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INCREASING EVANGELISM AND MISSION MOBILIZATION
AT NEW BIRTH CATHEDRAL OF PRAISE
IN SHERMAN, TEXAS

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INCREASING EVANGELISM AND MISSION MOBILIZATION

AT NEW BIRTH CATHEDRAL OF PRAISE

IN SHERMAN, TEXAS

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I dedicate this project to the people who do not know Christ as their Savior and Lord, and
to the believers who will be mobilized by this urgent message to take this gospel of
Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth!

John 3:16

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PREFACE

God has given me a heart for evangelism and a burden for people who have not heard the gospel of the grace of God. I am passionate about sharing the gospel with people. During my time at Alaska Bible College, I became more excited and eager to share the gospel on the streets of Anchorage, Alaska. That burden has never left me. So, at thirty-two years old, I attended Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS). While attending DTS my worldview was expanded leading me to a life changing mission trip to Kenya, Africa. The eight-week trip turned into six months as I stayed on the mission field to evangelize. Many years later, my passion is to get others involved in evangelism and missions. I thank God for the opportunity to study here at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, an institution serious about the proclamation of the gospel for the glory of God.

I have received much support from family, friends, and professors, as well as Dr. Michael Wilder, Dr. Shane Parker, and Bailey Walker in the Professional Doctorial office. I am grateful for their investment in my education and training. I especially appreciate the efforts of Dr. John Klaassen, my faculty supervisor. As I graduate from Southern Seminary, I leave more focused and equipped to serve Christ!

Charles Roger Leslie, Jr.

Sherman, Texas

December 2018

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Jesus gave the Great Commission to his church in Matthew 28:19-20. This mandate is to make disciples of all nations. Since Jesus Christ has given this instruction, obedience is imperative. In turn, Christ receives the glory, and his Kingdom is advanced. New Birth Cathedral of Praise is part of his plan; in reality, this church is not fulfilling this commission to the degree that it ought or could in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Context

The congregation of 50 people at New Birth Cathedral of Praise (NBCP) believe that the primary responsibility for evangelism rests upon the pastor. However, Jesus gave the biblical mandate of Matthew 28:19-20 to all believers. Since believers follow Christ's commands, believers must be obedient. The congregation's current attitude and practices need to be addressed so that the gospel will be shared throughout Sherman, Texas. The church mission statement is, "New Birth Cathedral of Praise is a family of believers committed to reaching people with the life-changing reality of Jesus Christ." This project was designed to develop a plan for increasing evangelism and mission mobilization among the members of NBCP in Sherman, Texas.

This lack of involvement in evangelism and mission work has its roots in the church's history. C. H. Brown, Sr. resigned from Harmony Baptist Church of Sherman, Texas, in August 1991. At that time, a group of forty members came to his home for a prayer service. This group felt led to ask Brown to continue his pastoral ministry. So, in prayer and faith, he accepted the pastoral position in a new church—New Birth Missionary Baptist Church. It was founded under the leadership of C. H. Brown, Sr. and

Billy M. Milam, who was named the associate pastor. The church grew rapidly utilizing ministries such as the Awana program for children, men's ministry, women's ministry, youth ministry, choir, usher ministry, and Sunday school. The church's ministries grew from within the church itself. These ministries grew, but there was not a structured form of evangelism or mission ministry.

In 1997, the church purchased 4.6 acres of land in order to build a new facility that would include a 1000-seat sanctuary and a Family Life Center. The church was able to pay off the land in 1998, and the construction began in October 1999. The Family Life Center was completed and dedicated on April 11, 2000. In 2008, the church changed its name to New Birth Cathedral of Praise (NBCP). Due to the economic downturn, many large industries laid off workers and moved away from Sherman, Texas. As a result, the church membership shrank in size from 200 to 35, causing the church to relocate in 2010 to a smaller facility across town.

Ever since the relocation, the congregation has faithfully attended Sunday school and Wednesday night prayer and Bible study. Therefore, the environment at NBCP is right for a structured evangelism and mission program. The church members are welcoming, loving, and genuinely care for one another. The environment is welcoming for both the Christian and non-Christian. As a result of the church atmosphere, the congregation is now ready to lay the foundation for evangelism, baptism, discipleship, and global ministry.

Rationale

Contextual factors reveal that the New Birth Cathedral of Praise membership need to be trained in evangelism and mission ministry. Members need an evangelism and mission mobilization plan in order to understand that everyone in the church can be a part of God's mandate to make disciples of all nations. The church needs to be equipped with a biblical curriculum regarding the church's responsibility for evangelism and missions.

The pastor is obligated to teach the word of God to the church and to lead by example in evangelism. Paul states in Ephesians 4:12, the pastor is “to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” It is the responsibility of the saints in the church to actually do the work of the ministry, thus reaching people with the gospel and discipling them as well.

Ultimately, this project was developed because New Birth Cathedral of Praise was failing to reach its community of Sherman, Texas with the gospel. Educating the congregation on humanity’s need for the gospel helped them understand the importance of evangelizing people around the world. As a result, NBCP can begin doing their part in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop a plan for increasing evangelism and mission mobilization at New Birth Cathedral of Praise in Sherman, Texas. NBCP needed teaching with regard to evangelism in order to develop a deeper understanding of the urgent need for engagement. As the church develops this mindset and ministry of evangelism, their vision of the lostness of humanity will broaden. Such vision will begin to mobilize them towards mission involvement.

Goals

The following goals guided this project toward the fulfillment of its purpose among the people at New Birth Cathedral of Praise.

1. The first goal was to assess the congregation’s knowledge of evangelism and missions.
2. The second goal was to develop a thirteen-week evangelism and mission curriculum.
3. The third goal was to equip the congregation by teaching the newly developed curriculum on evangelism and missions.

Research Methodology

The research for this project included a pre-survey, a post-survey, and an evaluation rubric.¹ The first goal was to assess the congregation's understanding of "evangelism" and "mission mobilization" as they relate to New Birth Cathedral of Praise in Sherman, Texas. This goal was measured by administering a survey to the adult church members.² This survey consisted of questions related to evangelism and mission mobilization. This goal was successfully met when 6 of the adult members completed the survey and the results were analyzed. This analysis provided a starting point of their knowledge of evangelism and missions.³

The second goal, accomplished as a thirteen-week curriculum, addressed the following questions: How should I pray for the nations? What is evangelism? What are the different approaches to evangelizing? Who is responsible for evangelizing? After evangelizing, what do you do when someone responds? What is missions? Who is responsible for doing mission work? What does the Bible teach about mission work? What is the role of the Church in mission? What kind of leader is needed for mission work? What is mission mobilization? An internal panel consisting of the pastor and three ministers of the church measured this goal utilizing a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, applicability, and teaching methodology detailed in the curriculum.⁴ This goal was successfully met when the pastor and three ministers who are the field ministry directors critiqued the teaching with the curriculum evaluation rubric. They measured the curriculum as exemplary with comments.

¹All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

²See appendix 1.

³NBCP had 35 adult members at the time of this survey.

⁴See appendix 2.

The third goal was to equip 6 adult members by teaching the newly developed curriculum related to evangelism and mission mobilization. This goal was measured by administering a survey before and after the course to see if there was an increase in their level of knowledge.⁵ This goal was successfully met when the T-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre-and post-survey scores. The T-test was selected for this analysis as it compares the means of the scores from the pre-test and post-test.⁶

A notable increase in knowledge with evangelism and missions was apparent. Their results of the pre-test revealed 107.5 out of 135 possible points. This was a surprising group of informed adults in evangelism and missions. However, after the curriculum was taught greater knowledge was achieved, thus increasing to 119.3 out of 135 possible points. This goal was successfully accomplished as it shows the effectiveness of this curriculum.

Definitions and Delimitations

The following definitions of key terms were used in the ministry project:

Evangelism. The term evangelism means “calling a person to repentance from sin and acceptance of the gospel. The gospel, or the good news, is that God has sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to earth in order to redeem persons and bring them into a personal relationship with himself.”⁷ The act of evangelism is sharing God’s good news message for mankind. The Greek verb for evangelism is *euaggelizo*, usually translated proclaim or

⁵See appendix 1.

⁶Neil J. Salkind, *Statistics for People Who Think They Hate Statistics*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Pub., 2008), 189-91.

⁷Michael J. Anthony, *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 267.

preach in English versions.”⁸

Missions. “The term ‘missions’ should not be confused with ‘mission.’ Missions is the plans of committed believers to accomplish the mission of God. Mission is the theological anchor of missions. Missions is the practical implementation of the mission of God.”⁹ God is the originator of this plan called mission. And the initiator to reconcile humanity back to himself so that the church will execute and fulfill the work of missions.

This project was limited to fifteen-weeks, which included pre-assessment, curriculum development, curriculum evaluation, curriculum instruction, post-assessment, and a T-test assessment. Participants included church members who were 16 years old or older.¹⁰

Conclusion

Evangelism, along with mission mobilization, is a necessary key for the advancement of the gospel. Jesus left this mandate with the church in Matthew 28:19-20. New Birth Cathedral of Praise must fulfill its role in the Great Commission as she brings glory to God. As each project goal was reached, the church was equipped to do the work of the ministry and be a witness in the world. Chapter 2 of this project outlines the biblical and theological foundation for evangelism and mission mobilization.

⁸Delos Miles, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1983), 20.

⁹Gailyn Van Rhee, *Missions: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 20.

¹⁰See “Agreement to Participate” in appendix 3.

CHAPTER 2
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS
FOR EVANGELISM AND MISSION
MOBILIZATION

The Gospel of Matthew provides an evangelistic and missional paradigm. There are three texts in the Gospel of Matthew that support this thesis. First, Matthew 9:36-38 provides a model for gospel motivation. Second, Matthew 10:1-23 provides a model for laborers in evangelism. Third, Matthew 28:19-20 provides a model for the laborers to be mobilized. These three texts offer a biblical and theological foundation for evangelism and mission mobilization.

**A Model for Gospel Motivation:
Matthew 9:36-38**

Scripture teaches the church to model its gospel message and commitment to display God’s love for people by the way it engages in service to the world.¹ Jesus is the model: “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matt 9:36).² Jesus was accustomed to crowds, but the crowds were not always following him with the right motives. Matthew 4:23 describes Jesus’s encounter with the crowds during his three-fold ministry: teaching, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom (evangelizing), and healing.

The Bible teaches that when readers see the word “crowds” and the word “compassion,” Jesus is addressing a human need. Two biblical texts demonstrate this

¹Darrell J. Bock, *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel: Reclaiming the Gospel as Good News* (Nashville: B & H Pub., 2010), 135.

²All Scripture references are from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

truth. Matthew 14:14 says, “When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.” In this context Jesus ends up feeding five thousand men as well as the women and children. Also, in the context of Matthew 15:29-38, Jesus engages in a healing ministry to great multitudes and ends up feeding four thousand men along with the women and children. The Scripture states, “And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, ‘I feel compassion for the multitude, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not wish to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way’” (Matt 15:32 NASB).

People and the state of their human condition are important to Jesus. When people suffer in any physical capacity it will affect their mental condition. The weight of worry and stress can take a toll on them. Even when Jesus is addressing the crowds, he recognizes that crowds are made up of individual people. He shows concern about each person’s individual condition. One sees the heart of Jesus demonstrating compassion on humanity.

The verb for compassion in Matthew 9:36 “is the word used in the Gospels to speak of Jesus’ having compassion on someone in need.”³ The word compassion is a strong emotional word that puts someone in another person’s shoes to feel their pain. Television commercials depicting starving children in a third world country attempt to make viewers feel that child’s hunger so that they will give to the aid organization. John Nolland states, “Compassion involves so identifying with the situation of others that one is prepared to act for their benefit.”⁴

Compassion needs to be part of a missionary’s heart and service. Christians must see people like God sees people: valued, important and savable. Gospel messengers

³Lawrence O. Richards, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 180.

⁴John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 407.

must present the gospel message in a clear, concise and compelling way. They need to be great leaders not just for themselves, but for the harvesting that they may accomplish.

When Jesus addresses the disciples whom he is sending out on a mission, two features are noteworthy. First the role of the missionaries is described with two metaphors, shepherd and harvester:

According to the first metaphor, the crowds are described as lacking ‘a shepherd,’ that is a single person who could be the leader of the people (like Joshua in Num. 27:17-18 or a king in 1 Kings 22:17); this leader would have the positive role of leading the people out of its desolate situation. The ministry or mission of their shepherd is one of ‘mercy,’ as is also expressed by the mention that Jesus ‘had compassion for’ the crowds (9:36).⁵

One sees the compassion of the Savior as he is moved by the condition of his shepherdless people. When there is lack of leadership as a shepherd or pastor they do not truly understand their calling, nor have a heart for people. Matthew 9:36 says, “He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd” (NASB). Jesus is moved by the condition of these people. Pastors today need to take a serious look at the Bible to truly ponder on the role they will play in the leadership of people. Jesus teaches us to look beyond the surface of people and see their hurts and pain. “What we are to see here is not purely human pity but divine compassion for troubled people.”⁶ Morris goes on to say, “The imagery is that of shepherdless sheep, sheep wounded and torn either by hostile animals or by thorn bushes and the like, and then prostrate and helpless.”⁷

One sees the care and concern of a loving God. The Pharisaic leadership was one of neglect and the cause of the declining spiritual condition of the people. When shepherds are called to serve a people, they must take their role seriously. They are called

⁵Daniel Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 142.

⁶Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 239.

⁷Morris, *Matthew*, 239.

to nurture the souls of the people and guide them through the word of God. Hebrews 13:17 says, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.” People have a responsibility to follow their shepherd, and the shepherd has an obligation to take care of the health of people’s souls with the right attitude because the shepherd will be held accountable. The reason Jesus had compassion for these crowds was that they were harassed and helpless (Matt 9:36). “Their pitiable condition as wearied under body fatigue, a vast disorganized mass, being but a faint picture of their wretchedness as the victims of pharisaic guidance; their souls uncared for.”⁸ God cares about the spiritual condition of his people, and he wants those who lead them to care about the people also.

Matthew 9:36 continues to state that their condition lacked spiritual leadership, they were “like sheep without a shepherd.” J. Dwight Pentecost describes this condition:

There were many who claimed to be shepherds. The Pharisees said: follow our traditions and we will lead you into life. The Sadducees said: follow us and through our ordinances you will become children of the kingdom. The different parties competed for followers. Many claimed to be shepherds but were not true shepherds. There was widespread spiritual hunger as evidenced by the interest in Jesus’ ministry.⁹

Even believers and non-believers are sought after today by any number of denominations and cults. People may follow leaders who mislead them for their own personal gain, both of money and fame. In this competition, many people are drawn towards what is culturally popular, entertaining, or just following where the crowds are going. But neither group may have the people’s healthy spiritual condition at heart. A lack of true spiritual leadership by the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes sums up the state of affairs when

⁸Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Practical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961), 916.

⁹J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 193.

Jesus saw the crowds in Matthew 9:36. According to Stanley Toussaint, “This is a terrible indictment against the hypocritical righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees.

Because of them the people had been vexed and were lying helpless. The King who shall shepherd His people Israel is greatly exercised in heart because they are as sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 2:6).”¹⁰

The Scriptures reveal that the spiritual condition of people is a concern to God and should be a leader’s concern. Numbers 27:12-18 indicates even though Moses could not lead Israel into the promised land because of his rebellion against God’s word, he cared about the spiritual condition of the people and who would lead them. The Bible states that God instructed Moses to appoint a successor. That man was Joshua; verse 17 states, “Who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep that have no shepherd.” The spiritual condition of leaders and their leadership of God’s people are important to him. He wants shepherds to instruct people biblically to develop disciples who will make other disciples. In the New Testament, the Bible gives clear instruction on the qualifications of a shepherd (pastor) in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1, and 1 Peter 5. Also, Ephesians 4:11-16 and Acts 20:28 describe the role and responsibilities of a shepherd. God takes serious notice of those in leadership who lead his people in the right spiritual direction. Shepherds (pastors) have an important role to play. They have been assigned to the church to lead blood bought believers to maturity in Christ (Col 1:28).

Jesus is compassionate towards people and their cares, concerns, and spiritual condition, it moves him to action on behalf of their need. Pastoral leadership should have the same attitude. In Matthew 9:37 “[Jesus] said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.’” Jesus draws attention to the harvest and the lack of workers for

¹⁰Stanley D. Toussaint, *Behold the King* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1980), 136.

it. He asks the disciples to pay attention to the great spiritual need of the people and how they can be involved. Jesus had been training the disciples up to this point, doing most of the work himself. Israel was in need of new spiritual leadership. Since these disciples had been with Jesus, Jesus knew these men would do ministry God's way. Jesus had modeled teaching, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom (evangelism) and healing ministry before the disciples. Jesus enlisted the disciples as needed laborers to reap the harvest.

The second metaphor concerns the harvest. John MacArthur describes what the harvest means in Matthew 9:37: "Several interpretations are commonly offered for the meaning of the harvest. It is said to represent all the lost, the seekers after God, of those who are elected for salvation. But from other parts of Scripture, including the Old Testament, we discover a different picture of what Jesus doubtlessly meant by the figure of harvest."¹¹

What MacArthur believes about the meaning of harvest in verse 37 is that harvest means judgment. He bases this understanding on several Old Testament texts (Isa 17, Joel 3) and two New Testament texts (Matt 13, Rev 14). It is biblically true that judgment will come at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-15) for those who were not written in the book of life, those who rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, Jesus sees the harvest in verse 37 as people to be harvested. He wants these people to have an opportunity to hear the gospel first, and if they reject the gospel, then they will face judgment. Morris believes that "the harvest may refer to a literal crop of grain or the like, but here it is used metaphorically of people."¹² When Jesus uses the

¹¹John MacArthur, *Matthew 8-15, MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1987), 114.

¹²Morris, *Matthew*, 239.

term “harvest” in Matthew 9:37-38, Luke 10:2 and John 4:35, the harvest means people. In John 4:35 when the word harvest is used, Jesus is trying to alert the disciples of the lostness of people. However, Matthew 13:30, 13:39, and Mark 4:29 talk about judgment. Thus, those who reject the gospel of Jesus Christ will be condemned in judgment. (John 3:18, Hebrews 9:27)

The main point revolves around the word *ergatēs*, which “can denote any workman, but it is used especially of agricultural laborers.”¹³ In the context “harvest” fits better as harvesting people, rather than judgment, and goes along with workers as agricultural laborers. Thus, MacArthur is right that harvest can mean judgment however, that occurs when people reject the gospel. In the meantime, the Body of Christ needs to get mobilized and get the gospel out by undertaking evangelism. Therefore, Matthew 9:36-38 provides a model for gospel motivation. The shepherds/pastors must offer spiritual leadership to the people better than the Pharisees and the Sadducees; as religious leaders, they offered no true spiritual leadership. That is why believers must see the lostness of humanity through the eyes of God. God wants this great harvest to be reaped. Ultimately what is at stake here is gospel motivation. This should be a big motivating factor to do evangelism.

God’s heart for the harvest is expressed in four key passages: (1) Genesis 3, the fall of man and the promise of the savior; (2) John 3:16, the love of God and the offer of salvation; (3) 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, the reconciliation of relationship between God and man restored through Jesus Christ; and (4) 2 Peter 3:9. God patiently waits for people to be saved and does not want anyone to perish. If people do not accept his Son as their Savior, then they will perish and stand before God in judgment. MacArthur provides a noteworthy statement, “it is easy to lose awareness of the imminence and the inevitability

¹³Morris, *Matthew*, 239.

of God's judgment, but the Christian who loses sight of that judgment loses a major portion of his motive for witnessing."¹⁴

This biblical text is why Matthew 9:36-38 provides a model for gospel motivation. Christians need a burden for people without Christ that moves them to action of sharing the gospel. Platt makes the point that "in light of God's coming judgement, Jesus knew the desperate condition of those to whom He ministered. These were people who were separated from God and who, if nothing changed, would one day stand before God in their sin and be cast into eternal darkness."¹⁵ Christians must present the gospel to the lost harvest first, and then if people do not accept Christ, they will end up becoming part of the harvest of judgment. Jesus saw the harvest first: "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Matt 9:36-38). Platt reports with compelling evidence that believers must see humanity with eyes of compassion.

The church must see the lostness of humanity in a new light, with a sense of urgency, because the harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Christians need to pray for more laborers. There are many that have yet to be saved. How can Christians be idle if they are truly born again? "We live in a world of approximately seven billion people, with most liberal estimates labeling about one-third of this seven billion 'Christian.' That leaves more than 4.5 billion people without Christ—that's more than 4.5 billion people on a road that leads to an eternal hell. This is the condition of the lost."¹⁶

¹⁴MacArthur, *Matthew 8-15*, 115.

¹⁵David Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville: B & H Pub., 2013), 133.

¹⁶Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, 133.

He tells believers what to do next. Matthew 9:38 states, “Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” The harvest is so great; it is plentiful. Jesus is drawing attention not only to the reality of the harvest but also to its vastness. For the Christian today, the reality is 4.5 billion without Christ. He says it is plentiful in verse 37. “The word ‘plentiful’ stands in the way of this interpretation; it makes sense only if here *therismos* does not mean “harvest-time” but “harvest-crop In that case the crop will be plentiful; many people will be ready to be ‘reaped’ into the kingdom.”¹⁷

Again, since the language refers to harvesting crops, Jesus not only talks about harvest but that believers can also expect to reap a harvest for the kingdom. The Holy Spirit is preparing people’s hearts to receive this gospel. God will send laborers; Christians just need to pray for people to be laborers. “Help is needed to gather in this great harvest. That is why he speaks of ‘the workers.’ Up to this point Jesus alone was working at bringing in the harvest and training the Twelve at the same time, so that they were now ready to help him.”¹⁸ Morris acknowledges that in verse 38, “*therefore* means that the state of affairs indicated in the previous statement demands action. Because there are few workers for the great harvest, it is incumbent on the disciples to do something. The particular action Jesus singles out is prayer.”¹⁹

Prayer was and still is important to Jesus. He taught his disciples to pray the Lord’s prayer (Matt 6:9-13), and he prays for believers, “who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us” (Rom 8:34). He prayed for his disciples before he chose them to be apostles. Luke 6:12-13 states, “In these days he went out to the mountain to

¹⁷D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 235.

¹⁸R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew’s Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub., 1964), 385.

¹⁹Morris, *Matthew*, 240.

pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles.” Jesus prayed to show the disciples and us that prayer is dependence on the Father for strength, protection, wisdom and direction, though not limited to these.

Jesus says in Matthew 9:38, “Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” In verse 38 *deēthēte* may be translated as “‘to ask, request, beseech’; [it] is used of specific spoken requests to God or man. The individual speaking is deeply aware of a personal need, and out of the need comes a cry for specific help.”²⁰ Christians need to make prayer a priority before they are moved by emotion and become overwhelmed because the vast need of so many lost people. Matthew 9:38 says, therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. “Notice that Jesus doesn’t say, ‘Here’s the harvest, now go!’ Instead, He says, ‘Here’s the harvest, now *pray*.’”²¹ The prayer is to be directed to “the Lord of the harvest.” Who is the Lord of the harvest? MacDonald mentions that “Jesus did not identify the Lord of the harvest. Some think it is the Holy Spirit.”²² Some commenters say it is Jesus. Turner states that “they should pray that God would send even more workers into the field.”²³ “It is one of the functions of the workers in God’s field that they pray for more workers to be sent into the field.”²⁴ Christians should always pray as the Scriptures exhorts believers to but especially for this critical need of laborers to go to reap the harvest that is ready. Lenski, describes what God will do when we pray:

²⁰Richards, *Expository Dictionary*, 499.

²¹Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, 134.

²²William MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Art Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1238.

²³David L. Turner, *The Gospel of Matthew*, in vol. 13 of *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary*, ed. Philip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2005), 144.

²⁴Morris, *Matthew*, 240.

“The harvest is God’s, and he must provide the workers, *ekballein eis*, ‘throw them out into the harvest,’ i.e., hurry them out. All that we are to do is ‘to ask’ this of God, and we know that this is his will, and that he will hear our request. He is the one who in his own way will find and send out the workers.”²⁵

In light of Matthew 9:36-38 one sees that the biblical record shows believers that this text is a model for gospel motivation. Christians need to see people as needing to be saved before they die because they will be in hell for all eternity. Therefore, believers must realize that they cannot do this alone and they must pray for help-more laborers. Jesus has compassion on the multitudes because they were neglected and not being taken care of spirituality by the religious leaders in Israel. They had no spiritual leadership for their lives. So, he invites his disciples whom he has been training to join him in the great harvest. He tells them to pray that God would send more laborers into this great harvest to help them.

A Model for Laborers in Evangelism: Matthew 10:1-23

Jesus had modeled various ministries before the disciples, such as teaching, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom (evangelism), and healing. He had felt compassion on the crowds because the religious leaders were neglecting their spiritual needs. He instructed his disciples to pray because the harvest was plentiful, but the laborers to reap this great harvest were few.

Prayer in God’s work must be taken seriously. “The believer who prays for God to send workers but is unwilling to go himself prays insincerely and hypocritically.”²⁶ Anyone who sincerely prays for God to send laborers, must also be

²⁵Lenski, *Matthew’s Gospel*, 386.

²⁶MacArthur, *Matthew 8-15*, 119.

willing to go. When believers learn from the Scriptures what Jesus taught about reaching the lost, believers must know that this work is done supernaturally. It can only be done by divine help—the Holy Spirit. Christians must make prayer a high priority in all of God’s work. And be ready to be the answer to the prayers that are prayed. The disciples demonstrate that. The disciples became the answer to their prayer in verse 38. Jesus immediately calls the Twelve disciples to himself in Matthew 10:1.

Immediately after his instructions on prayer, Jesus summoned the twelve disciples.²⁷ Platt says, “the language Matthew uses of ‘summoning’ might be compared to a military commander calling soldiers together to give them orders.”²⁸ These orders came with authority. Matthew 10:1 says, “And having summoned His Twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness” (NASB). The call that was given to his disciples came with authority. The authority was given for a specific purpose. Christians in authority must respect the position and not abuse their role because of a name. “While Jesus displayed great power by His miracles, the delegating of miraculous power to others was the clearest indication of the greatness of his person.”²⁹ Jesus never abused his authority, given to him as designed by the Father, for his purpose of authenticating that He is the Son of God.

MacArthur gives believers a clear description and impact of the authority given to the disciples by Jesus, “*Exousia* (authority) is from a verb that means ‘it is lawful,’ and it therefore refers to a right or power that is legitimately delegated. Jesus granted the twelve disciples God’s divine authority to do exactly what He Himself had

²⁷The term in Greek is προσκαλεσασμενος, aorist middle participle of προσκαλεω, “to call to one’s self.” Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 28.

²⁸Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, 135.

²⁹Toussaint, *Behold the King*, 137.

been doing (see 4:23; 9:35).”³⁰ It was important that God’s work is represented right and well. A title can give people a misrepresentation for the role assigned if their heart is not right. A missionary, pastor, deacon or elder must be humble and execute their role biblically, never abusing their authority. Jesus is careful about whom he calls, and he wants his representatives to represent God’s Kingdom well. The disciples were witnessing a poor representation of Israel’s leaders and what it did to the people because they abused their authority (Matt 9:36). The people were like sheep without a shepherd. It is always the people who suffer because of the abuse of people in leadership. Jesus really cares about people being led the right way. “To do what He did would demonstrate there were sent by Him, just as what He did demonstrated He was sent by the Father. Throughout the book of Acts, we see the disciples doing the very things for which Jesus here gives them authority.”³¹

Authority can be misused or abused. Jesus gave the disciples specific use of authority. He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness (Matt 10:1 NASB). This authority that was given to the disciples was to help relieve the ills and torments of people that they would encounter. Not all sickness is because someone did something wrong, nor is it demonic. Lenski argues that “the notion that all disease and sickness is due to evil spirits is not supported in the Scriptures and cannot in this instance be based on a grammatical construction alone.”³² But what Jesus does give to the disciples is clear, Jesus grants the Twelve the very same power which he possesses, to free men from demon possession and to heal them from all kinds of ailments. “The bestowal of this ‘authority’ upon the

³⁰MacArthur, *Matthew 8-15*, 127.

³¹MacArthur, *Matthew 8-15*, 127.

³²Lenski, *Matthew’s Gospel*, 388.

Twelve and then upon the Seventy (Luke 10:17-20) reveals his deity.”³³

Jesus now changes the name of the Twelve disciples in Matthew 10:1 to apostles in verse 2. MacArthur discusses the difference between the two: *Mathetes* (disciples) refers to those who learn under the instruction of a master teacher. *Apostoloi* (“apostles,” v. 2) refers to qualified representatives who are sent out on a mission.³⁴ Christians must be disciples before they are sent to do any work for the Lord. This is a crucial work because people’s lives are at stake mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. God is entrusting believers to be equipped to serve him and people.

Jesus specifically gives readers the name of the twelve apostles. An interesting note is that Jesus had chosen five of the twelve recorded in Matthew 4:18-22 (Simon called Peter, Andrew, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother), and in Matthew 9:9 he called Matthew. He told these men to “follow me.” Robert E. Coleman, in his classic book *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, notes, “The particulars surrounding the call of the other disciples are not recorded in the Gospels, but it is believed that they all occurred in the first year of the Lord’s ministry.”³⁵ Jesus calls the church to make disciples. Discipleship is needful for the development of believers so that they can effectively lead in the ministry that they are assigned. Being in Christian leadership must be taken seriously lest they get puffed up because of a title and pride takes over. Paul address this in 1 Timothy 3:6, the call of a pastor “must not be a new convert.”

One sees how Jesus is developing his disciples who will eventually take over this evangelism and mission work after Jesus finishes his redemptive work on earth. “He had previously chosen them, but now He calls them to a special evangelistic mission to

³³Lenski, *Matthew’s Gospel*, 388.

³⁴MacArthur, *Matthew 8-15*, 120.

³⁵Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1986), 22.

the nation of Israel.”³⁶ God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary Kingdom work for him. MacDonald explains, “The disciples were probably in their twenties at this time. Taken from varied walks of life and probably young men of average ability, their true greatness lay in their association with Jesus.”³⁷

If this statement is true, then the transformation of a person’s life is changed when they spend time with Jesus. These disciples had a remarkable witness for the Lord. They continued on with their teaching, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom (evangelism), and healing ministry as modeled by Jesus. The disciples demonstrate that they remained a witness to Israel in their three-fold ministry in Acts 4:8-13.

Readers see the lives of the apostles transformed throughout the gospels and the book of Acts. Four of these apostles wrote books in the New Testament. The apostle Peter wrote, 1 and 2 Peter; James wrote The Epistle of James; the apostle John wrote the Gospel of John, three Epistles of John, and Revelation; and Matthew wrote the Gospel according to Matthew. These books represent an extension of the ministry that Jesus had assigned to them. Turner points out, “Jesus now commissions his twelve disciples to extend his ministry of the Kingdom through word and deeds (cf. Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16). It is clear that Jesus’s choice of twelve disciples was intended to correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel (19:28), who were lacking godly leaders (9:36).”³⁸

The disciples were following Jesus from the time he called them to “follow me.” Jesus had been revealing his authority as the Messiah as foretold by the Old Testament prophets (Isa 35:5; 61:1-2). Jesus demonstrated this ministry in Matthew 4:23: “And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.”

³⁶MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary*, 1238.

³⁷MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary*, 1238.

³⁸Turner, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 146.

The disciples had been the heart of God through his Son Jesus Christ. They also were seeing the compassion of Jesus as he saw the crowds of people as sheep without a shepherd. Jesus saw spiritual emptiness and the lostness in their wandering. He modeled care and concern for the people even as he does for humanity today. Christian leaders must constantly be reminded that ministry is all about people not building and bucks.

The Twelve have seen Jesus' words and works; now it was their turn to go out on their own itinerant ministries as he continued his own ministry (11:1).³⁹ The apostles' ministry was to Israel; "They were to extend Jesus' ministry by announcing the Kingdom and demonstrating its power to Israel through mighty works."⁴⁰

When Jesus commissions his disciples in Matthew 10:5, He uses the word *apeteilen*, "to send forth on a certain mission such as to preach' (Mark 3:14; Luke 9:2)."⁴¹ Proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of Israel was to be their focus. The gospel is good news. Bock describes the gospel like this: "Its central proclamation is the good news of God's love and initiative not only to save us from hell, but also to bring us into a healthy relationship with Himself."⁴² The gospel is God's love message extended to mankind (John 3:16), but only if they receive his son Jesus Christ, as he has presented him, the Messiah, the Savior of the world (John 4:42).

The twelve were to go to a selective audience only. They were to evangelize the lost sheep of Israel. "The English word evangelism comes from the Greek word, *euaggelidzo*, which is often translated in English Bibles as 'preach the gospel.' *Euaggelidzo* comes from the word *euaggelion*, which means "gospel." Thus 'evangelize'

³⁹Turner, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 147.

⁴⁰Turner, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 147.

⁴¹Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), 237.

⁴²Darrell L. Bock, *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel: Reclaiming the Gospel as Good News* (Nashville: B & H Pub., 2010), 1.

literally means “to gospelize.”⁴³ Humanity only hope is the gospel of Jesus Christ and it must be proclaimed everywhere. Because 4.5 billion people are lost without Christ.

God has provided the way back to himself since he has assigned his Son to make the sacrifice of his life for man. Jesus did this through his death, burial and resurrection. Terry observes, “In his epistles Paul spoke of his ministry as evangelizing twenty-three times. The frequency with which these words are used in the New Testament ought to say something to us about the priority of evangelism in our churches today.”⁴⁴ The gospel is the good news of God’s reconciling love message to mankind. This ministry is to bring man and God together. Christians are God’s ambassadors to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 5:18-20).

It is extremely urgent that the church take seriously the mandate to be ambassadors for Christ and gospelize mankind. This is especially so in light of the fact that there are multitudes of lost people who need to hear and receive the gospel of Jesus Christ. Terry states, “Evangelism reflects the essential nature of God. God is by nature loving and gracious. Because of his love and grace, God desires to redeem sinful humanity and thus reconcile all the world’s people to himself.”⁴⁵ The Father and the Son agreed that the Son would come to redeem man. Jesus expresses one of the reasons he came to earth in Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” Even when people tried to detain him, Jesus never wavered from his purpose. The Bible says, “And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, but he said to them, ‘I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for

⁴³John Mark Terry, *Church Evangelism: Creating a Culture for Growth in Your Congregation* (Nashville: B & H Pub., 1997), 2.

⁴⁴Terry, *Church Evangelism*, 2.

⁴⁵Terry, *Church Evangelism*, 1.

I was sent for this purpose” (Luke 4:42-43). Jesus would often go and be alone to pray to the Father for wisdom and guidance to stay in the Father’s will.

Believers must pray as they have been given a ministry of reconciliation from God, and they must move forward to evangelize the lost. The Body of Christ must be about the Father’s business. Jesus has described the condition of humanity, “the harvest is plenteous but the laborers are few” (10:37) and what to do, “therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (10:38).

The disciples had a targeted audience to evangelize the lost sheep of the house of Israel. “This limitation of the apostles’ mission has perplexed many Bible students, specifically those who fail to hold to the dispensational viewpoint of Bible interpretation. The kingdom of heaven which is still at hand is being offered to Israel. If it will accept its king, Israel will have its kingdom.”⁴⁶ God was just being true to his promises from the beginning. He sovereignly chose a people, gave them covenants, a promised land and offered them their Messiah. He kept trying to bring them the gospel of the kingdom. Christians must see God’s relentless and constant love for his people and he has that same love for all people because he wants they know his love for them personally. Walvoord and Dyer bring attention to Jesus’s statement for the disciples to only “go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (10:6): “The question has been raised whether this restricted mission contradicts the Lord’s final instructions in the Great Commission: ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all nations’” (Matt 28:19).⁴⁷

⁴⁶John F. Walvoord and Charles H. Dyer, *Matthew*, in *John Walvoord Prophecy Commentaries* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013), 135.

⁴⁷Walvoord and Dyer, *Matthew*, 135.

Blomberg brings clarity to this point:

These restrictions do not contradict the Great Commission (28:18-20). Even 10:18 anticipates the disciples going into Gentile territory. Instead, Jesus' commands fit the larger pattern of his own ministry prior to his death and match the missionary priority Paul himself maintained throughout Acts (e.g. 13:46; 18:6; 19:9; 28:25-28) and articulated in Rom 1:16 ("first for the Jew, and then for the Gentile.").⁴⁸

In Matthew 28:19-20 the restriction was lifted after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It will be shown how the mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel will change into a universal mission. Walvoord and Dyer raise another issue concerning the temporary mission to Israel when they express, "There is also the question of whether Jesus' instructions to the Twelve in Mathew 10 represent a temporary priority on outreach to the Jews which He and Paul maintained, or whether 'to the Jew first' is a prescriptive formula for ministry that transcends the days of Jesus and the apostles."⁴⁹ It seems that it was Paul's strategy to always go to the Jew first and then the Gentiles. He explains this in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

Blomberg indicates,

It is not clear that even the end of Acts heralds a change in strategy, and it is at least possible that God intended Israel to be the first mission field in every era of Christian history. Even if this is not the case, it certainly does not justify relegating the Jews to the relatively low position in Christian missionary strategy they have usually been assigned.⁵⁰

Strategists of Christian mission must continue to seek opportunities in sharing the gospel with the Jews as with the Gentiles nations. God does not want any to perish but all to come to repentance (2 Pet 3:9). When witnessing we usually do not ask a person's ethnicity before we share the gospel. The Bible does address Israel's purpose in

⁴⁸Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, New American Commentary (Nashville: B & H Pub., 1992), 170.

⁴⁹Walvoord and Dyer, *Matthew*, 136.

⁵⁰Blomberg, *Matthew*, 170.

Romans 9-11. God does have a plan in spite of their unbelief. He is sovereign and has a plan for a remnant of Israel to be saved. In this sixth dispensation of grace, it is the Gentile that are being saved, but it does not mean the church cannot witness to the Jews.

Jesus's instruction to the Twelve also included in Matthew 10:8 says, "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely you received, freely give." "The apostles were given authority to perform miracles, even to raising the dead. While they seem to have been successful in casting out demons and curing all diseases, there is no record that any dead were raised at this time."⁵¹ MacArthur points out, however, "They demonstrated the sympathetic heart of God, who cares for the suffering, the hurting, the afflicted and the needy."⁵² Again, believers must see the compassion of God and the concern for displaced and hurting people. The twelve are to be an extension of the love and compassion of Jesus as he sends them out. Just as the Lord sends believers out to this hurting world with good news, they too need to display the love and compassion of God. God wants to display his love and that means using believers to do it.

Matthew 10:9-15 reveals Jesus's further instructions about their provisions. Jesus not only gives the disciples instruction about proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom (evangelizing) to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but he also instructs them to have faith for the provisions they will need. Jesus wanted them so focused on their mission of gospel witnessing to Israel that focusing on their provisions, while important, would be a distraction. The biblical principle here is taught earlier in Matthew on the Sermon on the Mount (6:25-34): "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you" (6:33). Jesus teaches his disciples here, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor

⁵¹Blomberg, *Matthew*, 136.

⁵²MacArthur, *Matthew 8-15*, 191.

about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?” (6:25). Today, the church often focuses on the things Jesus told the disciples not to focus on. These are the basic things in life. Examples would be worrying about their lives. God cares about believers’ lives because he made them with a purpose in mind to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. Worrying about what one will eat, drink, or wear is unnecessary. God will provide all one needs to fulfill his purpose for believer’s lives. That has become a big distraction for the church. When the Body of Christ gets inwardly focused, the lost are not the priority they need to be. Evangelism, discipleship, church planting, praying for laborers and mission work is then lacking. The church witness of the gospel is not effective, and the world remains in darkness. The disciples were not to worry about their provisions, nor should believers who are doing the work of the Lord. Someone has said, “The same hand that points the way is the same hand that provides.” When God is directing you to a work he will take care of the work and the worker.

Jesus was teaching his disciples that gospel ministry would open doors for them. Walvoord and Dyer verify the above statement when they say, “Jesus sent the disciples out with instructions of money or clothing and to depend upon ‘worthy’ people in the cities in which they preach to provide for them. These restrictions highlight the urgency of the apostles’ task.”⁵³ Such urgency also demonstrated to them “that God is going to provide for these men on their journey, both now and later on, and that he will use the friends of the gospel to carry out his plan.”⁵⁴ The disciples needed to trust God for their provisions and also have faith that the sovereign God would have people at the right place and at the right time to help them. The disciples would have just witnessed two men

⁵³Walvoord and Dyer, *Matthew*, 136.

⁵⁴William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975), 458.

exercising faith in Jesus words: “And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, ‘Have mercy on us, Son of David.’ When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, ‘Do you believe that I am able to do this?’ They said to him, ‘Yes, Lord.’ Then he touched their eyes, saying, ‘According to your faith be it done to you’” (Matt 9:27-29).

Believers should always be learning from Jesus for there may be an opportunity to share the word that was taught. Believers must always be ready to share the Scriptures. The disciples saw how others take the Lord at his word. As the disciples saw the Lord teach and model trust, they would have to learn to trust Jesus, their Messiah, and his word on their mission. The disciples’ faith would be stretched and challenged even more by Jesus. Just as God’s plan is to develop believers into stronger witnesses for him. He uses his word, adversity, trails and test that challenges our faith, God is always getting believers ready for the next assignment. The instruction in these verses may have caused the minds of the disciples to pause, listen intently and ask, “what did Jesus say?” Following Jesus is always designed to cause believers to trust him and his word. “Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, or a bag for *your* journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support” (Matt 10:9-10 NASB). Turner states,

The Twelve are told not to take money or extra clothes with them on the mission. Rather, their needs are to be met by the anticipated hospitality and support of those who receive their message (cf. 10:11-13; 40-42). The message of the kingdom is not for sale (cf. Acts 8:20), but those who receive it should also receive its messengers.⁵⁵

Believers must be open to learn an important truth here, that the message is a part of the messenger. If people receive the message, then people must receive the messenger. That’s why Jesus had been teaching and training the disciples to proclaim the

⁵⁵Turner, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 149.

gospel of the kingdom. This gospel message is a soul saving message. It is valuable and so are the messengers that are bringing this gospel. Equally important is the character of the person who shares the gospel. The apostle Paul says in Philippians 1:27, “Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.” This is why Jesus now calls on the twelve to evangelize the lost sheep of the house of Israel, because the Pharisees and the Sadducees were not representing the people nor God well. According to Jesus the people were ‘harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd’ (Matt 10:37). Israel’s leadership had failed to properly care for the spiritual development of the people. Jesus was calling a new workforce to minister to the people. If leaders are not representing God and the people, God can and will bring in replacements. This shows the love and care of God for his people. God will also make sure that his workers are taken care of.

The last part of Matthew 10:10, states, “For the worker is worthy of his support.” Jesus is reminding his disciples of the teaching of biblical hospitality. Hospitality, “while not solely a Christian virtue, it is a practice established among the people of God in the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament expectation of hospitality included providing a safe haven to travelers (Gen. 19:1-9; Judg. 19:20-28) and the provision of food and personal care (Gen. 18:4, 7-8; 24:14; Deut. 23:4).”⁵⁶ The provision of shelter and food would go a long way in aiding missionaries and servants of God to focus on their work. Leaving an impact on the providers home such as being an example to their family. When families take in missionaries, the husband, wife and children get an opportunity to hear about God’s work and may be inclined to join in God’s witnessing work. “Hospitality was even to be extended to strangers, who could be messengers from God (Gen. 18:1-8; Judg. 13:9-16; 2 Kings 4:8-10; cf. Heb. 13:2). The New Testament also demands hospitality of believers: ‘Share with God’s people who are

⁵⁶Michael Pocock, Gailyn Van Rheenen, and Douglas McConnell, *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 66-67.

in need. Practice hospitality' (Rom. 12:14-21)."⁵⁷ God has always taken care of his servants that are doing his will and sharing his word.

Turner affirms that "the disciples were to seek out those purported to be 'worthy' people and to stay with them. Their acceptance of the Kingdom message would show their genuine worthiness."⁵⁸ However, "pervading the Matthean mission discourse are references to the prospect of rejection of the gospel message (10:11-16, cf. 40-42), issuing in persecution of the messengers (10:17-20, 23-33) and division even among a person's own family (10:21-22, 34-39)."⁵⁹

The disciples will experience rejection and persecution as messengers of the gospel. In the book *The Changing Face of World Missions*, the authors make a sobering statement about the possibilities that could be reality if a person is being sent on a mission. "In John 20:21, he tells his disciples, 'As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' Like Jesus, we are sent into the world. Jesus lived a vulnerable life. Evil people tried to kill him, from the cowshed where he was born to Calvary, where he gave up his life."⁶⁰ To live as missionaries anywhere in the world may cause them to sacrifice their life for the sake of the gospel. "He told his disciples, 'In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world' (John 16:33). Believers who take a stand for Christ, especially in hostile societies, will pay a price, as did first century Christians. They survived by persevering in light of eternal perspectives."⁶¹ Missionaries must be steadfast in presenting the gospel in spite of people's responses to it.

⁵⁷Pocock, Van Rheenen, and McConnell, *Changing Face of World Missions*, 67.

⁵⁸Turner, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 149.

⁵⁹Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2001), 93.

⁶⁰Pocock, Van Rheenen, and McConnell, *Changing Face of World Missions*, 155.

⁶¹Pocock, Van Rheenen, and McConnell, *Changing Face of World Missions*, 155.

Matthew 10:11-13 describes two different responses to the kingdom message. If the disciples and their message were welcome, it was considered a worthy home. If they were not welcome in a particular place, they were to shake off the dust of their feet and to pronounce a solemn judgment against it.⁶² This judgment is described by Carson:

Sodom and Gomorrah faced catastrophic destruction because of their sin (Gen. 19) and became bywords of loathsome corruption (Isa. 1:9; Matt. 11:22-24; Luke 17:29; Rom. 9:29; 2 Peter 2:6; Jude 7; cf. Job 36:10). Although there is still worse to come for them on the Day of Judgment, there is yet more awful judgment for those who reject the word and the messengers of the Messiah (cf. Heb. 2:1-3).⁶³

Rejecting the gospel message and God's messengers are a serious offense before God. It is true those who do not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are condemned already (John 3:18). They will be lost without Christ for eternity. When God sends his messengers out he is sending his message—in God's eyes they both have value. To reject the messenger was to reject the message. This rejection has severe consequences. In fact, the severity was compared to the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. Matthew 10:15 suggests, "It will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town." Turner comments, "Jesus assured the disciples that those who reject them make a mistake even more serious than Sodom and Gomorrah's outrageously shameful treatment of God's angels (Gen 18-19). Rejection of God's rule in Christ renders one liable to a judgment more severe than the judgment of notorious Sodom and Gomorrah."⁶⁴ Regardless of how people reject the message of the gospel if they die without Christ in their life they will end up separated from God in hell for eternity. God is only extending his love to mankind, so that they will be able to enjoy his presence for all eternity and not be subject to an eternal hell.

⁶²Walvoord and Dyer, *Matthew*, 137.

⁶³Carson, *Matthew*, 246.

⁶⁴Turner, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 150.

Refusal to heed the message was tantamount to rejection of the messenger.

The disciples were not to worry about people accepting them or the message. That is not their responsibility. People condemn themselves when they do not believe the gospel (John 3:18).

Since rejection of both message and messenger is part of presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ, Jesus will now instruct them how to be humble in the midst of persecution (Matt 10:16-23).

The disciples' task was to be a difficult one; Jesus warns them of the persecution they would face. Although the Twelve had been delegated miraculous powers, those powers were to be used only in the authentication of the message. The apostles were at the same time to be like sheep, perhaps the most dependent and vulnerable of all domesticated animals.⁶⁵

Platt says, "the phrase 'sheep among wolves' in verse 16 is startling. After all, the responsibility of the shepherd is to protect the sheep from wolves."⁶⁶ Turner describes the wolves in Matthew 10:16. "The wolves of 10:16 are the religious leaders whose opposition to Jesus mounts as the narrative unfolds. The persecution from the 'wolves' is described in detail in the following verses (cf. Mark 13:9-13)."⁶⁷

These attacks will be civil and religious. Even through persecution will come Jesus told the disciples they must do two things. First, Jesus says, "be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves" (Matt 10:16 NASB). MacArthur writes, serpents symbolize wisdom. They were considered to be shrewd, smart, cunning, cautious. In that characteristic, at least, Christians are to emulate serpents. Paul advises believers, "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity"

⁶⁵Walvoord and Dyer, *Matthew*, 138.

⁶⁶Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, 136.

⁶⁷Turner, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 151.

(Col 4:5).⁶⁸ Christians need to be truly walking in the Spirit and not in the flesh. It is easy to retaliate when you have been offended. The believer must learn to trust God in every instance. The apostles were to also be, “Innocent as doves,” which denotes, “the most harmless and gentle of birds, doves represent being pure, or innocent, another characteristic of the faithful disciple of Christ. Being true to God’s Word and uncompromising in proclaiming the gospel does not require, and should never include, being abrasive, coarse, inconsiderate, belligerent, blatant, or blunt.”⁶⁹ Believers need to act and not react. The Bible states, “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger (Prov 15:1). In times of persecution the believers need to rely on God and his word.

Believers know tribulation will come, so they must arm themselves with the whole armor of God (Eph 6:10-20). “Servants of the Lord are to be shrewd and cunning in dealing with the unbelieving world around them. The basic idea is that of saying the right thing at the right time and place, of having a sense of propriety and appropriateness, and of trying to discover the means to achieve the highest goal.”⁷⁰ Missionaries should not lose heart just because not all people or countries welcome them to present the gospel of Jesus Christ. They must seek creative ways to get the gospel to people. Such strategies apply when countries close their doors to missionaries and they employ strategies such as Business as Mission (BAM). David Sills says in his book *Changing World, Unchanging Mission: Responding to Global Challenges*, “Business as mission (BAM) strategies are vitally important for reaching and teaching the unreached and undisciplined peoples of the world, and missionaries must be prepared with essential skills and credentials to meet

⁶⁸MacArthur, *Matthew 8-15*, 201.

⁶⁹MacArthur, *Matthew 8-15*, 201.

⁷⁰MacArthur, *Matthew 8-15*, 201.

international needs in the coming decades.”⁷¹

To meet these new challenges Jesus now says to his disciples and to the church when faced with persecution, “do not worry what you will say, the Spirit will help you.” The Bible says in Matthew 10:19-20, “When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.” The Holy Spirit plays a significant role in helping believers do the work of the ministry. Turner states, “up to this point in Matthew, the Spirit has been mentioned solely in connection with Jesus and his Kingdom ministry (1:18, 20; 3:11, 16; 4:1; cf. 12:18, 28,31-32). As the disciples extended the message of Jesus and the Kingdom, they too would experience the work of the Spirit in their lives (cf. John 14:15-17; 15:26).”⁷² “Scripture presents the Spirit as He who empowers us for mission (Acts 1:8) and gives us the words to say in time of need (Matt. 10:17-20).”⁷³ Another way that the Holy Spirit helps believers is to cope with persecution from family.

Matthew 10:21-22 can be a most troubling verse to grasp: “Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.” At times this may be hard to accept. “In this most poignant verse of the discourse, it is predicted that even one’s own family members will further this persecution (cf. 10:35-37), to the point of Jesus’ disciples being killed because of the betrayal of their own siblings, parents, and children (cf. Mic 7:6, to which

⁷¹M. David Sills, *Changing World, Unchanging Mission: Responding to Global Challenges* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015), 146.

⁷²Turner, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 151.

⁷³Chuck Lawless and Adam W. Greenway, *The Great Commission Resurgence: Fulfilling God’s Mandate in Our Time* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 186.

this verse alludes).”⁷⁴ Turner suggests,

Such betrayal is extremely distressing, but it is mollified somewhat by the existence of a new Kingdom family of disciples, with God as the father (10:20; 12:46-50; 23:8-9). It is a difficult teaching, but the primary allegiance of disciples must be to Jesus and to their new family of Kingdom disciples, not to their natural families (10:34-39).⁷⁵

Jesus then clarifies the seriousness of the opposition because of this gospel message when he says, “and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved” (Matt 10:22). It is hard to minister and be insulted by strangers when sharing good news but when insults and persecution comes from love ones, from family it hurts. Platt points out, “Know that, whether it's your family, the government or the religious establishment, you will be hatred from all corners. People will not like you when you proclaim Jesus. But why will they hate you? Because the world hated Jesus, and our lives are identified with Him.”⁷⁶ Jesus says, “Ye shall be hated (*esesthe misoumenoi*). Periphrastic future passive, linear action. It will go on through the ages.”⁷⁷ Jesus says the source of this hate is “on account of My name.” The Kingdom message is offensive to this world. Jesus is calling for total commitment of the twelve. Being committed to sharing the gospel you truly are giving your life to God fully. It is like being sworn in to the arm forces. People are obligated to give their life to the commander and chief and their country. Turner points out, “During such a horrible scenario, in which disciples are universally despised, endurance is the mark of the true disciple (cf. 7:21, 24; 13:21). When disciples face persecution, only those whose perseverance demonstrates the

⁷⁴Turner, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 151-52.

⁷⁵Turner, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 152.

⁷⁶Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, 137.

⁷⁷A. T. Robertson, *The Gospel According to Matthew and the Gospel According to Mark*, in vol. 1 of *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930), 81.

authenticity of their faith will be saved.”⁷⁸ Of course, many would probably disagree with this assertion that salvation can be maintained by self-effort.

Taken by itself, this could seem to imply that salvation can be earned by steadfast endurance. We know it cannot mean this because throughout Scripture salvation is presented as a free gift of God’s grace through faith (Eph. 2:8,9). Neither can the verse mean that those who remain faithful to Christ will be saved from physical death; the previous verse predicts the death of some faithful disciples.⁷⁹

Ultimately, what is at stake here is eternal security of one’s salvation (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; 17:3; Rom 5:1-2; Eph 1:13-14; 4:30-32; Titus 3:5). There should be no question for the person who accepts Jesus Christ on the condition set forth in Romans 10:9-10. Salvation is a gift of God’s grace and an expression of his love for mankind to be reconciled back to him. God is not playing games with his servants. He loves those that represent him and is present with his servants. And their salvation is secure for all eternity. The Scriptures are filled with encouragement for believers to endure on the basis of the victory that believers have in Christ (1 Cor 15:58). Persecution will be the reality for believers who preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christians have nothing to lose, there have been many a martyr that have died boldly while proclaiming their faith and went straight to heaven upon death.

Matthew 10:23 says, “When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.” There will be more challenges to the disciples about further persecution. Jesus tells them what is ahead. If the disciples will live for God, persecution is inevitable “Notice in verse 23 that Jesus doesn’t say, ‘If you are persecuted.’ He says, ‘When they persecute you.’”⁸⁰ Jesus makes there assignment very clear that their mission

⁷⁸Turner, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 152.

⁷⁹MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary*, 1240.

⁸⁰Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, 137-38.

work is not some glorified sightseeing trip. Or thinking that being on missions makes believers better than those who are not going on the trip. The gospel is very offensive, the message believers share is that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only to God. People get belligerent and will die or try to kill others on what they believe even if it not the truth. Paul states in 2 Timothy 3:12 “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

The Bible states in “the later part of verse 23, which carries us forward to the day preceding Christ’s coming to reign: ‘you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.’ This could not refer to the mission of the twelve because the Son of Man had already come.”⁸¹ Even while Christ covered a lot of area in Israel, he was on assignment from his Father. He went where is Father had directed him. Even at times the disciples tried to persuade him to go to other places, but Christ was led by his Father. The meaning here in the latter part of verse 23, as Walvoord and Dyer state, “it is apparent that these prophecies go beyond their immediate experience and were to be fulfilled after Pentecost. Jesus declared they would not be able to fulfill their tasks of reaching all the cities of Israel until the Son of Man had come. This seems to anticipate the second coming of Christ.”⁸²

Matthew 10:1-23 gives the model for laborers in evangelism. Because there is a great harvest, laborers are needed. Jesus had specific places for the disciples to go, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As they went to these mission fields they were to trust that the gospel message would open doors of reception, and that their needs would be met all along the way. If not, they were to move on shaking the dust off their feet. There would be persecution from civic authorities, religious leaders, and even from

⁸¹MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary*, 1240.

⁸²Walvoord and Dyer, *Matthew*, 138.

family members, all because of the gospel and the name of the Lord, but they were to persevere through it and thereby prove that their faith was genuine.

**A Model for Laborers to be Mobilized:
Matthew 28:19-20**

Matthew 28:19-20 provides a model for laborers to be mobilized for mission. Hanger explains how Jesus gives the Twelve their last assignment: “Jesus now ‘comes to them’ (*proselthōn*), a comforting approach that takes the initiative to reestablish an intimate relation with them, and speaks the wonderful concluding words of the Gospel.”⁸³ The character of God is consistent here as it was with Adam and Eve; he takes the initiative to seek the sinning ones (Gen 3:9) in order to reestablish an intimate relationship. Note how the Lord does not keep accounts of believer’s wrongs. Not the disciples and not with his servants. His grace is sufficient and his mercy is new every morning.

Hagner goes on to say, “He [Jesus] does not rebuke them for their disloyalty or their doubt. He begins with a vitally important prelude to the formal commissioning of the disciples, namely, the assertion of his authority: *edothē moi pasa exousia en ourano kai epi tes ousas*, ‘all things have been given to me by my Father.’”⁸⁴ The source of this authority is from God the Father. “The passive verb assumes God as the active subject: God has given Jesus this comprehensive sovereignty over the whole of the created order. From the risen Jesus, however, such a claim has all the more convincing power (cf. the exalted passage concerning the authority specifically of the risen Jesus in Eph. 1:20-23).”⁸⁵ Jesus sets the foundation for the mission work to continue to go on after

⁸³Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33b (Dallas: Word Books, 1995), 886.

⁸⁴Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 886.

⁸⁵Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 886.

he has ascended back to the Father in heaven. It will be the basis for their authority to do ministry. The assignment that the disciples will have to execute is disciple making. It will take the power of heaven to get the work on earth done. So, Jesus assures the disciples of his lordship and his authority from heaven to empower them for the work ahead.

“It is accordingly the one who has ‘all authority in heaven and on earth,’ i.e., the sovereign authority of God, who now sends out his disciples on the mission to evangelize the world. This is to provide them in turn with authority and supply them with confidence as they go.”⁸⁶ The disciples saw the authority that Jesus had and used in his ministry. They had seen him alive, then crucified, and now risen from the dead. This would also give the disciples even more confidence that nothing is too hard for God. If God has this kind of authority over death, then we can do ministry with authority in Jesus’s name. The disciples would be equipped for new challenges in mission work.

France describes how the mission will change and expand for the disciples,

Jesus’ universal Lordship now demands a universal mission. The restriction of the disciples’ mission to Israel alone in 10:5-6 can now be lifted, for the Kingdom of the Son of man as described in Daniel 7:14 requires *disciples of all nations*. *Ethne* (“nations”) is the regular Greek term for the Gentiles, and it has been argued that this command therefore actually excludes the Jews from the scope of the disciples’ mission.⁸⁷

What was the difference from an Israel-focused mission to a universal mission? The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Davies and Allison note that “the resurrection marks the end of the exclusive focus on Israel. The Jewish mission is now the world mission.”⁸⁸ The church is needed more than ever as we take the baton from the disciples after Acts chapter 2 began the beginning of the church. Christians can read live

⁸⁶Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 886.

⁸⁷R. T. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub., 1989), 413.

⁸⁸W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *Matthew 19-28*, International Critical Commentary (New York: Bloomsbury Pub., 2004), 684.

accounts in the Scriptures of the power of God working in these men, his word, their faith, boldness and courage to take the gospel from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Blomberg also makes a sobering point for the Jewish people, “what has changed is that they can no longer be saved simply by trusting in God under the Mosaic covenant. All who wish to be in fellowship with God must now come to him through Jesus.”⁸⁹ This is why Matthew 28:19-20 is a model for mobilizing laborers.

Who can make disciples? Is it only for the church leadership? No, it is for born again believers. Believers do not need a church title to make disciples. Believers need to be trained and ready to go and serve, but first they need to fully understand what it really means to make disciples. Blomberg states,

Matthew frequently uses ‘go’ as an introductory circumstantial participle that is rightly translated as coordinate to the main verb—here “Go and make” (cf. 2:8; 9:13; 11:4; 17:27; 28:7). Too little is made of it when all attention is centered on the command to ‘go’, as in countless appeals for missionary candidates, so that foreign missions are elevated to a higher status of Christian service than other forms of spiritual activity.⁹⁰

Blomberg writes, “At times the church takes on the attitude of the world when it comes to titles and status. Therefore, some believers may not feel as valued as others. God calls all believers to make disciples, to take on the mind of Christ (Phil 2:3-8) and use their gifts to serve the Lord by making disciples.”⁹¹ This is Jesus’ command: make disciples. First of all, believers do not have to leave the United States of America with a passport in hand to make disciples. Christians can start right in their church or neighborhood. Believers may start with doing evangelism then when new converts get saved they need to be discipled. Or believers may start with a seekers Bible study and a person may get saved there. However, people get saved making disciples is the command from Jesus Christ.

⁸⁹Blomberg, *Matthew*, 432.

⁹⁰Blomberg, *Matthew*, 431.

⁹¹Blomberg, *Matthew*, 431.

“The truly subordinate participles in v. 19 explain what making disciples involves: ‘baptizing’ them and ‘teaching’ them obedience to all of Jesus’ commandments. The first of these will be a once-for-all, decisive initiation into Christian community. The second proves a perennially incomplete, life-long task.”⁹²

It is time for the church to take her rightful role and use the authority given to her by Christ and do the work of evangelism, disciple making, and missions. “This connection between the authority of Jesus and fulfilling of the task now assigned to the disciples and those who come after them in Matthew and every church is made plain in the connective *oun*, ‘therefore’.”⁹³ An important element is to notice the verb. “The commission itself is given by means of one main imperative verb, *matheteusate*, make disciples.”⁹⁴ Matthew continues to demonstrate that the universal mission is for the disciples and the church, the body of Christ, to make disciples of all nations. “The verb *matheteusate*, ‘make disciples,’ is characteristically Matthean (cf. 13:52; 27:57; the only NT occurrence is in Acts 14:21 where it is linked with *euauuelisamenoi*, ‘having evangelized’).”⁹⁵ When believers evangelize and someone accepts the gospel, discipleship should be part of the process for the person’s spiritual development. “The disciples are to ‘go’ and ‘make disciples.’ Since the main verb has for its object *panta ta ethne* ‘all the nations,’ it is implied that the disciples are to go into all the world. The universal authority of Jesus is the basis of the universal mission of the church.”⁹⁶ This is the model for the body of Christ to be ambassadors to the world in Christ’s Great Commission. This is Scriptural basis that Jesus Christ has given his church a worldwide

⁹²Blomberg, *Matthew*, 431.

⁹³Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 886.

⁹⁴Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 886.

⁹⁵Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 887.

⁹⁶Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 886-87.

mission ministry not just a local church ministry. In truth there should be both going on.

Glasscock describes, the first step in this global disciple-making, baptism. “The participle ‘baptism’ (*baptizontes*) is a reference to water baptism which is to be a testimony to initial faith in the Messiah.”⁹⁷ When Phillip came across the Ethiopian eunuch coming back from Jerusalem, he was reading Scripture from Isaiah. Philip gave him understand, Acts 8:35-38 (NASB).

The text reveals that salvation comes first, then baptism. “Baptism does not save anyone but is public identification with a person or cause and testifies to one’s salvation.”⁹⁸ Jesus says in the rest of Matthew 28:19b, “baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Glasscock reveals what the word “name” means in this verse. “The term ‘name’ (*to onoma*) implies one’s character, nature, authority, rank, and purpose. To do something in the name of someone is to do it as his representative and as acting within his authority or purpose.”⁹⁹ Again we see the careful chosen words by our Savior to give weight to the authority one has to do this Great Commission work for the Lord. We are ambassadors for Christ to go and make disciples in the world in his name.

Another part of the discipleship process is education. “A second present tense participle (*didaskontes*, ‘teaching’) is connected with the main verb, ‘make disciples.’ To teach, *didasko*, is to inform and also to commit truth to someone else.¹⁰⁰ To evangelize is not enough. When a lost person accepts the gospel, the education process of discipleship is vital. Turner points out, “this teaching is not merely to convey information but to

⁹⁷Ed Glasscock, *Matthew*, in *Moody Gospel Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), 554.

⁹⁸Glasscock, *Matthew*, 554.

⁹⁹Glasscock, *Matthew*, 554.

¹⁰⁰Glasscock, *Matthew*, 555.

change lives from disobedient to obedient behavior (5:17-20; 7:21-27).”¹⁰¹ This describes a person becoming brand new, a transformed individual by the word of God. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” It is the word of God and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit that makes the difference in a person.

Discipleship involves teaching the converts to “observe” (*terein*, literally, “keep, guard, obey, pay attention to”) all that Jesus commanded His disciples. Thus, making a disciple is not just leading someone to faith in Christ (though that is certainly the first step) but also requires teaching that one to live according to all that Jesus commanded His original disciples.¹⁰²

Salvation is the first step to the believer’s life, but Jesus’ command is to make disciples not just converts. The church cripple’s new converts without giving them the teaching of the word of God and these new believers are susceptible to cults, false teaching and being weak Christians. When believers obey Christ command to make disciples they are assured God’s presence as they do this ministry of disciple making. This stipulation is made clear in the phrase “I am with you always.” This is designed to build confidence and assurance of the presence of God as disciples do this important work for the kingdom of God. The promise is explained by Hagner:

The commission of the disciple is followed by a promise that must have cheered the hearts of those to whom so much responsibility was being given. The promise is that *εγω μεθ υμων ειμι*, ‘I am with you,’ words that recall the promise of 18:20 as well as echo especially the identification of Jesus as Emmanuel, ‘God with us’ (1:23; cf. Hag. 1:13 where the words are found verbatim in slightly different order, in fact, the promise echoes numerous OT passages that promise the presence of Yahweh with his people, e.g., Gen 28:15; Exod. 3:12; Josh 1:5, 9; Isa 41:10).¹⁰³

The presence of God is seen over and over again in the Bible. This promise is reassuring language for the disciples and for believers today. This shows them that this

¹⁰¹Turner, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 376.

¹⁰²Glasscock, *Matthew*, 555.

¹⁰³Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 888.

work is so important to God that he gives believers everything they need to do this work. He is not just responding to prayers as they pray for laborers, he is there with them in the work. Morris affirms, “He [Jesus] does not say ‘I will be with you,’ but ‘I am with you,’ and his *I* is emphatic, ‘no less than I.’”¹⁰⁴ Believers have the Creator of heaven and earth with them as they do his work. There’s nothing God would not do to accomplish the work he needs done through us. This means even to the end of the age. Turner states,

This presence is permanent, lasting until ‘the end of the age.’ This expression has been used previously (13:39-40, 49; 24:3) and clearly refers to the time of eschatological judgment at the conclusion of the present order. Because the end of the age is in view; it seems clear that this commission is not merely for the original disciples but also for the disciples of the disciples, in perpetuity until Jesus returns.¹⁰⁵

God wants to accomplish his work but he needs the believers to do the work, the work of making disciples. This work is critical to change people, families, society and the world, so that God’s glory is revealed throughout the whole earth.

Conclusion

Matthew reveals that because of Jesus’s death, burial, and resurrection, all authority has been given to him. He passes that on to his disciples and on to the whole body of Christ, his church. The commission that he gave to them he also gives to the church, make disciples of all nations. Believers do this as his representatives because they represent Christ and minister in his name. As Christians make disciples of all nations their curriculum is his Word, the Bible. He promises to always be present as believer’s minister for him. This is the model for laborers to be mobilized to fulfill the Great Commission, making disciples of all nations.

¹⁰⁴Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 749.

¹⁰⁵Turner, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 376.

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED
TO EVANGELISM AND MISSION
MOBILIZATION

Introduction

The church in the twenty-first century has many challenges to address internally and externally. Internally the church struggles with adjusting to worship styles, length of sermon messages, and power struggles related to who is in control. The church audience must be taken into consideration at all times while externally trying to make the gospel message clear and relevant to the current culture. The gospel is man's only hope; so that man can spend eternity with God.

People think that if they are morally good and tolerate the behavior of other people, as long as it does not bother them, then everyone will be fine. They believe that good people go to heaven and bad people go to hell. Whatever seems to be the cultural norm at the time is what people think is "ok" or "cool to do." That kind of thinking is temporal and has no substance. People escape the reality that a loving and forgiving God wants a relationship with them by indulging in selfish and sinful desires without fear of judgment.

Man's Only Hope is the Gospel

"For God so love the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God's love is always followed by action. God has provided a way for man to spend eternity with him. However, man must accept and receive Jesus Christ as Savior for the pardoning of their sins (John 1:12). Mankind could enjoy peace and fellowship with God as they start the

journey of eternal life. The church has been equipped with pastoral leadership to teach and train believers to do evangelism and to share the gospel with compassion, conviction, and courage.

Ephesians 4:12 requires pastors “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” so that believers will be able to clearly and convincingly communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ within an anti-Christian culture. “The gospel is capable of reaching every person. It cuts through cultural, racial barriers, economic barriers, and age barriers.”¹ Eternity for man is at stake. They will spend it with God in heaven or away from God in hell. Church leadership and believers must understand the culture and its resistance to the authority of the Scriptures because it is the Scriptures that reveal the gospel. Paul outlines the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I received that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.” God gave us the Scriptures so that man would understand God’s desire for him and reach his full potential.

For man to reach his full potential he must fully embrace this good news that Jesus Christ has taken man’s place by dying on the cross thus redeeming man and providing reconciliation with God. “That is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:19). As equipped believers, they are to share this message with everyone in order to reach the world with the gospel. The church is to make this gospel clear and relevant to its culture. The Christian church must understand the meaning of culture, its influence and impact.

¹Greg Laurie, *The Upside-Down Church* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1999), 97.

The Influence and Impact of Culture

H. Richard Niebuhr states in his classic book *Christ and Culture*, “What do we mean in our use of this word when we say that the Christian church is enduring struggles with the problem of Christ and culture?”² The answer rests with God himself, as described in the following: “The God who created his image-bearers with the capacity to create culture, who inspired the Scriptures that were written in the midst of human culture, and who calls us to proclaim the gospel in the midst of such culture.”³ No matter the challenge to preach the gospel to human culture even in its dysfunctional state the gospel must be proclaimed to all mankind, it is still man’s only hope to be saved from their sins. “For this reason, he calls his church to proclaim the gospel across the fabric of human existence and in every dimension of human culture, and to do so in a way that uphold his gospel, builds his church, and advances his kingdom.”⁴

Thus, the church must know who it is, the task assigned to her, and the *Missio Dei* that is from God. In the twenty-first century, the church seems to be struggling with its biblical convictions of his word. Christ commissioned the church to influence the world in Acts 1:8, and the Holy Spirit birthed her to that end in Acts 2. It is imperative that the church be salt and light in the culture as Jesus Christ calls all believers to be in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:13-14). Here “we use the term ‘culture’ to refer to the common ideas, feelings, and values that guide community and personal behavior, that organize and regulate what the group thinks, feels and does about God, the world, and humanity.”⁵ The church has been commanded to make the truth of the Scriptures known

²H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1951), 30.

³Bruce Riley Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, The Church, and the Nations* (Nashville: B & H Pub., 2011), 2.

⁴Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 3.

⁵A. Scott Moureau, Harold Netland, and Charles Van Engen, eds., *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 252.

to humanity. When mankind is left to their own ideas, feelings, and personal behaviors, doing what is right in their own eyes, they are rejecting God and his Word. The power of sin has a tremendous influence and devastating impact.

Believers need a better understanding why the church struggles within the current culture to make biblical truth known to the culture. The church has been given a distinct identity, an eternal hope. The church has the word of God and the Trinity to back her. Jesus himself said, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt 16:18). With humanity not perceiving the reality of heaven or hell, the church needs to proclaim the gospel and participate in the global mandate to make disciples of all nations.

The Christians reality should be, the “non-Christian (and post-Christian) world needs to know Jesus Christ as the only Way, the Truth, and the Life.”⁶ Jesus has left the church to be salt and light in this world (Matt 5:13-15). People are lost. Given to their own way of thinking and living, they reject the truth and do what is right in their own eyes. This did not just happen in the twenty-first century. So how did man get this way besides living with the fallen nature, which has led to postmodernism?

Postmodernism generally encompasses the era from the mid-twentieth century through the present. As the name suggests, it comes after modernism—in every sense. As the modern period began to wane in the wake of wars and programs and corruption, various thinkers and philosophers in the culture went back to the drawing board and asked many of the same questions that vexed Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle thousands of years ago: What is truth? What is reality? Where does the authority to answer these questions lie? And instead of looking for some transcendent, overarching, universal answer to these questions, they looked at the details of human existence: Who we are; where we live; what we believe. In other words, they concluded, truth came out of context. Truth became subjective.⁷

When truth becomes subjective and not based on the authority of the Scriptures then man will do what is right in their own eyes.

⁶Moureau, Netland, and Engen, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, 774.

⁷Bruce Demarest and Keith J. Matthews, *The Dictionary of Everyday Theology and Culture* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2010), 300.

Man does not have the answer for its life or survival without God and his word. Mankind is still going back to the drawing board to see what he can come up with next. Mankind, left unto itself, cannot answer its own questions. It is trying to do that without acknowledging its creator, maker and sustainer—God. God’s word can answer each one of the above questions. Man suppresses the truth (Rom 1:19-23).

God has shown his awesome power throughout creation. David wrote in Psalms 19:1 “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.” Paul says that man is without excuse. And when man does not honor God his maker, he ends up futile in his thinking: “claiming to be wise, they became fools.”

For post-modernists, truth is not a destination, but an ongoing pursuit.⁸ Therefore, the church must take the commission from Christ and engage the culture and proclaim the gospel with compassion, biblical conviction, and courage. It is the Bible that has the answers, not man. The fate of this world is not in the hands of man, but God. The culture must hear the gospel message for their survival, and ours as well, because we are all connected to the human fabric of life. The church is the mediator between God and the lost. Believers have a divine purpose; because they have the truth—the word of God. Jesus is the bridge to God, and now believers are to share that same way with others.

Jesus makes this declaration in John 14:6, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me.” The church has the answers through the word of God to address every issue that man faces in any culture. Believers must note here how Jesus is speaking in John 14:6, “The repetition of the definite article refers to Christ as the real truth, life, etc.”⁹ Christ’s church has the biblical truth that offers the real way to salvation, the real truth, and the real life. The church must be convincing in its

⁸Demarest and Matthews, *Dictionary of Everyday Theology and Culture*, 301.

⁹Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 251.

presentation. What God has presented to the church in the authority of the Scriptures is the only way, the only truth, and the only life that is most satisfying.

American culture is shifting, it seems, into a difficult era, an era in which religion is not necessarily seen as a social good. Christianity in its historic, apostolic form is increasingly seen as socially awkward at best, as subversive at worst. This is especially true when it comes to what, at the moment, is perhaps the most offensive aspect of such Christianity: our sexual ethic¹⁰

In postmodernism, biblical truth becomes subjective, and the result of postmodernism is that every biblical truth is challenged. Just because the American culture is losing its moral direction does not mean the church should also. The Bible gives clear guidance on the way mankind is to govern themselves sexually. The Bible defines marriage as a man and a woman (Gen 2:18-25), the nature and function of the family (Eph 5:22-6:4), and the importance and the sanctity of human life (Ps 139).

The Church Is to Counter Culture

The church has been given the Great Commission from the Lord Jesus Christ, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all, that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt 28:19-20). The making of disciples is teaching born again believers a new way of living (2 Cor 5:17). These new believers are taught the word of God, to be rooted and grounded in the faith, and to not be tossed by every wind of doctrine. In this way they will be able to counter culture with biblical truth. Russell Moore, in his book *Onward: Engaging the Culture without Losing the Gospel*, explains that “the counterculture witness of the church to the Kingdom, though, does not mean that the church is merely a counterculture.”¹¹ To be clear, only biblical truth can counter culture. Moore goes on to

¹⁰Russell Moore, *Onward: Engaging the Culture without Losing the Gospel* (Nashville: B & H Pub., 2015), 4.

¹¹Moore, *Onward*, 87.

say, “the church is called to exist within a culture. Christians calling the church to cultural and social engagement have, rightly, appealed to Jesus’ command that the church is to be “salt and light” in the world (Matt 5:13-16), preserving that which is good and illuminating what is veiled in darkness.”¹²

Jesus continues his teaching on the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) and gives people his word and a new way of thinking and living. Jesus addresses issues that are prevailing in our culture: anger (5:21-26), lust (5:27-30), divorce (5:31-32), retaliation (5:38-42), loving your enemies (5:43-48), giving to the needy (6:1-4), laying up treasures in heaven (6:19-24), not being anxious (6:25-34), not judging others (7:1-6), the golden rule (7:12-14), and building your house on the rock (7:24-27). Jesus says this about his teaching, “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock” (7:24).

There is not one issue that man has invented in culture that the word of God does not address. For the church to remain light in this culture it must stick to its biblical conviction. We cannot dilute the gospel or adjust it to fit the culture. “The church has an opportunity now to reclaim our witness, as those who confess that we are ‘strangers and exiles on earth’ (Heb 11:13). That strangeness starts in what is the most important thing that differentiates us from the rest of the world: the gospel.”¹³ When the gospel is fully embraced, transformation of human life accrues because “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Cor 5:17). Believers must take the gospel to the streets and to the world so that other people’s lives can also change. “A Christianity that is walled off from the culture around it is a Christianity that

¹²Moore, *Onward*, 87.

¹³Moore, *Onward*, 7.

dies. The gospel we have received is a missionary gospel, one that must connect to those on the outside in order to have life.”¹⁴

This life is not just a life of material things and comfort. It starts with the promise of eternal life (John 3:16). God plans for the church to be the means by which the Kingdom is finally restored and all the people of the earth are represented in the new heaven and new earth. In the meantime, the church must engage the culture explaining the gospel with clarity as 1 Peter 3:15 describes: “But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.”

Christians cannot afford to abandon the call that Jesus Christ has given in Matthew 28:19-20.

The price is certainly high for people who don’t know Christ and who live in a world where Christians shrink back from self-denying faith and settle into self-indulging faith. While Christians choose to spend their lives fulfilling the American dream instead of giving their lives to proclaiming the Kingdom of God, literally billions in need of the gospel remain in the dark.¹⁵

The gospel offers hope, life, along with the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). Once a person is saved, meaning that they have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior (John 1:12), they have access to these virtues. However, when man remains in his lost state, there is no power in a person’s life to have lasting joy and peace or to resist the temptations of the culture (Eph 2:1-3). “The gospel is the lifeblood of Christianity, and it provides the foundation for countering culture. For when we truly believe the gospel, we begin to realize that the gospel not only compels Christians to confront social issues in the culture around us. The gospel actually creates confrontation with the culture around-and within-us.”¹⁶ When God is taken out of the picture man extinguish their moral compass; when

¹⁴Moore, *Onward*, 8.

¹⁵David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2010), 14.

¹⁶David Platt, *Counter Culture: A Compassionate Call to Counter Culture in a World of*

man does what is right in his own eyes, he is destined to fail, come up short, and wonder why life is not working out as he thought.

What a Godless Worldview Looks Like

David Platt's book *Counter Culture* describes what a world would look like if man had no consciousness of God.

Godless worldviews thus leave us with a hopeless subjectivity concerning good and evil that is wholly dependent on social constructs. Whatever a culture deems right is right, and whatever a culture deems wrong is wrong. This is precisely the worldview that prevails in American culture today, where rapid shifts in the moral landscape clearly communicate that we no longer believe certain things are inherently right or wrong.¹⁷

Therefore, the church must speak out with the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. It gives the right moral direction in a world of poverty, same-sex marriage, racism, sex slavery, immigration, persecution, abortion, pornography, orphans and widows. These topics are biblically addressed in Platt's *Counter Culture*. As the church reevaluates its place in society and biblical history, it must be consciously awake as it cannot but help to look at the culture decaying away because of the sin associated with the above topics. Man has taken life into his own hands without looking, thinking, searching, or accepting the authority of the Scriptures as its moral compass. The consequences of these issues will have long lasting ramifications on the culture and human lives if not properly dealt with. In reality, mankind is slowly destroying itself. Mankind is trying to find out what works in order to fill the empty void in their lives. If the church is obedient to reach and teach people the gospel, things can change. The gospel is man's only hope. "We need to return

Poverty, Same-Sex Marriage, Racism, Sex Slavery, Immigration, Abortion, Persecution, Orphans, and Pornography (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2015), 1.

¹⁷Platt, *Counter Culture*, 3.

with urgency to a biblical gospel, because the cost of not doing so is great for our lives, our families, our churches, and the world around us.”¹⁸

If the church does not change its focus and biblical convictions to stand for the truth, the church will be in the disgrace of disobedience. God expects the church to stand on the word of God and proclaim the gospel because of what he sent his Son to do for mankind, to redeem and reconcile man back to God. God even sent the church a helper, that helper is the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17, 26). He came after Jesus Christ had finished his earthly ministry and ascended back to the Father. The other resource that God has given man is his word, the Bible. Since man has these resources, what seems to be the problem? Why do believers choose to not share their faith; the gospel of Jesus Christ? Fear. Believers have a fear of rejection if they share the gospel. Believers are not being rejected, people reject the gospel. They must not take it personally. Believers must confront the failing human culture with biblical truth. Platt points out, “acting with conviction and compassion will require courage, to be sure. It is increasingly counter culture to stand upon unshakable truth in this ever-shifting time. The cost of biblical conviction in contemporary culture is growing steeper every day, and we are not far removed from sharing more soberly in the sufferings of Christ.”¹⁹ Jesus said if they persecuted him they will surely persecute us. He even talks about the persecution that will come to believers in Matthew 5:11-12: “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” Even as Jesus himself confronted the religious leaders, Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, elders within the culture, he was threatened many times for teaching

¹⁸Platt, *Radical*, 19.

¹⁹Platt, *Counter Culture*, 21.

and preaching the word of God. John the Baptist lost his life because he confronted King Herod for marrying his brother's wife (Mark 6:14-25).

Being rejected is probably why believers in the West do not speak the biblical truth more. "Doubtless this is why more and more 'Christians' today are stepping away from the gospel. Fear is a powerful force, leading more and more 'churches' today to accommodation and adaptation instead of confrontation with the surrounding culture."²⁰ The church must learn to see humanity like God sees them. What God sees in humanity is the value of human life, full of potential that is not being developed. Thus, the directive of the devil's mission kicks in, and man succumbs to the devil's influence (Eph 2:1-3). Jesus said Satan's agenda is "to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10). The church must see people as having worth and full of possibilities to become disciples for Christ. Believers must proclaim the good news of hope. "The gospel of Christ is not a call to cultural compromise in the face of fear. It is a call to countercultural crucifixion—death to self in the face of earthly opposition for the sake of eternal reward."²¹

The Bible describes different rewards that believers obtain for service to the Lord when their earthly ministry is finished. These rewards are defined as crowns.

1. Incorruptible Crown for mastery over the sin nature (1 Cor 9:25)
2. Crown of Righteousness for living righteously in this world (2 Tim 4:7-8)
3. Crown of Life for enduring trials in God's plan. (Jas 1:12; Rev 2:10)
4. Crown of Joy for leading others to Christ (Phil 4:1; 1 Thess 2:19)
5. Crown of Glory for fulfilling your calling and finishing the work (1 Pet 5:4)²²

²⁰Platt, *Counter Culture*, 21.

²¹Platt, *Counter Culture*, 22.

²²Generation Word, "The Five Crowns in Scripture," accessed February 26, 2017, [www.Generationword.com/notes_for_notebooks_pg/eternal_rewards_crowns_files/psoft.masonry\(1\).htm](http://www.Generationword.com/notes_for_notebooks_pg/eternal_rewards_crowns_files/psoft.masonry(1).htm).

Believers have been saved to serve and by God's grace they should be striving to get one of these crowns especially the Crown of Joy.

Practical Issues

Living out Christian biblical values everyday will demonstrate to an anti-Christian culture that the authority of the Scriptures is the only true guidance to life. Living out these values demonstrate that believers' lives, and their faith, make a difference. Believers must live out their biblical conviction in order to influence the culture with the gospel of Jesus Christ. This discussion of practical issues will cover (1) the importance of having biblical convictions, (2) how Christians can deal with their fears in an anti-Christian culture, and (3) how the word of God serves as the source of our biblical convictions.

Having Biblical Conviction in an Anti-Christian Culture

“In engaging the structures of society, the Christian will face pressure to play by the cultural rules of the game-to conform, to compromise with cultural idolatry.”²³

There is an example of several individuals who stood on the truth and did not compromise their biblical conviction. In the Book of Daniel, the story written states that Israel is carried away to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. The people were told to bow down to the image made of gold. In other words, the people of God, Israel, were told to worship idols which was against the Mosaic law (Dan 3:4-6).

Christians living in the twenty-first century face many gods of relativism. For example, more and more, Christians are being challenged to affirm that same sex marriage is “ok.” However, the Bible states clearly that marriage is between a man and a

²³Michael W. Goheen and Craig G. Bartholomew, *Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 143.

woman (Gen 2:24). The culture and some church denominations have accepted homosexuality as being acceptable (Rom 1:24-28), but, both same sex marriage and homosexuality are against God's word. Christians must stand on their biblical convictions from God's word just as these young men did in the Book of Daniel.

Dealing with Fears as Christians

From the beginning, people have persecuted one another for their faith. Cain rose up and killed his brother Abel because Abel did what was right (Gen 4:1-8). There are other biblical examples of believers who were persecuted for their faith, Elijah flees from the threats of Jezebel when he demonstrated the God was greater than the prophets of Baal (1 Kgs 19). David is persecuted by Saul, Saul had a plan to kill David. Saul was jealous of David's followings of the people (1 Sam 19), and Jeremiah was persecuted by the Priest Pashhur for preaching and he put Jeremiah in stocks after beating him (Jer 20). Standing for what is biblically right will always be a challenge. The three Hebrew men were facing death in Babylon. It would be natural to fear death, especially being burned alive. Yet three Hebrew young men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, refused to bow. The most interesting thing here is that these three had leadership roles within the province of Babylon given by Nebuchadnezzar himself. They refused to compromise and surrender to the cultural pressure; they stood on their biblical conviction with courage. Their lives were threatened by the King himself (Dan 3:15). These three Hebrew young men had a natural reason to fear, they would literally lose their lives, being burned alive.

Christians can deal with their fears like these people of faith from long ago. Scott Bader-Saye, refers to Thomas Aquinas in his book, *Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear*, "Thomas Aquinas will be helpful as we seek to map the terrain of fear. Aquinas observes that fear arises from the imagination of a future evil (something that threatens

the loss of something we love) that is both imminent and hard to resist.”²⁴ This threat was real and imminent, these three would lose their lives. Yet, their confidence in God and their biblical conviction gave them courage in a fearful situation (Dan 3:16-18). Their confidence in God extended beyond this life and beyond the way God would respond to their plight. They trusted in God by imagining his reaction to their faithfulness in this crisis.

Albert Mohler, in his book *The Conviction to Lead*, points out the importance of owning our biblical conviction. “The command to believe is central to the Bible. Christianity is founded upon certain nonnegotiable truths, and these truths, once known, are translated into beliefs. The beliefs that anchor our faith are those to which we are most passionately and personally committed, and these are our convictions.”²⁵ The Christians convictions must be devised from the Scriptures. Mohler goes on to state, “Put simply, a conviction is a belief of which we are thoroughly convinced. I don’t mean that we are merely persuaded that something is true, but rather that we are convinced this truth is essential and life-changing. We live out of this truth and are willing to die for it.”²⁶

These three Hebrew young men were ready to die and not compromise their biblical belief. They had faith in God, that God would honor their faith, and he did. They were bound and thrown into the fiery furnace. Yet the King said, “But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods” (Dan 3:25). King Nebuchadnezzar called for these men to come out of the fire. Their clothes were not burnt, nor was their hair; they didn’t even

²⁴Scott Bader-Saye, *Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2007), 52-53.

²⁵R. Albert Mohler, Jr., *The Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership that Matters* (Grand Rapids: Bethany House, 2012), 22.

²⁶Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead*, 22.

smell of smoke. Because of the biblical conviction and courage of these young men, they ended up changing the culture from a King that want people to worship a golden image to worshipping the true and living God. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were even promoted with within the province of Babylon (Dan 3:28-30).

Believers biblical conviction and faith in Christ must lead them to engage the culture and not be silent or run from it. They must have the same conviction that the Apostle Paul had, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom 1:16). Such biblical conviction anchors believers in their faith and give them solid footing to proclaim the gospel to a fallen and hurting world searching for security, hope, salvation and love.

The Word of God Is the Source for Biblical Convictions

The word of God has come from God through man to man. At least two Scriptures guide this conclusion. Second Timothy 3:16-17 states, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” William MacDonald writes, “This is one of the most important verses in the Bible on the subject of inspiration. It teaches that the Scriptures are God-breathed. In a miraculous way, He communicated His word to men and led them to write it down for permanent preservation. What they wrote was the very word of God, inspired and infallible.”²⁷ The Scriptures are the word of God. God wanted to communicate his desires to man so that man might know the heart of God and the love of God. One of the ways that God expressed his love was through his Son Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the thread and central theme of the Scriptures. Another Scripture that is also important is 2 Peter

²⁷William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary*, ed. Art Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 2122.

1:21, “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” The Bible is not a collection of ideas from man. “The writers of the Bible did not give their own private interpretation of things, but wrote the message which was given to them by God”²⁸

Because of the limited space for this project, the topic of inspiration must be delimited. The reader will look at how God did reveal himself to man. “In the Bible’s opening act of creation, we learn that he is a God of life and love. In the aftermath of the fall, we find he is still a God of life and love, setting in motion his plan to redeem his image-bearers and restore his creation.”²⁹ God wants believers to spread this redemption message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He does this by explaining the role of the church in the word of God. “This same God gave the Great Commission, empowered the early church of Acts in her mission, and empowers us in ours. Our knowledge of these teachings, indeed our confidence in them, stems from the narrative set forth in the Christian Scriptures.”³⁰

God has revealed himself through three acts: Creation (Ps 19:1-6; Rom 1:18-32), his Son (John 1:18; Heb 1:12), and his written word (Exod 14:13-31; John 17:17; Acts 8:25, 15:35). “The written revelation is all-inclusive. It restates all the facts concerning God which are revealed through nature and gives the only record concerning God’s manifestation in Christ. It also enlarges the divine revelation into great detail regarding God the Father, the Son, the Spirit, angels, demons, man, sin, salvation, grace, and glory.”³¹

²⁸MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary*, 2122.

²⁹Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 320.

³⁰Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 320.

³¹Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Major Bible Themes: 52 Vital Doctrines of the Scripture Simplified and Explained*, ed. John F. Walvoord (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 32.

The extent of God's love, care and concern for mankind appear in light of the steps that God has taken to reveal himself through creation, his Son, and his word. The story of the Bible can be described in a narrative of four developments: creation, fall, redemption and restoration. God governs each phase of these developments. "In creation, we learn that this world is a created world made by the uncreated triune God, a good world that God intends to fill with people made in his image whom he will make a Kingdom of priests. God's world is a world that reflects his glory and points continually to the beauty and goodness of the Creator."³² God intends for man to reflect his glory. Man serves as God's representatives in the earthly realm. Also, man's unique nature and calling involves at least four relationships: "a love for God, a love for others, a love for self, and a love for God's creation."³³ With all this love and perfection, why then do we see a world resistant to God and the gospel. Why do we now have an anti-Christian culture that is resistance toward the authority claims of the Scriptures? The answer is because of the fall.

The next stage of the biblical narrative is the fall. "Before the fall, God and Adam were in fellowship with each other; after the fall, that fellowship was broken. Our first parents now had the sense of God's displeasure with them; they had disobeyed his explicit command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and they were guilty (Gen 2:16, 3:17)."³⁴ Because of Adam's sin, his consequences and sin were passed on to all mankind. In fact, Romans 5:12 asserts, "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned." Ashford points out, "the harmony and the holistic flourishing of God's good creation was broken; man's relationship would from this point on be broken and

³²Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 6.

³³Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 9-10.

³⁴Henry C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 182.

distorted. He would suffer in his relationship to God, to the world, to others and to himself.”³⁵ Because of this broken and distorted relationship with God, man now chooses his own method to deal with life. He divorces himself from God and does what is right in his own eyes (Judg 21:25).

Look at a few of the devastating events man has caused and participated in that he believes are right in his own eyes. Man is selfish and self-centered, while looking at one’s self, people will not see God nor the need for him. “In a world where everything revolves around yourself—protect yourself, promote yourself, comfort yourself, and take care of yourself—Jesus says, ‘crucify yourself. Put aside all self-preservation in order to live for God’s glorification, no matter what that means for you in the culture around you.’”³⁶ Man has created his own culture of lifestyles that pleases himself and not God. Platt address several of these social issues from a biblical perspective in his book *Counter Culture*. Each one of these topics is the result of sin. They bring real harm to human beings. It is not what God intended for man; it is just a reflection of the fall of man. Without a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, mankind gets off course, loses his way, and does not realize his full potential in life. Christians must communicate the truth of Scripture in this anti-Christian culture. And therefore, redemption must be understood and embraced.

Redemption is the third biblical narrative. God loves man and he offers redemption to him so that once man is redeemed he then can fulfill his God given purpose. “The Genesis narrative plots the movement from creation to fall to redemption in three short chapters. Within the story of the fall in Genesis 3, God gave the promise of redemption amidst the very curse that he pronounced upon the serpent, the woman, and

³⁵Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 10.

³⁶Platt, *Counter Culture*, xiv.

the man.”³⁷ The promise would be his Son, Jesus Christ reconciling the world back to himself. Not only was God working in Christ to provide redemption for man but also that man would be entrusted with the message of reconciliation. Part of man’s purpose is to share this good news.

“At the center of God’s redemptive purpose is the salvation of man He redeems a people for himself, a people for his own possession (1 Pet 2:9). The Bible unfolds this grand redemptive narrative from Genesis to Revelation. Jesus Christ is the Redeemer, and the gospel is the good news that Jesus is the Savior of the world.”³⁸ The body of Christ must proclaim the gospel to the world and make disciples of all nations.

The final biblical narrative is restoration. “God’s work of redemption will reach its goal in the end, as God saves for himself a people and restores his good creation. The entire biblical narrative moves toward this end.”³⁹ This is observed in Revelation 5:9; 7:9-10, where God saves a people for himself. He restores creation, as recorded in Revelation 21:1-2, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”. There will be no more tears, death, crying, pain, nor sin. We will have unbroken fellowship with God and others, while worship God throughout eternity.

How to Prepare the Church for Ministry In an Anti-Christian Culture

Believers in the church must know their true identity comes from the word of God while they live in an anti-Christian culture. Believers must understand that their redemption was accomplished not only because God loves man but also because man has

³⁷Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 12.

³⁸Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 12-13.

³⁹Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 15.

a purpose to live out for God. As believers begin to live out their God given purpose they see their need for apologetic training as they witness in an anti-Christian culture.

The teaching of biblical doctrine, apologetics and worldview should form the cornerstone of the church's response to an anti-Christian culture. Pastoral leadership must take seriously their role to equip the church (Eph 4:11-16; Col 1:28). When the church understands what is right, from a biblical perspective, then they can address what is wrong in the culture. The church needs to understand the culture in which they live so that they can understand the culture's resistance to the Scriptures. Also, leaders must practically equip the church to communicate the gospel in a way that addresses cultural factors. In other words, the church must be taught to understand biblical doctrine, apologetics, and worldview. A suggested biblical doctrine outline:

1. Theism: the definition and existence of God, non-Christian worldviews
2. Bibliology: the nature of Scripture (the embodiment of a divine revelation), the canon of Scripture (genuineness, credibility), the inspiration of Scripture
3. Theology: the nature of God (essence and attributes, unity and trinity), the decrees of God, the works of God (creation, his sovereign rule)
4. Angelology: the study of angels
5. Pneumatology: the work of the Holy Spirit
6. Soteriology: the purpose, plan and method of God in the study of salvation
7. Ecclesiology: definition and founding of the church, the foundation of the church, the ordinances of the church, and the mission and destiny of the church
8. Eschatology: the second coming of Christ, the rapture, the resurrections, the judgments, the millennium and the final state⁴⁰

When the pastoral leadership takes seriously their role in equipping the saints to do the work of the ministry, it will empower the church to engage the culture from a biblical perspective. They will be able to address societal issues and make disciples of all nations,

⁴⁰Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, v-vi.

not just here in America. Therefore, the saints need to take seriously their role as believers to be a disciple, a student of the word of God, so that they can make other disciples. Thus, they need to support their pastor's teaching ministry.

Finding true identity in the word of God. “We study inspired Scripture to gain a true portrayal of humanity. The Bible answers fundamental questions of human experience: ‘Who am I?’ ‘Why are humans morally and spiritually flawed?’ ‘How do we receive a new nature, realize identity in Christ, and achieve our final destiny?’”⁴¹ These are the questions people are asking, but they are experimenting with things that lead to emptiness and opens the door to another set of sins. They have been called the seven deadly sins: “pride, covetousness, gluttony, lust, sloth, envy, anger—those are the sins considered deadly by St. Thomas Aquinas and by Western Churchmen”⁴² As the Apostle Paul writes, a little leaven will leaven the whole lump (1 Cor 5:6). In a similar way, a little sin will continue to grow if not addressed. Raymond Mortinier says in his introduction to *The Seven Deadly Sins*, “the deadly (or capital) sins (or vices) are distinguished not by their gravity but by their power of generating other sins.”⁴³ The church seems to be woefully behind as it needs to be addressing these societal issues. It must grieve the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to watch the world's system offering empty promises, zapping the energy and potential of humanity. Mankind, then, does not attain to their primary purpose of glorifying God. Man needs redeeming and he does not know it.

Redemption leads to man's purpose. Mankind must understand, “you cannot arrive at your life's purpose by starting with a focus on yourself. People must begin with

⁴¹Demarest and Matthews, *Dictionary of Everyday Theology and Culture*, 32.

⁴²Raymond Mortinier, introduction to *The Seven Deadly Sins*, by Angus Wilson (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1966), xiii.

⁴³Mortinier, introduction to *The Seven Deadly Sins*.

God, your Creator.”⁴⁴ People need to focus on the Creator who also becomes the Redeemer: “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph 1:7). In order to be freed from Satan’s influence and doing his will, a person must be redeemed. When people understand their lostness, and the gospel is presented clearly, it allows the Holy Spirit to convict and convert them so that they will be born again. Every human being is influenced and dominated by the world, the flesh, and the devil (Eph 2:1-3). When man is in his lost state they are dominated by the course of this world, allow the passion of the flesh to govern their lifestyle, and permit the devil to dictate behavior that leads to destruction. For God so loved the world he sent his Son Jesus Christ to redeem mankind.

The promise of God’s redemption would be the sacrificial death, burial and the resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ would defeat the power of the serpent and give Christ and man victory over Satan. The good news is that God would provide our redeemer through the line of Eve the mother of all living. “Yet Adam named his wife in light of life to come and God provided for the continuance of human life in part by means of the death of other creatures (Gen 3:20).”⁴⁵ God provided the covering that Adam and Eve needed. God preformed the first redemptive act, so that Adam and Eve could be back in fellowship with God. God loves man so much that he sent his Son to bring about redemption for mankind. “That is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:19). When man is redeemed and reconciled to God he then can be discipled to share this good news and fulfill his God given purpose of sharing the message and ministry of reconciliation. This is the message that every culture in the

⁴⁴Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 18.

⁴⁵Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 12.

world needs. Christians living in the postmodern culture must be equipped to speak this timeless message in a way that will be heard.

Postmodern people in America learn through stories. As Pocock, Van Rheenen, and McConnell write, “The use of story is appropriate in postmodern setting in which people are more interested in story than in doctrine.”⁴⁶ There are two programs that showcase this methodology. First is the chronological Bible teaching approach developed by New Tribes Mission and Trevor McIlwain (1991) called *Firm Foundations*. *Firm Foundations* starts with Genesis and works its way through the entire biblical story. Second is *Walk Thru the Bible* (2004) which was developed by Bruce Wilkinson for use in the church to help people obtain a thematic grasp of the sweep of Scripture. Hopefully, these two methods will become springboards to new approaches specifically designed for postmodernists.⁴⁷

The entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation is the redemption story in its fullest, going full circle from the creation of the first earth to the new heaven and new earth. The postmodernist is looking for reality; however, what they are looking for is truth. The church must present the gospel in this anti-Christian culture where people are searching for material things, status, wealth, fame and bigger bank accounts. McFarland in his book on apologetic’s, *The 10 Most Common Objections to Christianity*, expresses,

In my years of studying and interacting with people, I’ve discovered that basically our search boils down to six fundamental elements and questions that intermittently occupy our thoughts and feelings throughout life. My ministry involvement with thousands of people has helped me identify what I call the six ways were led by head and by heart. First there are the three pervasive intellectual issues we ponder:

1. Origin—Where do I come from?
2. Purpose—Why am I here?
3. Destiny—Where am I going?

⁴⁶Pocock, Van Rheenen and McConnell, *Changing Face of World Missions*, 126.

⁴⁷Pocock, Van Rheenen and McConnell, *Changing Face of World Missions*, 126.

Then there are the three persistent emotional issues with which we grapple:

1. Acceptance—Do I fit in?
2. Significance—Do I matter?
3. Security—Am I safe?⁴⁸

Discipled believers should be able to answer these questions and steer people to biblical hope and thus presenting the gospel clearly, concisely and compellingly.

The need for an apologetic curriculum. This study reveals the need for a practical, biblical, Christian apologetics curriculum. This would equip Christians to engage their culture and offer people hope according to 1 Peter 3:15. The culture seems to be a run-away train going down a hill. Jesus has left the church with the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20). The Bible has the answers to mankind’s self-destruction. It is imperative that the believers embody the message of the gospel so that it becomes a missional lifestyle. “By its very nature, a missional lifestyle is one that is distinct from the surrounding culture. As we seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness, God creates within us a very singular desire: his glory in all things and before all people. Thus, an authentic Christian lifestyle is one that clearly reflects this desire.”⁴⁹ People need to see a real example of people transformed by the gospel.

However, in reality, Christians struggle with the flesh and with culture. Nevertheless, for those that are saved “the Holy Spirit transforms our inner man, creating new thought patterns, desires, and worldview.”⁵⁰ This is why believers must constantly remain under the biblical teaching of their pastor and seek to grow as a disciple. As they get stronger in the word of God, they will grow more and more in discernment of fleshly

⁴⁸Alex McFarland, *The 10 Most Common Objections to Christianity* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2007), 208.

⁴⁹Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 129.

⁵⁰Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 129.

attacks and cultural influences. Ashford points out,

In so living, we are faced with the stark contrast between Christ's commands and the mandates of our culture. Believers often feel torn between the two worlds, and the temptation to compromise can be overwhelming. As a result, it is all too easy to respond to the pressure in an extreme manner, either by uncritical assimilation (blending in completely) or withdrawal from the culture.⁵¹

It is imperative that the church not succumb to the pressure of unscriptural lifestyles. Nor should the church withdraw from the culture. Christians must rely on the Scriptures to develop their biblical convictions. The church has an assignment; Christ is counting on the Christians to model the biblical message. Believers have all the tools needed-God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the church, the Word of God, and each other-to fight against the mandates of the culture. Jesus Christ promises to be present as we fulfill the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20).

Christians cannot retreat from engaging the culture. Russell Moore writes,

The countercultural witness of the church to the kingdom, though, does not mean that the church is merely a counterculture. The church is called to exist within a culture. Christians calling the church to cultural and social engagement have, rightly, appealed to Jesus' command that the church is to be 'salt' and 'light' in the world (Matt 5:13-16), preserving that which is good and illuminating what is veiled in darkness.⁵²

Because of the lost condition of man, believers must engage the culture by presenting the gospel. The church offers hope when people's lives are broken, battered, and bruised by life and when everything they try fails to give them the right answers. The gospel of the grace of God will be their real substance. It will be a new beginning with God and the true relationship that people long for. Christians must make the gospel and the word of God attractive without losing the message. People need to be attracted to a person with a biblical lifestyle then they can introduce them to the church.

⁵¹Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 129.

⁵²Moore, *Onward*, 87.

Ministry today is a matter of proclaiming and applying the results of God's victory in Christ. Non-believers need to understand this victory and how it frees them from a sense of obligation to any other spirit, demon, or god. They need to understand what embracing and acting on the truth can do to release them from doing Satan's will.⁵³

This is why the Scriptures must be taught clearly. Therefore, discipleship becomes imperative for new believers to help them understand how to "contend for the faith" (Jude 3). The church needs to come along side these new believers and model the message. Thus, helping assist new believers in their faith, so that they can grow spiritually, learning how to defend the truth of the Scriptures.

What is apologetics? "Apologetics" is a technical term for the defense of an individual's faith.⁵⁴ For the Christians, it is essential to know how to defend the faith. Peter wrote about this: "in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect" (1 Pet 3:15). The root of this defense is found in the authority of the Scriptures which offer the reason for a believer's hope of salvation. This is why apologetics are important for all believers to know. McFarland points out,

"A good apologetic response to someone's question should be biblically accurate, factually correct and existentially satisfying. In other words, for both general and specific issues, our apologetics considerations need to be theological, reasonable and practical."⁵⁵

McFarland explains in further detail what a good apologetic response needs to be. "Theological—Does what I say square up with the Bible? Reasonable—Does what I say make sense? Is it credible and factually correct? Practical—Am I giving people truth

⁵³Pocock, Van Rheezen, and McConnell, *Changing Face of World Missions*, 203.

⁵⁴McFarland, *10 Most Common Objections to Christianity*, 25.

⁵⁵McFarland, *10 Most Common Objections to Christianity*, 25.

that is relevant to life? Have I successfully bridged the gap from the “ivory towers of academia” to the “real world” where people live their day-to-day lives?”⁵⁶

This is where Christian must be creative in making biblical truth clear, concise and compelling through the language of culture today without losing the message of the Scriptures and while defending their faith. This is how the use of apologetics can be effective.

Apologetics is also part of equipping the saints to be able to do effective evangelism and mission mobilization. The majority of churches have not done an adequate job in training the believers at this level of doctrine and apologetics. The foreword written by Andy Stanley in the newly updated, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, by Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell, attest to the last statement,

If we're honest, most of us graduated high school and left home with Sunday school arguments for the reliability of the Bible and the credibility of our faith. Unfortunately, years of sermons, camps, mission trips, and personal devotions can be undermined by a single lecture in a university setting. Sunday school answerers are no match for the rigors of academia.⁵⁷

This needs to change if we are going to impact the culture and rescue mankind with the gospel. The church must not shrink back from the culture but engage it. Believers must exercise their compassion, conviction and courage to offer hope to a misguided pleasure-seeking world.

This world can be described by many “-ism’s.” These include atheism, pantheism, polytheism, deism, hedonism, and relativism. These “-ism’s” leave God and truth out of what the authority of the Scriptures declares. In order for the church to be equipped to communicate the gospel within an anti-Christian culture it must have a great understanding of the culture and all of its “-ism’s.” The church must be prepared and

⁵⁶McFarland, *10 Most Common Objections to Christianity*, 17-18.

⁵⁷Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell, *Evidence That Demands A Verdict: Life-Changing Truth for a Skeptical World* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2017), xv.

equipped well to address the cultural issues that are anti-God. God has spoken through his creation, his Son and the written word of God authored by him (Rom 1:19-20; Heb 1:1-2; 2 Tim 3:16). Proper training in apologetics will help believers articulate clearly from a biblical frame of reference to answer and offer scriptoria hope.

Christians need to know how to apply apologetics. When believers are equipped to communicate the gospel in an anti-Christian culture, they can answer these questions from a biblical frame of reference. The church needs to be taught and trained by pastoral leadership how to defend their faith from the authority of the Scriptures. Apologetics need to be taught, and Christians need to know how to use the Bible to make a defense. In Acts 17, the Apostle Paul did this well. McFarland outlined three intellectual issues to consider: Where do I come from? Why I am I here? and Where am I going? These are question that can be answered as believers evangelize and make a clear presentation of the gospel. Warren provides a good example of this in *The Purpose Driven Life*.

McFarland's second set of questions address emotional issues that all people deal with: Acceptance—Do I fit in? Significance—Do I matter? Security—Am I safe? If these are questions that people are asking, Christians should know how to effectively and clearly defend the faith (Jude 3). Therefore, once a person gets saved, they need to be disciplined. Evangelism is not enough; Jesus calls us to “make disciples . . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19-20). Believers that become students of the word of God will learn how to help people answer these questions. As the Scriptures are taught, truth is revealed, answers and assurance of salvation will come. “The inspired Word of God, illumined by the Spirit, blesses and comforts the heart (Psalm 1:1-2; 119:52), revives the soul (Psalm 19:7), guards against sin (Psalm 119:11), defends against the whiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:11), and guides our steps (Psalm

119:105).”⁵⁸ Believers must master the Scriptures so that they have the answers to the skeptics and offer them hope and salvation.

In *The 10 Most Common Objections to Christianity*, McFarland lists these objections along with challenging questions. These questions come from years of research and are questions that people are still asking today:

Objection number one: God is not real. “I don’t believe God exists. How can anybody know for sure?” Objection number two: Creation is a myth. “What about evolution? Couldn’t God have created us but used evolution to do it?” Objection number three: The Bible is not completely authentic. “How do I know that the Bible is really true?” Objection number four: The Bible is not completely accurate. “What about all those errors in the Bible?” Objection number five: Jesus was just a man. “What makes Jesus so different from other great men of history?” Objection number six: Jesus is not the only way to heaven. “Aren’t there many roads to heaven? Don’t all paths lead to the same place?” Objection number seven: A loving God wouldn’t send people to hell. “Is hell for real? If so how can a loving God send people there?” Objection number eight: People are basically good. “I don’t think I’m a sinner. I’m not so bad.” Objection number nine: Christians are all hypocrites. “I’d be interested in Christ if it weren’t for the Christians. Why would I want to become one of them?” Objection number ten: A merciful God wouldn’t allow suffering. “Why is there evil in the world? What about suffering?”⁵⁹

Believers cannot just live passively with the knowledge that they are saved and going to heaven. Christians have an assignment: to proclaim the gospel to every creature clearly, concisely and compellingly. The Bible states this clearly for believers, “Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). This will lead us to get a greater grasp of the idea of apologetics.

Christians must understand people’s worldview. Christians need to also understand how people perceive their own culture and the effect it has on their daily lives. In other words, Christians need to understand other worldviews. David Burnett

⁵⁸Demarest and Matthews, *Dictionary of Everyday Theology and Culture*, 32.

⁵⁹McFarland, *10 Most Common Objections to Christianity*, 5-6.

defines worldview this way: it is “the shared framework of ideas held by a particular society how they perceive the world. Everyday experiences are fitted into this framework in order to give a totality of meaning and comprehension for the individual.”⁶⁰ This occurs when societal and individual beliefs accept wrong as right (e.g., same sex-marriage), and right as wrong (e.g., God would not send good people to hell). Therefore, believers must be rooted and grounded in the faith (Col 2:7-8) while engaging the emptiness of culture with eyes wide open. The gospel of Jesus Christ can fill that emptiness with love, salvation, security, significance and acceptance. Giving people that are lost without hope the proper worldview.

James Sire’s book, *The Universe Next Door*, defines a worldview:

A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.⁶¹

Goheen and Bartholomew, in their book *Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview*, summarize James W. Sire’s seven worldviews:

Sire identifies the following worldviews competing for preeminence:

1. Christian theism
2. Deism (which is what remains of theism when the concept of a personal God is abandoned)
3. Naturalism (which abandons God completely but retains its trust in human autonomy)
4. Nihilism (which is what results from naturalism once the trust in human reason is eroded)

⁶⁰David Burnett, *Clash of Worlds* (London: Monarch, 2002), 13.

⁶¹James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 17.

5. Existentialism (which tries to move beyond nihilism by affirming its trust in the power of the individual to will into existence its own conception of the good, the true, and the beautiful)
6. Eastern pantheistic monism (in which new age thought is combined with the existentialists' sense of the self)
7. Postmodernism (which denies that we can know reality as it is but asserts that we can get along especially through our use of language; for the postmodernist, "pragmatic knowledge is all one can have and all one need")⁶²

These seven worldviews are competing for a society's time and attention, seeking to influence their mind, body and soul. In 2 Corinthians 4:4 Paul writes, "In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." This biblical passage from many centuries ago remains relevant today. People need the gospel more than ever. Jesus saw fit that the church would be appointed to proclaim the gospel around the world, while offering hope to a hopeless people searching for answers but never finding solutions. Believers are called to make disciples (Matt 28:19-20). They are to keep reaching, teaching, and training in way that mobilizes disciplined believers to reach the nations.

The Gospel Must Be Proclaimed to the Nations

The gospel offers more than "the here and now." God will one day do a full restoration of creation. There will be a new heaven and a new earth (Rev 21). God's work of redemption will reach its goal in the end, as God restores his good creation. "The Scriptures teach that, in the end, man's relationship with God will be finalized. Those who die apart from Christ will receive eternal torment (Matt 5:22, 8:12), while those who die in Christ will receive eternal life (Rev 21:2-4)"⁶³ The church must maintain a

⁶²Goheen and Bartholomew, *Living at the Crossroads*, 17.

⁶³Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 15.

conscious awareness of this final destiny. As Christians walk around in the daily affairs of life, they must not only have a God consciousness but also a gospel consciousness.

Paul wrote, in 2 Corinthians 4:3 “And if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.” Evangelism and church mobilization should come naturally to the church. It should be in our DNA to witness and tell of the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. After all, we did not change ourselves.

It is a great motivator for Christians, as we hold three truths in tension: that there is no name other than Christ by which man are saved, and all men who die apart from Christ abide in eternal torment, that there are approximately two billion people who have practically no access to the gospel, and another two billion who have very little access; and that we, as believers, have a calling and responsibility to proclaim to them the good news.⁶⁴

Every believer that has accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior has the testimony of a changed life. Every Christian is continually being transformed into a new person. Christians have a story to share of their life transformation.

This should be the motivating factor that should cause the church to take seriously their call to evangelism and be mobilized to participate in the *missio dei*—the mission of God. Since the church has not completed its work on earth yet, in the proclamation of the gospel, the kingdom of God has not yet fully developed. “Believers live in that gap between the time when Jesus inaugurated the new creation (in his death and resurrection) and the time when he will return to finish what he has begun. The Kingdom of God is already here by the work of the Spirit but has not yet been completed.”⁶⁵ God’s plan of total restoration of creation will come with the new Kingdom. He will have brought in the redeemed, all who were elected into his Kingdom, members of all the nations, all tribes, people, and tongues. All will stand before the throne worshipping his Son. “In Revelation 21, John received a vision in which there was

⁶⁴Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 15.

⁶⁵Goheen and Bartholomew, *Living at the Crossroads*, 59.

a new heaven and a new earth, where there remained no pain or tears. This is the doctrine of creation come full circle. The God who gave mankind the good creation recorded in the Genesis narrative is the God who will give us a new heavens and new earth.⁶⁶ The body of Christ, the church of born-again believers, have something to look forward too. The new heavens and new earth where God will have every tribe, people, tongue, and nation represented. Therefore, it is imperative that the pastoral leadership and the church body take seriously the mandate of the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20). Evangelism and mission mobilization must be the priority in our church today.

The church must engage the culture with the gospel and yet keep its biblical convictions without compromise.

Our task is daunting, considering that opposition to the gospel has never been more formidable than in the twenty-first century. The magnitude of our task, however, is matched and exceeded by the magnitude of our biblical convictions: that God is a missionary God; that a central theme in the Scriptures is God's desire to win the nations unto himself.⁶⁷

This is a very serious time in the history of the church and believers must be about the Father's business without delay. Billions need to hear the gospel of the grace of God. The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. There is so much work yet to do therefore, the church must awaken to the call left by Jesus Christ, "And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15).

Conclusion

Four billion people have not heard the gospel of Jesus. The church has been assigned to participate in the *missio dei*—the mission of God. People that are without Christ are trying to figure life out on their own and are coming up short. Mankind has invented their own gods and their own religions, but God has sent his Son for mankind in

⁶⁶Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 16.

⁶⁷Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 333.

order to redeem and reconcile them back to himself. When Christ finished his earthly ministry, he went back to heaven. But before leaving, after his resurrection from the dead and before his ascension, Jesus Christ commissioned his disciples to execute the Great Commission as spelled out in Matthew 28:19-20, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” The disciples were to engage in the culture without compromising the message. They were to have biblical convictions about their message and the word of God from which they preached. They were to stand on the biblical authority of the Scriptures just as believers must today. The core of humanity has not changed; man is still a sinner and needs to repent of his sins and be saved by accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ. The word of God has the power to convict and convert the vilest of sinner. Culture is always evolving and is in a constant flux, but the word of God never changes from generation to generation.

It is important that the church be equipped by pastoral leadership to engage the culture with biblical doctrine, apologetics, and worldview “so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” (Eph 4:14–15). The postmodern culture that people live in today does not believe they can know the truth. People believe and do what is right in their own eyes. There is a moral decay in our society. Society is doing things that are contrary to God’s revealed will: same-sex marriage, racism, abortion, sex slavery, and pornography. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the answer for these societal ills. They rob human potential. Therefore, the gospel of Jesus Christ must be the number one priority for the church, but in so doing the believers must be willing to submit to the church as servants and true disciples. They must be prepared to answer the questions people are asking from a biblical perspective. The

church must always be ready to evangelize and remain ready to be mobilized. Looking at each human life with eyes of compassion, while standing on biblical convictions and speaking the gospel with courage. “But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Pet 3:15).

CHAPTER 4
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MINISTRY PROJECT FOR
EVANGELISM AND MISSION
MOBILIZATION

Introduction

This research project was guided by the research methodology outlined in chapter 1. The implementation of this thirteen-week curriculum was based on the biblical exegetical work done in chapter 2. Chapter 3 provided the theoretical and practical issues related to evangelism and mission mobilization. The project took place over the course of fifteen weeks from Sunday, March 25, 2018, to Sunday, July 1, 2018.

This was the second attempt to teach the thirteen-week curriculum because the gathering of the post-survey information of the first group was not documented correctly. Therefore, the results could not be calculated properly. This was a great disappointment to start over and reteach the curriculum to a different group of adults.

This time, 6 new adults made up the new group. They put the last four digits of their social security number on their pre-survey. After the curriculum was taught this new group then took the post-survey and put the last four digits of their social security number on their survey, so that the results could be calculated properly. The class began at 5 pm on Sunday, March 25, 2018. I began by going over the goals of the project. Then I handed out the pre-survey which took about 30 minutes for this new group to complete. The post-survey was given on July 1, 2018, after the thirteen-week curriculum was taught. The post-survey results were analyzed and put in a table on September 28, 2018, with the assistance of Dr. Joe Harrod.

The Curriculum Lesson Plan

In order for NBCP to increase their evangelism outreach and mission mobilization, a thirteen-week curriculum lesson was developed. The church needs the teaching of evangelism and the urgent engagement in it. As the church develops this mindset and the execution of evangelism, they will broaden their vision of the lostness of humanity and be mobilized towards mission involvement. The first four chapters of the curriculum addresses evangelism. Prior to the teaching of the curriculum a pre-survey was given to the class to assess their understanding and practice of evangelism and mission mobilization. A summary of each lesson is given, and the full lesson plan can be found in appendix 4.

Lesson 1: What is Evangelism?

Jesus came to model evangelism for the body of Christ, and he came to seek to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). The term evangelism is “calling a person to repentance from sin and acceptance of the gospel. The gospel or the Good News is that God has sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to earth in order to redeem persons and bring them into a personal relationship with himself.”¹ God has provided the way back for man to himself since he has assigned his Son to make the sacrifice of his life for the. Jesus did this through his death, burial and resurrection. The body of Christ now must take this good news to the world.

Lesson 2: What Are the Different Approaches to Evangelism?

In evangelizing believers need to be aware of obstacles found in churches. There are at least two that will be focused on: a basic lack of clarity both (1) in defining the task, and (2) in understanding the Christian faith. These deficiencies obscure

¹Michael J. Anthony, *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 267.

believer's presentation and motivation to share the gospel in the culture. There are many different approaches that can have positive and long-lasting effects. Some of the most popular are door-to-door and work place sharing of the Christian faith. I believe that when believers are sensitive to those around them, life itself will offer opportunities to share the gospel and or pray. What seems to be consistent is regardless of the work place or environment all people will have to deal with relationship issues or health issues. That is an opportunity to offer hope.

For believers, there must not be a deficiency in understanding our faith. Christians are to be hope givers. First Peter 3:15 states, "but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."

Lesson 3: Who Is Responsible for Evangelism?

Evangelism is very important because people's souls are weighing in the balance between an eternal heaven or hell. Christians must fight against the forces of fear, embarrassment, laziness and lack of concern of the lost in order to communicate to people the gospel of the grace of God. Church leaders and laymen—all Christians—should be concern for the lost state of humanity (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21) because of the Father's love and forgiveness for them. "The only people who can make Christ known are those who already know Him. He relies on the believers. 'We are ambassadors for Christ,' wrote Paul, God making his appeal through us."²

This responsibility and assignment has been given to believers by God. We must not live for ourselves but for the one who gave his life for mankind so that

²Michael Green, *Evangelism through the Local Church* (Nashville: Oliver-Nelson Books, 1992), 20.

Christians can share this good news with others. “It is through his people that God means to communicate with those He longs to reach. This reality of what He offers is best seen in the lives of those who have begun to be changed by it. Conviction is best communicated by those who have themselves been convinced by Christ.”³

Lesson 4: What Does One Do after Evangelizing If Someone Responds to the Gospel?

The Bible teaches that there is joy in heaven and there should be joy on earth when a sinner comes to faith through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 15:3-7). Accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior is just the beginning. Just as a newborn baby needs milk to grow, so does the babe in Christ need spiritual food—the word of God—to be nourished to grow. Therefore, a new Christian that feeds on God’s word will mature as a disciple and grow in the knowledge and grace of the Jesus Christ. A disciple (*mathetes*) is a pupil or learner. “A *mathetes* was one who attached himself to another to gain some practical or theoretical knowledge, whether by instruction or by experience.”⁴

The need for believers to become disciples is a critical step to be a witness for the Lord and to be obedient to his command in Matthew 28:19-20, that is, to “make disciples of all nations.” “The goal of discipleship is conformity to the Savior, being transformed into the image or likeness of Christ (Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:17-18) in our character, conduct, attitudes, and actions.”⁵

³Green, *Evangelism through the Local Church*, 20.

⁴Larry Richards, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 226.

⁵Tony Evans, *Kingdom Disciples: Heaven’s Representatives on Earth* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2017), 27.

Lesson 5: What Is Mission?

It has to do with God's salvation reaching the ends of the earth: that is, his gracious movement in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to rescue a desperately needy world that is in rebellion against him and stands under his righteous judgment (John 3:16-18). Mission is from God, and missions is the activity of the church carrying out God's mission.

“The writings that now comprise our Bible are themselves the product of and witness to the ultimate mission of God.”⁶ God's mission is all about redemption (Rom 8:20-23). God's motive is all about love (John 3:16). The Bible gives the church God's plan for the work that is to be done.

Lesson 6: What Does the Bible Teach about Mission Work?

“The Bible is the key resource to learn about mission. It has always been the heart of God to reach the people he created and provide reconciliation so that they will be with him forever (John 3:16; 2 Cor 5:18-19). However, the redemptive purposes of God do not change; every person must repent of their sins, submit to Christ as Lord and be born again.”⁷ The Bible states that believers have been given the ministry of reconciliation and thus ambassadors to represent Christ in the world (2 Cor 5:20).

Matthew 28:19-20: The Great Commission that he gave to the disciples and that he gives to the church is to make disciples of all nations. Christians do this as his representatives because Christians represent Christ and minister in his name. As Christians make disciples of all nations the curriculum is his word, the Bible. He promises to always be present with them, as they minister for him.

⁶Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 48.

⁷M. David Sills, *Changing World, Unchanging Mission: Responding to Global Challenges* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 17.

Lesson 7: Who Is Responsible for Doing Mission Work?

Jesus first left the responsibility for mission work to the disciples (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8) and to the church. Believers today are baptized into the body of Christ, which is the church. All believers are responsible to do mission work.

All believers are on assignment to represent Christ wherever they are and whatever the calling is in society: doctors, janitors, dishwashers, teachers, fast food workers, secretaries, nurses, police, fire fighters, accountants, flight attendants, or librarians. Christians do not have to have a passport to be a missionary. All those that are born again into the body of Christ have been commissioned to share their faith (2 Cor 5:18-20).

Lesson 8: What Is the Role of the Church in Mission?

Believers have been given a clear mandate from Jesus Christ himself (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24: 46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8). The Book of Acts gives an example of that unfolding of the Great Commission which is still not finished. The gospel proclamation must remain the central focus of the church ministry. Letting people know that they are loved unconditionally by God and can be saved (John 3:16), they also are and will be continually forgiven of their sin (1 John 1:9).

There are two distinct purposes for each church. “The general mission of the church is to worship God, glorify Christ., make disciples of all nations, baptize believers and teach them to obey all that Christ has commanded.”⁸ Also they may be given a specific ministry that God has called that church to do. Different ministries such as: senior citizens, children, food/clothing, homeless, prison, youth, marriage, or cross-

⁸Sills, *Changing World, Unchanging Mission*, 13.

cultural missions. Every born again disciplined believer should understand their role and be willing to play a part in God's kingdom building effort.

Lesson 9: What Kind of Leader/Missionary Is Needed for Mission Work?

Whether a church leader or a missionary, there are certain requirements or qualification biblical leaders should follow (1 Tim 3; 4:12-16; 1 Pet 5:1-11; Rom 12:1-2; Heb 12:1-2). "Godliness is more important than giftedness. While being gifted is important, a gifted leader who lacks godliness can lead others to destruction. Godliness is crucial. 'An overseer must be above reproach' (1 Tim 3:2)."⁹

It is important to be an example to the believers. Leaders are to be role models for others to follow. "Leading is much more than having people follow you; it is mentoring them in such a way that you can empower and release them to do the same thing on their own that you have done with them."¹⁰ This is what Paul describes in 2 Timothy 2:2.

Lesson 10: How Should One Pray for the Nations as a Believer?

"True prayer begins with God. It is the Lord who invited his disciples to pray (Matt 7:7-11). It is also a command of God that people pray continually (1 Thess 5:17). Prayer is the primary means that God uses to accomplish his work."¹¹ Prayer is often a forgotten resource at the believer's disposal.

⁹Harry L. Reeder III, *The Leadership Dynamic: A Biblical Model for Raising Effective Leaders* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 56.

¹⁰Sherwood G. Lingenfelter, *Leading Cross-Culturally: Covenant Relationships for Effective Christian Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 19.

¹¹A. Scott Moureau, Harold Netland, and Charles Van Engen, eds., *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 781.

“God ordained that our prayer be preserving to accomplish his sovereign work (Luke 11:5-8; 18:1-8). God uses persevering prayer to purify his church, prepare it for his answers, develop the lives of his people, defeat spiritual enemies, and give to his church the answer-intimacy with himself.”¹² The church must realize that God has given the church the tool of prayer. Prayer invokes God’s power to intervene into the situation toward change. Jesus illustrates this principle in Matthew 9:37-38, “Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” This principle works for all believers who sincerely pray.

Lesson 11: What Is Mission Mobilization?

Mission Mobilization is “teaching believers in a local church to understand God’s global plan, motivating them to a loving response to God’s word, and providing opportunities for them to use their gifts, abilities and resources individually and corporately to accomplish his global plan.”¹³ This definition shows how all believers, as the body of Christ, play a part because God has also ensured a gift at salvation to serve him. All believers have been given the same biblical mandate to preach the gospel to all creation and make disciples of all nations (Mark 15:16; Matt 28:19-20).

The body of Christ should take seriously their assignment to share the gospel with urgency. “Mission mobilization, simply put, is pointing people who know Jesus to entire people who don’t. The goal of mission mobilization is to help Christians

¹²Moureau, Netland, and Van Engen, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, 782.

¹³Larry Reesor, “A Fresh Perspective on Mobilizing the Church,” *Mission Frontiers*, January 1, 2000, accessed January 30, 2018, <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/a-fresh-perspective-on-mobilizing-the-church>.

worldwide see that Jesus' commission to go make disciples of all nations is for each of us."¹⁴

Lesson 12: Why Does NBCP Need a Mission Mobilization Plan?

The Scriptures relate a command that Jesus Christ left the church over 2000 years ago, the task of "making disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19–20). This important task has not yet been completed.

It is a great motivator for Christians, as we hold three truths in tension: that there is no name other than Christ by which men are saved, and all men who die apart from Christ abide in eternal torment; that there are approximately two billion people who have practically no access; to the gospel, and another two billion who have very little access; and that we, as believers, have a calling and responsibility to proclaim to them the good news.¹⁵

NBCP needs to look into the Scriptures, look at the condition of the world and look at the work that God has called the church to do, then the church can see they are needed to make their contribution in fulfilling the Great Commission. Thus, the church needs a mission mobilization plan so that they too can participate in God's mission. The Scriptures makes this clear with the fact that God is counting on NBCP (2 Cor 5:17-20).

Lesson 13: How Can NBCP Make Disciples of All the Nations?

When the biblical mandate is studied and learnt, the action of discipleship should take place. It must be more than just studying facts of the lost condition of the world but, that information must be undergirded with prayer. Prayer that grips the heart of God and in turn grips our heart that moves us with compassion for a lost world!

¹⁴"Go Mobilize," Center for Mission Mobilization (2016), accessed January 30, 2018, www.mobilization.org/docs/gomobilize/GoMobilize-English-v1.7.pdf, 3.

¹⁵A. Bruce Riley Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, The Church, and the Nations* (Nashville: B & H Pub., 2011), 15.

God is looking for an obedient church that will fulfill his command. God has entrusted the church with the ministry and message of reconciliation. God has made a great investment in reconciling the world back to himself, he gave his only begotten Son – Jesus Christ (2 Cor 5:18-19). The church must understand the great lengths that God and his Son, Jesus Christ went through to provide salvation for all humanity, if they accept the gospel on God's terms (John 1:12). As a response, the least the body of Christ can do is be thankful, grateful, appreciative and obedient to the biblical mandate given by Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19-20.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to develop a thirteen-week curriculum plan for increasing evangelism and mission mobilization. NBCP needed the teaching of evangelism and the understanding of the urgent engagement in it. Now as the church develops this mindset and the execution of evangelism, this will broaden their vision of the lostness of humanity and be mobilized towards mission involvement. The church understands the call to evangelism, many different approaches, and their responsibility for doing evangelism and mission work. NBCP also understands what the Bible teaches about missions and their responsibility for being engaged in missions. They also know they have a role to play as a church in God's mission. The church was taught the role that prayer plays in missions. And they know what mission mobilization is and their importance to be a part of the Great Commission making disciples of all nations.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to develop a plan for increasing evangelism and mission mobilization at New Birth Cathedral of Praise in Sherman, Texas. The church had the mindset that it was the pastor's responsibility to do evangelism. The goal was to teach the church that it is the responsibility of the entire church to be engaged in evangelism and missions. This chapter evaluates the effectiveness of this project.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

This project was to propose a plan for increasing evangelism and mission mobilization at NBCP in Sherman, Texas. NBCP needed the teaching of evangelism and missions, along with the understanding of the urgent engagement of these critical ministries. The previous chapters aimed to implement such teaching by creating a thirteen-week curriculum equipping the church in evangelism and mission mobilization. As the church applies those lessons, she will develop this needed mindset and the execution of evangelism. This has also broadened their vision of the lostness of humanity and be mobilized towards mission involvement.

This project has moved the church in a new direction towards becoming aware of the urgent need of evangelism and mission mobilization. The development of this project has caused the church leadership, as well as its members, to see the need for seriously preparing the church at an in-depth level of teaching and training. Believers desired to know what the Scriptures say about evangelism and mission mobilization. The

congregation responded with eagerness week after week as learning took place on new subjects related to evangelism and mission mobilization from God's word.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

Three goals guided this project towards the fulfillment of its purpose. The first goal was to assess the congregation's knowledge of evangelism and missions. The second goal was to develop a thirteen-week evangelism and mission's curriculum. The third goal was to equip the congregation by teaching the newly developed curriculum on evangelism and missions. Each goal led to the next goal, so that the teaching of evangelism and mission mobilization would broaden NBCP's vision of the lostness of humanity and be mobilized towards evangelism and mission involvement. The first time I did the teaching, the post-survey revealed an inconsistency in the scoring. Therefore, I had to reteach the curriculum to a new group. The second group provided the statistical variance needed.

The three goals were presented as an overview of the entire project. Each goal was then addressed individually. The first goal was to assess knowledge of evangelism and missions in the 6 new adults who participated. They were presented with a 22-question survey related to evangelism and mission, along with some needed demographic information. These adults were to give their opinion using the following scale: SD= strongly disagree, D= disagree, DS= disagree somewhat, AS= agree somewhat, A= agree, SA= strongly agree.

After 6 adult members were given the survey and the results were analyzed, it gave an understanding of their knowledge of evangelism and mission mobilization.¹ The first goal had been successfully met. But the knowledge these individuals had about evangelism and missions was unanticipated, scoring a 107.5 out of 135 possible points. With such knowledge I wonder why there was not more activity and motivation towards evangelism and missions. The second goal was to develop a thirteen-week evangelism and missions curriculum. The planned curriculum to be taught was presented to the pastor and the expert panel of three ministers of the church, who are the field ministry directors.² They reviewed the curriculum and measured this goal by utilizing the curriculum evaluation rubric.³ Their evaluation of the curriculum of evangelism and missions was exemplary.

The third goal was to equip 6 adult members of NBCP by teaching the newly developed curriculum related to evangelism and mission. After the thirteen-week curriculum was taught, there was also a post-survey given to the 6 adult members who attended the classes to measure their level of knowledge.⁴ There were 6 pre-and post-surveys given. The teaching of doctrine to the select group of adults made a statistically significant difference resulting in the increase of their doctrinal knowledge ($t(5) = 3.749$, $p < .013$). The results displayed below.

¹See the “Evangelism and Missions Knowledge Survey” in appendix 1.

²These field ministry directors are members of the NBCP. They are responsible for coordinating all the evangelism outreach training.

³See the “Curriculum Evaluation Rubric” in appendix 2.

⁴See the “Evangelism and Missions Knowledge Survey” in appendix 1.

Table. Comparison of the cumulative responses

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	107.5	119.3333333
Variance	209.9	87.06666667
Observations	6	6
Pearson Correlation	0.877308851	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	5	
t Stat	-3.749326022	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.00665148	
t Critical one-tail	2.015048373	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.013302961	
t Critical two-tail	2.570581836	

This above T-test was designated to analyze and compare the means from the pre-test and the post-test scores. A noteworthy measure in knowledge of evangelism and missions was apparent. The pre-test disclosed 107.5 out of 135 possible points. While the post-test revealed an increase of knowledge, which showed a cumulative score of 119.3 out of 135 possible points. This third goal was successfully met.

Strength of the Project

When this project began, it took on a shape all its own. As it was developed, it became more than ideas about evangelism and mission mobilization. After developing the

goals, it gave a clearer picture of the direction the project was headed. This would become a challenge and a blessing to the author and NBCP—assessing what the church knew about evangelism and missions. Next was developing a thirteen-week curriculum, which now remains a permanent curriculum to train future church members in evangelism and mission mobilization.

Another strength of this project was developing the biblical and theological basis for evangelism and mission mobilization that NBCP can call its own. There were three biblical text that support the foundation of this project. First, Matthew 9:36-38 provides a model for gospel motivation. Second, Matthew 10:1-23 provides a model for laborers in evangelism. Third, Matthew 28:19-20 provides a model for the laborers to be mobilized. These three texts are the biblical and theological foundation for evangelism and mission mobilization for this project.

While developing the theoretical and practical issues, another strength was discovered—that the church must be equipped to communicate the gospel in an anti-Christian culture. If disciplined, believers are to be committed to the cause of Christ and live godly lives in this culture, then they will be persecuted (2 Tim 3:12). The present culture is anti-Christian, so believers must learn how to share their faith in this hostile environment. This post-modern culture has no absolutes, no moral compass, and they govern their lives based on what is popular and not what is ethical. Therefore, the church must be equipped to communicate the gospel within an anti-Christian culture. The church needs to have a great understanding of the culture's resistance towards the authority of the Scriptures and defend their beliefs using apologetics.

This project has provided a stronger conviction about the authority of Scripture and the answers to life that are found in them for all. Man's advanced technologies are not adequate to sustain a healthy moral life. Believers today must be equipped in biblical doctrines, apologetics and worldviews, so that they can offer hope while being humble and not harsh nor hateful, "but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord

as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Pet 3:15). This will be the new platform for training believers in evangelism in the 21st century.

Weakness of the Project

Numerous positive results have come out of this project. However, some weakness arose. A weakness that was discovered was in motivation. While the adult members who attended the class were excited about evangelism training, getting people to come out frequently to do evangelism is still a challenge. While there may be an increase of knowledge, the actual execution of doing evangelism is still a struggle. What I have learned is that there must be a consistency of going out to share the gospel. A constant role of modeling and mentoring members is needed. Also needed is a monthly report from the pastor on mission and missionary’s activity around the world to keep people informed of what God is doing. Stressing the fact that God’s work is important and NBCP is needed and necessary to do their part of sharing the gospel locally and globally. Teaching content is not enough; the leadership will continue to find ways to get more of the entire church involved in evangelism and missions.

Role play was an effective tool as far as getting people involved in church. After two weeks of doing role play on witnessing, members acted as though it would be no problem going out to actually do evangelism in the field. However, when these same members were asked to come out to share their faith, some failed to show up. But those who did step out in faith to share the gospel saw results of God working through them and in people. The church leadership will continue to motivate and teach the members to pray for the lost; the church leadership will stress that God has need of the entire church to get involved in evangelism, “for the harvest is plenteous but the labors are few” (Matt 9:37).

What I Would Do Differently

Starting with the goals for this project gave guidance, and there were many discoveries all along the way. Being excited about the project and potential of NBCP playing their part in the Great Commission. However, the gathering of the post-survey information was not documented correctly. Therefore, it led to faulty results. This was a great disappointment and I had to start over and reteach the curriculum to a different group of adults. This time, the new group put their last four digits of their social security number on their pre-survey and post-survey. After teaching another thirteen-weeks, there was an increase in knowledge and the results were constant with each adult. The evangelism team went out, shared the gospel and 5 people accepted Christ. Therefore, after reflecting on this encouraging step of moving NBCP forward towards playing her part in fulfilling the Great Commission, there were four other things I would do differently.

First, there would be homework assignments for the adult members to write out their testimony. This would lead to the class pairing up and critiquing one another's testimonies while providing a template to help guide the process. Secondly, there would be more presentations using power point and videos during the training on evangelism and missions. Living in a visual culture people tend to pay attention more when there is a visual presentation rather than just lecture. Thirdly, the adult members would be assigned to do research on an assigned culture. They would investigate how someone would evangelize in that specific culture and then make a presentation to the class on their findings. Lastly, there would be some Saturday training classes that would take place from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. Breaks, discussions, and field trips would be included. The field trips would be designed to go observe a targeted culture so that the church may be better equipped at engaging that people group with the gospel.

Theological Reflections

This project has made me look more in depth and reflect on the Scriptures in order to address the culture and its current worldview. It has also been a challenge to understand the subtle ways that the culture influences so many people without their real knowledge. This has led one to observe how the culture has influenced the church and it seems that the church has little influence or impact on the culture. Therefore, the gospel must be presented constantly within this culture. The gospel can be read, studied and even preached within the church, but if it is not shared and defended by believers the culture continues to gain influence. Man's only hope for spiritual and moral transformation is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The necessity of staying grounded in the Scriptures is so vital; no matter what the pop culture is doing or promoting, the word of God must have the final say. God, and God's word, are a constant, stabilizing force for any believer no matter their generation. Believers must be able to use God's word to defend their biblical convictions.

As stated earlier, believers today must be equipped in these three major subjects: biblical doctrines, apologetics, and worldview so as to adequately defend the doctrines of Creation, the Bible, the authority of the Scriptures, Jesus Christ, Salvation through faith alone, and the Holy Spirit, to name a few. Pastoral leadership must arm themselves well and be well versed in these three subjects so that they can properly equip the saint to do the work of the ministry. Today this requires an ability to embrace the culture without losing the gospel. There must also be a clear understanding of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Animism, Atheism, and Tribalism, and how to share the gospel with these groups.

There is a great need for believers to be taught biblically how to defend their faith. It is so important because of what believers see in the culture, that various denominations have succumbed to the pressures of the culture—whether it is same-sex marriage (there are churches marrying people of the same sex in the church), human and

sex trafficking, racism, abortion, exploitation of children, or pornography. It is because churches have left the word of God and no longer have biblical convictions of the sin they endorse. Without God's word, man is only filling himself up with more emptiness, yet nothing fills the voids of emptiness but God and his word.

Personal Reflections

I have gained significantly from reading textbooks, going to classes, interacting with other students, researching and writing papers. This project has totally changed my life—mentally, physically and spiritually. First of all, I am so grateful to have been accepted and to attend Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. While researching schools, I found out that Southern Seminary was serious about the gospel, and they had a mission program. That was very important to me since developing a passion for the lost, specifically to reach unreached people groups. Being motivated to reach people who have never heard the gospel yet. Also, being called to mission mobilization. Southern Seminary's focus on evangelism was a main factor that drew me to this school, along with the quality of education and affordability.

The faculty, staff, and students having met will be a part of my life and ministry. Many instructional moments happened over a cup of coffee, in the third floor of the library, and at Founders Café. This project needs to be read worldwide because of two major factors: first, because there are 2.5-4 billion that have no or little access to the gospel of Jesus Christ; second, because there are not many churches world-wide doing evangelism and mission mobilization. The Great Commission was given to the church over 2000 years ago and it has not fulfilled their mandate yet. Thousands of books have been written on evangelism and missions and there seems to be just a church gathering on Sunday. The church gathers but seldom scatters to proclaim the gospel locally or globally. The church needs prayer and revival to be awoken and mobilized. There must be an act of God to help the church get back on track. This project has motivated me to make a

difference. By God's grace, hard work and my burden to see people come to faith, I am motivated to call the church back to her mandate of fulfilling the Great Commission. The purpose of this project was to develop a plan for increasing evangelism and mission mobilization at NBCP in Sherman, Texas, but any church name could be inserted here. Jesus said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Matt 9:37-38).

Another personal reflection that must be noted—realizing that believers really do live in a postmodern culture and how strongly our culture resists the authority of the Scriptures—believers going to church two to three hours a week is not enough to defend our faith in the marketplace. The universities are causing Christian students to doubt their God, the Bible, and their Salvation within the first few weeks of class. The church must take a serious look at what they teach and how they teach. The pastoral leadership must reevaluate their role as shepherds to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry (Eph 4:12). They must have the integrity, honesty, and biblical convictions to stand for what is right and not what is popular.

What this project has made clear is that pastors are key, and pastors must take a hard look at how they equip their congregations in evangelism and missions. The platform must be biblical doctrine, apologetics and understanding worldviews. This must be the curriculum used to equip the church. The culture is slowly eroding the society stating false claims that there is no God, therefore whatever you believe or do is okay. The church must stand on the word of God and model a different message of truth.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to develop a plan for increasing evangelism and mission mobilization. The urgency of this topic has grown more and more, with 2.5-4 billion people with little or no access to the gospel of Jesus Christ. People need the gospel

of Jesus Christ proclaimed to them. After developing this project, NBCP has developed a new mindset, and the church understands they are needed for urgent engagement of evangelism and mission mobilization. This project has broadened the vision of NBCP for the lostness of humanity and the need to be mobilized towards mission involvement.

Section II

The second section of the survey will assess your knowledge of evangelism and missions.

Directions: Answer the questions and statements below using the following options.

Based on the following scale, circle the option that best represents your agreement with the statement. The questions in this section ask you to give your opinion using the following scale: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, DS = disagree somewhat, AS = agree somewhat, A = agree, SA = strongly agree; please circle the appropriate answer.

1. I understand the importance of sharing the gospel.

SD D DS AS A SA

2. I can explain the plan of salvation to a child.

SD D DS AS A SA

3. I know what the Bible teaches about evangelism.

SD D DS AS A SA

4. I understand what the Bible teaches about the Great Commission in Matt 28:19-20.

SD D DS AS A SA

5. I can explain the plan of salvation to an adult.

SD D DS AS A SA

6. I know several key biblical texts to use in sharing my faith.

SD D DS AS A SA

7. I can explain to a non-believer why Jesus Christ came to earth.

SD D DS AS A SA

8. I can explain the importance of discipleship to a new believer.

SD D DS AS A SA

9. I know the difference between evangelism and missions.

SD D DS AS A SA

10. I know what a missionary does.

SD D DS AS A SA

11. I understand that our culture can influence my faith in God.

SD D DS AS A SA

12. I have a burden for lost people to be saved.

SD D DS AS A SA

13. I can explain the grace of God.

SD D DS AS A SA

14. If asked I can articulate the gospel.

SD D DS AS A SA

15. I understand Biblical forgiveness.

SD D DS AS A SA

16. I share the gospel on a regular basis.

SD D DS AS A SA

17. I pray for people who do not know Christ.

SD D DS AS A SA

18. I can explain God's purpose for my life.

SD D DS AS A SA

19. I understand what Jesus means in Matt 9:37-38.

SD D DS AS A SA

20. I understand who the unreached people groups are.

SD D DS AS A SA

21. I understand why the church must be mobilized.

SD D DS AS A SA

22. I know how to turn conversations to spiritual issues.

SD D DS AS A SA

APPENDIX 2

CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

The curriculum was evaluated and measured by the expert panel.

Evangelism Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
Lesson Evaluation					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The lesson is clearly relevant to the evangelism ministry.					
The material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on evangelism.					
The material is theologically sound.					
The aim of the lesson is clearly stated.					
The points of the lesson clearly support the aim.					
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 3
AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

Agreement to Participate

You are being requested to give permission for a minor or member of a vulnerable population under your legal supervision to participate in a study designed to increase our evangelism and mission outreach. This research is being conducted by Charles R. Leslie Jr, for purposes of a project research. In this research, a person will be observed doing evangelism outreach. Any information provided will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will a person's name be reported, or a person's name identified with his or her responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary, and the person you are giving approval to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By signing your name below, you are giving informed consent for the designated minor or member of a vulnerable population to participate in this research if he or she desires.

Participant Name _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX 4
THE THIRTEEN-WEEK CURRICULUM

Lesson 1: What Is Evangelism?

There are many things that come to mind when the church leadership talks about evangelism, but believers need to understand what it is and how to do it. It is imperative that the church take the sharing of their faith seriously. Jesus came to model that for the Body of Christ, he came to seek to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). Let's start with a definition of evangelism.

The term evangelism is “calling a person to repentance from sin and acceptance of the gospel. The gospel or the Good News is that God has sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to earth in order to redeem persons and bring them into a personal relationship with himself.”¹ The act of evangelism is the proclamation of God’s good news message. “The Greek root for this term, *euangelion*, provides the basis for the English equivalent, evangelism. In such biblical passages as John 3:16, God’s love for all humanity is expressed along with his desire that all persons will come to him through faith in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross and through the resurrection.”²

Jesus commissions the Twelve in Matthew 10:5 with the word *apostelein*, “to send forth on a certain mission such as to preach’ (Mark 3:14; Luke 9:2).”³ Proclaiming

¹Michael J. Anthony, *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 267.

²Anthony, *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education*, 267.

³Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Pub., 1992), 237.

the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of Israel was to be their focus. The gospel is good news. Bock describes the gospel like this, “its central proclamation is the good news of God’s love and initiative not only to save us from hell, but also to bring us into a healthy relationship with Himself.”⁴ The gospel is God’s love message extended to mankind (John 3:16), but only if they receive his son Jesus Christ, as he has presented him the Messiah, the Savior of the world (John 4:42). The twelve were to go to a selective audience only. They were to evangelize the lost sheep of Israel. “The English word evangelism comes from the Greek word, *euaggelidzo*, which is often translated in English Bibles as ‘preach the gospel.’ *Euaggelidzo* comes from the word *euaggelion*, which means “gospel.” Thus ‘evangelize’ literally means “to gospelize.”⁵

God has provided the way back to himself since he has assigned his Son to make the sacrifice of his life for man. Jesus did this through his death, burial and resurrection. The Body of Christ now must take this good news to the world. Remember, 4.5 billion people are lost without Christ. Terry makes a noteworthy observation, “In his epistles Paul spoke of his ministry as evangelizing twenty-three times. The frequency with which these words are used in the New Testament ought to say something to us about the priority of evangelism in our churches today.”⁶ The gospel is the good news of God’s reconciliation love message to mankind. This ministry is to bring man and God together. We are God’s ambassadors to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us (2 Cor 5:18-20a)

⁴Darrell L. Bock, *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel: Reclaiming the Gospel as Good News* (Nashville: B & H Pub., 2010), 1.

⁵John Mark Terry, *Church Evangelism: Creating a Culture for Growth in your Congregation* (Nashville: B & H Pub., 1997), 2.

⁶Terry, *Church Evangelism*, 2.

It is extremely urgent that the church take seriously the mandate to be ambassadors for Christ and gospelize mankind, especially in light of the fact that there are multitudes of lost people who need to hear and receive the gospel of Jesus Christ because, “evangelism reflects the essential nature of God. God is by nature loving and gracious. Because of his love and grace, God desires to redeem sinful humanity and thus reconcile all the world’s people to himself.”⁷ The Father and the Son agreed that the Son would come to redeem man. Jesus expresses one of the reasons he came to earth in Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” Even when people tried to detain him, Jesus never wavered from his purpose. The Bible states, “And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, but he said to them, ‘I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose’” (Luke 4:42-43). Jesus would often go and be alone to pray to the Father for wisdom and guidance to stay in the Father’s will.

Believers must pray and execute the ministry of reconciliation from God, and they must move forward to evangelize the lost. The Body of Christ must be about the Father’s business. Jesus has communicated the condition of humanity, “the harvest is plenteous but the laborers are few” (10:37), and what to do, “therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (10:38). Terry gives believers seven different definitions of evangelism:

1. William Temple: “Evangelism is the winning of men to acknowledge Christ as their Savior and King, so that they may give themselves to his service in the fellowship of his church.”
2. John Stott: “Evangelism means announcing or proclaiming the good news of Jesus.”
3. C.E. Autrey: “Evangelism is to bear witness to the Gospel with soul aflame and to

⁷Terry, *Church Evangelism*, 1.

teach and preach with the express purpose of making disciples of those who hear.”

4. Delos Miles: “Evangelism is being, doing, and telling the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, in order that by the power of the Holy Spirit persons and structures may be converted to the Lordship of Christ.”
5. Peter Wagner: “Evangelism is seeking and finding the lost, effectively presenting the gospel to them and persuading them to become Christ’s disciples, responsible members of his church.”
6. Lausanne Covenant: “Evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God.”
7. John Mark Terry: “Evangelism is presenting Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit so that people will become his disciples.”⁸

Evangelism and mission mobilization is a necessary key for the advancement of the gospel. This is the mandate left to the church as given in Matt 28:19-20. New Birth Cathedral of Praise must evangelize to fulfill her role in the Great Commission as she brings glory to God.

Lesson 2: What are the Different Approaches to Evangelism?

In evangelizing believers need to be aware of obstacles found in churches.

There are at least two that will be focused on: a basic lack of clarity both (1) in defining the task, and (2) in understanding the Christian faith. These deficiencies obscure believers presentation and motivation to share the gospel in the culture. Many people have different experiences and often negative images come to mind when they hear the word evangelism. “Images of manipulative techniques, of decision cards never followed up, of door-to-door intruders, of sidewalk confrontations, and of ranting television and radio evangelists have produced a strong negative reaction to the concept of doing evangelism, and a strong deterrent to participation on the part of our church members.”⁹

⁸Terry, *Church Evangelism*, 3-4.

⁹Charles Van Engen, *Mission on the Way: Issues in Mission Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 198-99.

There are many different approaches that can have positive and long-lasting effects. Some of the most popular are door-to-door and work place sharing of the Christian faith. I believe that when believers are sensitive to those around them, life itself will offer opportunities to share the gospel and or pray. What seems to be consistent is regardless of the work place or environment all people will have to deal with relationship issues or health issues. That is an opportunity to offer hope.

For believers, there must not be a deficiency in understanding our faith. Christians are to be hope givers. First Peter 3:15 states, “but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.” This represents biblical hope. “It is a given fact in evangelism that we cannot share what we do not have. Lack of clarity in matters of Scripture and faith produces a lack of enthusiasm and in fact a real avoidance of personally sharing our faith. Our reluctance to participate in evangelism is obvious.”¹⁰

Hard times are often great times for the gospel. Worried? Scared? Confused? Disillusioned? Depressed? Hard times often incite burdensome emotion, and these times can be particularly difficult for those who do not know the Lord. This is when we have a powerful message to give to the lost—God is in control. For the Christian, we have nothing to fear, as Romans 8:28 states, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

In order to convey that message, believers need to get to the heart of the gospel. They do not need to know about the God that is in control. They need to know the God that is in control. It’s a relationship with Him that brings security. Christians are His now, and Christians are His forever. That means Christians need to explain that all people

¹⁰Van Engen, *Mission on the Way*, 200.

are sinners, and that Christ died for all people, took the punishment for our sins, and rose again. People need to place faith in Jesus Christ alone as the only way to eternal life with God. Once people do that, they are instantly His children. The Bible states, “But as many as receive Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe on His name” (John 1:12). “Hard times can sometimes offer better opportunities for the gospel than good times. Good times can dull people to their need of the Lord (Deuteronomy 6:1-12).”¹¹

Lesson 3: Who Is Responsible for Evangelism?

Evangelism is very important because people’s souls are weighing in the balance between an eternal heaven or hell. Christians must fight against the forces of fear, embarrassment, laziness and lack of concern of the lost in order to communicate to people the gospel of the grace of God. Church leaders and laymen—all Christians—should be concern for the lost state of humanity (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21) because of the Father’s love and forgiveness for them. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

“The God believers worship is the supreme lover. All lovers will give anything, endure anything, do anything for the beloved. That is what God is like.”¹² God is also a God of patience. “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). It is the responsibility of the church, the body of Christ to be a witness (Acts 1:8). “The only people who can make Christ known are

¹¹R. Larry Moyer, *101 Tips for Evangelism: Practical Ways to Enhance Your Witness* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2017), 144.

¹²Michael Green, *Evangelism through the Local Church* (Nashville: Oliver-Nelson Books, 1992), 17.

those who already know Him. He relies on the believers. ‘We are ambassadors for Christ,’ wrote Paul, God making his appeal through us.”¹³ God changes lives by the power of the gospel so that our lives become a living testimony for him, because no one can argue with a changed life.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (2 Cor 5:17-20)

This responsibility has been given to us by God. We must not live for ourselves but for the one who gave his life for us so that we can share this good news with others. “It is through his people that God means to communicate with those He longs to reach. This reality of what He offers is best seen in the lives of those who have begun to be changed by it. Conviction is best communicated by those who have themselves been convinced by Christ.”¹⁴

Christians are to be equipped by the pastor or church leaders to do the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11-12). Christians must see that it is a privilege to share the gospel wherever believers are (community, family gatherings, work place). Christians should take their role seriously as born-again believers, as God calls believers to represent him on earth (ushers, bankers, choir members, deacons, youth leaders/workers, school teachers, pastor, businessmen, ministers, nurses). Believers have been given a great opportunity to make him known to the world. He has entrusted believers with his work. “It is an amazing privilege to be given such a sacred trust. And Paul, for one, never forgot

¹³Green, *Evangelism through the Local Church*, 20.

¹⁴Green, *Evangelism through the Local Church*, 20.

it. In 1 Corinthians 15:9 he is brought low by the memory that he had persecuted the church of God. Incredible that he should be taken on in the Master's service."¹⁵

Like Paul, believers too did not recognize the love and forgiveness that God was offering to them. It was and is the grace of God that made the difference in salvation and service. "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me" (1 Cor 15:10). Paul realized that to be asked by God to do anything (preach the gospel, witness to anyone, go through hardship, confront false teaching, traveling to unknown parts of the world, being led into God's direction and not his own) was a privilege and opportunity to serve God. Whatever he was asked to do, he did it (2 Cor 6:1-10).

Lesson 4: What Does One Do After Evangelizing If Someone Responds to the Gospel?

The Bible teaches that there is joy in heaven and there should be joy on earth when a sinner comes to faith through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Read the parable in Luke 15.

So he told them this parable: What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. (Luke 15:3-7).

Accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior is just the beginning. Just as a newborn baby needs milk to grow, so does the babe in Christ need spiritual food—the word of God—to be nourished to grow. "Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation" (1 Pet 2:2). The growing process is called

¹⁵Green, *Evangelism through the Local Church*, 21.

being a disciple. The writer to the Hebrews explains the difference between milk and meat.

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil (5:12-14).

Therefore, a new Christian that feeds on God's word will mature as a disciple and grow in the knowledge and grace of the Jesus Christ. A disciple (*mathetes*) is a pupil or learner. "A *mathetes* was one who attached himself to another to gain some practical or theoretical knowledge, whether by instruction or by experience."¹⁶ The need for believers to become disciples is a critical step to be a witness for the Lord and to be obedient to his command in Matthew 28:19-20, that is, to "make disciples of all nations." "The concept of discipleship was most popular in the Judaism of Jesus' day. Rabbis had disciples who studied with them in a well-defined and special relationship."¹⁷ Believers need to be disciple and have proper training before given an assignment in the church.

Several aspects of the rabbi-disciple relationship in first-century Judaism are significant. The disciple left his home and moved in with his teacher. The disciple was expected not only to learn all that his rabbi knew but also to become like him in character and piety (Matt 10:24; Lk 6:40). The rabbi in return provided food and lodging and saw his own distinctive interpretations transmitted through his disciples to future generations. So when Mark says that Jesus chose twelve men "that they might be with him" (Mk 3:14), he accurately reflects contemporary understanding of how future leaders should be trained.¹⁸

Therefore, a disciple today must be discipled by other mature believers. The Bible teaches that the older must teach the younger (Titus 2:2-8). Being disciple today may look different than in the first century since disciples may not be able to live with their

¹⁶Larry Richards, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 226.

¹⁷Richards, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, 226.

¹⁸Richards, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, 226.

teacher. However, there can be scheduled times together for instruction and fellowship, similar to mentorship. A mentor is a person with firsthand knowledge of life and a reliable adviser. A person one opens their life up to and allow them to pour into their life. Are you teachable? “The power of mentoring is so strong that you can actually see the lives of the persons you are influencing change before your eyes.”¹⁹ God wants believers to make disciples, that means to influence people’s lives and let the power of the word of God and the Holy Spirit do the changing. Are you discipling someone?

Tony Evans writes this in his book, *Kingdom Disciples: Heaven’s Representative’s on Earth*, “A disciple is a person who has decided that following Jesus Christ takes precedence over everything else. Or to express it another way, a disciple looks and acts like one he or she follows.”²⁰ Whether you see this process as a mentor or a disciple, in the Christian context “the goal of discipleship is conformity to the Savior, being transformed into the image or likeness of Christ (Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:17-18) in our character, conduct, attitudes, and actions.”²¹ God wants lives to reflect his Son, totally transformed so that He gets the glory. “Likeness, not simply knowledge, was the goal of Jewish discipleship. And likeness to Jesus himself is the goal God has for you and me.”²² Changed lives then become trophies of God’s grace on display for him.

Lesson 5: What Is Mission?

God’s saving plan moves from creation to the new creation. It has to do with God’s salvation reaching the ends of the earth: that is, his gracious movement in his Son,

¹⁹John Maxwell and Jim Dornan, *Becoming a Person of Influence: How to Positively Impact the Lives of Others* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 8.

²⁰Tony Evans, *Kingdom Disciples: Heaven’s Representatives on Earth* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2017), 20.

²¹Evans, *Kingdom Disciples*, 27.

²²Richards, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, 227.

the Lord Jesus Christ, to rescue a desperately needy world that is in rebellion against him and stands under his righteous judgment (John 3:16-18).

The Triune God: The God of Mission, is an investigation of what it means to say that God is the agent of missions. It defines *missio dei* (the mission of God), delineates the missional character of God by arguing that God's nature is the foundation of the mission and that his triune life is the pattern of the mission, and deals with creation and redemption as missional acts of God.²³

Since God is the author of mission then we need to just follow his lead and the assignment that he has given the church.

The concept of mission comprises of six elements:

1. There is the sender, along with the sender's purpose and authority in sending. That purpose is God's accomplishment of salvation for humans and God's application of it to them (Matt 28:16-20).
2. One must consider the act of sending, a commissioning or authorization that leads to movement. To be on mission is to respond to the sender's call and commission and to go to those to whom one is sent (Isa 6:8).
3. Further, study must be done on "those who are sent": the various agents God employs, and about their stance: obedience.
4. Another element is the particular task of those on mission, which in the New Testament focuses primary on the proclamation in the word and deed of God's saving work.
5. The result of mission must be explained. How does the kingdom of God advance as the church fulfills its mission? What constitutes a completion of the task, and how are those successful results accomplished?
6. Finally, the whole study must view mission within the framework of God's salvation history, whereby God does the covenantal work of judgment or redemption.²⁴

This summarizes the idea of mission, that it is God's idea and not the church's. It is God that does the sending (his Son-Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Church-the body of Christ). Mission is from God, and missions is the activity of the church carrying out God's mission.

²³Bruce R. Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, The Church, and the Nations* (Nashville: B & H Pub., 2011), 1.

²⁴William J. Larkin, Jr. and Joel F. Williams, *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 3-4.

“The writings that now comprise our Bible are themselves the product of and witness to the ultimate mission of God.”²⁵ God’s mission is all about redemption (Rom 8:20-23). God’s motive is all about love (John 3:16).

The very existence of the Bible is incontrovertible evidence of the God who refused to forsake his rebellious creation, who refused to give up, who was and is determined to redeem and restore fallen creation to his original design. . . . The very existence of such a collection of writings testifies to a God who breaks through to human beings, who disclosed himself to them, who will not leave them unilluminated in their darkness, . . . who takes the initiative in re-establishing broken relationships with us.²⁶

The Bible helps man understand the mind, heart, forgiveness, and the love that God has for mankind. Also, the length that he took to secure an eternal loving relationship with man by giving his only Son to redeem and reconcile man back to God. The Bible gives the church God’s plan for the work that is to be done. As one theologian put it, “It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church. . . . Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission.”²⁷ The church is to come along side God as his partner.

Lesson 6: What Does the Bible Teach about Mission Work?

The first place to look for the mission of God is in the Scriptures. In recent years biblical scholars and teachers have rediscovered the missional basis of the Bible. Where believers once searched the Bible for reasons for mission, today Christians understand that the mission is the reason for the Bible!

This concept that the Bible itself exists because of God’s mission is truly

²⁵Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 48.

²⁶Charles R. Taber, “Missiology and the Bible,” *Missiology* 11 (1983): 232.

²⁷Mike Barnett and Robin Martin, *Discovering the Mission of God: Best Missional Practices for the 21st Century* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 18-19.

transformational. If the Bible exists because of the mission, the same must be said about the church. If this is true, then all that we do as Christ-followers must point toward the mission of God. Once we are faced with the reality that the Bible is missional and we should all be about this mission of God in all that we do...²⁸

The Bible that has been given to believers is comprehensive in the mission of God.

It begins with God's vision, records how he goes about his mission, and concludes with the mission accomplished. It tells us whose mission it is, and why. It includes his mandate for us to be engaged in his mission. It reveals that God uses us, the church, as his instruments. It displays his power as he works throughout history among all the people on earth. It motivates and empowers us to boldly serve and worship him. It inspires us to be on mission with God-to know where we fit in his mission.²⁹

“The Bible is the key resource to learn about mission. It has always been the heart of God to reach the people he created and provide reconciliation so that they will be with him forever (John 3:16; 2 Cor 5:18-19). However, the redemptive purposes of God do not change; every person must repent of their sins, submit to Christ as Lord and be born again.”³⁰ The Bible states that believers have been given the ministry of reconciliation and thus ambassadors to represent Christ in the world (2 Cor 5:20). This role has been clearly stated in the gospels and Acts 1:8.

Matthew 28:19-20: The Great Commission that he gave to the disciples and that he gives to the church is to make disciples of all nations. Christians do this as his representatives because Christians represent Christ and minister in his name. As Christians make disciples of all nations the curriculum is his word, the Bible. He promises to always be present with them, as they minister for him.

Mark 16:15: This gospel is to be preached to every person in all the world. God loves mankind so much he took the initiative to make a way for man to get back in

²⁸Barnett and Martin, *Discovering the Mission of God*, 23.

²⁹Barnett and Martin, *Discovering the Mission of God*, 23.

³⁰M. David Sills, *Changing World, Unchanging Mission: Responding to Global Challenges* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 17.

fellowship with him through the death of Jesus Christ. And God wants the whole world to know that redemption and reconciliation has been provided for man.

Luke 24:46-48: Jesus even shows them his hands and feet to give them confidence in his word, and that God can do what he says he can do. He tells them in light of his suffering, death, and resurrection that they were to proclaim to the nations repentance and forgiveness of sins so that people could experience that same freedom they had. Since they were eyewitnesses to the things that Christ experienced, they could preach with power and conviction.

John 20:21: John was an eye witness of most of Jesus' ministry. He understood why Jesus came to offer good news to mankind, and he wrote about it. Jesus realized that his mission from God on earth was temporary. He did everything that his Father sent him to do: redeem man and reconcile him back to God. As the post resurrection victorious Savior, he now commissions the disciples and the Body of Christ. As the Father has sent him, he sent his disciples, and also sends his church, to witness to the world the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Acts 1:8: Luke is the author of the book of Acts. He describes the coming of the Holy Spirit that was promised by Jesus Christ; after 120 believers were praying in the Upper Room for ten days, Jesus ushered in the Holy Spirit and was the inauguration of the church. The book of Acts is the fulfillment of the outline given by Jesus Christ in Acts 1:8. The Gospel was to spread from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the utter parts of the earth.

Thus, believers everywhere are to be involved in the mission of God. To be obedient to God is to be obedient to his mandate that he has revealed, and demonstrates his power when believers do his will. The Bible then becomes a road map to do the work of the ministry with expected results so that God gets the credit and the glory.

Lesson 7: Who Is Responsible for Doing Mission Work?

Jesus first left the responsibility for mission work to the disciples (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8) and to the church. Believers today are baptized into the body of Christ, which is the church. All believers are responsible to do mission work. All believers are on assignment to represent Christ wherever they are and whatever the calling is in society: doctors, janitors, dishwashers, teachers, fast food workers, secretaries, nurses, police, fire fighters, accountants, flight attendants, or librarians. Christians do not have to have a passport to be a missionary. All those that are born again into the body of Christ have been commissioned to share their faith.

The church spread throughout the world as communities of redeemed people forms the structure of Christ's plan (Eph 2:19-22). The local church, then, is the community of God's people called to be both a witness to the lost and a welcoming family to those who respond. This biblical mandate is the foundation for the missional engagement of believing congregations in local and global outreach.³¹

Acts 2:41-47 describes a vibrant community of believers that became disciples that were radically changed and had an impact on the society. We can learn from these early disciples. The world is changing so fast, Christians do not need to travel to another part of the world to meet someone from another religion or culture.

This distinctive community must then learn to communicate the gospel to those of other religions, including participants of both world religions and new religious movements. Because the gospel is innately narrative, Christians must become storytellers of God's mighty acts and work in the world since creation. Christians must continually demonstrate prayerful, dependent, authentic relationship with God.³²

Discipled believers must model the gospel message that has transformed their lives, because no one can argue with a changed life. That being said, "we need to return with urgency to a biblical gospel, because the cost of not doing so is great for our lives,

³¹Michael Pocock, Gailyn Van Rheenen and Douglas McConnell, *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 70.

³²Pocock, Van Rheenen and McConnell, *Changing Face of World Missions*, 103.

our families, our churches, and the world around us.”³³ The gospel has the ability to transform people’s lives, families, churches, and communities when they surrender to it.

The critical question for every professing or potential follower of Jesus: Do we really believe he is worth abandoning everything for? Do you and I really believe that Jesus is so good, so satisfying and so rewarding that we will leave all we have and all we own and all we are in order to find fullness in him? Do you and I believe him enough to obey him and follow him wherever he leads, even when the crowds in our culture—and maybe in our churches—turn the other way.³⁴

Are we willing to live a life of total surrender to follow God in his mission?

“The word ‘mission’ has engaged Christians today because it challenges the church to take up this role and leave behind its self-interested preoccupation and its sinful accommodation to its cultural story.”³⁵ Mission must be more than a buzz word that makes Christians feel good to be in the discussion, but there is no activity within the church. “Ecclesiology is about understanding our identity, who we are, and why God has chosen us-whose we are. If we do not develop our self-understanding in terms of the role that we have been called to play in the biblical drama, we will find ourselves shaped by the idolatrous story of the dominant culture.”³⁶

Who is responsible for mission work? Believers are, believers everywhere! This calling is for all believers, to be salt and light in this world on mission with God.

Lesson 8: What Is the Role of the Church in Mission?

“Defining the missionary task of the church is central to missionary reflection. But it is more than that. It is also a crucial responsibility of the church, for a church

³³David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back your Faith from the American Dream* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2010), 19.

³⁴Platt, *Radical*, 18-19.

³⁵Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 5.

³⁶Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*, 5.

unsure or misdirected about its mission can hardly achieve it.”³⁷ Believers have been given a clear mandate from Jesus Christ himself (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8). The Book of Acts gives an example of that unfolding of the Great Commission which is still not finished.

While there are a lot of things people do and call it mission of the church. Some think it is only proclaiming the gospel and others believe it is a social gospel. David Hesselgrave offers a balance with the gospel in missions.

Hesselgrave presents four points on a continuum. He first presents the traditional view of pure gospel proclamation as a proper expression of missions, calling it “prioritism theology”. Next, he presents restrained holism, which uses social ministry to open doors or provide a platform for the goal of gospel proclamation. Revisionist holism, on the other hand, views gospel proclamation and social ministry as equal partners; neither is more important than the other or truly distinguished from one another. Finally, he presents the radical perspective, “liberation theology”, which is social ministry that may not even involve gospel proclamation because social justice and shalom on the earth are the essential aims of missions.³⁸

The gospel proclamation must remain the central focus of the church ministry. Letting people know that they are loved unconditionally by God and can be saved (John 3:16), they also are and will be continually forgiven of their sin (1 John 1:9). But also, a transform people will do transforming things (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35; Gal 6:10). Thus, the word becomes flesh, lived out.

There is a difference between mission and missions. “Mission (singular) refers to all the church is to do in the world and missions (plural) refers to the diverse methods of churches and missionaries to carry out – evangelism, discipleship and church planting to extend the kingdom.”³⁹ There are two distinct purposes for each church.

³⁷A. Scott Moreau, Harold Netland, and Charles Van Engen, eds., *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 648.

³⁸Sills, *Changing World, Unchanging Mission*, 13-14.

³⁹Sills, *Changing World, Unchanging Mission*, 12-13.

“The general mission of the church is to worship God, glorify Christ., make disciples of all nations, baptize believers and teach them to obey all that Christ has commanded.”⁴⁰ Also they may be given a specific ministry that God has called that church to do. Different ministries such as: senior citizens, children, food/clothing, homeless, prison, youth, marriage, or cross-cultural missions.

God is counting on the church to fulfill its mission and ministry as it has been assigned. Every born again disciplined believer should understand and be willing to play a part in God’s kingdom building effort. Each believer has been given a gift at the moment of their salvation to serve in the body of Christ. The church has been empowered with the Holy Spirit and has the Word of God as its guide. They can accomplish their mandate given by Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8) and go to the uttermost parts of the earth.

When the church understands that its mission is rooted in God’s mission and is captured by the incredible privilege of participating in God’s work for his name sake, we believe the church will be energized and empowered to pursue its spiritual calling and purpose, namely, to make God’s name known through making disciples to the ends of the earth (Matt 28:18-20). If the church shapes and orients its mission around God’s mission, it will not fail.⁴¹

Billions of people are lost headed to hell and need to hear and receive the gospel, this is the assignment for the church-the body of Christ to share the gospel and make disciples. The Bible states, “Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame” (1 Cor 15:34).

Lesson 9: What Kind of Leader/Missionary Is Needed for Mission Work?

“If I were to begin my ministry as a pastor tomorrow knowing what I know today, there is one commitment that I would elevate in terms of priority and attention. That one commitment is leadership. If I could begin my ministry again, I would certainly

⁴⁰Sills, *Changing World, Unchanging Mission*, 13.

⁴¹Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 17.

seek to be more consistent in intercessory prayer and more effective as” an _____
(fill in the blank; i.e., preacher, teacher, Christian parent, deacon, missionary, choir member, trustee, or usher).⁴² Jesus is the model leader who came to serve and not to be served (Mark 10:45). He also chose disciples that he would influence to carry on the mission that was given to him. “A leader influences others to effectively achieve a defined mission together.”⁴³ After the resurrection and 40 days before Jesus left earth he commissioned his disciples and the church, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt 28:19-20). Although Jesus commissioned believers he promised that he is with them always, as they do his work.

Whether a church leader or a missionary, there are certain requirements or qualification biblical leaders should follow (1 Tim 3; 4:12-16; 1 Pet 5:1-11; Rom 12:1-2; Heb 12:1-2). “Godliness is more important than giftedness. While being gifted is important, a gifted leader who lacks godliness can lead others to destruction. Godliness is crucial. ‘An overseer must be above reproach’ (1 Tim 3:2).”⁴⁴ It is important to be an example to the believers. Leaders are to be role models for others to follow. “Leading is much more than having people follow you; it is mentoring them in such a way that you can empower and release them to do the same thing on their own that you have done with them.”⁴⁵ Jesus tells his disciples in John 20:21, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” Therefore, “leading, then, is inspiring people who

⁴²Harry L. Reeder III, *The Leadership Dynamic: A Biblical Model for Raising Effective Leaders* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 7.

⁴³Reeder, *The Leadership Dynamic*, 43.

⁴⁴Reeder, *The Leadership Dynamic*, 56.

⁴⁵Sherwood G. Lingenfelter, *Leading Cross-Culturally: Covenant Relationships for Effective Christian Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 19.

participate with you in a community of trust to follow you-a leader or a leadership team- and be empowered by you to achieve a compelling vision of faith.”⁴⁶ Thus the Great Commission Matthew 28 :19-20 is to be fulfilled by the body of Christ, that is making disciples of all nations.

The kind of leader/missionary that is needed for mission work is also one who has a great grasp of conflict resolution. “Communication is the cornerstone of conflict resolution. The team leader must model communication clearly and help team members to communicate with each other openly and honestly. The purpose of communication is restoring relationships.”⁴⁷

Another key role of the leader/mission for mission work is found in the outline of Duane Elmer’s book, *Cross-Cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility*. A Leader/Missionary should model:

1. Openness: Welcoming Others into your Presence,
2. Acceptance: Communicating Respect for Others,
3. Trust: Building Confidence in Relationships,
4. Learning: Seeking Information That Changes you
5. Learning: Biblical Foundations for Change
6. Understanding: Seeing Through the Other’s Eyes
7. Serving: Becoming Like Christ to Others.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Lingenfelter, *Leading Cross-Culturally*, 19.

⁴⁷Evelyn Hibbert and Richard Hibbert, *Leading Multicultural Teams* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2014), 158.

⁴⁸Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 7.

Being a servant leader that leads God’s people in a humble way is needed today. When leaders show that they care, ready to listen and are compassionate, they will draw out the best in people.

Lesson 10: How Should One Pray for the Nations as a Believer?

“True prayer begins with God. It is the Lord who invited his disciples to pray (Matt 7:7-11). It is also a command of God that people pray continually (1 Thess 5:17). Prayer is the primary means that God uses to accomplish his work.”⁴⁹ It was 120 believers that gathered in the upper room praying that change happen. In the book of Acts prayer was a major part of the church. (Acts 2:42).

When Jesus says to the disciples, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt 28:19-20), it was to go cross-cultural to make disciples (learners) of all nations. Jesus says in Mark 11:17, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations.”

“The missionary’s prayer is not limited to revival itself; Jesus commanded us to pray for the very labors to work the fields that were ripe for harvest (Matt 9:36-38).”⁵⁰ There are many tools that can be used for believers, *Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation*, by Jason Mandryk, is such a guide.⁵¹ It lists 13 different organizations and helps to pray, research, and study more about missions and the people of the world. Appendix 2 has further prayer information from pages 923-950 of

⁴⁹Moreau, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, 781.

⁵⁰Moreau, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, 782.

⁵¹Jason Mandryk, *Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation* (Colorado Springs: Biblica Publishing, 2010).

Operation World. Prayer is often a forgotten resource at the believer's disposal. Most only use it in a desperate or emergency situations. "Believers are to pray about everything, confident that God hears prayers, cares, and is able to act."⁵²

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Phil 4:6-7). Paul is asking for an open door. "At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison" (Col 4:3). Even today, many countries are closing their door to Christians.

"The total population of individuals from unreached peoples is 2.84 billion, or 41.1% of humanity."⁵³ The church needs to pray and be mobilized to proclaim the gospel everywhere. "The vast majority of the unreached originate from the 10/40 Window area and fall into 11 major Affinity Blocs."⁵⁴ These people should be important to the Body of Christ. They are often forgotten, but Jesus told—the church—to "make disciples of all nations."

God ordained that our prayer be preserving to accomplish his sovereign work (Luke 11:5-8; 18:1-8). God uses persevering prayer to purify his church, prepare it for his answers, develop the lives of his people, defeat spiritual enemies, and give to his church the answer-intimacy with himself. This is especially important for missionaries working where the response to the gospel is limited.⁵⁵

The church must realize that God has given the church the tool of prayer. Prayer invokes God's power to intervene into the situation toward change. Jesus illustrates this principle in Matthew 9:37-38, "Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the

⁵²Richards, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, 496.

⁵³Mandryk, *Operation World*, 25.

⁵⁴Mandryk, *Operation World*, 25.

⁵⁵Moreau, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, 782.

laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” This principle works for all believers who sincerely pray.

Lesson 11: What Is Mission Mobilization?

Dr. Ralph Winter sounded the call for mission mobilizers. He describes the urgent situation this way: “Mission mobilization activity is more crucial than field missionary activity. Wouldn’t it be better to awaken one hundred sleeping firemen than to hopelessly throw your own little bucket of water on a huge fire yourself?”⁵⁶ One hundred firemen would be a whole lot more effective putting out a fire than one fire fighter. “Dr. Winter defines mobilization as ‘moving individuals out of positions in everyday life into career service in the bloodstream of the global cause’”⁵⁷ Dr. Winter makes a board statement when it comes to mobilization, but Jerry Rankin makes clear the definition as it applies to the local church. He defines mobilization as, “teaching believers in a local church to understand God’s global plan, motivating them to a loving response to God’s word, and providing opportunities for them to use their gifts, abilities and resources individually and corporately to accomplish his global plan.”⁵⁸

This definition shows how all believers, as the body of Christ, play a part because God has also ensured a gift at salvation to serve him. All believers have been given the same biblical mandate to preach the gospel to all creation and make disciples of all nations (Mark 16:15; Matt 28:19-20). The body of Christ should take seriously their assignment to share the gospel with urgency. Luis Palau “believes that the urgency of evangelism ought to drive every Christian to make it their first priority in life. With

⁵⁶Larry Reesor, “A Fresh Perspective on Mobilizing the Church,” *Mission Frontiers*, January 1, 2000, accessed January 30, 2018, <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/a-fresh-perspective-on-mobilizing-the-church>.

⁵⁷Reesor, “A Fresh Perspective.”

⁵⁸Reesor, “A Fresh Perspective.”

urgency and priority, every believer should make an intentional effort to share the gospel.”⁵⁹

It is important that believers get this definition and understanding right:

Glad tidings, or good news. Specifically, the good news that Jesus Christ (the incarnate Son of God) gave his life on the cross as a payment for his people’s sins, and then rose from the dead to demonstrate that the sacrifice was accepted; and therefore sinners can receive full forgiveness and all the blessings of heaven solely and simply through repentant faith in Christ.⁶⁰

Once believers know the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through them, then God can do his miraculous work. “Mission mobilization, simply put, is pointing people who know Jesus to entire people who don’t. The goal of mission mobilization is to help Christian worldwide see that Jesus’ commission to go make disciples of all nations is for each of us.”⁶¹

There is an easy and simple way to grasp this overwhelming mandate. It seems so big almost impossible to think that any church, could ever make a difference. But note this, “nearly all the tools, methods, and approaches to mobilization can be boiled down to three stages of development: show believers the Word of God; show believers the world God loves; and show believers the work God has called them to.”⁶²

1. The Word of God states believers have been given a mandate: (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8)
2. The world God loves states that God does not want any to perish (2 Peter 3:9) 2.5 billion have not heard the gospel.

⁵⁹Hongnak Koo, *The Impact of Luis Palau on Global Evangelism: An Evaluation of His Theology and Strategies* (Grand Rapids: Credo House Pub., 2010), 69.

⁶⁰John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Paul: Embracing the Good News at the Heart of Paul’s Teaching* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2017), 192.

⁶¹“Go Mobilize,” Center for Mission Mobilization (2016), 3, accessed January 30, 2018 www.mobilization.org/docs/gomobilize/GoMobilize-English-v1.7.pdf.

⁶²Go Mobilize,” Center for Mission Mobilization, 3.

3. The work God has called them to: be my witnesses to the world (Acts 1:8; 2 Cor 5:18-20).

Mobilization must happen, it is happening, but it needs to happen even more. People need the gospel presented to them more than ever which requires more laborers in the harvest field. Mobilization gets more laborers into the field.

Lesson 12: Why NBCP Needs a Mission Mobilization Plan?

The Scriptures relate a command that Jesus Christ left the church over 2000 years ago, the task of “making disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19–20). This important task has not yet been completed.

It is a great motivator for Christians, as we hold three truths in tension: that there is no name other than Christ by which men are saved, and all men who die apart from Christ abide in eternal torment; that there are approximately two billion people who have practically no access; to the gospel, and another two billion who have very little access; and that we, as believers, have a calling and responsibility to proclaim to them the good news.⁶³

NBCP needs to look into the Scriptures, look at the condition of the world and look at the work that God has called the church to do, then the church can see they are needed to make their contribution to fulfilling the Great Commission. There is a sense of hopelessness in the world. People are trying to fill that empty void with all sort of things, but not the true and living God. “Jesus gave us the command, the church as the missionary force, and the promise that He would be with us in the fulfillment of it.”⁶⁴

NBCP needs a mission mobilization plan so that they too can participate in God’s mission. It is obedience that God is looking for from the church. “Mission, from the point of view of our human endeavor, means the committed participation of God’s people in the

⁶³Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 15.

⁶⁴M. David Sills, *The Missionary Call: Finding Your Place in God’s Plan for the World* (Chicago: Moody Pub., 2008), 24.

purposes of God for the redemption of the whole creation. The mission is God's. The marvel is that God invites us to join in."⁶⁵

The Scriptures makes this clear with the fact that God is counting on believers.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:17-20).

As ambassadors, believers are a sent church of missionaries to people without the light of the gospel. "Missionaries serve as ambassadors of God. They are believers in Jesus Christ to whom God imparts certain spiritual gifts, and calls and sends out to make disciples and preach the good news (Matt 28:18-20; Rom 10:15)."⁶⁶ Christians become God's voice to express his love. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him (John 3:16-17)." God needs NBCP to do her part as other churches participate in the Great Commission, because 2 Peter 3:9 states, "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

The Great Commission of Jesus, the call to "go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19), is being lived out across the globe in a raucous and jubilant celebration of the gospel's transformative influence on earth. The evangelization of the whole world-making sure that everyone hears the gospel-is being realized as the message of Jesus circles the globe and attracts followers from every nation.⁶⁷

⁶⁵Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 66.

⁶⁶Moreau, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, 55.

⁶⁷Douglas Jacobsen, *Global Gospel: A Introduction to Christianity on Five Continents* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 225.

NBCP should be encouraged that there are other churches that are investing time, treasure, sacrifice, and people are giving their lives for the sake of the gospel.

Lesson 13: How Can Our Church Make Disciples of All the Nations?

It should be noted that, “Matthew closes his Gospel by making quite explicit what the opening of his Gospel had implied—the universality of Jesus Christ and the worldwide extent of the demand for discipleship.”⁶⁸ Each born again believer has the Holy Spirit living in them and if they are yielded to the word of God and the Holy Spirit their awareness to make disciples of all nations should be a natural response. When the biblical mandate is studied and learnt, the action of discipleship should take place. It must be more than just studying facts of the lost condition of the world but, that information must be undergirded with prayer.

Prayer that grips the heart of God and in turn grips believers and moves them with compassion for a lost world! God is looking for an obedient church that will fulfill his command. God has entrusted the church with the ministry and message of reconciliation. God has made a great investment in reconciling the world back to himself, he gave his only begotten Son – Jesus Christ (2 Cor 5:18-19). The church must understand the great lengths that God and his Son, Jesus Christ went through to provide salvation for all humanity, if they accept the gospel on God’s terms (John 1:12). As a response, the least the body of Christ can do is be thankful, grateful, appreciative and obedient to the biblical mandate given by Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19-20.

“The Great Commission is not a special calling or a gift of the Spirit; it is a command—an obligation incumbent upon the whole community of faith. There are no exceptions. Bank presidents and automobile mechanics, physicians and schoolteachers,

⁶⁸Wright, *The Mission of God*, 244.

theologians and homemakers—everyone who believes on Christ has a part in his work (John 14:12).”⁶⁹

The church must realize that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to do the convicting and the converting. Therefore, God wants to use believer’s voices to share the gospel. Christians need to pray for boldness (Eph 6:19). Prayer should also be made for the different cultures of the world for their openness to the gospel.

The world has always been comprised of thousands of ethnicities, languages, and cultures. But ‘the world’ of our own lives—our own cities, communities, schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods—is vastly more multicultural than a generation ago. Plus, through the Internet and social media, our connections internationally and multiculturally have also multiplied.⁷⁰

The nations have come to America. Therefore, believers need to not just pray for them but, engage in conversation to gain access of understanding to present the gospel clearly and make disciples of all people groups. “Any activity not in step with His design for human destiny is an exercise in futility.”⁷¹

The body of Christ must be open minded to accept all people the way that God made them and yet present the gospel in a clear, concise and compelling way. So that the process of discipleship can then begin with these new believers. NBCP must see people the way that God sees people, with the potential of being saved. God wants a spiritual relationship with all humanity through his Son Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12, 1 Tim 2:5), not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance (2 Pete 3:9). “How critically the church needs the Kingdom vision—a vision born of the Word of God and the reality of His will for humankind. Too easily we have settled for less, letting the world set our

⁶⁹Robert E. Coleman, *The Master’s Plan of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1987), 10.

⁷⁰Werner Mischke, *The Global Gospel: Achieving Missional Impact in Our Multicultural World* (Scottsdale, AZ: Mission One, 2015), 28.

⁷¹Coleman, *The Master’s Plan of Discipleship*, 41.

agenda, while the priorities of heaven are ignored.”⁷² It is important that NBCP take seriously the biblical mandate towards obedience, to make disciples, and this must be a high priority as it is with the Lord.

⁷²Coleman, *The Master's Plan of Discipleship*, 41.

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ABSTRACT

INCREASING EVANGELISM AND MISSION MOBILIZATION AT NEW BIRTH CATHEDRAL OF PRAISE IN SHERMAN, TEXAS

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This project was to develop a plan for increasing evangelism and mission mobilization at New Birth Cathedral of Praise (NBCP) in Sherman, Texas. The process involved assessing the congregation's knowledge of evangelism and missions in order to develop a curriculum for evangelism and missions. That process then led to the establishment of a mobilization plan to reach Sherman, Texas, and beyond.

Chapter 1 introduces the ministry context of NBCP, along with the rationale, purpose, goals, research methodologies, definitions, and delimitations of the project. Chapter 2 provides the biblical and theological basis for evangelism and mission mobilization. The gospel of Matthew provides three different models for advancing the gospel. Matthew 9:36-38 provides a model for gospel motivation; Matthew 10:1-23 provides a model for laborers in evangelism and Matthew 28:19-20 provides a model for laborers to be mobilized. These passages serve as the basis for increasing evangelism and mission mobilization.

Chapter 3 addresses the practical issues related to how the church must be equipped to communicate the gospel within the anti-Christian culture. Chapter 4 details the curriculum and lesson plans. Chapter 5 concludes with an overall evaluation of the project, and suggestions for improvement and further development.

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