scripture states, “There was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. . . . They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth” (Ruth 1:1-5).

Ruth lived two religious experiences, the first experience as a child from Moab with pagan gods, and the second as a wife in an immigrant Jewish family from Bethlehem with the religious practices of Jehovah. The death of her husband and father-in-law as well as her only relative, her brother-in-law, left the extended family without males, thus placing the remaining females, three widows, in a precarious situation, both legally and economically.

Ruth, one of two young Moabite widows, decides to tie her future to that of her mother-in-law, Naomi, and travel to Bethlehem, where she marries the wealthy Boaz, the Jewish son of a Canaanite mother named Rahab, who made the transition from the

Canaanite worship of Chemosh and other gods to the true worship of Jehovah (Ruth 4:21; Matt 1:5). Block suggests that in the biblical world, nations tended to be distinguished on the basis of ethnicity (“her people”), territory (“land of Moab”), kingship (“Eglon king of Moab” in Judges 3:12-17), language (Moabite, Hebrew, etc.), and theology. The Moabites were the people of Chemosh—they worshipped many gods, but Chemosh was their divine patron. He was the god they looked to for protection, prosperity, and internal order.⁵

The book of Ruth is full of portraits related to cross-culture. Here one has an example of migration from one country to another. The book of Ruth has been preached many times in ethnic cultural settings. Just like Elimelek and Naomi, immigrants can identify migrating to this country due to a “famine.” They are here because they heard that there was abundance on this side of the border. Yet, trying to fulfill the necessities of life and following the American dream, they have also found tragedy like that which is in this biblical story. Many have lost their loved ones back home without having the opportunity to see them one more time before their departure.

Intercultural marriages provide a unique opportunity for the Christian spouse or in-law to share their faith across cultures not only with a non-Christian marriage partner but with the in-laws from the other side of the family. In the NT, one can point to the situation of Timothy, whose father was Greek and whose mother was Jewish. Cross-cultural evangelism is about God’s love for all people regardless of their ethnicity. This unconditional love is not based on background or country of origin, but rather on one's

⁵Daniel I. Block, *Judges and Ruth*, The New American Commentary, vol. 6 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1999), 639.

sinful nature in need of a savior. God loves the Jew as much as he loves the Moabite or the Mexican or Brazilian or someone from Sierra Leone.

Jonah

God's inclusion of all nations is also found in the story of Jonah. God's inclusiveness gives hope to a non-deserving people. In the story of Jonah, there are two important facts related to God's inclusive ministry. The first is that the story encourages a sense of urgency in responding to the inclusive message. People need to know that God accepts them and forgives them. The second is the importance of the deliverer. God is looking for people who understand the urgency of His message. He calls Jonah to deliver this inclusive message of hope.

The inclusive message is urgent. In the book of Jonah, God has a special message for the Assyrian city. Nineveh's wickedness has reached the heavens, and destruction is eminent. God calls Jonah to proclaim a message of repentance and hope so that a nation with all of its inhabitants may be spared. House reminds his readers that "God intervened in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Moses, David and the prophets in order to change the direction of Israel's future. The same impulse appears here on behalf of the Gentiles Yahweh's mercy toward the whole human race, emerges in the very first segment."⁶ The same message to the Assyrians is still relevant to modern-day life. The delivery of the message stands out. The message proclaimed was understood by the people of Nineveh because it was delivered in a language that was understood. The

⁶Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 366.

people responded to a clear message. Clarity was critical for the Assyrians to understand their sinful condition and be able to respond accordingly.

Today, as then, the message needs to be clear and simple. The message also needs to be delivered in a variety of languages. The delivery must be in the heart language of the hearers. As immigrants come to reside in the U.S., the church needs to find ways to bring God's urgent message of hope to people in their own tongues. The U.S. Census estimates that "over 300 languages are spoken in the U.S."⁷ The inclusive message needs to be delivered in a way that can be best understood.

Secondly, one must not underestimate the power of the inclusive message. Simon notes that the people of Nineveh were "astonishingly quick to respond."⁸ The inclusive message is powerful. Before Jonah set foot in the city, God's powerful message was already bringing conversions in the high seas. House notes that Jonah's message "[led] to the sailors' conversion."⁹ The powerful message can transform a person and an entire city.

The book of Jonah reveals why the message is urgent: "The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me'" (Jonah 1:1-2). God is a God of compassion. Matthew 9:36 reads, "When He saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." The

⁷Camille Ryan, "Language use in the United States: 2011" accessed date October 4, 2016, <https://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/acs-22.pdf>

⁸Uriel Simon, *Jonah Commentary* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1999), 8.

⁹House, *Old Testament Theology*, 366.

Assyrians were going to be destroyed because of their wickedness, and yet Jonah did not want to go and take the message to them. Sometimes it is not the people who do not want to listen but believers who do not want to go. Why did Jonah choose not to obey God but rather run away? What were his motives for running the opposite way?

Nineveh was an important city in a strategic location. Yamaguchi states, “Nineveh was the greatest of the capitals of the ancient Assyrian Empire, which flourished from about 800 to 612 B.C. It was located on the left bank of the Tigris River in northeastern Mesopotamia (Iraq today).”¹⁰ Today, the region is known for radical religious upheaval and dictatorial leadership. According to the Holman Bible Dictionary, during Jonah’s time, “the city of Nineveh was the enemy city to which God called Jonah to proclaim a message of hope.”¹¹ God’s calling is not always to one’s choosing or delight, sometimes He sends one to dangerous locations. Jonah 3:3 refers to the city of Ninevah as “the great city.” Greatness did not mean it was good in the sight of God. The greatness of man may be an abomination to God. Nevertheless, God was sending His messenger with a message of hope and a second chance.

Sometimes believers do not respond to God’s calling to bring the message to all peoples because they are intimidated. One possibility for Jonah’s objection to go was that he was intimidated by the size of the city. In Jonah 3:3, says, “It took three days to go through it.” The city was also heavily populated. The population was over 120,000 people (Jonah 4:11). One source states, “the numbers did not take into consideration the

¹⁰Trent C. Butler, ed., *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Holman, 1991), s.v. “Nineveh,” by Edwin Yamaguchi.

¹¹*Ibid.*

children of the city and that city had a population closer to 600,000.”¹² Many times large cities can overwhelm and intimidate a messenger, yet one must overcome this fear in order to obey God’s calling.

The Person God Uses

First, the person that God uses may be imperfect. Jonah was a patriotic prophet but God not only called him to cross-cultural ministry but one that guided him to an enemy nation, a despised nation (2 Kgs 14:25).

Second, God uses people who may at first not display godly compassion. God showed Jonah the definition of compassion by allowing Jonah to personally experience His grace inside the belly of a large fish (Jonah 2:1). God showed compassion on him. God showed Jonah love. Inside that fish, God took care of him. The fish could have digested him and ended his life. But God’s love and care for him spared his life. Jonah also experienced grace. The Lord showed Jonah that He is the God of second chances. God gave Jonah a second chance to go back to Nineveh and proclaim the message. Perhaps that is exactly what the church needs today—a second chance to obey God’s command to reach the nations. Maybe Christians just need time to sit down and reflect on God’s goodness toward them. As the popular Christian hymn says, “Count your blessings, count them one by one.” Believers are a blessed people because they know the one true God. Christians have experienced God’s goodness in their lives many times.

¹²Yamaguchi, “Nineveh.”

Inclusion of all the Nations in the New Testament

God's inclusive love for all peoples is also predominant throughout the NT. This section will examine four passages related to Jesus' earthly ministry and post resurrection, which express His heart for the nations. First is Jesus' ministry in Samaria, where according to John's Gospel, it was "necessary" to go. Barth states, "Note that the aim of the mission of John is described by the point that all are to believe through him."¹³ The Jew, the Samaritan, Hispanic, Anglo, African-American, Asian, all races must come to Him for salvation. A Samaritan woman on that day at the well was told how the way to heaven. Second, God's inclusive message was imminent after His resurrection. The Lord commanded His disciples to "go" to all the nations in Matthew 28:18-20. The heart of the Lord's command was to focus on the "nations." The disciples were to go to people who lived on territories other than their own, different cultures, languages, values, and foods. Today, it is called a cross-culture ministry. Perhaps the best illustration of taking the gospel cross-culturally is the apostle Paul. In Acts 9, the Lord calls Saul to be "a chosen vessel" to reach Gentiles. Finally, the church at Antioch modeled God's inclusiveness of all peoples. Antioch was a community of believers made up of various social classes, races, and cultures. Smith points out the following: "At first these disciples preached only to the Jews in those area, but in Antioch the Cypriot and Cyrenian Jewish Christians began proclaiming to the Greeks that Jesus was Lord."¹⁴ The church at Antioch serves as

¹³Karl Barth, *Witness to the World: A Commentary on John 1* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), 51.

¹⁴T. C. Smith, *Kerygma and Church: Studies in Acts* (Greenville, SC: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 1991), 29.

a model that God's people can worship, serve, and obey the Lord's regardless of class, ethnicity, or language.

Samaritans

The visit to Samaria was intentional in nature. The Bible states in John 4, "Now he had to go through Samaria" (v. 4). The fact that He went to Samaria and not around it, as the Jews did at that time, was a demonstration of God's love for all people—even for one's worst enemies. In spite of the broken relationship between the Jews and Samaritans, Jesus went and ministered. He went to minister in a foreign land. Smith highlights the poor relations that existed between Jews and Samaritans during Jesus' earthly ministry:

The Galileans were accustomed to pass through Samaria when they went up to Jerusalem in companies at the festal season, but for solidarity or defenseless travellers the eastern was safer. The Samaritans were hated by the Jews and hated them in return with bitter hatred . . . they [the Samaritans], maltreated and sometimes slew Jewish travellers through their territory. . . . On Jewish lips "Samaritan" was a term of abuse. The Samaritans were cursed in the Temple; their food was reckoned unclean, even as swine's flesh.¹⁵

Christ took the initiative to fulfill, not a cultural need, but a spiritual need by ignoring the Jewish custom of the day. The example left by Jesus is a message that the church needs to imitate. The church needs to cross cultural barriers and focus on the spiritual needs of the people. Placher states, "A pious Jew would not speak to a strange woman, and Jews regarded Samaritans as heretics, who failed to keep the proper laws and were ritually unclean . . . few people match the inclusiveness of Jesus' welcome."¹⁶ Jesus

¹⁵David Smith, *The Days of His Flesh: The Earthly Life of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), 73.

not only gave the Samaritan woman “living water” (4:10), but also transformed her into an evangelist to her people. She went back to city of Sychar and gave testimony of what Jesus had done. The impact of that encounter made its way to the city. John 4:39, “many of the Samaritans from that town believe in him because of the woman’s testimony.” The Samaritan woman is an example not only of God’s inclusion, but also of Christians’ mission as ambassadors of His inclusive message to all.

God’s inclusive message of love and acceptance brings people and cultures together. He makes peoples become one people—His people. God’s inclusive message, though open to anyone who believes, is also confrontational in nature. Jesus confronted the woman’s personal life by requesting, “Go, call your husband” (4:16). Deen suggests, “If the conversation was to continue, Jesus realized that it was best for the woman’s husband to be present, because it was not customary for a rabbi to hold a long conversation with a strange woman No one had ever reprimanded this woman in such an honest manner before.”¹⁷ The very nature of the gospel is confrontational, regardless of culture or language, because one is confronted with one's own sinful nature. The woman realized that Jesus had revealed the truth about her personal life. She realized that in front of her stood the one who could fulfill her empty life. Now she was confronted with a decision to receive the one who could take her thirst away. The invitation of God’s inclusive message is for the Samaritans, the women, and all peoples to come and worship in “Spirit and in truth,” wherever they may be. Nichols states, “He

¹⁶William C. Placher, *Jesus the Savior: The Meaning of Jesus Christ for Christian Faith* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 76.

¹⁷Edith Deen, *All the Women of the Bible* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1955), 197-98.

is the God who loves the whole world and call all men and women to himself in repentance and faith.”¹⁸ The heart of the gospel is for “all” to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4).

The message at Samaria demonstrates God's intention to redeem the whole world to Himself. It must be documented however that Jesus earthly ministry was mainly focused on reaching the Jews. Cook points out that “Christ did dedicate His earthly ministry to His own people, the Jews. On rare occasions He ministered to Samaritans and Gentiles . . . even while He was ministering to the Jews He envisioned a worldwide ministry for His gospel.”¹⁹ Later, Paul echoed this same sentiment writing to the church at Rome (Rom 1:16)—“to the Jew first.”

Inclusion of all the Nations in the Great Commission

God’s inclusive message is also found in the Great Commission passage in Matthew 28:18-20 where making disciples of all nations echo the future good news to a lost world. In the previous paragraph, Jesus, being a Jew, models God’s inclusive message of love by going into Samaria and ministering there. It is worth noting that He was not rejected but rather accepted, and “many believed,” according to John 4. Now after modeling the concept of inclusiveness to His disciples in Samaria, He commands them to “go” and the same. From a chronological perspective, Jesus, according to Matthew's account, shares His command after His resurrection and prior to His departure

¹⁸Bruce J. Nicholls, *Contextualization: A Theology of Gospel and Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 19.

¹⁹Harold R. Cook, *An Introduction to Christian Missions* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1954), 29-30.

to heaven. God's inclusive message is of great importance to Him because it was a command prior to His ascension. He exemplified the concept of cross-cultural ministry to later command it. Matthew 28:18-20 has come to be known as the epitome of God's inclusive love for all nations. Many congregations use the text as their mission statement to promote local and worldwide missions. The disciples are commanded to go to "all nations" proclaiming God's message. The proclamation of the exclusive message to all the nations is not limited to Matthew.

Starkes suggests that the message is spread through the four gospels. He writes, "In all four accounts can be found the ascending King on his way to City of God, using all his power and authority to teach and evangelize the world."²⁰ It would serve the local body well to refresh the Lord's command. God's inclusive message was given to His disciples to go and share God's love to all humanity, regardless of culture, race, or language. The church in the U.S. has a great opportunity. The nations have come the communities. The "going" has a different meaning. It is not going over the ocean but rather crossing the street. People of all ethnicities and languages are not in the neighborhood around the church and around one's home. The church must engage the communities instead of moving away from them. God has brought the nations to the church so that the church can share this inclusive language. Campolo and Aeschliman write, "God never intended to give His love *only* to the people of Israel, . . . through them He intended to bring all of humankind into relationship with him."²¹ Blomberg states,

²⁰Thomas W. Starkes, *God's Commissioned People: A Fresh History of Christian Missions* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1984), 39.

²¹Tony Campolo and Gordon Aeschliman, *Everybody Wants to Change the World: Practical Ideas for Social Justice* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2006), 149.

“‘all nations’ translates *panta ta ethnē* and translates peoples (somewhat equivalent to ethnic groups). Matthew's most recent uses of *ethnē* seem to include Jews and Gentiles alike as the recipients of evangelism and judgment.”²² Christ gives His church the same instruction to reach the nations of Jews and Gentiles. The church needs to retake that mission once again. Doughty suggests that the “*Evangelization of the World* phrase means giving every person in the world an adequate opportunity to know and receive Jesus Christ. This is the present and urgent task of all Christians.”²³

Several areas will be highlighted about the cross-cultural concept in God’s inclusiveness to all peoples in the Great Commission passage of Matthew. First, the disciples were given authority to take this inclusive message to all the nations. Pratt, Sills, and Walters agree: “His universal *authority* is the foundation of Christian mission.”²⁴ Starkes adds, “The messengers were not sent empty handed without proper training or power; on them he breathed the Holy Spirit.”²⁵ The Spirit of God was with them, empowering them in their mission. Not only did they have the Spirit in them; they also had the promise from Jesus that they would go along on this journey. Not only did they have the Spirit, but they also had communality in their task. The mission was the same. The commission was to go and make disciples of all nations.

²²Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 431-32.

²³W. E. Doughty, *The Call of the World or Every Man’s Supreme Opportunity* (New York: Missionary Education Movement and Laymen’s Missionary Movement, 1912), 35.

²⁴Zane Pratt, David M. Sills, and Jeff K. Walters, *Introduction to Global Missions* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 57.

²⁵Starkes, *God’s Commissioned People*, 39.

The disciples were to teach the ways of God. The mission was to be consistent, regardless of the people group or its ethnicity. The making of disciples was the common denominator; whether Jews or Gentiles, the plan was the same. The *scope* of Christian mission is all people.²⁶ Somehow the church today has failed greatly in duplicating this concept of “making-disciples” when it comes to evangelizing. This is especially true when it comes to evangelizing ethnic groups. Most ethnic works are weak because the sponsoring church is not transferring the “teaching” to the new groups. For some reason, the church or mother church has failed in transferring their model to the new mission. Robertson points out that “the program included making disciples or learners such as they were themselves, . . . evangelism in the fullest sense and not merely revival meetings²⁷

The Great Commission was about establishing a kingdom with kingdom people who will revolutionize the world with God’s inclusive message to all people groups. Campbell Johnson states, “The mission of the church with respect to the kingdom is to create a community of kingdom people, to bear corporate witness to the action of the Spirit in history, and to resist evil in all its form Evangelism stresses that persons are to fulfill Christ’s will ‘as obedient disciples.’”²⁸ Jesus’ command was to make *disciples* of all nations—to teach people about Him and His principles. Evangelism must not be separated from discipleship. As Huston suggests, “The Great Commission is unitary, not

²⁶Pratt, Sills, and Walters, *Introduction to Global Missions*, 57.

²⁷Thomas A. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament: The Gospel According to Matthew and The Gospel According to Mark*, vol. 1 (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1930), 245.

²⁸Ben C. Johnson, *Rethinking Evangelism: A Theological Approach* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987), 121.

dualistic. Its primary, even sole, objective is discipleship.”²⁹ Several questions still need to be answered in terms of Jesus' command to His disciples, what happened to them? How and where did they carry the gospel commanded? Did they follow through in carrying God's inclusive message to the nations as they were told? The Bible provides little or no information about the whereabouts of the apostles; however, church tradition provides some information about their missionary endeavor. Hunter writes,

The recorded early traditions about the apostles leave no doubt about their job descriptions. Primarily each was “sent out” [*apostello* in the Greek] into the world by the Holy Spirit, usually not a new field, area, or ethnic population, to extend the Church to people groups who had not yet received the opportunity. That was their vacation; and their congregations, once planted, continue the outreach.³⁰

The apostles carried God's inclusive message to many parts of the world. Some lost their lives because of sharing the love of God. They traveled to Asia, Europe, and India with the inclusive message. As they went to fulfill their calling, one may wonder how they knew where to go and in what direction. Stephen Neill states, “When the apostles were together in Jerusalem and divided the world among themselves, the lot to go to India fell to Thomas.”³¹ What motivated them to continue spreading Christianity everywhere? Why were they so resilient with their mission? Roland Leavell explains, “The early disciples took it seriously when Jesus told them to make disciples of others. They never ceased trying. Their passion for souls was kept aflame by constant spiritual fellowship with Christ and also by continued efforts to win others. Even persecution

²⁹Sterling H. Huston, *Crusade Evangelism and the Local Church: An Inside Look at Billy Graham Crusades, Revealing Principles of Evangelism That Can Work for Your Church* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1984), 36.

³⁰George G. Hunter III, *How to Reach Secular People* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 109.

³¹Stephen Neill, *A History of Christianity in India: The Beginning to AD 1707* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 26.

could not stop them.”³² The church needs to be spiritually renewed, it needs to reassert the essence of the gospel message once again. The heart of Christianity is not about the size of the church building or about competing for sheep but rather about loving Jesus and proclaiming His message to a lost and dying world.

Inclusion of all the Nations: Paul’s Calling

Jesus modeled cross-culture through His inclusiveness to the Samaritans and later instructed His disciples to “go” and reach the nations. The disciples obeyed and transformed the world with the inclusive message of Christ. The messengers were not always welcome but faced fierce opposition, some to the point of death. One of their biggest opponents was a man called Saul. However, God’s inclusive love transformed him from enemy to friend, from persecuting to being persecuted. Acts 9 describes Saul’s conversion experience on the way to Damascus; that day Saul became Paul, a missionary to the Gentiles. Acts 9:15 reads, “But the Lord said to Ananias, ‘Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.’” God’s message to Ananias included “Gentiles” and “Jews” alike. God wants to save all! Acts 9 states, “This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name” (Acts 9:15-16).

God called Paul to a special mission: to proclaim His inclusive message to a Gentile world with no hope. The calling was not just limited to reaching the Gentiles but to include all the peoples of the world. His mission was to reach Jews and Gentiles alike

³²Roland Q. Leavell, *Evangelism Christ’s Imperative Commission* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1951), 6.

and develop a new people—God’s people. Sabatier states, “The difference between Jews and Gentiles is reduced to its minimum. God has made all nations of one blood. He is not the God of the Jews alone, but also of the Gentiles.”³³ Through the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8), Paul, like the apostles, was to go and witness to the nations, starting first with the Jew. Paul’s calling was to reach people like him and people who were different than him. Johnson declares, “What is most striking in the statement, however, is the climatic position of ‘children of Israel.’ They are not left behind in Paul’s mission; he continues to preach to his fellow Jews until the very end of the story.”³⁴ Christ’s message to Paul was for him to continue sharing His inclusive message wherever he went. Longenecker points out that “Paul had no doubt that he was commissioned to be an apostle to the Gentiles, but he never interpreted this call as meaning a total disregard for the Jew Rather, follow his Lord’s practice and command of putting the Jew first—but never allowing that order to stand in his way or detain him from *his* primary responsibility to the Gentile.”³⁵

Inclusion of all the Nations: The Church at Antioch

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called Them.” (Acts 13:1-2)

³³Louis A. Sabatier, *The Apostle Paul* (London: Butler and Tanner, n.d.), 105.

³⁴Timothy Luke Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina 5 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 165.

³⁵Richard N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House 1964), 253.

A simple reading of this passage highlights the rich ethnic diversity in the great Antioch Church. Few times in the history of Christianity has such a group of leaders have stepped forward to build a spirit-led congregation; at least this is what Luke portrays. Paul's inclusive calling reflects God's inclusive message to everyone. Paul was commissioned by Jesus and reaffirmed by the Antioch church in Syria. Thiessen states, "Antioch, not Jerusalem, became the center for missionary work and that Paul, not one of the twelve, became the apostle to the Gentiles."³⁶ The Antioch church exemplified a model for today's commissioning process: God calls, and the church reaffirms. Many today misunderstand God's calling and omit the role of the local body of believers. The message is inclusive in its function. God works through His church.

Some proponents today prefer to take an authoritative approach and simply state that God called them to a particular role without a confirmation from the local church. Sadly, some claim to be called by God, but their testimony does not reflect the calling. God desires to include His church in the calling and sending process. Acts 6 serves as an example of this pattern: when the seven were called to be deacons, they prayed, and criteria were followed before the selection was made. The same pattern is apparent at the church at Antioch where Paul and Barnabas served. The role of a sending church is to prepare leaders to send them to the mission field, whether local or abroad. Thiessen estimates, "By the end of the first century, the number of Christians had grown to around half a million."³⁷ Cook points out that "a vital contribution of the church of

³⁶John C. Thiessen, *A Survey of World Missions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1955), 5.

³⁷Thiessen, *A Survey of World Missions*, 5.

Antioch was its role in the preparation of Paul for missionary evangelism . . . Paul and his teams planted numerous churches, taught the Scriptures, and raised up leaders for the congregations . . . by the end of the second century, Christianity had touched every major province of the Roman Empire.”³⁸ The role of the church is not just to affirm God’s calling but also to select and send the very best. Both men held prominent positions within the church. They were considered “prophets and teachers” (Acts 13:1) of the church. Whitelaw states that “Barnabas . . . appears to have held a position corresponding to that of Peter in Jerusalem.”³⁹

What church today would send a Paul or a Barnabas to the mission field? One may think that sending the top leaders may weaken the church or make it vulnerable to false teachings. Besides Paul's and Barnabas's prominent positions in the church, they were of great influence. Bosch notes, “through the ministry of Paul and Barnabas, the Antioch church became a community with a concern for people they had never met, . . . people living in Cyprus, mainland in Asia Minor, and elsewhere.”⁴⁰ Fortunately, the Antioch church did not have such mindset. Unfortunately, the church today does the opposite and holds on to the best leaders and sends the troubled ones to the field or sends none at all. One must confess that having Paul teaching a Sunday school class would be a once in a lifetime experience; however, from the text, the church at Antioch did not seem to think this way. The church sent the very best to continue this inclusive message; they

³⁸Harold R. Cook, *An Introduction to Christian Missions* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), 100-101.

³⁹Thomas Whitelaw, *Homiletical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1896), 276.

⁴⁰David, J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 44.

understood that God's calling was to send out the called. One may ask, but who were these two men? Whitelaw provides their résumés:

1. Barnabas. Originally called Joseph. Styled Barnabas, meaning son of consolation or of exhortation, either from his sympathy or from his eloquence, or perhaps from both. A native of Cypress, a Levite, who stood high in the esteem of the Church at Jerusalem on account of His self sacrificing liberality, and who had lately arrived in Antioch on a mission from the mother Church in the metropolis.
2. Saul, a native of Tarsus, a scholar of Gamaliel, a participator in the murder of Stephen, a persecutor of Christians, a convert of Jesus, a powerful evangelist, recently introduced to the Church at Antioch by Barnabas.⁴¹

The church needs to continue with the same fervent heart to carry this inclusive message forward. The body of Christ needs to be missional and intentional in order to reach the nations with the Gospel. The church at Antioch exemplifies a healthy model of a Great Commission church that lives, equips and sends out missionaries to the nations.

F. F. Bruce describes the make-up of the Antioch church as follows: "Other leaders of the church at Antioch were Cyrenean named Lucius, Simeon, who bore the Latin surname, *Niger*, or 'Black,' and Manaen [the Greek from Menahem], [and] a young Greek physician named Lucas."⁴² The church at Antioch reflects a vivid example of Jesus's inclusive message: people of all colors, nationalities, and ethnicities serving the same Lord at Antioch. The local body reflected God's love for all peoples. In modern times, the Antioch church would be classified as a multi-ethnic church and multi-cultural. God's inclusive message is for all. The church reflected the ethnic diversity of the population of the city. Lea and Black state that "the church came from a multi-ethnic background, but

⁴¹Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 279.

⁴²F. F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame: The Rise and Progress of Christianity from Its First Beginnings to the Conversion of the English* (Eugene: OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1958), 91-92.

all seemed to possess a remarkable sensitivity to divine leadership.”⁴³ Taylor points out that the population had “many heterogeneous elements.”⁴⁴ The church was a mirror of a God’s inclusive message to the world. The church at Antioch was ethnically diverse and culturally different. The church was not homogeneous, nor was it all Anglo, African-American, Hispanic, or Asian; rather, it was made up of people of all colors and social classes worshipping God. It is a joy to worship in a local church setting where all the nations are represented. The church at Antioch was a sample of heaven on earth.

The role of the Holy Spirit was critical at Antioch. The people were filled with the Spirit of God. They were also sensitive to the voice of the Spirit. They heard when God gave the command to set apart Saul and Barnabas. The body was attentive to God’s voice. It was the Holy Spirit who instructed the church at Antioch who needed to be set apart. One cannot ignore the role of the Holy Spirit in the commissioning and activity within the church. Throughout the book of Acts, the activity of the Holy Spirit is evident. The church today has become insensitive to the work of the Holy Spirit in missions. Some congregations have a one-tract mind when choosing a staff. Some only rely on a candidate’s seminary degree or which seminary the servant attended. In his Gospel, Luke reminds us that the work of Holy Spirit is central. Mills and Watson state, “Luke wants it clear that just as the Holy Spirit was involved in the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry,

⁴³Thomas A. Lea and David A. Black, *The New Testament: Its Background and Message*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2003), 306.

⁴⁴William M. Taylor, *Paul, The Missionary* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1881), 71.

the Antioch church sets Saul and Barnabas apart only under the direction of the Holy Spirit (v. 3).”⁴⁵

The fact that the church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey brings an additional perspective of God’s inclusive message. The messengers that were to spread the good news came from *within* the church. They were not brought in or transferred from another congregation or from a nearby province, but rather were already inside the church. God prepared these two men inside the four walls of their local church. The church did not welcome resumes from the outside to fill a position, nor was there a promotion issued to fill the position for career missionary. No mission agency was contacted, but rather the church prayed and fasted, seeking God’s will. The two missionaries were people who were known to the local body and had won the trust of the church. The missionaries gave testimony of their faith in the local church setting. Their lifestyle was their credential. Perhaps, it would be of much benefit to begin to look inward for the next pastor, church planter, or missionary. It is of great importance that, at Antioch, God’s laborers were *inside* the church.

The Antioch church discerned God’s calling on future missionaries. The local body obeyed God’s voice. The church could have “resisted the Spirit” (Acts 7:51), but they chose not to; instead, they obeyed and submitted to His calling. The body of Christ understood that their mission was to equip and to send. The goal was to obey the Great Commission and send missionaries to fulfill Jesus’ command to reach the nations. The Antioch church was not greedy but understood God’s heart for the nations; they obeyed

⁴⁵Michael C. Parsons, *Acts*, in vol. 7 of *Acts and Pauline Writings*, Mercer University Commentary on the Bible, ed. Watson E. Mills and Richard F. Wilson (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 33.

God's Spirit and rejoiced in being a sending missionary church. The church at Antioch reflected the real purpose and focus of the local church. Allen states, "The church was first established and organized with a world-wide mission for a world-wide work."⁴⁶

The impact of the Antioch church is of great value for generations to come. The story of this multi-cultural church is inspiring and serves as a model for the church today to reflect such diversity. Iorg states, "The story of the church at Antioch is an inspiring drama, a model of a transformational church in the first century for the church in the twenty-first century . . . is an ancient model for the future church."⁴⁷

Conclusion

From the passages studied above in both Testaments, one can see the inclusion of God's love for all peoples, from Abraham to the early church. He called individuals to carry this inclusive message to their own people and to those who are different from them. Some were called to go far off to distant lands to be bearers of the gospel message. The mission was to go outside their land of origin, do cross culture ministry and even learn a new language. God's inclusive love welcomed everyone. In Genesis, He called a man from Ur and promised to bless the nations through him. In Ruth, He accepted a pagan worshipper, who followed a different religion, to have a relationship with Him. Jonah demonstrates God's inclusiveness through mercy; he spared an entire city from destruction. In the New Testament, God's inclusiveness was demonstrated through Jesus'

⁴⁶Roland Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church: And the Causes That Hinder It* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1962), 96.

⁴⁷Jeff Iorg, *The Case for Antioch: A Biblical Model for a Transformational Church* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 7.

earthly ministry. In Samaria, he took the initiative to visit a woman at the well, and later many believed.

With the Great Commission, He commanded His disciples to “go” to the nations. Later, in the book of Acts, He called a furious enemy of the cross to be a missionary to the Gentiles. And, in Antioch, He established a church that modeled His inclusive message. Manifestations of God’s inclusive message run through these passages of Scripture in both the Old and New Testaments. His love for all people is highlighted and modeled for all generations. One can conclude that cross-culture ministry is a biblical concept reflected in God’s inclusiveness of all people. He calls men and women to bring His message of salvation for all. John sums up God’s inclusive message in his Gospel: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

CHAPTER 3

SOCIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CROSS-CULTURAL EVANGELISM

This chapter highlights the sociological foundations of cross-cultural evangelism. The focus of this section will be to study up close the first-generation immigrants from Mexico, Guatemalans, the Mexican-Americans known as Tejano, and the children of the immigrants born in the U.S. A segment of the children of immigrants will include a look at second-generation immigrants as well. The study of the Mexican people will be more thorough than that of the Guatemalan people because they reflect the majority of the Hispanic population group in my area, state, and the nation as a whole.¹ In order to understand who the people are, one must first know their background, culture, and religious belief system. This helpful pattern will be demonstrated for each individual group.

The First-Generation Immigrant

México: Early History

Mexico originated many civilizations ago. Reflection on this rich historic heritage starts with the name “México.” Earl Shorris describes its meaning as follows:

¹Jens Manuel Krogstad and Michael Keegan, “From Germany to Mexico: How America’s Source of Immigrants Has Changed over a Century,” accessed December 1, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/10/07/a-shift-from-germany-to-mexico-for-americas-immigrants/>.

Choosing Mexico as a name necessitated changing the name of the people who lived in what now is called Mexico City: To avoid confusion the Mexicans became the Aztecs. “Aztec” comes from Nahuatl origin stories, which say the people came from a place called Aztlán, which probably means “Place of the White Heron” or something similar. The pre-Hispanic people, who lived in what is now Mexico City, refer to the same people. Tenochtitlán was the name of the city-state; so Tenochas; Nahuatl was the name of the language group, so Nahuas; and Mexica referred to one of the names of their tutelary god. But they were not called Aztecs until 1821.²

According to Shorris, “The birth of Mexico began when in early 1519 when Herman Cortés, a Spanish Conquistador (conqueror), landed on the Mexican shores. After colonizing several Caribbean islands, the Spanish turned their attention to the American mainland. Cortés marched inland, looking to claim new lands for Spain. Soon after landing in Mexico, Cortés learned of the vast and wealthy Aztec Empire in the region’s interior.”³

Several factors helped Cortés and the Spaniards have success in the New Spain, as the territory was called. The following outlines some of the factors that led to their being conquered:

First of all, the Aztec emperor, Montezuma II, was convinced Herman Cortés was a god wearing armor. Second, the conquistadors were opportunistic; they took advantage of a religious celebration to kill many warriors during a religious festival. Another advantage Cortés and his men had superior weaponry when the natives counterattack. Also, the Spaniards recruited other native groups, through a lady translator, that hated the harsh practices of the Aztecs. Lastly, the natives not had developed a natural immune system to defend against some of diseases the Spaniards brought with them such as Measles, mumps, smallpox, and typhus . . . resulted in the death of hundreds and thousands.⁴

²Earl Shorris, *The Life and Times of Mexico* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 7-8.

³Ibid., 36.

⁴*Nasoa.com*, accessed, December 2, 2016, [http://www.nasoa.com/School%20Folder/World%20History/Patterns%20of%20Interaction%20\(ebook\)%20\(website\)/Source/W5D20AAD.pdf](http://www.nasoa.com/School%20Folder/World%20History/Patterns%20of%20Interaction%20(ebook)%20(website)/Source/W5D20AAD.pdf).

The people of Mexico are a people who look to the past. Shorris notes, “By 1821 Mexicans already preferred looking backward . . . the idea resonates in the mid-twentieth-century work of Octavio Paz, who said that Mexico and United States face in opposite directions: Mexico looks to the past, and the United States to the future.”⁵ Mexico is about preserving traditions of culture, religion, and remaining loyal. Even the centrality of their religious practices is based on past events. The Mexican Catholics have a unique and faithful devotion to the Virgin Guadalupe. Bañuelas summarizes the story of the Virgin: “The story tells of a recently converted Amerindian call Juan Diego who, in December 1531 saw and was adjust by a Nahuatl-speaking, indigenous woman on the hills of Tepeyac. It also mentions that the woman wanted a temple built on that site and the Spanish Church Authorities in 16th Century Mexico did not believe him until a miracle occurred.”⁶ Mexicans devote a special day to Virgin Guadalupe, December 12. The celebration begins at midnight on December 11. The fiesta takes place in the location believed to be the site where the Virgin first appeared. The village is called Villa de Guadalupe. The day of the Virgin is celebrated with mariachi music, dances, and a special mass. Timeanddate.com provides insight into such Mexican nationalism:

Public celebrations, or fiestas, are held in honor of Mary, the Virgin of Guadalupe, on December 12. Catholics from across Mexico and other countries pay pilgrimage to see an image of Mary (*Virgen Morena*), believed to be authentic, in the Basilica of Guadalupe in Mexico City. Children are dressed in traditional costumes and are blessed in churches. Thousands of people come to church to pray.⁷

⁵Shorris, *The Life and Times of Mexico*, 8.

⁶Arturo J. Bañuelas, *Mestizo Christianity Theology from the Latin Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 158.

⁷“Holidays in Mexico,” accessed December 2, 2016, <https://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/mexico/day-of-virgin-guadalupe>.

Every year, thousands of people gather at the Basilica in Mexico City for the national celebration to pay honor to the image of Virgin Guadalupe. This is also the location where it is believed that the Virgin appeared to Juan Diego. Here, in the United States, all of the national Hispanic television stations provide U.S. Hispanics with live coverage of the annual special event. The main television channel, Univision (a U.S. based cable TV station), shows the entire ceremony, which starts on Dec. 11 at midnight. Prior to the celebration, commercials remind the people that the event is nearing. In addition, Univision has a special weekly program called “La Rosa de Guadalupe” (The Rose of Guadalupe), a program that focuses on the miracles that the Virgin performs in modern times. A Franciscan article summarizes the story about Juan Diego and the Virgin’s appearance:

Juan Diego’s name is forever linked with Our Lady of Guadalupe because it was to him that she first appeared at Tepeyac hill on December 9, 1531. The most famous part of his story is told in connection with the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12. After the roses gathered in his tilma were transformed into the miraculous image of Our Lady, however, little more is said about Juan Diego.⁸

However, all is not well with the Mexican Catholic Church, as some Catholic theologians are now questioning Juan Diego’s account. In 2002, the Washington Post published an article entitled “Myth versus Miracle” where it states the following: “But there are ants at this garden party. A vocal minority of priests and church historians, including the former head priest of the Basilica of Guadalupe, has opened an emotional national debate here by publicly stating what some scholars have long believed: that there is no convincing historical record that Juan Diego ever existed.”⁹ Mexico’s past is

⁸Don Miller, “Saint Juan Diego,” accessed December 2, 2016, <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-juan-diego/>.

Mexico's present. The story of Juan Diego and Virgin appearance is an example how the past is present in everyday Mexican life. Mexico's past is alive today by the media, people, religion, and culture. Every year the annual celebration in Mexico, the T.V. programs, and the highlighting of the Virgin's miracles, bring its past to life.

Social make-up. In order to have a better understanding of the people of Mexico, one must look back at the origin of the Mexican nation. The Spanish conquerors did not just come to conquer the land but also to change the society of Mexico. Hugo Nutini and Barry Isaac provide a glimpse into the make-up of the people during and after the conquest:

The Conquest brought together three distinct populations: Indigenous "Indians," Europeans, and African slaves. The indigenous population numbered at least three million in 1521 but introduced diseases reduced almost ninety percent. The African slaves were present from the moment of the Spanish Conquest of Central Mexico, having been brought from Cuba by the Spanish Expeditions. In 1553, there were some 20,000 African slaves in Mexico. Many of these slaves were destined for the sugar cane plantation around Cordoba and Orizaba, in eastern part of Central Mexico. But also they served in many other areas as well such: domestic industrial, commercial, agriculture, or domestic work. In fact, "the urban areas received a greater proportion of slaves than the rural areas."¹⁰

Mexico was slowly turning from being a "fully Indian" nation to becoming a more cosmopolitan ethnically diverse country. The conquest brought change in the make up of the population and a class society that would impact the nation forever. One example of this social change was the demographic information presented in 1612. The capital reportedly had some 50,000 blacks and mulattos (African-Indian mixture), about 15,000

⁹Kevin Sullivan, "Debate Rages Over Likely Canonization," accessed December 10, 2016, <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/religion/myth.htm>.

¹⁰Hugo G. Nutini and Barry L. Isaac, *Social Stratification in Central Mexico, 1500-2000* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 34.

“Spaniards” (including creoles, mixed Spanish-Indian parentage), and about 80,000 Indians. Assuming these figures are accurate, Mexico City’s population was 34.5 percent black/mulatto and 10.3 percent “Spanish” in that year.¹¹ The social change did not just impact Mexico, but the whole region. The study of the background and early social life of Mexico is not far off from my personal heritage or that of my spouse. My family tree goes back to Spanish settlers who migrated from Spain to Ocotepaque, Honduras, and my spouse’s roots can be traced to Italy.

A lot has changed since Herman Cortés arrived in New Spain in early 1500s. Today, “México’s capitol is considered one of the largest cities in the world and the country has 129 million people . . . [and] ranks as the tenth most populated country in the world.”¹² This information is valuable because it helps to understand that some immigrants are not coming from small towns or rural setting into similar regions but rather, besides dealing with the cultural and linguistic barriers, they also must cope with adjusting to living in rural settings.

The language of México. The people of México preserved multiple languages besides Spanish. The official language of México, however, is Spanish. México is rich with linguistic diversity. There are a great number of dialects or indigenous languages mainly in the Southern parts of the country. Indian languages have also been part of the early beginnings of the country. Earl Shorris states, “The language spoken by most Mexicans is Spanish, but it is far from the only language spoken in Mexico . . . [T]he

¹¹Nutini and Isaac, *Social Stratification in Central Mexico, 1500-2000*, 34.

¹²“Mexico Population-Worldometers,” accessed December 12, 2016, www.worldometers.info/world-population/mexico-population/.

number of languages within what are now the political boundaries of Mexico at the moment of the Spanish Invasion probably exceeded 175.”¹³ A lot of those native languages are still in existence today. As result of the multiples Indian languages early in history, some believe that the country could not move forward. Turner points out that “the diversity of languages impeded the rise of Mexican nationalism throughout the nineteenth century.”¹⁴ Some of those indigenous languages still exist and are spoken today in many regions of Mexico. This helps one to understand that not everyone who is from Mexico speaks Spanish or only Spanish. Every year, during February, I organize a conference with the purpose to train, equip, and inspire the Hispanic Baptist congregations in South and Central Georgia. The location of the conference varies, as does its theme. The conference is called the Intercultural Hispanic Church Growth and Missions Conference, and it is a one-day event.

In 2015, the conference was held at First Baptist Church Lyons, Georgia. During the lunch break, I sat across from a Mexican couple from Puebla, Mexico. As the conversation evolved, the question was asked whether they knew people in the area who spoke a dialect or an of the indigenous languages, to which the wife replied, “My native tongue is Nahuatl.” She spoke the language or a variation of the language spoken by the Aztecs in the interior when the Spaniards conquistadors arrived in the New Spain in the 1500s!¹⁵ Even though some of the dialects have died down or are nonexistent, many are

¹³Shorris, *The Life and Times of Mexico*, 6-7.

¹⁴Frederick C. Turner, *The Dynamic of Mexican Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 84.

¹⁵*Mexico*, The Library of Nations, ed. Dale M. Brown, Anne Horan, David Thompson, and Jane Jordan (Amsterdam: Time-Life Books, 1985), 74.

still preserved in certain regions of Mexico. For instance, Spinden declares, “Over half a million people who speak a Mayan dialect. Some of the places where these dialects are spoken include: Veracruz, Yucatan, Tabasco, and Chiapas. The languages spoken or a form thereof include: Tzental, Quiché, Cakchiquel, Chol, Chorti, and, in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Zapoteco, and Mixtecan.”¹⁶ In 2013, while serving as an interim pastor at Filadelfia Hispanic Mission in Dooly County, Georgia, it became apparent that multiple languages were present within the local congregation. The make-up of the congregation was primarily composed of people from Southern Mexico and Northern Guatemala. In conversations with some of the leaders, one learned that at least two or three different indigenous languages or dialects from both countries were present.

As a Hispanic missionary, I travel across the Southern and Central part of Georgia. At one unique congregation, El Camino (“The Way”), in Cairo, Georgia, the mission has multiple Mayan dialects spoken. Two of the most popular dialects spoken are the Mom from Guatemala and Tzotzil from Chiapas, Mexico. Arnaldo Gonzalez, the pastor, has supported the preservation of both languages and, during Sunday School, a class is taught in Tzotzil. The Mexican indigenous people have faithfully preserved their heart languages even after so many years.

The religion of México. The people of México are very religious. Religion is a part of the culture, and religion permeates the individual, the family, and society as a whole. It includes all ways of life. One perfect example is the names given to babies at birth. One source revealed that the most popular Mexican baby names are Maria

¹⁶Herbert Spinden, *Ancient Civilizations of Mexico and Central America* (New York: Publication of the Anthropological Handbook Fund, 1943), 35.

Guadalupe and José Luis.¹⁷ A careful observation of the most popular names highlights the names of Virgin Guadalupe, Mary, and Joseph (José), all religious icons of the Mexican Catholic faith. Another distinctive of the religious tradition of México is naming one's child after a saint for protection: "Since we name our children after the saints, that they may have an advocate in heaven who will intercede for them before the throne of God, there are also links to a list of Catholic saint names, with Catholic male saints and Catholic female saints listed separately, as well as a patron saint list."¹⁸ It is the belief that the saint will help raise the child and serve as his or her patron. In addition, "Guadalupe" and "Maria" are popular names that cross gender barriers. Therefore, in the Mexican culture, and Hispanic culture in general, it is common for a male or female to bare these names. During a cultural orientation in Mexico City sponsored by the Mexican Baptist Theological Seminary, a faculty member stated, "In México, to be Mexican means to be Catholic, and also to be Mexican means to be Guadalupano; expressing [one's] loyalty to Virgin Guadalupe."¹⁹

The people, however, practice many expressions of the Catholic faith tied with multiple forms of beliefs that create many facets of Catholicism. The Catholic Church embraces all religious different expression as long as the faithful remain connected to the Church and fulfill some of the church's commandments. Thompson explains, "Catholic Church divides the Church population into three divisions, which he calls pagan

¹⁷"Most Common Baby Names in Mexico," accessed December 12, 2016, http://www.babycenter.com/0_most-common-baby-names-in-mexico_10341179.bc

¹⁸"Saint Calendars & Saint's Feast Days," accessed December 12, 2016, <http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com>.

¹⁹Cultural Orientation provided by Mexican Baptist Theological Seminary in Mexico City Summer 2001 in partnership with the Georgia Baptist Convention.

Catholics, utilitarian Catholics, and true Catholics. All are baptized, married, and buried by the Church, but Pagan Catholics perform all sorts of strange rites and find their chief bond to the Church in their superstitious beliefs.”²⁰

Because of this welcoming and adjustable pattern of religion, when sharing the gospel with a Mexican Catholic, one must always ask a follow-up question to “Are you a Christian?” Their answer will always be “Yes, I am!” A possible follow-up can be “When did you become a Christian?” In this open approach to Christianity, everyone is a Christian. The pagan Catholic, however, can go much deeper into the occult and still not lose his religious affiliation with the church. Thompson adds, “While they profess full faith in Christianity, they also perform rituals for the preservation of their crops from drought and wild animals; they exorcise demons during illness and find their sweetest revenge against their enemies in the use of charms and philters.”²¹ Understanding the Catholic distinctiveness of faith in Mexico can lead to a better understanding of the Mexican people living in the United States.

A Brief History of Guatemala

The Central America region is located between Mexico and Panama. It is made up of five countries: Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. Geographically, Guatemala rests between two large bodies of water, the Caribbean on one side and the Pacific Ocean on the other. The region shares a common language, Spanish, but it is not exclusively Spanish-speaking. In addition, the five countries share a

²⁰Wallace Thompson, *The People of Mexico: Who They Are and How They Live* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1921), 178.

²¹Ibid.

common date of independence. A website states, “All five seceded from Spain on September 15, 1821.”²² For the purpose of this project, only Guatemala will be studied.

Guatemala is rich in culture. The first step in understanding Guatemala is understanding the meaning of the word: “Guatemala comes from the Nahuatl, a Mayan dialect, and means ‘Land of Trees.’”²³ Whetten says, “In 1950s more than half of the population consisted of indigenous peoples, who can be divided into numerous small isolated societies with their own distinctive ways of life Each group possesses their own traditional customs, attitudes, and techniques that have prevailed for ages.”²⁴ In later years, the population of the country remains indigenous. Gonzalez concludes, “44 percent of the population was illiterate, and Indians made up half of the population in 2002. Also, the people do not live very long; the average life span for a man is only forty-eight years.”²⁵ A sizeable amount of the indigenous population has migrated to other neighboring countries, mainly to the U.S. Gonzalez states, “The largest exodus to the U.S. took place in the early 1980s and the majority were Indian peasants from the nation’s underdeveloped highlands.”²⁶ Besides the high population of illiteracy, Guatemalans are a people that have endured civil wars, dictators, and hardship

²²Michael Oleaga, “Central America Independence Day, 193 Years Later As 5 Countries Continue to Improve Future,” accessed January 4, 2017, <http://www.latinpost.com/articles/21304/20140915/hispanic-heritage-month-2014-central-american-independence-day.htm>.

²³Shelagh McNaly, *Pocket Adventure Guatemala* (Edison, NJ: Hunter Publishing, 2006), 10.

²⁴Nathan L. Whetten, *Guatemala: The Land and People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1961), viii.

²⁵Juan Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America*, rev. ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 130.

²⁶Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire*, 139.

throughout its history. Gonzalez adds, “In 1985, for example, 75,000 people disappeared and about 150,000, mostly Indians, fled to México.”²⁷ The fact that the population has such a high Indigenous population also means that the language spoken is diverse. For many, Spanish is there second tongue but not their heart language. A recent article states that “approximately 40 percent of Guatemalan people identify themselves as indigenous and that apart from Spanish the people speak twenty-three official indigenous languages.”²⁸

The culture of Guatemala. Guatemala’s culture has been heavily influenced by its indigenous history. One example of this influence is the food. Donquijote.org states that “the Mayan civilization used corn as their principle crop, and corn is still important today. Popular dishes in Guatemala include enchiladas, quesadillas, and tamales, although these are not to be confused with their Mexican counterparts.”²⁹ Music and fashion also play an import role in Guatemalan tradition: “Guatemalans are known for their percussion bands featuring the marimba, the national instrument. . . . Its fashion is also well known for its use of brightly colored yarn, textiles, capes, shirts, blouses, skirts, and dresses, . . . a reflection of Guatemalan history as bright colored fabrics were very popular with the Mayan people.”³⁰ Everyculture.com states that “Mayan children are taught manners early in life; they are taught to greet adults by bowing their heads and sometimes folding their hands before them, as in prayer. Adults greet other adults

²⁷Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire*, 138.

²⁸“Culture of Guatemala,” accessed January 4, 2017, <http://www.donquijote.org/culture/guatemala/society/people/>.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

verbally, asking about one's health and that of one's family. They are not physically demonstrative.”³¹ A final characteristic of Mayan culture is marriage: “Arranged marriages between families when children are young are a common practice. . . . Mayan women traditionally trail their husbands; if he falls drunk by the road, she dutifully waits to care for him until he wakes up.”³²

The religion of Guatemala. Catholicism in Guatemala is a mixture of faith with indigenous practices and beliefs. Whetten states, “For more than four hundred years the Indians have practiced their own integrated type of assimilated Christianity, a blend of ancient Mayan practices and the Catholicism presented to them by the early missionaries. Further, each town has its own set of beliefs in the supernatural.”³³ Many of these beliefs are inherited from generation to generation. When people migrate, the belief comes with them, making it difficult to reach them with the gospel. It is even harder to reach them when settled communities organized. Whetten adds, “The belief in one or more virgins or female deities is characteristic of most villagers. Images of Our Lady of Guadalupe of México, Our Lady of Chinautla, Our Lady of the Rosary, and Our Lady of the Concepción. Sometimes, the Virgin may refer to the Virgin Mary who is occasionally thought of as being the wife of Christ.”³⁴ Catholicism is not as strong in Guatemala as it

³¹“Guatemala,” accessed January 4, 2017, <http://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Guatemala.html#ixzz4GnqxlWI>.

³²Ibid.

³³Whetten, *Guatemala the Land and the People*, 287.

³⁴Ibid., 291.

is in the neighboring country of México. There are varying estimates and numbers when it comes to counting the percentage of Catholics in the country.

In brief, Catholicism was introduced to Guatemala during colonial times. It continues to have an important role in the country today, although there have been tensions between the Church and state throughout the last few hundred years. Friction escalated in the late nineteenth century when the Guatemalan government confiscated church property and secularized education in an attempt to limit the power of the Church. During the civil war in Guatemala, many priests adopted a form of Liberation Theology and opposed military campaigns in the highlands. Numerous priests were killed or exiled as a result.³⁵ The evangelical church has had great success in Guatemala. Almost a third of all Guatemalans are now Protestant or evangelical Christians. Some attribute the rise of the evangelical church to the 1975 earthquakes that destroyed several villages in the highlands. Following the earthquake, international aid agencies, many of them Christian, rushed in to help and left having converted several people. Another factor that contributed to the rise of evangelical Christianity was the civil war of the 1980s. During this time, many Guatemalans found hope in a belief system that promised rewards in heaven despite a challenging present.³⁶

The Mexican American: “El Tejano”

Who is a “Tejano?” Does he or she speak English or Spanish or both? Does it even matter if that individual was born on the U.S. side of the border? What would their

³⁵“Religion in Guatemala,” accessed January 4, 2017, <http://www.anywhereguatemala.com/travel-guide/religion>.

³⁶“Religion in Guatemala.”

physical descriptions be? Could a foreigner distinguish them from someone from Mexico or another Spanish-speaking country? Arreola helps those looking for answers by defining who is a Tejana/o. He states that Tejanos or Texas Americans are generally used to distinguish Mexican Americans who are Texans by birth from, say, Mexican Americans born in Arizona or California. “Mexican American” is the term most often used for those of Mexican heritage born in the U.S.³⁷ In order to have a better description of who Tejanos are, one must look back at the historical archives of Texas’ birth. The Tejanos were originally people from México who lived in Texas, which was known as northern Mexico, prior to 1845. Some believe that half of México’s territory, which included Texas, was home to over 100,000 inhabitants with partial Hispanic heritage. It was after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed in 1848, that Tejanos became U.S. citizens.³⁸ The fact that they were now American citizens did not mean that they spoke English or had assimilated to American culture. The road for them, for many years, would not be easy. On the contrary, Sandoval states that Anglo Americans refused to accept the Hispanics as equals.³⁹ In addition, after the Treaty of 1848, a massive flow of pioneers headed for the new Texas Nation and the comments made towards the tejanos were rather unkind and deplorable to say the least. They were mistreated and at times compared to animals. Madsen states that an Anglo pioneer after arriving in Texas, expressed the common sentiment of the time, saying, “When we came here, there was

³⁷Daniel D. Arreola, *Tejano South Texas: A Mexican American Cultural Province* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 8.

³⁸Moises Sandoval, *On the Move: A History of the Hispanic Church in the United States* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 2006), 38.

³⁹Ibid.

nothing but rats, cactus, mesquite, and Mexicans.”⁴⁰ Life was not easy for these new Americans.

The culture of the Tejano. The Tejano, or Mexican-American as some describe them, live in two distinct worlds. They may learn the English language and the laws of the land, but they will not conform to American culture. Madsen explains that as “opportunities open for economic advancement and social acceptance of Mexican-Americans, but still resist complete conformity to Anglo patterns Mexican-Americans are unwilling to abandon their cultural heritage from south of the border.”⁴¹ The roots of México are alive and will not be abandoned by future generations. One may think that the generations that follow would take a different path and would embrace an American way of life. However, one college student expressed his Latin heritage this way: “My ancestors came from one of the most civilized nations in the world. I’m not going to forget what they taught me. I’m proud to be an American but I won’t become a gringo.”⁴² The Tejano is one who is an American but will not trade in his Spanish heritage. Being Mexican-American has some divine ties besides being an American citizen.

The Tejano is a U.S. citizen but also a member of *La Raza* (“The Race”). This term refers to all Latin-Americans who are united by cultural and spiritual bonds derived from God. The spiritual aspect is more important than the cultural [A]n example of

⁴⁰William Madsen, *Mexican-Americans of South Texas* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), 6.

⁴¹Ibid., 14.

⁴²Ibid.

this is the belief that good or bad fortune is predestined.⁴³ Another cultural importance is their view on education. For many in the U.S. education is everything. The goal of a parent is to see a child exceed in high school or in college. For the traditional Tejano family the concept of education may not involve school at all. Madsen states that an “educated” Tejano person is one who has been well trained as a social being. Therefore, informal education within the family is viewed as *more* important than a formal education. Madsen adds that an educated person displays polish and courtesy in his social relationships.⁴⁴ A lack of perspective on higher learning does not encourage young people to strive for more when they reach high school. The little or no support they receive from their parents may have a direct correlation on the high dropout rate in 2000 among Latinos. However, there is some good news. Perhaps parents are seeing the importance of their children finishing school and, in one 2014 survey, the drop out rate dropped. The Hispanic dropout rate reached a new low in 2014, dropping from 32 percent in 2000 to 12 percent in 2014 among those ages 18 to 24. This helped lower the national dropout rate from twelve percent to seven percent over the same time period—also a new low. Even so, the Hispanic dropout rate remains higher than that of blacks (7 percent), whites (5 percent), and Asians (1 percent).⁴⁵

The religion of the Tejano. Virgin Guadalupe, as seen earlier, is the Virgin of Mexico and is venerated among Texans. Mexican-Americans seem to lack the close

⁴³Madsen *Mexican-Americans of South Texas*, 15.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 23.

⁴⁵Jens Manuel Krogstad, “5 facts about Latinos and education,” accessed February 2, 2017 <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/28/5-facts-about-latinos-and-education/>.

personal attachment to her that is felt in México, however. One Latin said, “The Virgin of Guadalupe is very beautiful and she loves mankind but she lives in México. Her people there keep her busy with many sins. I do not think she has time for the Texans. She is so far away. Virgin San Juan is closer to the Mexican-Americans [H]er shrine is at Jalisco, México.”⁴⁶ Arreola states that Mexican-American Catholicism is a folk Catholicism inherited from the homeland (México). The people worship, as some put it, “idols behind bars,” a native tradition of beliefs in pre-Columbian gods that conveniently allowed a syncretism with the saints of Catholicism. The faith is committed to pilgrimage and sacred places, . . . which lead to apparitions.”⁴⁷

The Immigrant Children Born in the U.S.

In order to understand Hispanics, Hispanics needs to be studied not as one culture, but rather as a culture with various subcultures. Another way to look at Hispanic culture is to view the culture from a citizenship approach. Understanding the distinctive of each of the subculture groups can lead one to be more effective when ministering. The diversity includes three groups: the native-born, those who are naturalized citizens, and those who are here without legal documentation. When speaking about the Hispanic population of the U.S. one cannot speak in general terms about the culture as a whole. Rather, one must speak in terms of those who are foreign born, documented inhabitants, and undocumented. The born in the U.S. are the largest group in the United States at 60 percent of the U.S. population. Since 2000, the Hispanic population has grown more by

⁴⁶Madsen, *Mexican-Americans of South Texas*, 60.

⁴⁷Arreola, *Tejano South Texas*, 176-77.

birth than by immigration.⁴⁸ The Census Bureau states that 40 percent of the Hispanic population is foreign-born. Church Planting Resource Library suggest, “foreign born can be divided into two groups: the documented and the undocumented. The documented are those who enter the country legally. The other group is the one with much debate in the political platform; the undocumented. The Pew estimates that there are 11.9 million Hispanics in this category.”⁴⁹

A distinction must be made between the Hispanic children born outside of the U.S. as apposed to those who are born here. One of the main differences between first and second generation Hispanics as individual subgroups is the sense of identity. First generation immigrants have an ingrained sense of identity with strong ties to their country of origin. When a first generation parent is asked their country of origin, there is no hesitation in quickly responding. The identity is strong and transcends the number of years the person stays in this country. For instance, an immigrant from México can live in this country for twenty years and feel the same passion for his homeland even after learning to communicate in the English language. His heart and passion for the homeland endures regardless of the number of years he or she lives in the U.S. On the other hand, a second-generation immigrant may have a different perspective than that of their parents. While the immigrant is firm in his or her identity, their children probably hold a dual identity.

⁴⁸Church Planting Resource Library, *Reaching Hispanics in North America: Helping You Understand and Engage One of God's Greatest Mission Fields* (Alpharetta, GA: North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 2009), 50.

⁴⁹Ibid., 51.

An example of a dual identity is someone from México or Guatemala who becomes Mexican-American or Guatemalan-American.⁵⁰ The individual who is second generation identifies with both groups, the parent homeland and his own. Another difference is the issue as it relates to the language spoken by the immigrant parent as opposed to the U.S. born immigrant child. Whether the child is born in the States or abroad, the parents fear that the children will lose the Spanish language. Unfortunately, studies show that the Latino parents' fears are real. Studies conclude that households tend to share Spanish as a common language and lose it very rapidly crossing generations; it is rare to encounter a completely fluent Spanish speaker by the third generation. One of the main reasons for losing the parents heart language is that children and youth absorb a significant amount of the American culture.⁵¹

Religion among foreign born. A recent study provides a current situation of the religious climate among the foreign born Hispanics in general across the country. The study concludes that roughly half of Hispanic adults (50 percent) were born outside the United States. Among these first-generation immigrants, Catholics have had a net loss of 19 percentage points due to religious switching. The net gains are about evenly divided between those who have converted to Protestantism (a net gain of 8 percentage points) and those who have changed to no religious affiliation (a net gain of 10 percentage points). Among Hispanic immigrants who say their current religion is different from their

⁵⁰Church Planting Resource Library, *Reaching Hispanics in North America*, 55.

⁵¹Susan S. Chuang and Robert P. Moreno, *Immigrant Children: Change, Adaptation, and Cultural Transformation* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 12.

childhood religion, roughly half say this change occurred *after* moving to the U.S., while nearly as many say they changed religion *before* coming to the United States.⁵²

Religion among U.S. born. Another study looks at the U.S. born Hispanic population who came mainly from a traditional Catholic background. The study concluded that the biggest gains in religious switching among the native born have been among the unaffiliated (a net gain of 17 percentage points) and Protestants (a net gain of 7 points). Catholics, by contrast, have had a net loss of 25 percentage points among the native born.⁵³

Some of the reasons given for the switching of religions are included in the paragraph below:

The new survey asked respondents who have left their childhood religion about the reasons they did so. Of six possible reasons offered on the survey, two were cited as important by half or more of Hispanics who have changed faiths: 55% say they just gradually “drifted away” from the religion in which they were raised, and 52% say they stopped believing in the teachings of their childhood religion. In addition, nearly a third (31%) say they found a congregation that reaches out and helps its members more, while roughly a fifth say the decision was associated with a “deep personal crisis” (23%) or with moving to a new community (19%). About one-in-ten (9%) say that marrying someone who practices a different faith was an important reason for leaving the childhood religion. Latinos who have left the Catholic Church are especially likely to say that an important reason was that they stopped believing in its teachings; 63% of former Catholics who are now unaffiliated and 57% of former Catholics who are now Protestants give this reason for having left the church. In addition, 49% of Hispanics who were raised as Catholics and have become Protestants say that an important factor was finding a church that “reaches out and helps its members more.” The survey also contained an open-ended question asking respondents to explain, in their own words, the main reason they left their childhood religion. Some former Catholics cite particular aspects of Catholicism that they now reject, such as the *veneration of saints and the Virgin Mary, or trust in the Catholic priesthood*; about 3% specifically mention the

⁵²Cary Funk and Jessica Hamar Martinez, “The Shifting Religious Identity of Latinos in the United States,” accessed February 5, 2017, <http://www.pewforum.org/2014/05/07/the-shifting-religious-identity-of-latinos-in-the-united-states/>.

⁵³Ibid.

scandal over sexual abuse by clergy, for example. But many others give general answers, such as that they no longer accept Catholic doctrine, came to a different understanding of the Bible, found God's love, lost faith in all religions or decided for themselves what to believe.⁵⁴

The openness of the U.S. born is substantial. The door of opportunity to reach the largest minority is wide open. The church has a mission field in their surrounding communities who do not require linguistic barriers. The U.S. born speaks English and, for the most part, has assimilated into the American culture.

The State of the Hispanic Church

As a Church Planting Missionary, a major responsibility of mine is equipping potential and future church planters through a training called Basic Training (BT). After the BT, BT2 is offered to evaluate the progress of the new congregation. Basic Training 2 is focused on evaluating the vision, values, and mileposts of the trainees. The role of the planter during BT2 is two fold: first, to present the key leaders with the vision, core values, and mileposts. The second assignment, for the planter is to prepare and deliver a thirty-minute sermon entitled the "State of Church." The sermon focuses on what the church is currently doing in terms of its overall ministry.

In my area of ministry most Hispanic churches do not have an assimilation process for church membership, an assimilation process that shows entry points utilizing outreach opportunities into the church then moves a new believer to a new believer's class, membership, leadership development, and mission engagement.

⁵⁴Funk and Martinez, "The Shifting Religious Identity of Latinos in the United States."

Another area, which needs improvement, is the lack of affiliation and participation within the local association and state convention. Most congregations have little or no relationship with the local Baptist Association, which is sponsoring them to start the work. Most Hispanic congregations and pastors function isolated from associational events. The Hispanic congregations need to be involved locally because the goal of the association is to start a sister church not an Independent Baptist Church. The lack of local involvement at the associational level leads to congregations that do not have a Baptist identity. In some extreme cases, church members do not know what Baptists believe. An example of this lack of identity crisis occurred on a visit to one congregation. The pastor asked the congregation what kind of Baptist they were. The congregation responded with every name under the earth except “Southern Baptist.”

Another area is the lack of discipleship. Only a handful of Hispanic congregations have discipleship programs. One of the flaws of existing discipleship materials in the market today is that they are not tailored to the level of education of the immigrant.

Hispanics by the numbers. The latest Hispanic population updates show, “Hispanics reached a new high of 55.4 million in 2014 (or 17.4 percent of the total U.S. population), an increase of 1.2 million (2.1 percent) from the year before.”⁵⁵ The projection by Pew forecasts “Hispanic population to rise to 128 million in 2050, tripling in size. Latinos will be 29 percent of the population, compared with 14 percent in

⁵⁵Jens Manuel Krogstad and Mark Hugo, “Hispanic Population Reaches Record 55 Million, but Growth Has Cooled,” accessed February 3, 2017, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/06/25/u-s-hispanic-population-growth-surge-cools/>.

2005.”⁵⁶ Obviously, the projections of Hispanic population will continue to increase in the years to come. Unfortunately, Christian ministries at all levels are not gearing up for the Hispanic population explosion that is coming. Instead, less Hispanic leaders are serving or being hired at the national denominational levels or state conventions.

Conclusion

Like any other non-English speaking ethnic group who migrates to another country, the Hispanic family unit is in transition. Typically, the longer a group resides in a country, the more complex the home becomes in terms of language and culture. In order to reach Hispanics or Latinos, one must consider different approaches to reach them with the Gospel. One model will not be sufficient to engage a culture in transition. In light of the variety of people and sub-cultures associated with Hispanics, the following type of churches is suggested: First, Spanish only congregations will always be needed. There will always be a need for Latino churches that reflect both culture and language of the first generation. Some reasons for these types of churches include the fact that immigration, whether legal or undocumented, will continue. Immigrants need to hear the gospel in their native tongue in order to respond to it and for their spiritual development. Another reason for the need of Spanish only churches is that first generation assimilates very little into the American culture and language. Some can live in this country and learn very few words of the English language, this is due to the vast Hispanic population of the country and the need to speak the language is not as urgent as it used to be. Also, social media can be fully Spanish. From a marketing perspective, large food chains

⁵⁶Jeffrey S. Passel and D’vera Cohn, “Hispanic Trends,” accessed February 7, 2017, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2008/02/11/ii-population-projections/>.

provide Hispanic products focusing on the Hispanic customer. In large metropolitan cities, such as Miami, English is not a factor for communication. The second type of church needed is one that has a bilingual message. Bilingual churches are churches that minister to the Hispanic community in both languages, Spanish and English. Perhaps the best scenario of a Bilingual church is to have preaching in Spanish and teaching in both languages as the community dictates. The pastors of these congregations will probably need to be bilingual and bicultural. Some Hispanics speak English but there is a Spanish preference when it comes to worship and learning. The final, and perhaps the most needed type of church, is one that is English speaking. A main reason for the need of these congregations is the language used by the second, third, and later Hispanic generations. Rodriguez's study concludes, "only 7 percent of the second-generation Latinos were Spanish dominant, while only 22 percent of third-generation Latinos reported being bilingual, and 78 percent reported speaking predominantly English."⁵⁷ The heart language for second-generation Latinos is English, while that of the first generation is Spanish. Second-generation Hispanics need English-Speaking churches with the cultural flavor of their ancestors.

⁵⁷Daniel A. Rodriguez, *A Future for the Latino Church: Models for Multilingual, Multigenerational Hispanic Congregations* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 42.

CHAPTER 4

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation stage was accomplished only by the generosity of the leadership at the Associational level and the Hispanic Coordinator. The leadership of both parties was critical. This project was designed to accomplish the following three goals:

1. Evaluate the evangelistic practices of the Hispanic leaders of the Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association. Do they evangelize? Do they know how to evangelize? Do they understand the biblical mandate?
2. Prepare a teaching series that incorporates both a training element as well as a practical debriefing element for evangelism.¹ What biblical passages lay a foundation for evangelism? What tools are useful for evangelistic encounters? How does one evaluate evangelistic encounters?
3. Equip the Hispanic participants in evangelism.² What fears do they have when evangelizing? What learning styles are best for the participants? Would role playing

¹Two critical statements must be made in reference to the selection of and evaluation of the resources used: (1) The resources were intentionally selected for two primary reasons: (1) I have been serving among the Hispanic community in the region for the past 26 years. (2) I am a first generation Hispanic immigrant who understands the culture, language, and educational levels of the people. (2) The resources used were evaluated and measured by a two-panel board, which included Mike Brandenburg and Victor Lyons. Brandenburg's has direct involvement with Hispanic people and experience. Under his leadership, the local Association started a Hispanic congregation. Victor Lyons, former International Mission Board Mission Board Missionary in Chile for 13 years. Also, serves as professor of the Hispanic Certificate tract at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary at Warner Robins and Moultrie Extensions. Both men have experience in dealing with Hispanics.

²The knowledge of the evangelistic resources presented was measured by a two-step process. First, I exhibit, through role modeling of an evangelistic witnessing experience and the ability of the participants to start the conversation. The technique of "ice-breaking," is very important in our culture. One must start informally, asking about general information such as country of origin, what specific location within the country, name, favorite sports team, etc. To approach an evangelistic encounter without this informality in a Hispanic setting, can be contra-productive. The ice-breaking technique to engage a Hispanic evangelistically was monitored by the Hispanic coordinator and myself.

and/or modeling be effective? Do the participants have family or friends who are non-believers? What time frame are individuals and/or families at home? What questions and/or needs might arise in sharing the gospel?

In order to implement the goals of this project, the following process was featured:

1. Forty percent of the participant's time.
Participants will be trained in the use of demographic information (Georgia Baptist Mission Board Research Ministry statistics), conducting a community assessment, the use of three evangelistic resources—Wordless Book, EvangeCube, and personal testimony, and in the use of *Beginning Steps for New Believers*, a discipleship tool for new believers. Moreover, the participants will be trained in debriefing and sharing their experiences. Role modeling will be one element of their training.
2. Twenty percent of the participant's time.
In two of the targeted communities a community assessment will help the participants to understand the needs, both spiritual/physical of the people.
3. Twenty percent of the participant's time.
Participants will be encouraged to share their faith in evangelistic encounters using the three evangelistic resources: Wordless Book, EvangeCube, and personal testimony.
4. Twenty percent of the participant's time.
Participants will record their evangelistic experiences following a debriefing format. Also, they will share their experiences with the rest of the group.

The outcome of this project was determined by the success of the effective change that took place by equipping fourteen Hispanic leaders from all four Hispanic congregations of the Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association to engage in witnessing and commitment to continue sharing their faith using the resources presented in the future. The time and effort was demanding. The following individuals and/or groups were contacted: The Associational Missionary—Freddy Gardner, the Association Hispanic Team, Associational Hispanic coordinator, Roman Rodriguez, the four congregations—Agape (Claxton), Arca de Noe (Aline), Emanuel (Glennville), and Nueva Vida (Reidsville), and the sponsoring church pastors and members. The goal was to recruit from 12 to 20 participants in the project.

Upon the completion of this project, I hoped to present a model for revitalizing the evangelistic efforts of the Hispanic congregations within an association or a network of Hispanic churches. Flexibility was needed in the implementation of any project, especially among Hispanics, many of whom find themselves in precarious circumstances. Moreover, the demographics of the Hispanic communities within the Tattnell-Evans Baptist Association revealed lower economics and educational levels of the greater Hispanic Community. This created the need for simple teaching methods and classes taught in basic Spanish.

Target Audience

Once logistics with the Hispanic coordinator and the leadership of the Association was established, recruitment of Hispanic participants for the project began. The recruitment for participants began one month prior to the project's implementation. In the Hispanic context, church members typically do not attend events outside of their congregation due to a lack of transportation or because they are unaware of what is happening. Another reason for not attending events outside their church is simply a lack of self-initiative and motivation. The role of the pastor or leader becomes critical when it comes to churches participating in events. The congregation whose pastor and leaders play the role of motivator and encourager are the ones who benefit most from the training. In order to have enough participants in this project, I suggested to the pastors and key leaders that they accompany participants to the training sessions.

Final Preparatory Meetings

After the promotional materials had been sent to the four congregations, the final preparatory meetings were scheduled. The first meeting, which took place two

weeks prior to the project's implementation, was a one-on-one meeting with the Associational Hispanic Coordinator. According to the Associational Missionary, Freddy Gardner, and others in leadership, it was essential that the Associational Hispanic Coordinator in on board with the project.

The second and final preparatory meeting occurred one week before the implementation of the project and included all the members of the Hispanic Associational Team. This was a time to go over the schedule and make any necessary changes and a time to pray for the participants who will attend.

Implementation

Patience is one of the needed virtues when one works with Hispanics who cannot always control their circumstances. For example, work schedules are often extended on the farms, poultry factories, cotton gins, or harvesting crops. Also, many have small children whose health plays a role in their ability to have free time in order to do other activities. Arriving late, leaving early, or being absent does not reflect the desires or lack of desire to attend the meeting but often reflects circumstances beyond their control. That is not to say that a schedule should not be created and followed.

A second cultural factor is the diversity of the Hispanic community, which requires a more basic Spanish to be used in the training sessions. Some Hispanics speak dialects and have acquired Spanish as a second language. A few of the Hispanics cannot read or write Spanish and cannot even write their own names. It is good to remember that for many Hispanics, education is not a priority as they already have an opportunity to earn a good living, at least in their eyes. Another reason to use basic Spanish in training sessions is the rich diversity of Spanish-speaking countries represented in the Hispanic

communities. There is a common language, but any native will understand that terms in one country do not necessarily have the same meaning or are pronounced the same way in another country.

Week 1—God’s Inclusion of All the Nations: Knowing One’s Community

The participants received a schedule of the evangelistic training sessions, which included training days, training times, training locations, and activities (see appendix 2 and 3). In addition, all participants were presented a covenant that outlines his or her role, involvement, and responsibilities throughout the evangelistic training process (see appendix 3). In order to assure a high level of attendance and commitment to the evangelistic training, each participant was asked to sign the covenant after the orientation.

The participants’ evangelistic knowledge and experience were assessed and evaluated through a pre-test. Understanding the participants’ past knowledge and involvement in evangelism training events served as a guideline for the implementation of the project.

Genesis 12:1-5 taught that God’s love through Abram was to bless all the families of the world. God had established a process that involved mobilization. Abram had to “leave” the comforts of his culture, language, and family in order for this blessing to be fulfilled. Abram’s obedience was critical for that blessing. He obeyed God and others would be blessed.

The first week Lesson 1 (2 hours) provided demographic information of the Hispanic population of the four communities: Claxton, Reidsville, Glennville, and Aline. In addition to the demographic information, the participants were provided a list of

Hispanic surnames of each community provided by the Research Ministry of the Georgia Baptist Mission Board (GBMB). The list of Hispanic surnames and addresses was used in weeks 2 and 3 to facilitate the implementation of a community assessment. Each study area included the following aspects related to Hispanics for each location: (1) five-mile radius from the congregation's location; (2) Hispanic population trend 2000 through 2026; (3) racial-Ethnic Population Trends from 2010-2021; (4) racial/ethnicity as percentage of population.

**Week 2—God's Inclusion of All
the Nations: Knowing the
Hispanic Community
in Glennville, Part 1**

In unexpected circumstances, God's inclusive love manifested itself in the midst of tragedy. In Ruth 1:1-5, one learned of a family that because of famine in their land of Judah, had to migrate to Moab to stay alive. Death came to Elimelek and his two sons, Mahlon and Kilion, leaving behind three widows (Naomi, Orpha, and Ruth). Understanding God's inclusive love was to be sensitive to the pain and agony that those who migrate might be presently experiencing due to unexpected circumstances.

In order to assess the needs of the Hispanic community in Glennville, a community survey had been developed to learn of the needs of the Latino community. The survey contained the following information:

1. The Community Survey was written in Spanish and English.
2. The Community Survey was conducted in two locations only: First in Glennville and then in Reidsville only.
3. The Community Survey requested personal information of the interviewee such as: country of origin, language spoken at home, number of children living in the home, religion, etc.

4. The Community Survey requested information related to the needs of the Hispanic community from *their* perspective.
5. The Community Survey placed the participant on the field and on hands on training.
6. The Community Survey provided the interviewer an opportunity to meet a spiritual need during the survey or at a future time.

Community Survey Orientation

The Community Survey was conducted with the help of Anglo volunteers from the some of the local churches. The recruitment of volunteers was done with the help of the Associational Missionary at Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association. Two requirements were needed from the local volunteers: First, the volunteers were people who knew the area well. Second, each volunteer brought a passenger vehicle, like a passenger van, to help transport the teams to be organized. Implementation with previous community surveys at other locations and dates had proven that Hispanics are more open to sharing information when both Anglos and Hispanics were present. Another reason to combine the two groups was because one of the survey's key statements was "How can local Baptist churches better serve the Hispanic Community?" Therefore, having an Anglo-Saxon believer from a local congregation strengthened the validity of the survey.

Another reason to recruit Anglo volunteers was because it provided a good testimony. When interviewees see cultures working together it creates a sense of togetherness. It gives the community a testimony that God's people are serving together regardless of their ethnicity. In addition to volunteer recruitment, Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association helped with snacks and meals for Glennville and Reidsville projects. In week two, First Baptist Glennville assisted in providing snacks and meals. Then, in week three, Reidsville Baptist Church provided snacks and meals. I was grateful and blessed to

partner with such generous churches. The following guidelines were presented during orientation:

1. The teams are made-up of Anglo Church volunteer with 3-4 Hispanic participants. All participants will get off the vehicle and one Hispanic participant will knock on the door. Do not enter the home unless invited. State your name and then have each team member state their name, church and its' location. State the purpose of your visit (begin reading the survey). Ask the interviewee if they would like to participate.
2. Each Hispanic Team Member will conduct at least two community surveys. While one participant is sharing, the others will pray silently. Be `cordial and respectful. If an individual or group wishes not to participate do not get upset but thank them for their time.
3. The local volunteers from Association will drive and guide the teams to the addresses provided by the Research Ministry of the Georgia Baptist Mission Board.
4. An assigned Hispanic Team Member will write names, addresses, time, of interviewees who wish to be visited in the future or request prayer at a later time.

The implementation for the community assessment (Lesson 2) in Glennville required a total of three hours (one hour for orientation and two hours visiting homes).

Week 3—God’s Inclusion of All the Nations: Knowing the Hispanic Community in Reidsville, Part 2

God’s inclusive love powerfully manifested itself in John’s Gospel. John 3:16 states, “For God so loved the world.” God’s unconditional love extends to all humanity. God loves all the people of the world. He loves regardless of language, nationality or ethnicity. He also gave his “one and only Son” for the entire world. He gave His Son for all. Yet, there is one condition: “whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”—“whoever,” that means anyone can have the blessing if he or she only “believes.” And there is a wonderful promise to all who believe, which is “eternal life.”

All the information related to week three was repeated from week two. The same guidelines and orientation for the community assessments were applied. The only

noticeable difference besides the location (Reidsville), was the volunteers recruited to partner with the Hispanic participants during the visitation. A list of Hispanic surnames and addresses were provided by Research Ministries a ministry of the GBMB. The implementation for the community assessment (Lesson 2) in Reidsville required a total of three hours (1 hour for orientation and two hours visiting homes).

**Week 4—God’s Inclusion of All
the Nations: Becoming All
Things to All to Win Some**

In 1 Corinthians 9:20-22, Paul highlights several principles when engaging lostness. First, Paul contextualized. He made the necessary adjustments depending on the prospect’s background. If it was a Jew, Paul approached the prospect as such. If the potential prospect was a gentile, then he approached him as such. Second, Paul focused. The goal of the Apostle was always the same, regardless of who the prospect may or could be, he focused on the centrality of the gospel presentation. His goal was to share Christ. Finally, Paul was intentional. The reason for contextualizing was to share Christ. He “became all things to all people...” to intentionally share the Christ. In week 3, Lessons 3, 4, and 5 will be covered.

In Lesson 3 (1 hour), a vital part of the community assessment was the community assessment debriefing. Prior to participants’ arrival, tables and chairs were organized in a horseshoe setting to create a comfortable setting for the sharing experience. The debriefing began shortly after participants a time to relax and eat a light snack. They also prayed and shared a time of thanksgiving. Everyone sat around the tables and the debriefing started counter-clock wise. Each participant was asked the same questions (see below). For example, question number one went around the room. After

everyone finished answering question one, the question number two was introduced in the same manner. One of the volunteers was asked to report all the responses given by the participants. The debriefing provided a platform for the participant to share their experiences in a non-threatening setting. The debriefing was presented in both English and Spanish so that both volunteers and Hispanic participants could participate. Below is a list of the questions considered as part of the assessment debriefing:

1. What did you sense God saying to you while driving through the community?
2. What fears did you have to overcome?
3. Was the person receptive when you arrived?
4. What did you sense God saying to you as you pray during the interview?
5. How did you feel when you encounter the person?
6. Did you encounter hostility or negativity?
7. Would you do this (visitation) in a future date?
8. What did you sense God saying to you through the whole experience?

In Lesson 4 (1 hour), the Wordless Book was presented as a resource for evangelism. Each participant received a complementary pocket-size Wordless Book and a bracelet that contained the beads with the same colors as the pages of the book. I modeled the Wordless Book using a larger size example and also using a bracelet on the left hand. After resources were given to the participants, I prayed that these resources, now in the participants hands, would be used for God's glory and that many souls would come to know Christ.

The training for the participants was two-fold. The first aspect of the training dealt with becoming familiar and comfortable with the Wordless Book and bracelet. Team

Missions International provided the Wordless Book/Bracelet with beads instructions.³

The color black symbolized sin (Rom 3:23), red signified blood (1 John 1:7), white indicated purity (Ps 51:7), yellow symbolized heaven (John 14:2), and green signified growth (2 Pet 3:18).

The second aspect of the presentation taught the participants how to use the resource in a witnessing encounter through roleplaying. A participant from the group was asked to come and play the role of a non-believer while the I presented him with the gospel using both instruments. I was the witness (W) and the participant was the non-believer (NB).

(W) “Good morning, my name is Dennis Rivera, how are you today?”

(NB) “I am fine. Thanks for asking”

(W) “I am from Honduras originally, and where are you from?”

(NB) “I am from Mexico and I am Carlos”

(W) “Mexico! I’ve been in Mexico several times and in many different parts, I’ve been in Mexico City, and have travelled from Tamaulipas to Chiapas, and it is a beautiful country! What part of Mexico are you from?”

(NB) “I am from Hidalgo”

(W) “Wow, you will not believe this, but my last trip to Mexico was to Tula, Hidalgo. Would you mind if I give you small gift and take few minutes to share a special message?”

(I hand the bracelet and he receives it gladly with no objection).

(W) Begins the gospel presentation and concludes inviting Carlos to receive Christ.

(Roleplaying ends)

³“Team Missions International,” accessed February 1, 2017, <https://www.teenmissions.org/resources/wordless-book-bracelet/>.

After I modeled the presentation through roleplaying, the groups were asked to show their appreciation to the volunteer. The participants were organized in groups of two. Each person had a partner and role modeling began. First, one participant played the role of a non-believer, while the other playing the witness using the Wordless Book, offered the gift (the bracelet). After a participant completed the gospel presentation using the book, the roles switched.

In Lesson 5 (1 hour), each participant was given a new EvangeCube. The EvangeCube came with folded instructions on how to use the cube step-by-step. The step-by-step instructions and biblical passages were in Spanish and English. This was very appropriate for our setting because no translation work was needed. I unfolded the instructions and began a three-step process. The first step was to become acquainted with the resource. The EvangeCube had arrows that open the pictures. 3resources.org provides the following instructions on how to use the EvangeCube in a witnessing encounter, “◊” represents the opening to a new picture in the cube:

- 1 ◊ Show ‘Man in Sin’ Rom 3:23
- 2 ◊ Open to ‘Christ on the Cross’ John 3:16
- 3 ◊ Open to ‘Tomb’
- 4 ◊ Open to ‘Risen Christ’
- 5 ◊ Open to ‘Cross Bridge’ Heb 4:2
- 6 ◊ Open to ‘Heaven & Hell’ John 3:16, 18, 36⁴

⁴“e3resources,” accessed February 1, 2017, http://e3resources.org/content/Downloadable_Items/E_CubeInsert.pdf.

After familiarizing themselves with the EvangeCube, the participants were encouraged to practice sharing the gospel as they followed the arrows. The art of speaking and turning simultaneously was important. People heard the message as they saw it through the pictures. Not being able to follow a rhythm could ruin the witnessing encounter because non-believers might become confused.

Week 5—God’s Inclusion of All the Nations: God’s People Reaching the Nations (Evangelistic Encounter No. 1)

Acts 1:8 reminded believers that when reaching the nations with the gospel, there were certain elements that each believer had. First, believers had power. Believers received power when they “received,” the Holy Spirit. Believers had power internal power. Second, believers had received a promise. God was always there and would never forsake His children. God had sealed believers with the gift of the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13). Third, believers were all missionaries through God’s Spirit. The early believers started at home in Jerusalem and finished at the “ends of the earth.”

During this week, the participants were engaged in two evangelistic encounters in their communities using the Wordless Book (bracelet). Each participant was encouraged to memorize Acts 1:8 prior to the evangelistic encounter.⁵ Each participant shared the gospel with at least two non-believers using the resource. The participants had a debriefing during week 7.

⁵The devotional is for the participant’s spiritual nourishment and encouragement when conducting evangelistic encounters.

Week 6—God’s Inclusion of All the Nations: God’s People Reaching the Nations (Evangelistic Encounter No. 2)

Matthew 28:18-20 challenged believers that reaching the nations with the gospel was not optional. The Great Commission passage was a command from the resurrected Lord that His followers must “go.” It is never a suggestion! The text also stated that believers ought to “make disciples.” It is not simply sharing the gospel with the non-believers but making sure that those who came to faith understood their decision. Making disciples required time, patience, and love. Christians needed to make disciples, which then would go and made more disciples. Christians were not to shy away from God’s command.

During this week, the participants engaged in two evangelistic encounters in their communities using the EvangeCube. Each participant shared the gospel with at least two non-believers using the resource. The participants were debriefed during week 7. Each participant was encouraged to memorize Matthew 28:19 prior to the evangelistic encounter.

Week 7—God’s Inclusion of All the Nations: God’s People Reaching the Nations (Evangelistic Encounter Debriefing 1/PT)

In Luke 10:1, 17 the story of the seventy-two was encountered. There were three biblical principles related to every believer. First, Jesus was the one who sent the seventy-two. There was not human intervention; the calling was and remained directly from Him. Contemporary Christians should remind themselves that He is the one who calls and sends. Second, the seventy-two we are not alone. Jesus sent His followers in

pairs of two, and not one-by-one. The lone ranger approach which many favor, was not one advocated by this passage.

In the first two hours of this week's training two debriefings were realized. The first debriefing (1 hour) involved the Wordless Book (Lesson 6) followed by a second debriefing (1 hour) of the EvangeCube (Lesson 7). The participants were asked to gather all their evangelistic encounter interviews using both resources. A word of appreciation was given for their faithfulness in sharing and then I led in a prayer of thanksgiving. A summary of the evangelistic experiences and their feedback, using both resources (WB/EC) has been placed on the same page and detailed in appendix 5. The focus of this debriefing was to listen as they shared their experiences, and then encourage the participants in a job well done.

Along with the training in WB/EC resources through exposure, practice, modeling, and implementation, I trained the participants using a third resource—one's personal testimony (PT). My goal was to give the participants three methods in which to engage their communities with the gospel.

In Lesson 8 (1 hour), participants were oriented in the use of the PT resource. The participants were given a handout, appendix 6, that described how to engage in an evangelistic encounter using one's own PT. After prayer, I shared my own conversion experience using the PT format with a volunteer who played the role of a non-believer. Having completed the role-playing, I discussed three crucial areas related to the success of the PT format (see appendix 6).

The first area maintains the focus on the person and saving work of Christ. This is central to the success of the PT method. The second area requires participants to

share the personal changes that Christ has made in their lives. A final crucial area involves the red flag, a warning not to engage the non-believer in religious controversy; this is critical in dealing with those of the Catholic faith. An uncomfortable dialogue over religion may end the evangelistic opportunity or at least may cause it to be ineffective. Experience shows that most evangelistic encounters end quickly or are ineffective when presenters begin to talk about the non-believer's religious background.

Week 8—God's Inclusion of All the Nations: God's People Reaching the Nations (Evangelistic Encounter No. 3)

In Joshua 1:8, the new the political leader was encouraged to give priority to the Word. As Christians engaging the community with the gospel, the admonition to Joshua becomes the Christian's admonition. This admonition incorporated three phases. First, the word was to be one's prized possession; it was not something ignored or lost. Second, the word was to become an obsession of one's thoughts as the word "meditate" implies. And finally, one's lifestyle should be the result of one's possession and one's obsession with God's Word. I then challenged the participants to memorize Joshua 1:8.

Participants engaged the community in evangelistic encounters (2 hours) using all three resources. Participants had option of sharing individually or with a partner. During the week, the participants used the WB/EC/PT. Each participant shared the gospel with at least one non-believer per resource. In week 10, participants shared their experiences using their PT resource.

Week 9—God’s Inclusion of All the Nations: God’s People Reaching the Nations (Evangelistic Encounter No. 4)

In Jeremiah 33:3, God revealed His great promises to the Hebrews. This text is very dear to me and brings back memories of my first encounter with Scripture. This passage, Jeremiah 33:3, was marked by my brother-in-law in the first Bible given to him. The passage has been a personal encouragement and a resource to encourage others over the years.

Three promises were clearly stated: First, God invited the Hebrews to communicate with Him. He said, “Call to me.” What a great promise from God to His people! It was an invitation to call on Him at any time of day and under any circumstance. Second, God promised to “answer” when called. God responds to the Christian, although, His response may not be what was solicited or expected. Finally, God promised to revealed unexpected riches. Participants will memorize Jeremiah 33:3.

Participants engaged in evangelistic encounters using all three resources. Participants had option of sharing individually or in groups of two. The participants used the Wordless Book, EvangeCube, and PT format. Each participant presented the gospel to at least one non-believer per resource for total of three evangelistic encounters. The participants will were debriefing during week 10. The focus of this debriefing was the used of PT witnessing experience.

Week 10—God’s Inclusion of All the Nations: God’s People Engaging the Nations (PT Evangelistic Debriefing)

In 1 Timothy 2:1-4, Paul encouraged Timothy to honor God. First, honoring God meant actively praying. Intercessory prayer was featured as it was first directed to “Kings and all those in authority.” Second, believers honor God by sharing their faith. Timothy states, “This is good, and pleases God.” Why was it so important to share ones’ faith? Because, God wanted “all people to be saved.”

In Lesson 9, the training and debriefing (2 hours) began with a prayer of thanksgiving. Participants’ efforts were appreciated for their faithfulness and boldness in sharing their PT. Even though this lesson focused on their PT experience, the decision had to be made to include experiences using the two previous two previous (WB and EC) because the prior debriefing time had not been adequate.

Week 11—God’s Inclusion of All the Nations: Leading New Believers to Understand Their New Life in Christ

In John 5:24, believers in Christ discovered biblical truths highlighting the nature of their new lives in Christ. First, new believers received eternal life, a decision impacting the future but also the present. Jesus said that new believer “has eternal life” from the moment Christ comes to live in their hearts. Second, new believers have “crossed from death to life.”

In Lesson 10, the session began with prayer. Participants were encouraged to do follow-up with those who had made profession of faith. Each participant was provided

a Spanish language copy of *Beginning Steps: A Growth Guide For New Believers*.⁶

Emanuel Hispanic Mission in Glennville provided this material. This material contains seven studies presented in a simple format with pictures that enhance the teaching experience. It was very appropriate for this project's implementation. The following suggestions were given to the participants:

1. Each participant will do Step one and two during the training.
2. Participants are encouraged to complete the rest of the booklet.
3. Participants are encourage, since most are not familiar with the material, to practice with another believer inside the congregation.
4. Participants are encouraged to pray (pause to pray) for the person that will be chosen.
5. Participants are encouraged to do one step per week for a total of seven weeks. My experience with this material is that people in the region learn best when the material is implemented at a slower pace.
6. Participants are encouraged to expend no more than an hour per step and always repeat previous steps.

Week 12—God's Inclusion of All the Nations: God's Work Is Never in Vain

First Corinthians 15:58 encouraged who serve the Lord. Paul encouraged the Corinthian Church with three affirmations. First, the church was encouraged to “stand firm.” They were to be strong for the cause of Christ. Second, the church was encouraged to serve fully, without reservation. Paul told the church “to give fully to the work.” Finally, the church was encouraged to continue serving. Many times servants feel that

⁶“Beginning Steps,” accessed February 1, 2017, <http://brnow.org/BPWC/Documents/beginningstepsniv.pdf>.

their ministry is meaningless, yet Paul encouraged the church to continue because “your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” Don’t stop serving!

In this last week of training, participants were congratulated for their hard labor and faithfulness to the project. After this opening gratitude, a time of prayer followed to thank the Lord for all His blessings throughout the twelve weeks. The final training included a post-test given to evaluate their new theological understanding and experiences in evangelism (see appendix 7).

After twenty years of Hispanic ministry, I have discovered the importance of a relaxed and informal setting where Hispanics can share personal experiences. For the participants the implementation of this project was not a mere academic exercise but impacted them in a deeply personal and emotional way. The non-believers included family, close friends, colleagues at work and neighbors, individual who were love and rested.

Time was allotted so that participants could share their response to the following three questions:

1. What did you learn through the whole training experience?
2. What did you sense God telling you through this experience?
3. What changes are you planning to make after this training?

Those who live in Hispanic communities are not accustomed to receiving a certificate of any kind. When they receive a certificate of achievement or even a certificate of participation, they and their families have a sense of pride that a person in a typical American context would not understand. Therefore, when Associational Missionary Freddy Gardner presented a Certificate of Achievement to the fourteen participants who had completed the training, there was an environment of celebration and

legitimate Christian pride. I requested two weeks earlier, the preparation of the certificates with the inclusion of the name of the participant, the name of the Association, the seal of the Association, the date of the presentation (January 21, 2017), and the signatures of the Association Missionary Freddy Gardner and me.

The training concluded with the presentation of the certificates to the participants. Both the Associational Missionary and myself called each participant to receive their certificate while pictures were taken with an applause. Many Hispanics who reside in our area have not completed any academic accomplishment, so this small but significant gesture brings a great joy for them! To God Be the Glory!

Conclusion

The evangelistic training has ended but the evangelism in the area is continuing. The hope is that this training will help the four Hispanic congregations reach their communities with gospel. I pray that this evangelistic training will birth an evangelistic culture inside the congregations and that hundreds of people will come to meet the Savior. I have nothing but gratitude to the Lord for the endless help from the Association Missionary, the Associational Hispanic Team, Hispanic Coordinator, his assistant, and a especial thanks to the participants who faithfully attended the training. To God Be the Glory for allowing me to serve Him in this capacity.

CHAPTER 5
ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Introduction

The twelve-week project provided a unique experience for the Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association Team, for the participants and for me. The journey allowed brothers and sisters in Christ to unite and serve the Lord as one in reaching their communities. A strong witness was left in the streets of Glennville and Reidsville through the community assessment as Hispanics and Anglos served together.

The Project's Purpose

Chapter 1 stated, the purpose of this project to be to equip the Hispanic leaders of Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association for cross-cultural evangelism. According to the results of the pre-test, fourteen participants had no more than one-two trainings relating to evangelism in their life. In addition, four had never been through any training. After the training was completed, a post-test was administered and 100 percent of the fourteen who completed the training responded positively.

The purpose of the project was fulfilled. The participants were trained using three evangelistic resources: Wordless Book, EvangeCube, and Personal Testimony. The training was implemented in three phases: First, I modeled for the participants how to engage a potential prospect with the gospel using all three resources. Second, the participants were organized in groups of two by gender. Once the groups were organized,

each team spread out throughout the room to have plenty of space. Finally, role-play of an evangelistic encounter began. One partner became the witness while the other played the role of a non-believer; then roles reversed.

The Project's Goals

This project had three objectives: (1) to assess the knowledge and practices; (2) to develop a teaching series; (3) to equip the Hispanic participants for cross-cultural evangelism in the Tattnell-Evans Baptist Association.

The first goal was to assess the knowledge and practices of the Hispanic leaders of Tattnell-Evans Baptist Association in cross-cultural evangelism. In order to assess the knowledge and practice of the participants, a pre-test was administered. The focus of the test is to provide information about the participant's evangelistic experience. The pre-test results showed that twelve participants had one or two prior evangelistic trainings while 6 percent participants lack any training. In addition, the training provided did not include implementation.

The second goal was to develop a teaching series on personal and cross-cultural evangelism. The resources that were used to administer the training had three distinct characteristics: first, I used the Wordless Book/Bracelet. The book contains blank color pages use to share biblical truths. The goal was to develop for the participant a simple reproducible resource that was simple to learn and to teach others. This same criterion was implemented in the selection of the other two resources: EvangeCube and their own personal testimony.

The third goal was to equip the Hispanic participants in cross-cultural evangelism using the teaching series. I trained the participants to share the gospel with

multiple Hispanic nationalities with a common language. One example, People of Mexican background shared the gospel with people from Guatemala and other Central American countries. Besides the language difference, the resources used in the training can be used to evangelize a person across social backgrounds and educational levels. Additionally, the participants were also trained to conduct a community assessment and engaged two Hispanic communities. The participants were provided with Hispanic surnames and specific addresses where Hispanics live.

The results of the training, which include the community assessment results, evangelistic encounters, decisions made, participants' comments and additional observations can be found in appendix 8.

Strengths

The project had many positive areas that must be highlighted. The areas of strength were the reproducible nature of the resources; the trainings were done in the language and level of the people. The practical nature of the training and the key role of the Association were critical.

The evangelistic resources presented were reproducible and well received. All the resources were simple allowing the participants to learn quickly. In addition the resources were relatively inexpensive for future purchase.

The training presentations were provided in the language and in the level of the people. All resources presented were in both Spanish and English. Even though few participants spoke English and most understand it, for most their heart language is Spanish. It was nice to present the instructions for each resource in their native tongue. I

chose a basic Spanish when conducting a presentation and avoid using language that would be above the participants' head.

The resources presented were not meant to be theoretical but rather practical. The participants were exposed to become familiar with the resource, had it role modeled to them, and then role-play an encounter. In addition, the participants were encouraged to go and practice by doing evangelistic visits in their own communities. The Association played a very important role. They encouraged their Hispanic participants by being present in some of the training and praying for them. Also, they provided meals and snacks for the group. Perhaps, the most valuable was their dedication of time and participation during the community assessment. For me, the most important was the testimony left in the community. The two cultures served together during the community survey, leaving testimony to those communities. The testimony of the church, send a message to those communities (Glennville and Reidsville). The project brought people together. It is always successful when two cultures merge towards the same goal.

Weaknesses

The timing of the training needs to be moved away from a major holiday. The training took place during Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year. This is a busy time for the church. In addition, Agape Hispanic Mission in Claxton was doing a live nativity scene which required a lot of the participant's time away from work. Besides the busy time, some families left town during the Christmas season impacting attendance to the training.

The distance site of the project became an issue. The distance became a factor because my hometown is a two and a half hour drive, one-way. Sometimes I had to

depart earlier than usual because of heavy traffic. At times it was difficult to arrive early due to traffic and decreasing weather conditions. Finally, the physical toll on the body became a factor. Even though the sessions concluded on time, the participants enjoyed fellowship afterward and usually stayed late after the training was over. I arrived home close to midnight when the fellowships occurred,

The lack of direct communication with the participants at times became an issue. The fact that the Hispanic coordinator was the link between me and the participants, there was little to no communication outside the training sessions with participants. At times, I desired to send letters of encouragement, e-mails, or call, but all the communication was channeled through the Hispanic Coordinator.

The work schedule of the participants became an obstacle. The work schedule of some of our participants was inflexible at times. Some intended to be present from beginning to end but had to withdraw or be late, especially those that work on the fields. The volunteer recruitment needs to be earlier. I believe that the recruitment of volunteers needs to be at least three months prior to the training to leave ample time for orientation and expectations. Perhaps when the orientation with the Anglo volunteers is made, the Hispanic participants could develop relationships through fellowship during the orientation so that the two groups can meet. The way the volunteers and the participants were introduced for the time during the orientation of the community assessment, leaving no time to get to know one another. More time to complete the “Beginning Steps for New Believers,” material needs to be allocated. Because of time, only a few lessons of the material were covered. More time is needed to complete the resource especially because most of the participants were unfamiliar with the resource.

What I Would Do Differently

I would do the project locally closer to or in my hometown. First, the project's implementation site was a four and half-hours round-trip. Conducting the project in my community would eliminate travel and fatigue. A local site would have been easier for recruiting volunteers. My home church would have been a logical option. A second area to consider future changes relates to the order of the trainings. A better option to consider is equipping the participants with the evangelistic resources so that they can engage the community with the gospel when engaging the community I would have been able to work closer and more directly with the participants.

I needed to spend more time with the Associational Team prior the training began to explain the details of the project, their roles, and expectations. A possible consideration would be to have multiple meetings prior to the project implementation. I would implement a more spiritual training. Prior to the training, prayer walking would be implemented in all four locations location. Teams from all the churches in the Association would be organized, street names would be assigned and the churches would be encourage to participate. Also, a stronger emphasis would be made to develop a culture of prayer in the local congregations. Participants would be trained in developing a prayer strategy that would include praying for their lost neighbors.

Theological Reflections

I want to thank the Lord for all the biblical passages used throughout the project. Certain verses that stand out however. These selected passages reminded me of God's inclusion of all the people. In Genesis 12, God says that he will bless "all the nations" through Abram. As the project implementation was unfolding, the Lord

reminded me of this promise to Abram. The promise is being fulfilled as we evangelize the nations in our own communities.

In Ruth 4:21, God's inclusive love is demonstrated to a Moabite woman named Ruth. She leaves her gods to come to the one true God. This text has special meaning to me because it serves as a reminder that I once worshiped other gods but one day, like Ruth the Moabite, I too left the gods to worship the one true God. The Hispanic communities of the Association reflect a similar background as the one portrayed in this text. People in our communities are worshipping gods that are man-made, who cannot hear or talk, and serve as mediators between themselves and God. Not knowing that they can worship the true God through Christ, our mediator (1 Tim 2:5). People returned from their witnessing experiences with testimonies similar to those of Ruth, namely, that people had turned from their gods to God. Several professions of faith reflected the power of the gospel. I rejoice that we cried together during the briefing time of the evangelistic encounters. Some, for the first time, led people to Christ. The participants rejoiced because God used them to bring people to Himself. Some could not believe that God had used them to lead someone to Christ because they thought that witnessing was only for ordained ministers. The false impression that only a minister could witness was lifted.

In Jonah 1:2-3, God gives an urgent message to the Assyrian people. An entire nation will perish because it has become wicked. The participants had been trained to take an urgent message to the streets of their own communities in Tattnell-Evans Baptist Association. I was excited that they were not running away from God's opportunity.

They were excited about what God was going to do in the homes they visited and in their own personal lives.

In John 4:4 Christ reaches out to the foreigner. It was “necessary” for Him to go through Samaria. Through this text, God reminds me that as a believer, I need to go out of my way to minister to people. I was excited to see the evangelistic process unfold and conclude with the implementation. The ministry is incomplete if one leaves the training in the classroom setting and ignores the going. Hispanics of different backgrounds were trained to do cross-culture ministry as Christ had modeled it.

In Matthew 28:18-20 the call is to “make disciples of all nations.” Understanding this passage correctly should be of great importance to every believer. After the training, the participants had to “go.” The nerves and anxiety of the faces of the participants was palpable. Yet, the moment came to take the torch of the Great Commission to the streets of their communities. Their time to take the gospel collectively had arrived, for some, for the first time. The fulfillment of Jesus’ command began with a time of prayer and organizing the group of at least two people. After praying, reading Scripture reading, and a time of encouragement, the tension that was initially felt in the room was gone. The atmosphere in the room turned from tense to joy and expectation when the participants were reminded of their call by God to this very purpose.

In the study of Acts 9:15-16, Saul, later Paul, is called to be an apostle to the “Gentiles,” a perfect example of cross-cultural ministry. God’s calling on Paul reflects God’s inclusive love for all the nations. I learned that God has called me to go out of my comfort zone into a different arena. The participants engaged people from different backgrounds. Some shared encountering Hondurans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Mexicans,

Nicaraguans, African-Americans, and Anglos. The passage is a reminder that God is sovereign and can send anyone to serve people of a different culture than his or hers.

In Acts 13:1-2, the Church at Antioch was an ethnically-diverse congregation. I am reminded through these verses that the gospel is for everyone and that God can bring together anyone to serve Him. During the implementation of the community assessment in Glennville and Claxton the participants and volunteers met together with those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and language similar to the Antioch Church. For a short time, the Association experienced a glimpse of Antioch. I experience a bit of heaven on earth. In the same room there were Anglos, Mexicans, Hondurans, Guatemalans, Tejanos, first generation immigrants, 1.5 generation immigrants, and 2nd generation immigrants coming together to serve the Lord. God is an inclusive God. God extends His grace to all peoples. God loves all people, and He desires for all to come to the “knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4).

Personal Reflections

The project has helped me grow in three areas: spiritually, in understanding, and in trust. First, I have grown spiritually. Many times, when equipping others, the presenter wonders if this is getting across to the people or not. Equipping others requires an element of faith that God will at the end put it all together. My faith has been increased, and God has demonstrated that I can equip others with His strength. This project has required me to spend more time in prayer and in God’s Word more than ever before. I have grown in understanding the meaning of a partnership. Implementing this project required a team, not one or two individuals. A team approach was critical for its

success. One realizes that God has prepared and equipped others to come alongside as partners in ministry.

My trust in the Lord has grown. As one looks back, it is hard to believe that God would take a man from a developing country, which had little to no education in his childhood and use him to equip others. In order to complete this project, it required trust in God that He would provide all that was required and needed to implement this project. The Lord honored the trust and provided the volunteers, the meals, snacks, drivers, resources, gas, transportation, and finances. 1 Corinthians 1:9 states that “God is faithful.” He has provided again and again. To Him be the glory forever and ever!

Conclusion

The project has been a great inspiration and encouragement to me. The approach used in the implementation can easily be adapted to any setting. It is my prayer that this project will help to reach non-believers, discipling and equipping them to win others for Christ. Further, it is my prayer that those trained will use the resources from this project to reach the growing Hispanic communities in the Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association for years to come.

APPENDIX 1

CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

Using the scale 1-4, place an “x” in the box that best describes the value of that criteria. Along with indicating a number from the scale, also write any comments on that criteria under the section “comments.”

Personal Evangelism Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
Lesson 1 Evaluation					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The lesson is clearly relevant to the issue of personal evangelism.					
The material is faithful to the Bible’s teaching on personal evangelism.					
The material is theologically sound.					
The thesis of the lesson is clearly stated.					
The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis.					
The lesson contains points of practical application.					
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.					
Overall, the lesson is clearly presented.					

APPENDIX 2

PRELIMINARY MEETING SCHEDULE

Preparatory Meeting #1 Two weeks prior to meeting one	Planning Conference Roman Rodriguez, Associational Hispanic Coordinator
Preparatory Meeting #2 One prior to meeting 1	Planning Conference: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dennis Rivera• Freddy Gardner, Associational Missionary,• Mike Howell, pastor First Baptist Church, Glennville,• Roman Rodriguez, Association Hispanic Coordinator• Angel Fernandez, Associational Hispanic Coordinator's Assistant.
Meeting #1 First Week of Training	Orientation, Demographics
Meeting #2 Second Week of Training	Community Assessment
Meeting #3 Third Week of Training	Community Assessment
Meeting #4 Fourth Week of Training	Wordless Book/EvangeCube
Non-meeting engagement: Evangelistic Encounters Two Weeks (Weeks 5 & 6)	Individual Witnessing opportunities resources (WB/EC)

Meeting #5	Seventh Week- Training	Evangelistic Testimony
Non-meeting engagement: Evangelistic Encounters Two Weeks (Weeks 8 & 9)		Individual Witnessing opportunities (PT)
Meeting #6	Tenth Week - Training	Personal Testimony/Beginning Steps
Meeting #7	Eleventh Week - Training	Beginning Steps
Meeting #8	Twelfth Week - Training	Beginning Steps, Conclusions
Follow-up Meeting	Two after project completion	Project evaluation and results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dennis Rivera • Freddy Gardner, Associational Missionary, • Mike Howell, pastor First Baptist Church, Glennville, • Román Rodríguez, Association Hispanic Coordinator • Angel Fernández,, Associational Hispanic Coordinator's Assistant.

*The fifteen-week implementation includes two weeks of preparatory meetings, twelve weeks of training and evangelistic engagement, and a final week of follow-up with the associational leadership

APPENDIX 3

MEETING SCHEDULE

Preparatory Meeting #1	4 November 2016, 11 am-1 pm	
	Harry's Barbecue, Claxton	Planning Conference: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dennis Rivera• Román Rodríguez, Associational Hispanic Coordinator
Preparatory Meeting #2	18 November 2016, 4:30-6:30 PM	
	Cilantros Mexican Restaurant, Claxton	Planning Conference: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dennis Rivera• Freddy Gardner, Associational Missionary,• Mike Howell, pastor First Baptist Church, Glennville,• Román Rodríguez, Association Hispanic Coordinator• Ángel Fernández, Associational Hispanic Coordinator's Assistant.
Meeting #1	18 November 2016, 7 pm-9 pm	
	Agape Hispanic Mission, Claxton	Orientation/Covenant, Pre Test, Demographics
	Lessons 1	
Meeting #2	10 December 2016, 8 am-12 noon	
	Emanuel Hispanic Mission, Glennville	Community Assessment (CA)
	Lesson 2	
Meeting #3	10 December 2016, 1:30 pm-5 pm	
	Nueva Vida Hispanic Mission, Reidsville	Community Assessment (CA)
	Lesson 3	
Meeting #4	12 December 2016, 7 pm-9 pm	
	Agape Hispanic Mission, Claxton	Debriefing (CA)

Lessons 5/Lesson 6	Wordless Book (WB)/ EvangeCube (EC)
Non-meeting engagement: Evangelistic Encounters 13 December 2016- 8 January 2017	Individual Witnessing opportunities resources (WB/EC)
Meeting #5 7 January 2017, 9 am-11:00 am Agape Hispanic Mission, Claxton	Personal Testimony (PT)
Non-meeting engagement: Evangelistic Encounters 10 January 2016- 15 January 2017	Individual Witnessing opportunities (PT)
Meeting #6 14 January 2017, 9 am-11 am Agape Hispanic Mission, Claxton	Personal Testimony Debriefing
Meeting #7 21 January 2017, 9 am-11 am Agape Hispanic Mission, Claxton	Beginning Steps
Meeting #8 21 January 2017, 1 pm-3 pm Agape Hispanic Mission, Claxton	Beginning Steps, Conclusions
Follow-up Meeting 3 February 2017, 5 pm-7 pm Cilantros Mexican Restaurant, Claxton	Project evaluation and results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dennis Rivera • Freddy Gardner, Associational Missionary, • Mike Howell, pastor First Baptist Church, Glennville, • Roman Rodríguez, Association Hispanic Coordinator • Ángel Fernández,, Associational Hispanic Coordinator's Assistant.

*Six calendar days were used for the primary training sessions. Four days had one session and two days had two sessions for a total of twenty-one hours of training. In addition, the participants used ten to twelve hours of their own time for their combined seventy-six evangelistic encounters.

APPENDIX 4

COVENANT AGREEMENT

**Agreement to participate on the Cross-Culture Evangelism
Project at Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association**

The Hispanic Leaders, by signing this covenant agreement, agree to participate in the ministry project of Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association in southeast, Georgia. The purpose of this training is to equip the Hispanic leaders of the Association in cross-culture evangelism. The following times, schedule, and locations are as follow:

November 18, 2016, 7-9 pm at Agape Hispanic Missions in Claxton, GA.

December 3, 2016, from 8 am-12 noon (including lunch) at Emanuel Hispanic Missions in Glennville and from 1:30 pm-5:00 pm (dinner included) at Nueva Vida Hispanic Mission in Reidsville, Ga.

December 12, 2016. The Hispanic participants will also meet for training and equipping on Saturdays January 7, 14, 21, & 28, 2017 at Agape Hispanic Mission in Claxton from 9am-11am.

By signing this covenant agreement I, (please print name)

_____ agree to the following

(please initial):

- I ___ agree to be on time.
- I ___ agree to participate on all the activities presented.
- I ___ agree to attend all training sessions from the first to the last.
- I ___ agree to participate in the group, while being careful not to dominate.
- I ___ agree to pray every day during the training event for my peers and I.

Signature Date

APPENDIX 5

ENCUESTA DE LA COMUNIDAD/COMMUNITY SURVEY

Hola, mi nombre es _____ y somos de la Iglesia Bautista de/en _____ . Las iglesias Bautistas Americanas del area estan llevando a cabo una encuesta para poder identificar cuales son las necesidades de la comunidad Hispana para poder servirles mejor. ¿Nos permite hacer unas breves preguntas?

Hi, my name is _____ and we are from (name of your church). Our Baptist churches in the area are conducting a survey to find out the needs of the Hispanic community to better serve them. Could you help us answer a few questions?

1. ¿Cuál es su país de origen? What is your country of origin?
2. ¿Cuál es su idioma? What language do you speak? ¿Qué idioma o idiomas hablan en casa? What language (s) do you speak at home?
3. ¿Tienen niños? Do you have any children? ¿Qué edades tienen? What ages?
4. De su punto de vista, ¿Cuáles serian algunas necesidades específicas que tiene la comunidad Hispana de _____? According to you, what are some specific needs of the Hispanic Community here in _____?
5. ¿Le gustaría que la Iglesia diera clases de Ingles? Si es así, que día y a que hora seria mejor? Would you like for the church to offer English classes? If yes, what day and time.
6. ¿Cuál es su religión? What is your religión?
7. ¿Asiste a la Iglesia? ¿A donde? Do you attend church? Where?
8. Nuestra Iglesia tiene un ministerio de oración. ¿Tiene alguna petición de oración? Podriamos regresar en otra ocasión y orar con usted? ¿Qué día sería conveniente y a qué hora? Our church has a prayer ministry, would you have any prayer request? Could we come back and have a prayer time with you? What day and time would be best for you? (Por favor escriba el nombre de la persona, dirección,

día y hora por favor/Please write the person's name, address, day, and time please).

By Dennis Rivera

APPENDIX 6

PERSONAL TESTIMONY (PT) / TESTIMONIO PERSONAL (TP)

I. Introduction/Introducción.

- My name is/Mi nombre es:_____.
- I work/study at/Yo estudio/trabajo en
_____.
- I live in (city)/Vivo en (ciudad)
_____.
- I am from (country of origin)/Soy de (país de origen)_____.

II. How I came to Christ./Como vine a conocer a Cristo.

- Describe your life before accepting Christ./Describa su vida antes de conocer a Cristo.

- Describe what was going on in your life./Describa que estaba pasando en su vida en ese tiempo.

- Describe how you learn about Jesus./Describa como conocio de Cristo.

- Describe why you accepted Jesus./Describa porque acepto a Cristo.

- Describe how you accepted Jesus./Describa como acepto a Cristo.

III. Life in Christ./La Vida en Cristo

- Describe the changes that Christ has made in your life./Describa los cambios que Cristo a hecho en su vida.

- Describe the experience when the Holy Spirit came to live in you./Describa la experiencia que sintió cuando el Espíritu Santo vino a vivir en usted.

- Describe how Christ has impacted you home./Describa como Cristo a impactado su hogar.

By Dennis Rivera

APPENDIX 7

PRE- AND POST-TEST SURVEY

The research in which you are about to participate in is designed to evaluate understanding of key biblical and practical issues of cross-cultural evangelism. Dennis Rivera is conducting this research for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project in the Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association in Southeast Georgia. In this research, you will indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with certain statements. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

Please answer the following questions as accurately and honestly as possible:

1. What is your age?

- Under 30
- 30-49
- 50-69
- 70 or above

2. What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

3. How long have you been a Christian?

- Less than 3 year
- 4-9 years
- 10-29 years
- 30 or above

4. How many “evangelism training” courses have you attended?

- None
- 1-2
- 3
- 4 or more

5. Have you ever shared your personal testimony with a lost person?

- Yes
- No

6. How many individuals have you personally led to saving faith in Jesus Christ?

- 0
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11 or more

7. If you are not involved in evangelism please check the primary reason why you are not:

- Fear of rejection
- Do not want to come across as pushing your religious views on a person
- Fear of hostility
- Do not know how to evangelize

8. How many people do you have in your friendships that are not believers?

- 0 individual
- 1-4 individuals
- 5-10 individuals
- 10 or more

9. Have you ever used the EvangeCube?

- Yes
- No

10. Have you ever used the Wordless Book?

- Yes
- No

11. Have you ever-used *Beginning Steps: A Seventh-Day Growth Guide for New Believers*?

- Yes
- No

12. Have you ever done or been involved in a community assessment?

- Yes
- No

APPENDIX 8

RESULTS OF THE EVANGELISTIC ENCOUNTERS

1. The fourteen participants accomplished seventy-six evangelistic encounters using the following resources:
 - a. Wordless Book 32 encounters
 - b. EvangeCube 31 encounters
 - c. Personal Testimony 14 encounters

Note: There were seventy-seven total encounters according to the resource used in one evangelistic encounter the participant used both Wordless Book and the EvangeCube.

2. The fourteen participants shared with following groups:
 - a. Individuals from their family (father, mother, aunt, niece, daughter, etc.).
 - b. Individuals with who they worked.
 - c. Neighbors, friends and a few casual acquaintances.
3. The fourteen participants shared in the following gender relationships:
 - a. Male to male 35%
 - b. Female to female 27%
 - c. Other 14%
 - d. 4. The age of the participants:
 - a. 30-45 years old 80%
 - b. < 30 years old 15%
 - c. unknown 5%

Decisions

1. Fifteen accepted Christ.
2. Three rededications
3. Seven who did not accept Christ but wanted to attend church (Some with their children).
4. One husband wanted to accept Christ with the wife who was absent, requested a return visit so he and wife together could accept Christ.
5. Some wanted an EvangeCube for themselves to share with others.
6. Twenty plus said the presentation was beautiful, several thanking the presenter-wanted follow-up because they were thinking things through.
7. Four were indifferent, not interested.
8. Five wanted an EvangeCube for themselves to share with others.

9. Three ladies could not read at all; one did not attend church because she was ashamed that she couldn't send her children.

The Participants' Comments

1. Several were nervous but everything worked out.
2. Several made a commitment to share more frequently.
3. Several made a commitment to follow-up with those to whom they witnessed.

Additional Observations

1. Twenty-eight homes were visited during the community assessment.
2. Seventy-six evangelistic encounters were accomplished.
3. One hundred percent of the participants were involved in the evangelistic encounters.
4. The favorite resource of the fourteen participants was the EvangeCube.
5. The process for the project was:
 - a. Community awareness and encounter through the community assessment.
 - b. Training the participants with specific evangelistic resources and role modeling.
 - c. Debriefing the results of the participants evangelistic encounters through personal testimony and written summary of the evangelistic encounters.
 - d. Training the participants in the use of Beginning Steps when decisions for Christ are made.
6. The post-test reveals an awareness and effective use of evangelistic resources.

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING HISPANIC LEADERS OF TATTNALL-EVANS BAPTIST ASSOCIATION IN SOUTHEAST GEORGIA FOR CROSS-CULTURAL EVANGELISM

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This project shows how to equip Hispanics leaders of the Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association in Southeast Georgia for cross-cultural evangelism. The participants were trained using simple but effective resources that can be reproduced. Chapter 1 provides the ministry context of the Hispanic community in Claxton, Reidsville, Glennville, and Aline, Georgia. Chapter 2 presents the biblical and theological bases for doing cross-cultural evangelism, covering some Old and New Testaments characters who were involved in cross-cultural evangelism. Chapter 3 deals with the theoretical and sociological foundation of cross-cultural evangelism. It takes into account the importance of understanding one's generation, culture, and religious background. Chapter 4 describes the implementation of the project. Chapter 5 presents an evaluation of the purpose, goals, strengths, and weakness of the project and discusses what could have been done differently as well as personal theological reflections.

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