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EQUIPPING PERSONAL EVANGELISTS
AT LIFE COMMUNITY CHURCH IN
OWENSBORO, KENTUCKY

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APPROVAL SHEET

EQUIPPING PERSONAL EVANGELISTS
AT LIFE COMMUNITY CHURCH IN
OWENSBORO, KENTUCKY

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I dedicate this work to the following:

Most importantly I dedicate the work to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
who saved a wretch like me.

Second, I dedicate this work to my best friend and wife, Taran Elise Rager, who encouraged me to pursue my doctorate, even with a house full of small children.

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PREFACE

I am incredibly grateful for my wife, Taran Elise Rager, for encouraging me to doctoral studies. I would have never accepted this challenge had it not been for her. She is my best friend.

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Kenny Rager

Owensboro, Kentucky

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Life Community Church, Owensboro, Kentucky (LCC), was planted with the expectation of being a Kentucky Baptist High Impact Church (HIC), with the expectations of averaging 250 in attendance, investing into church planting, giving actively to Southern Baptist work through the Cooperative Program, and the baptizing of new believers. Personal evangelism contributes greatly to making a high impact for the kingdom. Believing that pastors are given to equip the saints for the work of ministry (Eph 4:12), LCC desires to equip the personal evangelists.

Context

The ministry project took place at Life Community Church, Owensboro Kentucky. In the summer of 2012, my wife and I left our current ministry to plant a Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC)-sponsored, High Impact Church (HIC) plant. The dream was to plant a church that would reach the lost within my hometown of Owensboro, Kentucky. LCC began weekly services in a small community center in mid-October of 2012 and the church quickly began to grow. LCC chartered and constituted within two years, changed locations three times within three years, and united with both the KBC and our local Baptist association, all under the blessing of our sending church.

LCC places a high value on reaching the lost for Christ. Since the church was charged with becoming an HIC, it was to build evangelism into the DNA of the church from the beginning. The mission statement of LCC embraces the five purposes of the church through “Connecting to God through worship and discipleship, Caring for people

through fellowship and ministry, and Changing the world through evangelism.”¹ The third part of the mission statement places a high value on evangelism. The work of evangelism includes supporting missions, but also being missionaries in the community.

Though LCC has reached many for Christ, it must be stated that the LCC is still striving to become an HIC. LCC members often excel in the challenge of inviting friends or family members to a church service, but seldom are stories told of those who are actively sharing their faith. It is even more rare to hear that a church member has led a friend or coworker to Christ. Often members say, “I’m trying to get him to come to church,” or “I’m praying he comes here.” Though these intentions are commendable, members are most focused on getting people to attend services rather than sharing the gospel with them. The members try to get people to come and then rely on the pastor to explain the gospel to their guests.

LCC is situated in a neighborhood with a lot of need. Crime, poverty, drugs, and mental illness are no scarce commodity in the neighborhood. A quick tour of the neighborhood will reveal the devastating effects of sin. Observations quickly reveal the signs of drug use, poverty, and people who need the gospel. Many LCC members express the desire to bring the gospel to the community but they do not know how.

In the formal structure of the church, the outreach team (a group of five people selected by the nominating team and then approved by congregational vote) is responsible for leading the way in evangelism. The outreach team’s focus has consisted more with planning events than presenting the gospel. Block parties and other acts of community service have been excellent endeavors from the outreach team, and have even attracted people to the service, but intentional efforts of presenting the gospel have been scarce.

¹ Life Community Church, “Our Vision and Core Values,” accessed April 6, 2018, <http://lifeowensboro.com/sample-page/mission-and-core-values/>.

The Purpose Driven Church (PDC) class system was installed with the hopes of building disciples that would become evangelists.² The PDC class system, consisting of four classes (membership-101, maturity-201, ministry-301, and missions-401), is held periodically on the LCC calendar, with membership-101 being the most frequent (once a month). Each class is conducted in one sitting for a duration of two and a half hours. Members are expected to go through each class to complete the discipleship training.

Membership-101 has been a very effective tool in winning people to Christ. Many who have been baptized accepted Christ in the membership class. Unfortunately, the rest of the PDC class system has not been a success at LCC and is currently being evaluated for effectiveness. All members must complete membership-101 to be united with the church, but few make it to maturity-201 and ministry-301. Sadly, many of the members will never complete missions-401. Out of the 260-plus members of LCC, only 60-plus people have completed the evangelistic training.

Of those 60-plus that completed the evangelistic training, the majority completed missions-401 class when the pastor (myself) was teaching them. The class system has recently transitioned to the pastor teaching membership-101 and the deacons teaching subsequent classes. Few have attended the other classes since the transition. Small attendance is especially true for class 401. People have stopped showing interest in the classes since they are no longer taught by pastors. It is becoming apparent that the PDC class system is not being utilized for evangelistic training and a new option is needed.

LCC has baptized more than 120 people since its launch and has a membership of 260-plus. Though many have been reached for Christ at LCC, over half have come through transfer growth. The transfer growth consists of members who were absent from church life for a long period of time. LCC celebrates those who have come back to

² Life Community Church, "Class 101-Discovering Membership," accessed July 18, 201, <http://lifeowensboro.com/the-lcc-class-system/>.

church after a season of being backslidden or unchurched, but LCC must strive to reach the lost as an HIC.

The membership of LCC were willing to grow as personal evangelists but they needed better evangelism training. Believing that Scripture teaches that the pastor should assist in the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, LCC needed a personal evangelism training course taught by the pastor. A pastoral-led training group intended to greatly benefit the church.

Rationale

The context of LCC gives some understanding of why a personal evangelistic training course was needed at LCC. From the previously stated information and additional information gleaned from an online survey³ it was clear that the course was needed. First, because the majority of LCC baptisms were not the result of a church members leading someone to Christ, members needed to share the responsibility of evangelization. In the last five years of the church's existence many people were baptized. When examining the list of those baptized, it becomes clear that they were led to Christ either through a visit from the pastor, through the church membership class taught by the pastor, or they were led to Christ at an earlier age and never followed through with baptism. LCC members are good about inviting people to church and events but struggled with explaining the gospel to others. It was essential for each member of LCC to realize that they too should be obedient to the Great Commission as found in Matthew 28:18-20.

Second, because the members did not frequently share the gospel with others, they also had not led others to Christ. The voluntary, non-scientific poll conducted among the members and an additional follow up poll revealed interesting information. Out of 52

³ A voluntary, non-scientific poll was conducted among the membership of Life Community Church. In addition to the first poll, a second poll was administered to those who indicated that they had never led a person to Christ and were asked if they would be interested in a training course. These polls revealed excellent insights that helped determine the need to conduct a pastoral-led evangelistic training course at Life Community Church. See appendix 1 for the two non-scientific surveys.

people, the poll revealed that 26 had shared the gospel with a non-familial adult while 26 members had not—half of the people in the poll had never shared their faith. Nine people had led a non-familial adult to Christ while 43 had never led a non-familial adult to Christ. The first poll revealed that most people (68 percent) did believe it was a sin not to share the gospel, but the poll also revealed that (11 percent) did not believe it was sinful not to share.

Third, many LCC members recognized the need to share the gospel but needed help to do so. The informal surveys revealed that 53 out of 80 people were willing to engage the community around the church but felt uneasy about doing so. The same poll also revealed that church members could identify 1 to 5 people that they knew were not Christians. The second survey revealed that 4 people (out of 52) did not know how to share the gospel, 7 felt that past shame hindered their evangelism, 16 were afraid, and 25 did not know how to begin a gospel conversation.

Members needed help in overcoming fear and understanding practical tools in how to share the gospel. Authors like Oscar Thompson, who suggests the utilization of Acts 1:8 to help believers understand their networks,⁴ and Bill Faye's *Share Jesus without Fear* are excellent examples of tools that the members of LCC could be exposed to in an evangelistic training course.

Fourth, because the members of LCC need evangelistic training, they are more likely to be equipped if a pastor trains them. Since most members who completed missions-401 did so under the pastor, it appears that the congregation turns to the pastor for evangelistic advice. Since the pastor stopped conducting the missions-401, few have shown interest in the area of evangelistic training. The missions-401 material was dated and did not meet the current challenges that the people of LCC were experiencing.

⁴ Carolyn T. Ritzman and W. Oscar Thompson, *Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples*, ed. Claude V. King, rev. ed. (Nashville: B & H, 1999).

Understanding that the pastor is biblically called to equip the saints for ministry, as clearly taught in Ephesians 4:12, a relevant pastor-led training course on personal evangelism would help LCC greatly.⁵

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip personal evangelists at Life Community in Owensboro, Kentucky.

Goals

To equip personal evangelists successfully at Life Community Church, three goals were established. The three goals reflect a progressive order and build off each other. These goals operated under the assumption of Ephesians 4:12, that the pastor is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry.

1. The first goal was to assess the current personal evangelism practices amongst various members of LCC.
2. The second goal was to develop an eight-session curriculum to equip church members to engage in personal evangelism conversations.
3. The third goal was to increase the practice of personal evangelism at LCC.

Research Methodology

Three goals determined the effectiveness of this project. The research methodology used included pre- and post- surveys and an evaluation rubric. The tools used for the project were in agreement with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the project.

The first goal was to assess the current personal evangelism practices amongst various members of LCC. This goal was accomplished by administering the Personal Evangelism Inventory (PEI) to church members who had never led a non-familial adult to

⁵ See chap. 2.

Christ and who were willing to join a pastor-led personal evangelism training group.⁶ The PEI was a multiple-choice survey ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree with a numerical value assigned to each response (i.e., strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, disagree somewhat=3, etc.). “Strongly agree” was the desired response of each item (with the exception of six items where the response of “strongly disagree” was desired. These six items were numerically valued from 6 to 1 rather than 1 to 6).⁷ The survey was tabulated by adding all responses into a single PEI score. Goal 1 was considered successfully met when group members completed the PEI and the inventory was analyzed, yielding a clearer picture of the current evangelism practices among LCC church members

The second goal was to develop an eight-session curriculum to equip church members to engage in personal evangelism conversations. This goal was accomplished when the curriculum was written and evaluated. The evaluation of the curriculum was conducted by an expert panel who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum.⁸ This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. If the 90 percent benchmark was not initially met, the material was revised until it met the standard.

The third goal was to increase the practice of personal evangelism at LCC through an eight-week class that intended to increase awareness of the lost, knowledge of the gospel, and the knowledge of gospel techniques. This goal was accomplished through the teaching of the eight-week class. The goal was measured by re-administering the PEI to group members to measure the change in their practice of personal evangelism.

⁶ See appendix 2 for “Personal Evangelism Inventory.”

⁷ Items 10, 11, 15, 19, 23, and 28 aimed for a “strongly disagree” response.

⁸ See appendix 3, “Evaluation Rubric for Personal Evangelism Training.”

A *t*-test for dependent samples was used to measure any real difference from the eight-week class.⁹ This goal was considered successfully met when the results showed a statistically significant improvement

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

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

Evangelism. Evangelism should be understood to be the act of sharing with a lost person how they can be right with God through Jesus Christ. Weber explains evangelism as “the proclamation of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ with a view to bringing about the reconciliation of the sinner to God the Father through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁰

Equipping. Equipping should be understood as the act of making someone qualified for a task at hand. The term is often used in relationship to Ephesians 4:12 and comes from the Greek word *katartismos*. Swanson defines *katartismo* as “complete furnishing, a preparation or training that fully qualifies.”¹¹

The gospel. The *gospel*, from the Greek word *euangelion*, is to be understood as the historical story of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as a substitute for the atonement of man. Mounce refers to the gospel as “God’s redemptive activity in Christ Jesus on behalf of humans enslaved by sin.”¹² Author Greg Gilbert notes that the gospel also calls for a response: “We are accountable to the God who created us. We have sinned against that God and will be judged. But God has acted in Jesus Christ to

⁹ A *t*-test was chosen due to its simplicity and effectiveness in measuring mean differences.

¹⁰ T. P. Weber, “Evangelism,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 410.

¹¹ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 2938.

¹² Robert H. Mounce, “Gospel,” in Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 512.

save us, and we take hold of that salvation by repentance from sin and faith in Jesus. God. Man. Christ. Response.”¹³

The lost. The *lost* should be understood as a sinner who has not experienced the salvation of Jesus Christ. Butler writes, “Sinners are lost until they repent of their sins and find salvation.”¹⁴ Jesus himself used this term in Luke 19:10 when he stated, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.”

The personal evangelist. The *personal evangelist* may be understood as someone who engages the lost within their personal networks.¹⁵ Oscar Thompson points out that this is not global evangelism but an evangelism that targets the personal world that is unique to the evangelist.¹⁶

Two limitations applied to this project. First, the accuracy of the pre- and post-series PEI were dependent upon the willingness of the respondents to be honest about their practice of personal evangelism. To mitigate this limitation, respondents completed surveys in anonymity by utilizing a four-digit personal code for identification. Second, the effectiveness of the training was limited by the constancy of attendance. If the participants did not attend all of the training sessions, it was difficult to measure how beneficial the training had been. To mitigate this limitation, subsequent makeup sessions were offered.

Three delimitations were placed on the project. First, the project attempted to create personal evangelists from church members who had never led someone to Christ; therefore, this project was limited to Life Community members who indicated through a

¹³ Gregory D. Gilbert, *What Is the Gospel?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 32.

¹⁴ Trent C. Butler, *Luke*, Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 3 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 248.

¹⁵ The personal evangelist is not to be confused with the gift of the evangelist in Eph 4:11. See chap. 2.

¹⁶ Ritzman and Thompson, *Concentric Circles of Concern*, 29.

non-scientific survey that they had never led a person to Christ and were willing to be part of an evangelism training group. Second, the project was confined to twenty-two weeks, which included an eight-week training session for participants. The twenty-two weeks gave adequate time to prepare and teach the eight-week training sessions and conduct the post-series survey after sessions are completed. Finally, this project attempted to create personal evangelists and utilized several evangelistic methods as examples for training; therefore, this project was limited to a small sample of evangelistic examples that I predetermined as beneficial for equipping personal evangelist.

Conclusion

LCC must be a church that has knowledge, an understanding, and an active practice of evangelism. To press forward as an HIC, the people of LCC must be equipped with the help of their pastor. Though becoming an HIC is important to the people of LCC, obedience to the Great Commission is more important. LCC wants to be found faithful to her God by fulfilling the Great Commission through personal networks. Chapter 2 explains the biblical and theological basis for this project.

CHAPTER 2
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REASONING FOR THE
EQUIPPING OF PERSONAL EVANGELISTS

Church leaders have many expectations laid upon them. The apparent expectation is that of preaching and teaching the Bible weekly. Some church leaders have the weight of adequately expositing the Word of God before a congregation, while other church leaders may be expected to visit the sick, participate in leadership meetings, pray for the discouraged, and oversee various ministries. It can be challenging to find time to meet all of these expectations and may even seem impossible to add more to the schedule. Regardless of how church leaders feel about adding another requirement to the ongoing tasks of preaching, pastoring, teaching, and administrating, they must realize that they are to be involved in evangelism.

This chapter will show that church leaders are to lead in personal evangelism. Early church leaders were very capable of leading others to Christ and serve as excellent examples. Biblical examples of the evangelistic actions of church leaders can be utilized as examples of why church leaders are to be involved in evangelism. Selected biblical passages from Acts 8:4-25, 2 Timothy 4:1-5, Acts 16:16-32, and Ephesians 4:1-14 will support the thesis.

The Biblical Example in Acts 8:4-15

The church leader should be able to lead the church in evangelism. Acts 8:4-15 illustrates how early church leaders shared the gospel. The book of Acts chronicles the growth and development of the church. The book begins with the resurrected Jesus giving instructions to the disciples. The disciples are instructed to be his witnesses in

Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and beyond (Acts 1-8). It is within Acts 8 that Luke begins to detail how the gospel will leave Jerusalem and travel to other parts of the world.

Acts 8:4-25 recounts the story of the Hellenist deacon, Phillip, moving into Samaria after the death of Stephen, the first martyr. The story details Phillip's preaching of the gospel to the Samaritans and the Samaritans accepting the gospel. Word of the Samaritan conversion travels back to the Jerusalem church and Peter and John are sent to investigate. Upon arrival, Peter and John witness the Samaritans receiving the Holy Spirit. After this event, there is an episode with a magician named Simon, and the narrative concludes with the evangelization of several Samaritan cities.¹

Verse 4 reads that those "who were scattered" would go forth preaching the good news. The scattered are "those who had been scattered as a result of the persecution that started because of Stephen" (Acts 11:19). Though some Jerusalem leaders did not leave Jerusalem, it is clear that some did. Phillip, a deacon of the church in Acts 6:5, is the church leader who took the gospel into Samaria.

Verse 4 also serves as a connector to verse 25. Luke uses the word οὕτως, translated as "so" and "then" in verses 4 and 25 to illustrate a significant advance in the outreach of the gospel.² The narrative between 4 and 25 serves as "exhibit A"³ to support the thesis that those who were scattered preached the good news.⁴

¹ Modern source criticism views Acts 8:4-25 as a hodge-podge of oral stories about Peter and John, Phillip, and even Simon Magus (a Gnostic teacher) mixed by the author Luke. Prominent New Testament scholar Richard Longenecker refutes such claims and argues that Phillip was the source of Luke's account. Luke could have interviewed Philip to gain an understanding of the gospel's transmission from Jerusalem to the Gentile world. Richard N. Longenecker, *Acts*, in vol. 9 of *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 356.

² Longenecker, *Acts*, 356.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Phillip does proclaim the good news of Jesus to the Samaritans.⁵ The text indicates that the crowd heard the message but also observed the “signs he was performing” (Acts 9:6). Though the signs will be of interest to Simon in verse 13, Luke’s emphasis is on the “proclaiming of the Messiah” (Acts 8:5). Bruce writes, “As in the ministry of Jesus himself and of his apostles, so in the ministry of Phillip these works of mercy and power were visible ‘signs’ confirming the message that he proclaimed.”⁶ Simon’s error is the focusing on signs rather than the message of Philip.

Phillip’s message is received by the Samaritans. Signs were performed, unclean spirits cast out, and the paralyzed and lame are healed (v. 7). There was a great joy with the acceptance of Phillip’s message of good news. Verses 9 through 13 introduced a man by the name of Simon. Simon, a known sorcerer, believes the message and is baptized. Simon is intrigued by the miracles that accompany Phillip.

Word of the Samaritan conversion is heard in Jerusalem. The Jerusalem church sends delegates to investigate the claims of Samaritan salvation. Bruce notes that in the early days of the Christian mission the Jerusalem church felt an obligation to oversee the mission of the delivery of the gospel.⁷ The Jerusalem church dispatched Peter and John to verify the claims of Samaritan salvation.

⁵ Phillip’s city is not named, but it is critical that the text notes that it was a city in Samaria. Samaria had an interesting past with neighboring Judah. Samaria was the home of the ten tribes of Israel, who would be scattered by the Assyrians. The destruction of the capital city by Sargon of the Assyrians occurred in 722 BC. Due to Assyrians intermingling with the Jews, there would emerge a mixed blood of people. In 127 BC, John Hyrcanus led Jews to destroy the Gerizim temple, and again, the capital city of Samaria. Herod the Great offered to rebuild the Samaritan temple, but they refused the offer due to his involvement with the Jewish temple. The historical context would explain why both Jews and Samaritans may have a prejudice against each other and why some leaders may not desire to venture into Samaria for mission work. Kenneth O. Gangel gives a brief historical account of the Samaritans in *Acts*, Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 5 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 131.

⁶ F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, New International Commentary on the New Testament, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 165.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 168.

Luke has already recorded the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. Longenecker notes that it is Phillip, a Hellenist, who has delivered the gospel to these people, which may cause suspicion (a suspicion that Samaritans were saved and that a Hellenist delivered the good news).⁸ Peter and John have now witnessed the giving of the Spirit to the Samaritans and there is confirmation that the gospel has traveled to Samaria. God has sovereignly withheld the Spirit from the Samaritans until the church leaders can witness the connection between believing Samaritans and believing Jews. The understanding that Gentiles can receive the Holy Spirit is, as Gangel notes, “an issue especially crucial when Jerusalem and Samaria were involved.”⁹ If the gospel can impact Samaritans, then the gospel can impact the world.

It is interesting to note that John was part of the delegation sent to investigate the Samaritan conversion. The author, Luke, records in his gospel that it was John and his brother James who desired to call fire down on a group of Samaritans.¹⁰ The same John who desired for them to perish is now confirming that these believing Samaritans are his brothers. The church leader, John (who had earlier prejudices against them), now believes that he must share the gospel with them.

The narrative then shifts to a man named Simon. Earlier, Simon had been described as previously practicing sorcery, able to astound the whole city, one who claimed to be great, known by the title of “Great Power of God,” and able to astound

⁸ Longenecker, *Acts*, 359.

⁹ Gangel, *Acts*, 123.

¹⁰ Bruce writes,

This is the last occasion on which John plays any part by name in the narrative of Acts; here, as before, his role is a silent one alongside Peter’s. John, with his brother James, had once suggested that fire should be called down from heaven on a Samaritan community for its inhospitable behavior to their Master. It was with a different attitude that he now set out for Samaria with Peter. The earlier ban on the apostles’ entering any city of the Samaritans (Matt. 10:5) had been rescinded by the unlimited commission of witness laid on them by the risen Christ, in which Samaria was one of the areas explicitly mentioned. (Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 168)

people with his sorcery (Acts 8:9-11). Luke also informs that Simon has had some conversion experience and is now interested in Phillip's miracles. In verse 18, Simon,¹¹ after observing the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Samaritan believers, makes the mistake of offering to buy the power from Peter and John. Luke records Peter's response to Simon's request: "May your silver be destroyed with you, because you thought the gift of God could be obtained with money!" (v. 20). Verses 21-23 record Simon's further words and Peter's command to repent of his wickedness (v. 22). Simon requests that Peter pray for him. The outcome of Simon's life is not known.

Did Simon believe in Phillip's message? Polhill contends that he did not: "Simon had not responded to the gospel; he had responded to greed. He lacked the contrition and inner conviction that accompany a true response to the gospel."¹² Gangel agrees with Polhill attributing Simon's belief as "merely being caught up in the moment."¹³ Though Bruce does note, "Simon and his followers continued to be known as Christians, as Justin Martyr admits—a tribute, perhaps, to what Simon learned during the short time he spent in the company of Phillip."¹⁴

Regardless of what happened to Simon after this account, it is of importance to note that Peter commanded Simon to "repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that the intent of your heart may be forgiven you" (8:22). The Jewish church leader

¹¹ Who exactly was this Simon? Was he actually a believer? Polhill notes that Justin Martyr tells of a Samaritan Simon who was a Gnostic. The Gnostic Simon was worshipped as a God with a statue erected in honor of his deity in Rome. Justin Martyr also describes this Simon being accompanied by a prostitute who was the "first idea generated by him." Polhill suggests it is possible that there was no actual connection to the real Simon in Acts 8. Instead, the Gnostic Simon was just a fabricated idea to give Gnosticism a connection to the New Testament. Historical information about the early church fathers' view of Simon is from John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 217.

¹² Polhill *Acts*, 220.

¹³ Gangel, *Acts*, 122-23.

¹⁴ Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 172.

Peter is offering a Gentile magician, who has just committed a horrible sin, a chance to repent. When Peter and John encountered a wicked man, they did not call fire down upon him, but commanded him to repent.

Luke concludes the story in verse 25, he writes, “Then, after they had testified and spoken the message of the Lord, they traveled back to Jerusalem, evangelizing many villages of the Samaritans.” Polhill states that the “they” of the text certainly means Peter and John and possibly Phillip.¹⁵ The church leaders have endorsed the work and now intend to go back to Jerusalem to report their findings, but will evangelize on the way.

Polhill notes the significance of the apostles’ actions: “Not only did they endorse the Samaritan mission, but they also enthusiastically participated in it.”¹⁶ The participation of the apostles in the Samaritan evangelization will speak volumes to those in the Jerusalem church. Peter and John confirm the possibility of Gentile salvation, but even more, they witness the partial fulfillment of Jesus’ prediction (Acts 1:8).

Immediately after this passage, Luke records the salvation of more Gentiles. Phillip is called by an angel of the Lord to evangelize an Ethiopian man (vv. 26-40). Peter will also have more experiences with the evangelization of Gentiles through his interactions with Cornelius in chapter 10 (Peter will experience the household of Cornelius similarly receiving the Holy Spirit as the Samaritans had) (Acts 10:44-45). Peter’s encounter with Cornelius and Phillip’s encounter with the Ethiopian show the ongoing participation of church leaders in the work of evangelism.

Luke’s central message in Acts 8:4-25 is the moving of the gospel beyond Jerusalem. Church leaders themselves are leaving Jerusalem to participate in evangelization. Though much more could be said about the gift of the Spirit to the Samaritans (and even the household of Cornelius in chapter 10), Longenecker writes,

¹⁵ Polhill, *Acts*, 221.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

“Rather than trying to extract from the account further theological nuances of a deeper kind, we would better expend our energies in trying to work out, in theory and practice, the implications of such a divine interest in outreach.”¹⁷ Luke is showing that the Jewish church leaders were engaging Gentiles with the gospel.

The examples of Peter, John, and Phillip can be utilized to illustrate that church leaders are involved in personal evangelism. Another New Testament passage may be examined to reinforce the idea that church leaders are to lead in evangelism. Second Timothy 4:1-5 illustrates example of a church leader who evangelizes.

The Biblical Example in 2 Timothy 4:1-5

Church leaders should be able to lead the church in evangelism, as illustrated in Second Timothy. Second Timothy 4:1-5 is a charge from the apostle Paul to Timothy, to evangelize. As time is fleeting for the aging apostle, Paul gives appropriate instruction for Timothy to carry on the ministry. In chapter 4, Paul focuses on the task of preaching and the work of an evangelist. It is within Paul’s instructions about preaching and his instruction about the work of evangelism that the modern-day church leader will discover that he too is commissioned to do the work of an evangelist.

Paul begins the instruction of chapter 4 with a charge. Paul is charging Timothy “before God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead.” The importance of the evangelistic task is so serious that Paul invokes the image of Jesus as the judge. Paul also reminds Timothy that he is charging him “because of His appearing and His Kingdom.” The preaching and work of the evangelist are no small feat; it is to be serious work.

¹⁷ Longenecker, *Acts*, 359-60.

Mounce notes that the grammar is “awkward” and notices that “Paul starts with a prepositional phrase but continues with two accusatives used as oaths.”¹⁸ Regardless of the grammar, the oaths still carry much weight. These oaths are before the God who judges and the second appearing of Christ. Paul has painted a future eschatological scene to motivate Timothy to begin the work of evangelist quickly.¹⁹

Timothy’s motivation for the work of an evangelist is not only the judgment of Christ but also his “appearing and his kingdom.” Paul connects the second appearance of Jesus with the coming kingdom. Larson sees this as an encouragement to Timothy’s evangelization.²⁰ The believer longs for the coming kingdom but is encouraged every time a person places faith in Jesus. In one way, the membership of the coming kingdom is built on earth as Timothy participates in the work of an evangelist.

Paul’s charge to Timothy is fivefold. Timothy is instructed to preach, be persistent regardless of convenience, be serious, endure hardship, and do the work of the evangelist. Paul intentionally lists “preach the word” at the forefront of the five commands.

¹⁸ William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 571.

¹⁹ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 571. The charge may surprise some with its lack of mentioning the Holy Spirit. One may question why the third member of the Trinity absent from Paul’s charge. Liefeld attempts to explain this absence: “Judgment is under the authority of God the Father, who has ‘entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father.’” Walter L. Liefeld, *I & 2 Timothy, Titus*, The NIV Application Commentary, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 286-87. The Holy Spirit is absent from this charge due to divine roles of the Trinity that places judgment upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is charging Timothy in the name of Jesus, who will return and who will begin a righteous judgment. The judgment should motivate Timothy to do the work of the evangelist. As Larson notes, “There ought to exist in all of us a healthy fear of the future.” Knute Larson, *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 9 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 318.

²⁰ Larson writes,
Though outposts of his kingdom are established whenever God’s will is carried out by the power of his Spirit, the fullness of his kingdom remains in the future. Just as salvation has come in part to each believer, still we await the fullness of our salvation when Christ appears. Paul intended these coming realizations, though partially experienced now, as encouragement for faithful service.” (Larson, *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, 318-19)

Lea believes this is intentional and serves as the basis for all of the other commands (with the remaining commands explaining how he should proceed in preaching the word).²¹

Preaching and the work of the evangelist are connected. Lea and Griffin write, “To ‘preach’ does not imply that an ordained minister is to stand behind a stately pulpit and expound Scripture. It called Timothy to a public heralding of the gospel message, whether done in a mass meeting or person-to-person.”²² Lea and Griffin’s statement illustrates that the task of preaching could have involved personal evangelism and was not limited to the public sermon.

It is also necessary to understand Paul’s use of the phrase “the word.” Larson attempts to define Paul’s use of “the word” from what was earlier written in 2 Timothy and 1 Timothy. Larson notes that “the word” would include Paul’s teachings (2 Tim 2:2), “sound doctrine” (1 Tim 1:10; 2 Tim 1:13), the “glorious gospel” (1 Tim 1:11; 2 Tim 1:11), the “true faith” (1 Tim 2:7; 4:1; 2 Tim 1:5), and the “Scriptures” (1 Tim 4:13).²³ Timothy is to do more than present a polished homiletic; Timothy is to declare the timeless revealed truths and God’s beautiful plan of salvation.

Timothy’s second charge is “be ready in season and out of season.”²⁴ Fee does not see clarity within Paul’s statement of “in season and out of season” and draws attention to Paul’s usage of the verbs and adverbs in the statement. Fee writes, “The verb is probably best translated ‘stand by it’ or ‘keep at it’, that is, your proclaiming of the Word. The double adverbs (*eukairos*, *akairos*) are either subjective (having to do with

²¹ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *I, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 242-43.

²² Ibid.

²³ Larson, *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, 319.

²⁴ The command to be ready also includes rebuking, correcting, and encouraging. It is to be understood that the proclaiming of the gospel will include rebuking those who hold false beliefs, correcting those confused about the gospel, and encouraging the lost with the goodness of the gospel. The encouragement of the gospel will also include being patient with the lost person and ongoing teaching.

Timothy) or objective (having to do with his hearers).”²⁵ Fee interprets it as keeping with the task whether it is convenient for the hearers.²⁶ Since Christ is coming soon to judge, it would be wise to follow Fee’s interpretation. His interpretation is especially true in light of what Paul will write in verse 3. Timothy (as well as the modern day church leader) must be about the work of sharing the gospel (whether people want to hear it or not) because time is fleeing.

Paul is clear why Timothy must be persistent in declaring the gospel, even if people do not want to hear it. Verse 3 reads, “For the time will come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear something new.” The text indicates a coming time when the soundness of the gospel will not be tolerated, even to the point that people will gather around themselves teachers who teach new (but false) doctrines. It is within this context that Timothy must remain faithful to declare sound doctrine.

Liefeld sees a connection between Paul’s use of “in season and out of season” and “the time will come” in verse 3. Liefeld writes, “The word ‘time’ (*kairos*) has the same root as the words translated ‘season’ in verse 2; it will reappear in verse six with reference to the time of Paul’s impending death.”²⁷ The use of the word *time* strengthens the argument that the preaching is to happen regardless if people want to hear it or not, but it also raises the question of when will this *time* occur?

The coming time is either a time that is coming in Timothy’s present context or a time that is coming within future Christendom. Mounce views this as a coming time that has already begun:

²⁵ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 284.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Liefeld, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 287-88.

Although the verse is not stated as a prophecy of the increase of evil as the final day approaches, it is within that context that it should be understood, as 3:1-9 and 1 Tim 4:1-5 show. There too the prophecy is stated as a future reality but a future that has been realized in Timothy's present.²⁸

Mounce also notes that verse 4 states that they will wander into myths while 1 Timothy 1:4 indicates that the people have already begun to teach myths.²⁹ As time continues to press forward, the modern day church leader must realize that Jesus is coming to judge, people need to hear the gospel (whether they want to or not), and as time continues, it will become more challenging to share the gospel.

Timothy is to persist in his task of declaring the good news of Jesus. Paul instructs Timothy in verse 5, "But as for you, exercise self-control in everything, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." Verse 5 includes the remaining charges to Timothy as he preaches the word. In addition to preaching and being persistent, he is to possess self-control, endure hardship, work as an evangelist, and fulfill his ministry.

Enduring hardship and faithfulness are crucial to the completion of the gospel task. It is important to remember that it is the apostle Paul giving the instructions. A survey of the book of Acts chronicles Paul's hardships and persistence in delivering the gospel. Paul is now fading off the scene, and Timothy must now endure and be faithful. Though more can be said about endurance and ministry, particular attention needs to be drawn to the phrase, "Do the work of an evangelist."

Fee notes that the noun *evangelist* is also found in Ephesians 4:11 and Acts 21:8 and recalls the initial charge in verse 1.³⁰ Timothy's act of declaring the good news is similar to that of Phillip the evangelist, who took the gospel into Samaria. Like Phillip, Timothy will be declaring the gospel (perhaps in this case to a group that does not want

²⁸ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 574.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 286-89.

to hear it) through preaching and personal witness. Timothy should see himself as an evangelist who is charged before God to warn people of the coming judgment upon the living and the dead.

In 1 Thessalonians 3:2, Paul refers to Timothy as “God’s coworker in the gospel of Christ.” In Philippians 2:22, Paul declares that Timothy has served with Paul in the gospel ministry. Mounce notices that both verses are using a cognate of the word *evangelist*.³¹ The evangelist is fulfilling the great commission by serving and working. The work of the evangelist is an active work that requires motivation.

Paul has solemnly charged Timothy to preach the Word. One could argue that Timothy’s commission was an evangelistic commission, even though he will preach to those who may not want to hear what he has to say. The next verses give an understanding of why Paul is concerned with Timothy pursuing evangelistic work. Paul is about to die, he is “already being poured out as a drink offering,” his departure is close, he has finished his race (2 Tim 4:6-7). The great missionary, even when close to death, is still concerned for the lost that need to hear the gospel.

Jesus gave the Great Commission to his followers. Paul passed down the commission to Timothy. Timothy’s charge is to preach the Word because a Christ is coming. The Christ who is coming will come as a judge who will surely judge the living and the dead. Paul has instructed Timothy and all those who will read these words to do the work of an evangelist.

Mark Dever contributes to the book *Dear Timothy* with a chapter on evangelism. Dever offers several insights inspired by 2 Timothy 4:1-5. His insights are aimed toward church leaders and their involvement in evangelism. On one occasion Dever reminds church leaders that the work of an evangelist is a special responsibility

³¹ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 576.

that church leaders have.³² Dever would also encourage readers to view those who have been saved through their evangelism as their *magnum opus*, or their greatest achievement. As church leaders exercise their evangelistic responsibility they will be partaking in a beautiful and meaningful work

Timothy partnered with Paul for the work of evangelism. Church leaders can also partner in the work of evangelism by being deeply concerned that the lost will be saved. Church leaders should consider Paul's words to Timothy and then do the work of the evangelist. Church leaders would be wise to observe Paul's personal evangelistic ministry, especially his Philippian ministry, to further support the idea that they should be involved in evangelism.

The Biblical Example in Acts 16:11-34

Church leaders should be able to lead the church in evangelism by evangelizing and modeling evangelism in a variety of circumstances. Acts 16:16-32 details Paul's evangelistic encounters in Philippi. Earlier, in Acts 15:36-41, a division occurs between the apostle Paul and Barnabas regarding Mark. Paul opposes Barnabas' desire to take Mark with him on the next evangelistic journey. As a result of this disagreement, Barnabas chooses Mark and Paul chooses Silas. The narrative then shifts to the further evangelistic adventures of Paul. Chapter 16 presents three examples of Paul's evangelistic ministry. Though a modern-day church leader is not an apostle, the example of the apostle Paul's team ministry in various situations may motivate and encourage the church leaders to model evangelism to others.³³

³² Mark Dever, "Do the Work of an Evangelist," in *Dear Timothy: Letters on Pastoral Ministry*, ed. Thomas K. Ascol (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2004), 165.

³³ Chap. 16 begins with Paul and Silas discovering Timothy (another pupil who will accompany Paul in his evangelistic efforts). The text then shifts to a vision that Paul experiences. In the vision, Paul receives instruction to go to Macedonia (Acts 16:6-10). V. 10 uses the word "we." It is here that the author of Acts, Luke, joins the evangelistic party already consisting of Paul, Silas, and Timothy.

Upon arrival at Philippi, Paul's evangelistic party seeks out a place of prayer (v. 13). Paul usually begins his evangelistic work within the synagogues, but there appears to be no synagogue in Philippi. The lack of a synagogue indicates that there are not enough Jewish men to constitute one.³⁴ Regardless of the lack of a synagogue, the team seizes the moment to share the gospel with those gathered by the river. It is here the team evangelizes Lydia. Lydia is a woman of wealth with some knowledge of God.³⁵ She responds to Paul's message, converts, and becomes an aid to the evangelistic party. The text is clear that she responded to "what was spoken by Paul" (v. 14).

After Lydia's conversion, the team continues ministering in Philippi. The continual ministry will bring them in direct contact with a girl who is able to predict the future.³⁶ The girl, who served as a source of income for her masters, followed the evangelistic party and shouted that the men were "servants of the Most High God" (v. 18). After many days of such behavior, Paul turns to her in frustration and casts the demon

The party's first stop will be the Roman colony of Philippi where three very different people will experience Christian conversion.

³⁴ Bruce writes, "At Philippi, however, there does not appear to have been a regular synagogue. That can only mean that there were very few resident Jews; had there been ten Jewish men, they would have sufficed to constitute a synagogue." Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 310. A lack of Jews seems likely since the first evangelistic encounters in Philippi are women by a river and not men in a synagogue. There also seems to be anti-Semitic sentiments in the city of Philippi (v. 20).

³⁵ Macedonian women were known for their independence and (if freeborn or freed) their ability to undertake business dealings. Luke intentionally mentions that Lydia is a dealer in purple. This fact would indicate that she is a person of wealth, Polhill writes, "She is described as a dealer in goods dyed purple, a likely occupation since Thyatira was indeed a center of the purple dye trade. Lydia's business is not an incidental detail." Lydia's finances and influence could have been a significant help for the beginning Philippian church. Her being wealthy seems likely, especially since she invites the evangelistic team to stay with her in-house. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 311; Polhill, *Acts*, 348-49. Lydia is described as one who "worshipped God" (v. 14). There was an extensive Jewish community in Lydia's hometown of Thyatira; therefore, it is likely she came to believe in God that way. Polhill, *Acts*, 349.

³⁶ The girl's "spirit of prediction" in v. 16 should be of interest. Polhill points out that the literal Greek speaks of a "python spirit." This "python spirit" would draw the image of the mythical python that guarded the Apollonian temple. The myth was later used to refer to oracles who would receive their information through the spirit of the said python. Even the pagan generals had a reputation for consulting the oracles before going to war. Gangel observes that a person with a "python spirit" would be a "gold mine for her master." Gangel, *Acts*, 271-72.

out. The casting out of the demon led to Paul and Silas' imprisonment. The text states that the girl was demon possessed.³⁷ David Williams writes, "The same strong word of command is found in Luke's narrative of the Gerasene demoniac (Luke 8:29), and in a way, the situation here was similar to that faced by Jesus at Gerasa"³⁸ Again, it is Paul who is taking the lead over the evangelistic party when he casts the demon out of the girl.

Paul and Silas are brought before the magistrates because of their encounter with the girl (her owners had now lost their source of income and dragged Paul and Silas into the marketplace before the authorities). Since the "we" passages end in verse 17, it is understood that Luke and Timothy are not dragged away. The reason for Paul and Silas being arrested (not Luke and Timothy) is likely due to Paul and Silas being Jews. Williams writes, "They (the Jews) were generally disliked, perhaps never more than at this time when feeling against them was running particularly high in Rome itself."³⁹ Anti-Semitism seems to play a role in this scenario.

After being beaten, Paul and Silas are brought to the inner prison and secured in the stocks. It is at this point Luke mentions Paul and Silas' midnight praying and singing, which would have been heard by the other inmates. After a miraculous earthquake and chains coming off the walls, the jailer becomes frightened and desires to kill himself. Paul and Silas instruct the jailer that all the prisoners are there and there is no need to commit suicide.⁴⁰ The encounter led the jailer to ask Paul and Silas about

³⁷ Longenecker writes, "Later the word python came to mean a demon-possessed person through whom the Python spoke—even a ventriloquist was thought to have such a spirit living in his or her belly. Undoubtedly all who knew the girl regarded her as neither fraudulent nor insane, but as demon possessed and able to foretell the future." Longenecker, *Acts*, 462.

³⁸ David J. Williams, *Acts*, New International Biblical Commentary, vol. 5 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 286.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 287.

⁴⁰ Longenecker writes, "In Roman law, a guard who allowed his prisoner to escape was liable to the same penalty the prisoner would have suffered. Thus the jailer drew his sword to kill himself,

salvation. The man believes, his family then believes, and they are all baptized.⁴¹

After the supernatural earthquake and a realization that prisoners have not escaped, the jailer asks, “What must I do to be saved?” Longenecker believes that this man would have heard what the demon-possessed girl had said about them in verse 17.⁴² Longenecker notes that the man uses the word *kyrioi* (sirs), which would carry a note of adoration.⁴³ The beatings, singing, praying, earthquake, and lack of a prison escape has caused this man to seek spiritual salvation from Paul and Silas. The entire episode is evangelistic.

In the previous two accounts, Paul took the lead with Lydia and the demon-possessed girl. Here the text states that “they” spoke to the jailer. Paul and Silas instruct the man to “believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household” (v. 31). Polhill makes it clear that the salvation of the jailer’s household was not “proxy” faith, but that they too heard the message proclaimed and believed (v. 32).⁴⁴ The

believing the prisoners had all escaped.” Longenecker, *Acts*, 464. Longenecker’s observation would explain why the jailer was about to commit suicide.

⁴¹ Those who favor form criticism may debate the Philippian jailer account. According to Longenecker, the form critics see this story as another ancient story of another miraculous prison escape, with the fact that v. 35 could be read directly following v. 24, indicating that the story was inserted at a later time. Longenecker refutes such views:

The fact that a story resembles other accounts of a similar type provides very little basis for impugning its historicity. And to conclude that because one portion of a story follows nicely after another portion separated from it by a block of material, that this is intervening material and must be a later insertion, is indeed a precarious critical procedure. (Longenecker, *Acts*, 464)

The Philippian ministry already noted the conversion of Lydia and the deliverance of the demon-possessed girl. The conversion of the Philippian jailer does not seem incongruent with Luke’s storytelling. *Ibid.*

⁴² Acts 16:17 reads, “As she followed Paul and us she cried out, ‘These men, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation, are the servants of the Most High God.’”

⁴³ Longenecker, *Acts*, 465.

⁴⁴ Polhill, *Acts*, 355-56.

washing of Paul and Silas' wounds, baptism, and a sharing of a meal all express a sincerity of salvation.⁴⁵

Acts 16 details how Paul shared the gospel with Lydia, cast out a demon, prayed, and sung in times of suffering. Modern church leaders would be wise to engage in evangelism in a variety of settings, like Paul did. Church leaders may also be encouraged to bring others along for the purpose of modeling evangelism.

The act of modeling evangelism in a variety of circumstances provides real life education to the apprentices. As church leaders model evangelism they will be conducting a great service for their church. As others learn to share their faith they will be equipped to do the work of the ministry.

The Biblical Example in Ephesians 4:7-16

Church leaders should be able to lead the church in evangelism because they are gifted to equip the saints for ministry. One direct application of equipping saints for ministry could be evangelistic training. Ephesians 4:1-14 shows that a variety of church leaders are given to help the congregation fulfill their ministry.

Paul has much to say about church unity in chapter 4 in his letter to the Ephesians. Paul begins with a reminder that the Ephesians are “one body” (v. 4) and then moves the conversation to how they are to function as one body (vv. 7-14). Unity occurs when the Ephesian Christians are actively pursuing their ministry because they have been equipped (v. 12). The equipping of the Ephesian Christians will happen through those who have been “gifted” to the church (the church leaders). The various church leaders fulfill their duties when he begins the work of equipping.

Thielman divides the paragraph into two subsections, with verses 7-10 focusing on the gift giver and verses 11-16 being one long sentence which focuses on church leaders

⁴⁵ Bruce, writes, “The jailer bathed the wounded backs of the two men, probably at a well in the prison courtyard, and there too he and his household were baptized.” Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 318.

and the “gifts of five groups of people to the body of Christ so that they might, in turn, equip the ‘saints’ for the work of ministry”⁴⁶ Verse 16 paints the picture of a functioning church that is growing and unified because the saints are being equipped and are fulfilling their ministry.

Paul identifies Jesus as the gift giver (v. 7). Five specific church leaders are identified as the gifts. The gifts are described as a “grace” that Christ is giving. Anders writes, “Grace has not been apportioned equally. Rather, Christ has chosen how to divide grace to each member. Each is distinct and different.”⁴⁷ The gifts of grace are diverse. Five groups of different leaders (identified as apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers) are the gifts that Jesus gives to the church.⁴⁸

Verse 8 is used as a scriptural reference to illustrate that Christ is qualified to give these gifts. There is some debate about Paul’s usage of the Scripture. At first glance, it appears he is quoting Psalm 68:18, but further inspection notes that wording is not the same. Even the way Paul introduces this verse is unusual.⁴⁹ Patzia notes that scholars often conclude Paul has either made a deliberate alteration, an “unintentional

⁴⁶ Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 262.

⁴⁷ Max Anders, *Galatians-Colossians*, Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 8 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 150.

⁴⁸ Thielman agrees that the grace given, in this context, is regarding the church leaders. He writes, “The combination of the terms χάρις (*charis*, grace), δίδωμι (*didōmi*, give), and δωρεά (*dōrea*, gift) last occurred in Paul’s digression on his personal role in God’s purposes as a herald of the gospel to the Gentiles.” Thielman, *Ephesians*, 263. The earlier reference is found in Eph 3:2 and 3:7. Paul writes, “You have heard, haven’t you, about the administration of God’s grace that he gave to me for you?” (Eph 3:2), and then, “I was made a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace” (Eph 3:7). Christ is giving this grace (the church leaders) to the church so that they may be equipped and work together in unity.

⁴⁹ In regard to “For it says,” Bruce writes, This precise formula occurs once again in this letter (in Eph 5:14, introducing what is not recognizably a quotation from scripture) but nowhere else in Pauline corpus; no particular significance attaches to this, however (“it says” or “he says” is common enough in Paul when scripture is being quoted, whatever the accompanying adverb or conjunction may be). (F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, New International Commentary, 2nd rev. ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984], 342)

misquotation," or has used a piece of rabbinical exegesis.⁵⁰ There are three significant differences from Paul's usage to the original Psalm 68:18 wording. Thielman notes that the three differences are (1) the subject of the statement, so that it no longer tells God what he has done in the second person, but narrates what Christ has done in the third person; (2) Paul changes the collective singular noun "humanity" to the plural noun, "human beings," and (3) Paul changes the verb "received" to its antonym "gave" and modifies the end of the statement so that instead of God receiving gifts among humanity (singular), Christ gives gifts to human beings (plural).⁵¹

Anders suggests that Paul is not giving a direct quote. Instead, Paul is summarizing the entirety of Psalm 68.⁵² An ancient Targum changes the wording to "he gave gifts to men" (which is not in the Hebrew of Ps 68:18),⁵³ which leads Bruce to suggest that Paul selected the Targumic reading for this specific context.⁵⁴ If this is true, then Paul is reinforcing the picture of the military leader climbing up to Jerusalem and, as Bruce writes, "The tribute received by the victor from the vanquished foe will be dedicated to him. This tribute is referred to as 'gifts' which the victor has received 'among men'"⁵⁵

As contested as verse 8 is, verse 9 is also the subject of debate. Paul says that

⁵⁰ Arthur G. Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, New International Biblical Commentary, 5th ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 236.

⁵¹ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 265.

⁵² Anders writes, Psalm 68 is a victory hymn composed by David to celebrate the conquest of a Jebusite city. It describes a victory parade up Mount Zion, going beyond the literal, historical victory parade to attribute the victory to God. Thus it talks about a figurative victory parade with God ascending, not up to Mount Zion, but up to heaven. (Anders, *Galatians-Colossians*, 150)

⁵³ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 342-43.

⁵⁴ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: A Verse-By-Verse Exposition* (Toronto: Fleming H. Revell 1961), 82.

⁵⁵ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 340.

the Christ can give these gifts because “the One who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things” (v. 10). What does Paul mean by Christ descending? Patzia gives three possibilities: “(1) the earth; (2) the region below the earth, such as Hell or Hades; (3) Christ’s humiliation on the cross and his subsequent death and burial; and (4) Christ’s return at Pentecost to give his Spirit to the church.”⁵⁶

Historically, the passage has been understood as Christ descending into Hell but it may be better understood as the incarnation of Christ.⁵⁷ Patzia favors this view, especially in context of the giving of gifts, because the same Lord who ascended is the same Lord who descended (when he gave his presence on earth), in order to give the current gifts⁵⁸ Because of the incarnation (the descension), death, resurrection, and that the ascension has occurred, he will now “fill all things”(v. 10). Bruce writes, “The ‘filling’ of the universe inaugurated in his ascension, is now being put into effect more particularly as he supplies the church with everything necessary to promote the growth of the body until it matches his own fullness.”⁵⁹

Verse 11 notes the five different ministers gifted by Christ. Bruce notices similarities between 1 Corinthians 12:4, 28, with spiritual gifts and ministers in the church. Even though the ministers are not called gifts, these ministers are thought of as receiving

⁵⁶ Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 237.

⁵⁷ Anders writes,

This passage has historically been understood as Jesus’ having descended into hell and preached a proclamation of freedom to someone there. Recently, that interpretation has fallen into disfavor. The weight of evidence and the preponderance of modern commentaries now lean toward saying that the intent of the phrase is not to point to a specific place, such as the inner core of the earth, or to “hell,” but simply to refer to the incarnation. (Anders, *Galatians-Colossians*, 151)

⁵⁸ Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 238.

⁵⁹ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 344-45.

the gifts.⁶⁰ These ministers include apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers. Regarding evangelism, the evangelist may be of interest to the current subject matter, but here the “evangelist” is better understood as someone whom God has equipped to travel from place to place with the good news.⁶¹ The “pastor and teacher” are part of the group that equips the saints for the work of ministry. Regarding evangelism training, church leaders (not just the evangelists) must be willing to train believers in evangelistic endeavors.

Patzia defines “equipping” when he writes, “The word *katartismos* (‘training,’ ‘preparing,’ ‘equipping’) conveys the idea of harmonious development in which all parts are brought to a condition of being able to perform according to their created purpose.”⁶² Within context, the equipping of ministry would build up the body (v. 12), bring unity and knowledge of God’s Son (v. 13), maturity (v. 13), and truth spoken in love (v. 15). The goal is for the church to grow into the head, Christ (v. 15). Every piece working together brings growth to the entire body (v. 16). These beautiful results do not occur unless there is first the equipping of the saints.

The phrase “speaking the truth in love” brings to mind the image of declaring truth but doing so with loving motives, which would be beneficial for evangelistic activities. Bruce writes, “The confession of the Christian faith can be cold and indeed unattractive if it is not accompanied by the spirit of Christian love.”⁶³ Anders declares that speaking the truth without love is a sign of immaturity and will stop the church from growing into Christ.⁶⁴ The church leader would be wise to remind the saints of the need

⁶⁰ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 84.

⁶¹ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 274.

⁶² Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 243.

⁶³ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 352.

⁶⁴ Anders, *Galatians-Colossians*, 152.

to demonstrate the love of Christ.

Verse 16 is clear that Christ “promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part.” Thielman writes, “Here Christ is the head and therefore the source of this unity and growth . . . both guiding its construction and crowning its completion.”⁶⁵ Christ has descended through the incarnation, died, was buried, raised, ascended into heaven, and has given the gifts to the church, and it is through Christ that the church finds the source of power to fulfill its ministry.

Ephesians 4:7-16 illustrates how Christ gifts the church with a variety of church leaders. The church leaders are intended to equip the saints for the work of ministry with a desired goal of building and unifying the body. Though evangelism training is not taught in this section of Scripture, it can be viewed as a direct application of this Scripture.

Evangelistic training can both build and unify the church in many ways. First, evangelistic training will bring a variety of peoples together to be trained. Christians assembling, even for evangelistic training, may yield some unity. Second, the evangelistic training itself may be used as a means to bring maturity and unity to the saints as people are gathered together for the common goal of training. Finally, evangelistic training can grow and the body as new people are added.

Church leaders are to see themselves as ministers given by the Lord Jesus to promote growth and unity within the church. A direct application of Ephesians 4:7-16 may be the provision of evangelistic training. When members are equipped for evangelism they may grow in both maturity and unity.

Conclusion

Church leaders should be involved in evangelism. Illustrations from the life of Phillip, Peter, and John demonstrate how early church leaders were directly involved in

⁶⁵ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 286.

evangelism. Paul's charge to Timothy, a church leader, was to "preach the Word" and "do the work of an evangelist," and it is a charge that modern day church leaders should heed. Paul's Philippian ministry illustrates how Paul evangelized in a variety of situations with a team; likewise, church leaders may be encouraged to evangelize in a variety of situations while modeling evangelism to others. Finally, Paul's teaching in Ephesians 4:7-16 should remind church leaders that ministerial equipping is necessary for the church and evangelistic training can be one way to equip.

Church leaders are busy. Church leaders are tasked with preaching, administrating, counseling, and more. All these tasks can be time-consuming and draining, but church leaders must never forget that they should be involved in evangelistic work.

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE EQUIPPING
OF PERSONAL EVANGELISTS

In times past, the church growth movement may have led churches to place unhealthy attention on numerical attendance as opposed to equipping personal evangelists to share the gospel. This unhealthy focus on numbers has trapped churches within trends that rely on the gathering of crowds through attractional events, marketing, and gimmicks.

The church must equip its people to become personal evangelists. The equipping process must go beyond mere attractional events by spending time with members to properly train them. Even though church growth trends may have some positive effects, evangelism should primarily occur as a result of the development of personal evangelists.

**Teaching a Biblical and Adequate
Definition of the Gospel**

The pastor equips personal evangelists through the teaching of a biblical and adequate definition of the gospel. To share the gospel, the Christian must first understand the gospel. William Henard believes the lack of gospel understanding is so widespread that many “Christians” are actually “closet universalists,”¹ believing that all people will make it to heaven regardless of their response to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When a Christian cannot explain the gospel, he cannot be committed to the Great Commission.² Church trainings may be conducted to ensure that all members of

¹ William Henard, “The Great Commission Leader: The Pastor and Personal Evangelist,” in *The Great Commission Resurgence: Fulfilling God’s Mandate in Our Time*, ed. Adam W. Greenway and Chuck Lawless (Nashville: B & H, 2010), 269.

² William Henard, Executive Director of the West Virginia Baptist Convention and Southern Seminary professor, writes,

the church can adequately explain the gospel. Tim Keller suggests a regular and intense time of processing the gospel through training, taught by either the pastor or a church leader.³ It is hoped that regular training will help the Christian articulate the gospel.

Regular evangelistic training may yield positive results. Research shows 12 percent of non-churched friends and relatives make decisions for Christ when the gospel is shared to them by an evangelistically trained Christian.⁴ When more people are evangelistically trained and become active in evangelizing, more people may come to faith in Christ.

When church leaders conduct evangelistic training they should also provide resources and curriculum for his trainees. With the assumption that the pastor is an evangelical, he should use the Bible for all curriculum and for defining the gospel. Stackhouse writes that evangelicals have always been “Bible people”⁵ who regard the Bible as the authority for practice and belief. Though some evangelical liberals may object to Stackhouse’s statement, his idea that the Bible is the authority for practice and belief should be the basis for evangelistic training. As Stackhouse writes that the Bible for evangelistic training should be considered “the final authority over matters of faith and life.”⁶

Believers are to worship, disciple, fellowship, and minister, but none of those things will ever be complete on this side of heaven. God intends that followers of Jesus, while they are still here, will commit themselves to the priority of a Great Commission evangelism, whereby they “go. . . and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19-20). (Henard, “The Great Commission Leader,” 275)

³ Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 74.

⁴ Gary L. McIntosh and Charles Arn, *What Every Pastor Should Know: 101 Indispensable Rules of Thumb for Leading Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 30-31.

⁵ John G. Stackhouse, Jr., ed., *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 46.

⁶ Stackhouse, *Evangelical Futures*, 85.

Understanding the Gospel

As the pastor utilizes the Bible for the basis of evangelistic training, he will be required to teach what the gospel is. In attempts to answer the question “What is the Gospel?” Keller believes that there are two biblical ways to answer this question:

One is to offer the biblical good news of how you can get right with God. This is to understand the question to mean, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ . . . The second is to offer the biblical good news of what God will fully accomplish in history through the salvation of Jesus.⁷

Keller would caution not to answer only one of the questions but both questions, he continues,

The danger in answering only the first question (What must I do to be saved?) without the second (What hope is there for the world?) is that, standing alone, the first can play into the Western idea that religion exists to provide spiritual goods that meet individual spiritual needs for freedom from guilt and bondage. . . . But the danger in conceiving the Gospel too strictly as storyline for the renewal of the world is even greater. It tells listeners about God’s program to save the world, but it does not tell them how to actually get right with God and become part of that program.⁸

The gospel is both the hope for the world and a plan of personal salvation. Keller warns of only seeing the gospel as a storyline. When personal evangelists interact with those that do not know Jesus, the evangelists must explain God’s plan to their lost friends. Personal evangelists must know that the gospel is not good deeds done for social justice but instead a powerful message of “being right with God.”

DeYoung and Gilbert would identify what Keller calls “being right with God” as the “gospel of the cross.”⁹ In their definition, the gospel of the cross is “the message that sinners can be forgiven through repentance and faith in the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.”¹⁰ Though DeYoung and Gilbert would also have a

⁷ Keller, *Center Church*, 32.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 106.

¹⁰ Ibid.

definition for what they call “the Gospel of the kingdom”¹¹ (which describes a hope for the world), the pastor is encouraged to help the student specifically articulate the gospel of the cross. When the lost person understands and believes the gospel of the cross they will then begin to understand the gospel of the kingdom,¹² moreover, as Keller writes, “The richness and complexity of the Gospel” will “begin to emerge.”¹³ Gilbert and DeYoung’s definition of the gospel of the cross may be used for evangelistic training. The gospel can be defined as “the message that sinners can be forgiven through repentance and faith in the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.”¹⁴

Sin, Cross, and Resurrection

Since the gospel presentation is a message of how sinners can be forgiven, the presentation must include the topics of sin, cross and resurrection, and an invitation. First, there may be a temptation to speak about the love of God while excluding the topic of sin. Will McRaney cautions the evangelist: “By elevating tolerance and removing sin from our vocabulary, we still cannot eliminate the consequences of sin or the need for removal of that sin.”¹⁵ When omitting the depravity of man, the evangelist cheapens the death of Jesus. Verses that address the sinfulness of man, such as Romans 3:10, 3:23, and 6:23, should not be ignored when confronting the lost person about their sinful behavior.

¹¹ DeYoung and Gilbert define the gospel of the kingdom as “the whole complex of promises that God makes to those who are redeemed through Christ.” Ibid.

¹² DeYoung and Gilbert write, “We never see the promise of the new creation called ‘the Gospel.’ Nor do we see reconciliation between humans called ‘the Gospel.’ But we do see reconciliation between man and God called ‘the Gospel’ precisely because it is the one blessing that leads to the rest.” Ibid., 109. When the gospel is articulated first as reconciliation between God and man the gospel of the kingdom can then be thoroughly explained.

¹³ Keller, *Center Church*, 32.

¹⁴ DeYoung and Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?*, 106.

¹⁵ Will McRaney, *The Art of Personal Evangelism: Sharing Jesus in a Changing Culture* (Nashville: B & H, 2003), 84.

Excluding the topic of sin from the presentation eliminates the need for forgiveness. Ephesians 2:8-9 clearly states that man is saved by grace through faith. God is the giver of grace. Man is helpless to save himself and must rely on Jesus. McRaney writes, “The Christian message is embodied in Jesus Christ.”¹⁶ It is not a feel-good message or a self-help message, but a message of total dependence on Jesus Christ. When the lost person is confronted with his sin, he will realize his hope is only in Jesus.

Second, the gospel message must include the cross and resurrection. DeYoung and Gilbert write of a person holding only a handful of leaves and insisting that they are holding a tree. They equate these leaves to the blessings that one receives from the gospel, but not the gospel itself. Declaration of the cross of Jesus is necessary to present the gospel accurately. They write,

You cannot proclaim the “full Gospel” if you leave out the message of the cross, even if you talk for an hour about all the other blessings God has in store for the redeemed. . . . In the same way, unless the blessings of the Gospel of the kingdom are connected to the cross, you don’t have a Gospel at all.¹⁷

The gospel message includes Christ dying on a cross as a sacrificial substitute. Bible verses such as Romans 5:8, 1 Peter 3:18, and 1 John 4:10 declare the importance of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ concerning the salvation of man.

As the gospel includes the sacrificial death of Jesus, it must also include his resurrection. The apostle Paul states that if Christ did not rise from the dead, then the gospel message is in vain. In Romans 10:9, Paul states that belief in the resurrected Jesus is critical for salvation: “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Evangelists need to be informed that the gospel includes both the death of Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus.

¹⁶ McRaney, *The Art of Personal Evangelism*, 86.

¹⁷ DeYoung and Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?*, 107-8.

Finally, the gospel message must include an invitation. When commenting on 2 Timothy 4:2, Henard observes, “Paul admonishes Timothy to invite people, to urge people, to plead and to beg with them in regard to their spiritual condition.”¹⁸ Timothy was trained to present the gospel and then encourage the person to respond to the gospel. Likewise, the evangelist could present the gospel and plead with the lost person to accept the gospel.

When instructing church members to give invitations when sharing the gospel, it may be helpful to remember the value of ongoing relationship with the lost. Warren Bird and Carl George encourage relationship building. They believe that relationship building involves enthusiasm and the deployment of spiritual gifts.¹⁹ Though relationship building can be challenging work, it directly affects evangelism. McIntosh and Arn take note of the use of a relational “friend to friend approach” when evangelizing: “Of those who make a commitment to Christ through this approach, 78 percent stay active and involved.”²⁰ Instructions on how to build relationships are necessary when training church members to become personal evangelists.

As the pastor equips church members with a biblical and adequate definition of the gospel, church members will then be expected to go forth and share the gospel. After the church members understand the gospel, the church members must then identify individuals that need to hear the gospel.

Identifying and Praying for the Lost

The pastor can equip his congregation through evangelistic training that teaches an adequate definition of the gospel, but the task of creating personal evangelists goes

¹⁸ Henard, “The Great Commission Leader,” 276.

¹⁹ Warren Bird and Carl George, *Coming Church Revolution, The: Empowering Leaders for the Future* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1994), 64.

²⁰ McIntosh and Arn, *What Every Pastor Should Know*, 29.

beyond the instruction of what the gospel is. The pastor helps personal evangelists through instruction on how to identify and pray for the lost within personal networks. When the church member understands what the gospel is and then understands who they are to share the gospel with, then church member will be better equipped to share the good news.

There is no shortage of lost people. Thom Rainer, former president of LifeWay, has estimated that there are 160 million unchurched people in America.²¹ It is likely that the majority of the unchurched number are lost. The lost are found in every state, every city, every town, and in every neighborhood.

The church growth movement has made many efforts to reach the lost in a variety of ways. Some church growth experts and leaders may advocate for the use of homogenous church principles²² or crowd drawing gimmicks.²³ Churches that subscribe to church growth techniques may be more motivated with growing the attendance size than with actual conversions. Jim Cymbala, pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, rejects church growth principles. The Brooklyn Tabernacle Church in New York City was a small and dying church before Cymbala became the pastor. Today, the Brooklyn

²¹ Thomas S. Rainer, "A Resurgence Not Yet Fulfilled: Evangelistic Effectiveness in the Southern Baptist Convection since 1979," in Greenway and Lawless, *The Great Commission Resurgence*, 39.

²² C. Peter Wagner describes the homogenous principle: "The social, racial, cultural, economic and linguistic composition of the local church should as nearly as possible reflect the corresponding marriage and family patterns of the community in which it exists if it is to maximize its evangelistic potential." C. Peter Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow* (Glendale, CA: Regal Books, 1977), 141. The homogenous principle would teach that a church should only evangelize those who are similar to the current makeup of the existing congregation. Even though the personal evangelist will look into existing networks for evangelism, he should not limit himself to only those who "reflect the corresponding marriage and family patterns of the community." Ibid.

²³ In *Ashamed of the Gospel*, John MacArthur details some examples of church growth gimmicks:

For several years a colleague of mine has been collecting a 'horror file' of clippings that report how churches are employing worldly gimmicks like slapstick, vaudeville, wrestling exhibitions, and even mock striptease to spice up their Sunday meetings. No brand of horseplay, it seems, is too outrageous to be brought into the sanctuary. Burlesque has become the liturgy of the pragmatic church. (John MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 32.

Tabernacle is one of the largest churches in New York City and has reached many New Yorkers with the gospel. Cymbala writes about the church growth movement, “The Bible does not say we should aim at numbers but rather urges us to faithfully proclaim God’s message in the boldness of the Holy Spirit. This will build God’s church God’s way”²⁴ Cymbala encourages a proclamation of the gospel instead of the reliance on church growth principles.²⁵

The proclamation of the gospel happens when an individual proclaims the good news of Jesus Christ to a lost person. As Henard writes, personal evangelists must be “intentional.” Henard describes this intentional act of evangelism as “going outside our normal activities to establish relationships . . . [and] confrontational . . . in the sense that we must come to the point that we confront people about their need for Christ.”²⁶ Personal evangelists are concerned with a person’s eternal destination more so than the crowd at the Sunday service. The evangelist is intentionally seeking out those that do not know Christ and boldly proclaiming the good news.

Unfortunately, not every Christian is actively engaged in the practice of personal evangelism. The Christian who is not engaged in personal evangelism is committing, what Rainer would call, sinful disobedience. Rainer writes, “The Bible is replete with commands and admonitions to communicate passionately the Gospel with others.”²⁷ If the Christian

²⁴ Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire: What Happens When God’s Spirit Invades the Heart of His People* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 124.

²⁵ Cymbala speaks specifically about the homogenous church principle of the church growth movement. He warns of the dangers of focusing on one homogenous group: “The idea that a church could be called just to serve yuppies or some other designated class is not found in the New Testament. The ravages of sin are not pleasant—but they are what Jesus came to forgive and heal. ‘The Son of Man came to seek and to save what is lost’ (Luke 19:10).” *Ibid.*, 141.

²⁶ Henard, “The Great Commission Leader,” 269.

²⁷ Rainer, “A Resurgence Not Yet Fulfilled,” 47.

is disregarding God's commands, then he has become spiritually disobedient. In addition, many Christians may isolate themselves from the lost.²⁸

The Lost within Personal Networks

Christians must engage the lost because the lost need to hear the gospel. The Christian becomes naïve to the fact that many people may want to attend church. Rainer estimates that 8 out of 10 unchurched people indicate that they would come to church if invited.²⁹ Tom Mercer indicates a similar finding in his studies. Mercer notes that those who come to faith primarily do so because of the evangelistic efforts of a friend or relative (his study revealed that 75 to 90 percent of those who come to faith did so in this way).³⁰ Research indicates that the lost are open to hearing from their friends about the gospel.

The church should note such observations. If Christians isolate themselves from the lost, when the lost are receptive to the gospel, then the church must intervene in the lives of her members. Mercer calls for a “widescreen vision, the ability to see the immediate, local evangelistic opportunities (found in their worlds) as well as the global evangelistic opportunities (in the world).”³¹ Building off the word *oikos* (meaning “household” in the Greek), Mercer encourages the evangelizing of those who are in one’s

²⁸ A common temptation for Christians may come in the form of disassociating oneself from those that do not know Christ. Many Christians tend to ignore the lost around them. Henard offers an explanation for this for phenomenon:

Truthfully, most Christians probably do not like being around non-Christians. Once Christ has transformed an individual, that person will often become very aware of the behavior of others. People outside of Christ become offensive in the language they use, in the attitudes they demonstrate, and in the behaviors they accentuate. As a result, many Christians isolate themselves from non-Christians. (Henard, “The Great Commission Leader, 273-74)

²⁹ Rainer, “A Resurgence Not Yet Fulfilled,” 39.

³⁰ Tom Mercer, *Oikos, Your World, Delivered* (Chapel Hill, NC: Professional Press, 2008), 37.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

household (or who one is in close connection with).³² Evangelistic training, offered by the pastor through the church, may help members discover the lost within their networks.

Oscar Thompson believed that the most important word in the English language is the word “relationship.”³³ Thompson reached this conclusion by observing the outward wave that the gospel traveled in the book of Acts (from Jerusalem to Judea, then Samaria, and then the uttermost parts of the earth).³⁴ In Thompson’s view, the gospel continues to move outward in the Christian’s relationships, beginning with those in close relationship with the Christian and then extending out to acquaintances and strangers.

Mercer reaches a similar conclusion with his *oikos* relational evangelism strategy. Mercer writes, “God has given each of us, on average, anywhere from eight to fifteen people who He has supernaturally and strategically placed in our relational worlds. . . . This is the world He wants to use each of us to change, our individual world.”³⁵ Both Thompson and Mercer would encourage Christians to observe their concentric circles or the eight to fifteen people in close connection to them. By doing this, the Christian will discover many within their networks do not know Christ.

Evangelistic training sessions could assist in identifying the lost within relational networks. Utilizing Thompson’s *Concentric Circles of Concern* introduces the church member to the seven circles of relationships.³⁶ Church member would then begin to list

³² Mercer, *Oikos, Your World, Delivered*, 74.

³³ Carolyn T. Ritzman and W. Oscar Thompson, *Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples*, ed. Claude V. King, rev. ed. (Nashville: B & H, 1999), 8.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁵ Mercer, *Oikos, Your World, Delivered*, 34.

³⁶ Thompson’s seven Concentric Circles help identify different relationships that an individual has. Circle 1 is the relationship a person has with God. Circle 2 is the relationship a person has with those who live under their roof. Circle 3 includes all relatives. Circle 4 are the person’s close friends. Circle 5 includes neighbors and coworkers. Circle 6 includes acquaintances. Finally, Circle 7 includes Person X. Person X is identified as a person whom one may not know by name but does randomly come into one’s

various relationships they have with people that do not know Christ. Christians may be surprised with how many lost people are within their networks. Mercer notes, “I actually have people tell me that they don’t really know any non-Christians, but that’s because no one has ever trained them to think *oikocentrically*. We are all more connected to non-believers than we realize.”³⁷ Through the exploration of relational (*oikos*) connections, the Christians will then see who they are responsible for when sharing the gospel. If they still claim not to know lost people, then they have not genuinely explored their networks.

The exercise reveals the names of the lost within networks. Personal evangelists are not to discard any of the names. Disobeying the Great Commission should not be an option for any believer, especially if the believer has discovered connections with specific lost people. Henard cautions believers to recognize their accountability in the realm of witnessing.³⁸ The future judgment of believers should be a motivation for the Christian to share the gospel. Christians should consider both themselves standing before God and the lost person standing before God.

Sharing the gospel within personal networks could be intimidating. Cymbala understands the challenge of reaching those far from Christ and encourages believers to discover their need for God.³⁹ Evangelism is a spiritual act and requires a spiritual evangelist. Evangelism calls for a supernatural reliance upon God. Supernatural reliance occurs through prayer.

life. Identifying connections within the seven circles helps the evangelist see whom he can evangelize. Ritzman and Thompson, *Concentric Circles of Concern*, 98-110.

³⁷ Mercer, *Oikos, Your World, Delivered*, 103.

³⁸ Henard, “The Great Commission Leader,” 271.

³⁹ Cymbala’s ministry at the Brooklyn Tabernacle appears to have been very difficult at times. These difficulties were seen in the area of evangelism. Cymbala recalls, “When you have alcoholics trying to sleep on the back steps of your building, when your teenagers are getting assaulted and knifed on the way to youth meetings, when you bump into transvestites in the lobby after church, you can’t escape your need for God.” Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, 49.

Praying for the Lost

After identifying the lost within their relational network, Christians should begin praying for those individuals. Prayers will also be utilized to attune the believer to the instructions of God. Both Mercer and Thompson, advocates of the relational evangelism model, believe that prayer is of utmost importance. Mercer writes, “Listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. This is very important. As you move into this *oikocentric* lifestyle, you will find more and more that you’re hearing that small whisper guiding you. Listen to Him.”⁴⁰ Thompson writes, “You must intercede for those in your circles. You must pray for God to meet their spiritual, physical, or whatever needs they have. You are his vessel. You must be available.”⁴¹ Those who suggest relational evangelism models propose that the believer is to pray for those within their networks.

Cymbala is not surprised that an evangelism focus would require spiritual means. In his view, an evangelistic effort should call the Christian to forsake time-consuming hobbies and instead engage in activities like prayer and fasting for the lost.⁴² Since Christians already have some relationship with lost people, they should know how to pray for lost people. Christians may pray for open hearts, opportunities, boldness, and receptivity.

The pastor can equip personal evangelists by helping them identify and pray for the lost within their networks. The group has an adequate definition of the gospel and now begins to see who they are to share the gospel with, but the group may still be apprehensive about the task at hand. The pastor must now direct the group to various evangelistic presentations that they could utilize when sharing the gospel with those within their networks.

⁴⁰ Mercer, *Oikos, Your World, Delivered*, 103.

⁴¹ Ritzman and Thompson, *Concentric Circles of Concern*, 125.

⁴² Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, 180.

Exposure to Various Gospel Techniques

The training process of becoming personal evangelists includes an adequate definition of the gospel and instruction on how to identify and pray for the lost within networks. Also, some church member may require a knowledge of various gospel methods. The pastor can equip personal evangelists through the exposure to various gospel techniques. The pastor's motivation in presenting the various techniques is to lay a foundation for continuing evangelism.⁴³

Understanding Gospel Techniques

Gospel techniques are simple tools designed to assist a Christian with the presentation of the gospel to a lost person. Gospel techniques are varied, with some possibly being very effective and some not being very effective. Some may argue that the utilization of a gospel technique is similar to church growth gimmicks, but a clear distinction must be made between the two. Growth gimmicks attempt to draw crowds to a service whereas a gospel technique is designed to assist personal evangelists in the process of sharing the gospel.

Personal evangelists may need to share the gospel in a variety of ways for different contexts. First, personal evangelists will likely have struggles when presenting the gospel. Evangelist Bill Faye, author of *Share Jesus without Fear*, believes that many people will not share the gospel because "they don't know how."⁴⁴ A gospel technique confronts this excuse through the teaching of a systematic process of presenting the gospel.

⁴³ Robert Coleman's work *The Master Plan of Evangelism* calls for church leaders to disciple a group of individuals similarly as Jesus did with his disciples. Coleman's model heavily influences the idea of a pastoral-led personal evangelism training group. Coleman writes, "Surely if the pattern of Jesus at this point means anything at all, it teaches that the first duty of church leadership is to see to it that a foundation is laid in the beginning on which can be built an effective and continuing evangelistic ministry to the multitudes." Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 30th anniversary ed. (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1993), 36. Presenting various gospel methods to those being training is an attempt to lay a foundation for continuing evangelistic ministry.

⁴⁴ Linda Evans Shepherd and William Fay, *Share Jesus without Fear*, reissue ed. (Nashville: B & H, 1999), 17-26.

When believers are engaged in personal evangelism, they discover that people are not all the same. The homogenous church growth principle teaches that churches should attempt to attract those that are like them. Personal evangelists work from a different perspective; they are willing to go to anyone in order to fulfill the Great Commission. Those who are evangelized through personal evangelists may be similar to them, or they may be very different from them.

Gary McIntosh writes, “Today’s world continues to be a rich mosaic of cultures. While some cultures and subcultures are disappearing, there still exist thousands of different cultural expressions to which the Gospel message must be adapted.”⁴⁵ Christians need exposure to various gospel techniques to discover what is useful when sharing the gospel with the lost.

One technique may be beneficial in one context while another one is not effective. Training in various techniques will educate personal evangelists in the process of sharing the gospel and provide options when presenting the gospel. Exposure to various gospel techniques may help some overcome struggles when sharing.

Second, gospel techniques need to aid personal evangelists in initiating a gospel conversation. When presenting the gospel, the evangelist must understand the importance of a conversation. Harry Reeder writes, “Evangelism should be a dialogue. . . You can find out where people are spiritually, and challenge them to think about their faith, through questions such as the ones suggested by *Evangelism Explosion*.”⁴⁶ Here Reeder references a dialogical technique (*Evangelism Explosion*) that he prefers. When a gospel technique utilizes a dialogical approach, the personal evangelist will begin to touch the lost with the gospel.

⁴⁵ Gary L. McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth: How You Can Work with God to Build a Faithful Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 129.

⁴⁶ Harry L. Reeder III and David Swavely, *From Embers to a Flame, How God Can Revitalize Your Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2012), 197.

Some churches may leave church members with the impression that evangelism is just a presentation where the lost person listens with no chance to participate in a dialogue. Coleman cautions against this when he writes, “There is a lot of talk in the church about evangelism and Christian nurture, but little concern for personal association.”⁴⁷ A gospel technique should adequately encourage a conversation between the lost person and the evangelist.

Another example of a conversational gospel technique is Faye’s *Share Jesus without Fear*. Faye’s gospel technique involves asking a lost person thought-provoking questions.⁴⁸ Faye argues that questions are valid for two reasons: it allows the other person to express opinions, and it allows the questioner to be in control without putting the other person on the defense.⁴⁹ The *Share Jesus without Fear* technique would greatly encourage personal evangelists by equipping them with conversation starters and helping them overcome fear.

Third, gospel techniques include a faithful, systematic, and helpful layout of Scripture texts.⁵⁰ Coleman identifies that Jesus utilized Scripture while mentoring the disciples and that “they too should know and use the Scriptures in their own life.”⁵¹ Personal evangelists use Scripture when sharing the gospel. Romans 10:17 states that

⁴⁷ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 49.

⁴⁸ The *Share Jesus without Fear* technique begins by asking the lost person five conversational questions: Do you have any kind of spiritual beliefs? To you, Who is Jesus? Do you think there is a Heaven or Hell? If you died where would you go and why? If what you are believing is not true would you want to know? Shepherd and Fay, *Share Jesus without Fear*, 33.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Not every gospel technique may include a systematic, faithful, and helpful layout of Scripture. It is the responsibility of the pastor to examine and study gospel techniques before presenting them to his training group. The pastor will want gospel techniques to embody an adequate definition of the gospel.

⁵¹ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 73.

faith comes through “hearing the Word.” Gospel techniques can assist with the lost hearing the Word.

Faye’s *Share Jesus without Fear* serves as another example of a faithful, systematic, and helpful layout. Faye’s technique presents a series of seven Scriptures to a lost person.⁵² These seven Scriptures begin with man’s depravity, then the substitutional death of Jesus, and ends with an encouragement to accept and believe. Other gospel techniques may include differently arranged texts but should always use Scripture as a way of presenting the gospel to the lost.

The memorization of certain Scriptures encourages personal evangelists to rely on the Word of God as opposed to church growth gimmicks. The gospel technique ensures that the presentation stays on track. If the conversation is a genuine dialogue, then the Scriptures will be the topic of conversation. Opportunities for the evangelist to share personal experiences may emerge in the conversation.

Fourth, a gospel technique may present an opportunity to share a personal testimony. Since a gospel conversation should be a dialogue, it would be proper for the evangelist to present the technique by sharing details from his own life. The sharing of a personal testimony may have a tremendous impact on the lost.

Rick Warren highly encourages the use of testimony in his gospel technique, as presented in the *Purpose Driven Life*. Warren’s specific method for sharing a gospel testimony is worth noting. Warren encourages the division of the testimony into four parts for gospel effectiveness.⁵³ The testimony is used to reiterate the gospel message. Warren writes, “Unbelievers would probably lose interest if you started quoting theologians, but they have a natural curiosity about experiences they’ve never had. Shared stories build a

⁵² Rom 3:23; Rom 6:23; John 3:3; John 14:6; Rom 10:9-11; 2 Cor 5:15; Rev 3:20.

⁵³ Rick Warren’s four parts of dividing a testimony are (1) what my life like before I met Jesus; (2) how I realized I needed Jesus; (3) how I committed my life to Jesus; and (4) the difference Jesus made in my life.

relational bridge that Jesus can walk across from your heart to theirs.”⁵⁴ The evangelist has utilized Scripture and personally shared about the faith. The evangelist must now encourage the lost person to make a decision.

Fifth, gospel techniques assist the evangelist with the leading of a lost person to the point of decision. Faye writes, “Obviously, we look for the opportunity to present the Gospel to people. Yet we would be remiss if we did not give people a choice, the choice to receive life or death.”⁵⁵ Most gospel techniques include steps to becoming a Christian. The idea is for personal evangelists to explain the gospel to the lost person, dialogue with them, and then encourage them to believe and place trust in Christ. This encouragement comes at the end of the technique.

A clear example of this is found in Faye’s *Share Jesus without Fear* model. The model begins with dialogue questions, transitions to a systematic presentation of Scripture, and then concludes with four questions for the lost person.⁵⁶ The questions are intended to make the person reflect upon what they just heard and then respond. If the lost are ready to surrender their lives to Christ, then the personal evangelists leads the lost person in a prayer of belief and repentance.

It could be argued that such questions play upon emotions and are used to manipulate the lost person into “praying a prayer.” Asking questions that would encourage the lost person to believe is not foreign to the New Testament. When standing before King Agrippa, the apostle Paul asked, “King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets?” (Acts 26:27). Paul is an example of one who utilizes questions in hopes of encouraging

⁵⁴ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?*, expanded ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 288.

⁵⁵ Shepherd and Fay, *Share Jesus without Fear*, 44.

⁵⁶ Faye’s closing questions are (1) Are you a sinner? (2) Do you want forgiveness for your sins? (3) Do you believe Jesus died on the cross and rose again? (4) Are you willing to surrender your life to Jesus?

someone to decide to follow Christ. Many other examples of believers “encouraging the lost to make a decision” are found throughout the book of Acts.

Applying Gospel Techniques

Exposure to gospel techniques may be needed. The Share *Jesus without Fear* model and Warren’s *Purpose Driven Life* testimony model are just two examples of the many models that exist. By presenting multiple models to personal evangelists during training, the pastor will encourage and further equip them in their task of sharing the gospel with various peoples.

The key to a biblically-faithful gospel technique is the application. Coleman writes, “We fail, not because we do not try to do something, but because we let our little efforts become excuses for not doing more.”⁵⁷ Personal evangelists may meet significant challenges if they are not willing to learn and utilize new models when presenting the gospel. If the evangelist has been a Christian for some time, then he may especially need to learn new models.⁵⁸ Personal evangelists have been taught various methods and must now rise above the excuses for not knowing how to share the gospel.

Now personal evangelists are equipped with an adequate definition of the gospel, have identified and begun praying for the lost in their networks, and have been equipped with various gospel techniques to aid them in presenting the gospel. However, the trainee may still find themselves nervous and uneasy about sharing the gospel. The pastor must now help build confidence in personal evangelists.

⁵⁷ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 95.

⁵⁸ Harry Reeder writes to those who have been Christians for some time: “We must work harder to find ways to share the Gospel with others. After being Christians for some time, we can become ‘used to’ the Gospel, instead of amazed by it, and most of our friends are not Christians.” Reeder and Swavely, *From Embers to a Flame*, 195.

The Building of Confidence When Leading Someone to Christ

Personal evangelists, based on the previous writing in this chapter, after training will possess an adequate definition of the gospel, which will allow a bright and articulate communication of what the gospel is. Personal evangelist are trained to identify and pray for the lost within their networks. Personal evangelists have a variety of gospel techniques which will assist with the communication of the gospel. Yet personal evangelists may require additional encouragement to evangelize. Personal evangelists can be equipped by the pastor through the building of confidence when leading someone to Christ.

Communicating the gospel has always been difficult. A survey of the book of Acts brings to light various persecutions and hardships that accompanied the inaugural preaching of the gospel. History records the continuing persecution of future generations through the hands of Roman emperors and rival religions. Throughout time, Christians have been isolated, had property confiscated, ridiculed, tortured, and even martyred for the gospel.

Persecution still exists in various parts of the world. Thankfully, the United States of America still offers freedom of speech and religion, allowing Christians to practice their faith openly. Christians are allowed to share the gospel with others and are free to propagate the gospel across the United States. Even with such freedoms, the modern-day Christian may experience hardship when sharing the gospel in the United States.

The United States (often referred to as a “Christian” nation) is not a nation that is predominantly Christian. White references the Pew Forum and Public Life report that indicates 1 in 5 Americans claim no religious identity and that Protestant Christianity has fallen from 53 percent of the US population to 48 percent.⁵⁹ The majority of Americans are not evangelical Christians, and many claim no religious title whatsoever. Christians

⁵⁹ James Emery White, *The Rise of the Nones: Understanding and Reaching the Religiously Unaffiliated* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 16.

do not need to see statistics to understand such truths—they will observe this as a reality in their places of work, neighborhoods, schools, and social gatherings. The Christian is a minority, and being in the minority may be complicated and intimidating when sharing the gospel. The Christian needs encouragement.

Finding Encouragement

The Christian may find encouragement in many ways. First, Christians may be encouraged to share their faith by learning more about their secular friends. Even though most Americans are not Christians does not mean they are not open to hearing the gospel.

In *How to Reach Secular People*, George Hunter identifies three myths that Christians may have toward the secular person. Myth 1 declares that there is no religious consciousness amongst the secular (even though extensive evidence exists that people are, as Hunter writes, “incurably religious”). Myth 2 declares that the secular have no morals when in reality they experience some of the same moral struggles Christians face. Finally, myth 3 declares that all secular people are well-read, philosophical, intellectuals (George says that many are very naïve, superficial, and gullible).⁶⁰ It may be true that most Americans are not Protestant Christians, but the Christian should be encouraged that the lost may be religiously-minded, concerned about morals, and may not know much about Christianity. Such facts should encourage the Christian to share the gospel with others.

Second, the Christian may be encouraged to learn that rejection is not guaranteed. The fear of rejection may lead a Christian to never sharing their faith with a loved one or a family member. The fear of having a loved one “say no” to the gospel and the potential of damage to the relationship could result in the Christian becoming fearful.⁶¹ Christians must not believe that rejection will always happen when they share the gospel.

⁶⁰ George G. Hunter, *How to Reach Secular People* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992), 42-43.

⁶¹ Jim Cymbala, pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, believes that “fear presents itself in many ways—fear of rejection, opposition, suffering, and failure to name a few. But regardless of the ways we encounter fear in our lives, the Holy Spirit can help us overcome it.” Jim Cymbala and Jennifer Schuchmann,

The Christian will be encouraged to learn of studies that have shown the value of personal evangelism. Thom Rainer’s study of the previously unchurched yields encouraging data. Rainer writes, “Over one half indicated that someone from the church they joined shared Christ with them. Another 12 percent told us that someone other than a member at the church they joined personally evangelized them.”⁶² The data indicates that many people who came to Christ did so because of their connections. In these situations, the Christian’s message was not rejected but was received.⁶³

John Dickerson, author of the *Great Evangelical Recession*, affirms such data. Dickerson writes about the weakening of the North American church within evangelical Christianity. Though much of Dickerson’s work may be interpreted as discouraging, his findings on personal evangelism are encouraging. Dickerson writes, “The vast majority of unbelieving Americans do not come to Christ—or to a church—because of a big hitter. They come because of a friend or relative”⁶⁴ Dickerson so believes in the effectiveness of personal evangelism that he calls for the church to quit relying on evangelists and programs and instead to invest in the training of Christians in personal evangelism.⁶⁵

Spirit Rising: Tapping into the Power of the Holy Spirit (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 152. Fear, rejection, and opposition are three fears that hinder evangelism and will be addressed in order to demonstrate how Christians can be encouraged.

⁶² Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched: Proven Ways to Reach Them* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 43-44.

⁶³ Rainer discovered the importance of close relationships by asking the previously unchurched “Which person was the greatest influence in your coming to church?” The study then revealed that 8 percent were influenced by a coworker, 6 percent were influenced by a neighbor, 2 percent were influenced through a merchant, and 43 percent were influenced by a family member. Others indicated they were influenced by “other” (17 percent), and “no one” (25 percent). The study yields clear data that close relationships are effective when sharing the Gospel. *Ibid.*, 82.

⁶⁴ John S. Dickerson, *The Great Evangelical Recession: 6 Factors That Will Crash the American Church . . . and How to Prepare* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 206.

⁶⁵ Dickerson writes, Just like industry, the 20th century model for evangelism in the United States relied on the head, big hitters like Billy Graham. Locally, we relied on inviting folks to big events like Christmas or Easter outreaches. That used to be a fine model, but it’s grossly outdated because it ignores the Long Tail (what George refers to as the normal Christians), the millions of other “non-hit” evangelical

Third, even though the Christian may be opposed, he can be encouraged by viewing themselves as a “fisher of men.” Jesus promised that the Christian would experience trouble (John 16:33). Therefore, personal evangelists should not be surprised if he experiences opposition to the message. Opposition can take the form of hindrances, setbacks, frustrations, and hardships that come when attempting to present the gospel. Patience and time are often required to overcome such oppositions. The Christian must learn to be a “fisher.”

Rick Warren believes the sending out of the 70 in Luke 10 demonstrates the “fishing” methodology of Jesus.⁶⁶ When observing how the 70 were to operate, Warren writes, “Before Jesus sent out his disciples to evangelize, he gave them specific instructions about whom they were to spend their time with, whom they were to ignore, and what they were to say, and how they were to share it.”⁶⁷ Warren believes these instructions identify “fishing guidelines” for the evangelist.

Warren’s fishing guidelines include, “Go where the fish are biting” (the principle of receptivity), “learn to think like a fish” (making the most of every opportunity), and “catch the fish on their terms” (the gospel is communicated in some

Christians. It ignores us normal people—and God’s plan to use all His people. (Dickerson, *The Great Evangelical Recession*, 204)

⁶⁶ Luke 10:1-11 says,
After this, the Lord appointed 70 others, and He sent them ahead of Him in pairs to every town and place where He Himself was about to go. He told them: “The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest. Now go; I’m sending you out like lambs among wolves. Don’t carry a money-bag, traveling bag, or sandals; don’t greet anyone along the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this household.’ If a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they offer, for the worker is worthy of his wages. Don’t be moving from house to house. When you enter any town, and they welcome you, eat the things set before you. Heal the sick who are there, and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near you.’ When you enter any town, and they don’t welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ‘We are wiping off [as a witness] against you even the dust of your town that clings to our feet. Know this for certain: the kingdom of God has come near.’ I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town.”

⁶⁷ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 186.

form of culture).⁶⁸ Warren’s methods are both encouraging to the evangelist and still rooted in Scripture. By equating evangelism to fishing (a task that requires thinking and patience), the evangelist understands that evangelism is a process that requires time and patience.⁶⁹

Personal evangelists can be greatly discouraged by the oppositions that may come when evangelizing. If the evangelist is not prepared to meet the oppositions, they may become discouraged and cease trying to win the lost. The evangelist should be encouraged to begin the process of seeking out the receptive, taking advantage of all opportunities, and learning how to communicate the gospel properly overtime. Personal evangelists should be encouraged that evangelism is spiritual fishing.

Fourth, the Christian is encouraged to view suffering as a blessing. Historically the gospel has brought suffering in the forms of persecution. When Christians experience persecution they should recall the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:10: “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs.” Christ has made it clear that persecution (for the cause of the gospel) is a sign of blessing. The Christian should understand persecution as a sign of faithfulness to the Great Commission and as an act of glorifying God.

The Glory of God

The teaching of evangelism as an act of glorifying God encourages a Christian to endure suffering. Andrew Davis writes, “Root all evangelism in the glory of God. Teach that God’s glory is supreme—more important than even the value of a human soul—but show that the greatest display of God’s glory in the universe is the salvation of sinners

⁶⁸ Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 187-96.

⁶⁹ Warren’s fishing guidelines follow Luke 10’s methodology, but the “fishing” term is derived from Matt 4:19, “‘Follow Me,’ He told them, ‘and I will make you fish for people!’” Warren’s suggestions are convenient and would be easy to implement into evangelistic training.

through faith in Christ.”⁷⁰ Proper teaching of evangelism places the God of the Bible in his proper place, declaring that Jesus has sufficiently atoned for the sins of the world. This gospel message is the most important message in all the world. If Christians understand this, then they will endure suffering because the message is more important than the comforts of man.

Discouragement for Christians can take many forms: the fear of the lost, the fear of rejection, the fear of opposition, and the fear of suffering. Many practical suggestions can be offered to help assist with these fears, but evangelists should find ultimate encouragement in the Holy Spirit.

Jim Cymbala encourages Christians who are experiencing challenges: “The Holy Spirit is greater in power than our shyness or timidity. And he is greater than our fear of rejection or failure. His power makes the weakest as bold as a lion.”⁷¹ The evangelist’s encouragement is the Holy Spirit. The evangelist may find encouragement through training, resources, and information, but it is the Holy Spirit who brings power over fear.

Conclusion

The training of personal evangelists can be both lengthy and demanding. The training process involves time and educating the evangelists on an adequate definition of the gospel, while also helping them identify the lost within their networks. Training an evangelist in several techniques assists with the process of evangelism. Training brings encouragement to the evangelist.

The church growth movement may provide gimmicks and promises of large crowds, but it will fall short of effective evangelism that reaches the lost. The pastor

⁷⁰ Andrew M. Davis, *Revitalize: Biblical Keys to Helping Your Church Come Alive Again* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), 204.

⁷¹ Cymbala and Schuchmann, *Spirit Rising*, 156-57.

should prioritize the development of Christians who fulfil the Great Commission and the church should embrace their need to be equipped in becoming personal evangelists. The development of personal evangelists through pastoral training will create faithful church members who deliver the gospel to their worlds.

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS AND DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PROJECT

Life Community Church (LCC) of Owensboro, Kentucky, must equip personal evangelists. As noted in chapter 2, the Bible gives several examples that would encourage personal evangelism such as Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40), the apostle Paul's evangelism with Lydia (Acts 16:11-15), and the jailer (Acts 16:25-34). In addition to these biblical examples of personal evangelism there are other texts, such as 1 Timothy 4:1-5 and Ephesians 4:7-16, which would command an equipping for personal evangelism.

Theoretical issues related to personal evangelism would also encourage LCC to equip personal evangelists. As noted in chapter 3, various practitioners and teachers would advocate for both a biblical and adequate teaching of the gospel. In addition to properly understanding and articulating the gospel, evangelists must be taught how to identify the lost, pray for the lost, and to utilize various gospel techniques.¹ Research also indicates that there may be a need for encouragement for those who attempt to evangelize.

LCC was planted with the intention of becoming a High Impact Church.² The church has reached many lost people over its six-year history. Many of those who accepted Christ and were baptized came to faith through the church's membership class, a worship service, or a visit from the pastor, but not through another church member's personal

¹ Various gospel techniques may include the "Share Jesus without Fear" method, "3 Circles" conversation diagram, the use of an evangelistic testimony, or other tools or aides that help the evangelist better articulate the gospel message.

² The Kentucky Baptist Convention's High Impact program desired to aid church plants in becoming churches that would evangelize the lost, exceed an attendance of 250, and be active in planting other congregations.

evangelism. After a non-scientific survey was sent to the church body via MailChimp and Survey Monkey, it was determined that the people of LCC may benefit from personal evangelism training.³

The purpose of this project was to equip personal evangelists at Life Community in Owensboro, Kentucky. To accomplish this purpose three goals were to be met. The first goal attempted to assess the current personal evangelism practices amongst various members of LCC. The second goal attempted to develop an eight-session curriculum that would equip church members to engage in personal evangelism conversations. The third goal attempted to increase the practice of personal evangelism at LCC.

Goal 1

The first goal of the project was to assess the evangelistic practices of various members of LCC. The goal would ultimately be accomplished by administering the Personal Evangelism Inventory (PEI) during the first group meeting with a total of twenty-five participants completing the survey.⁴

The project was limited to LCC church members and to LCC church members that had never led a non-familial adult to the Lord. Participants were selected from those who completed the surveys emailed to the church body. The surveys helped form the group in two ways. First, the surveys identified those who had never led a non-familial adult to the Lord, which ensured that the participants in the group were only those with no experience in seeing someone receive Christ through their witness. Second, the surveys identified those interested in being part of an equipping group. Those who responded by listing their name were then contacted about participating in the group.

³ See appendix 1. The survey was labeled “non-scientific” because it was not formally measured with tools. The survey allowed me to glean insights from the responses and then make an educated guess on the currents state of evangelistic practices at LCC.

⁴ See appendix 2.

The first group meeting was held on a Sunday afternoon in the youth area of the church. I began the group by explaining the nature of his doctoral program and how it differed from undergraduate work. I then explained the PEI to the group, read the opening agreement statements of the PEI, and finally, administered the PEI to the group.

Special emphasis was brought to the four-digit identification number for the PEI. The importance of remembering the four-digit number was stressed to the group, as it would again be utilized for the post-course survey. It was suggested that the participants use a familiar number (such as the last four digits of a social security number) for easy recall after the eight-week lessons were completed.

The PEI was a multiple-choice survey ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” with a numerical value ranging from 1 to 6 assigned to each response. For most items, “strongly agree” was the desired response and was assigned the numerical value of 6. For items 10, 11, 15, 23, and 28, “strongly disagree” was the desired response. For those items, the numerical responses were reversed so that “strongly disagree” was assigned the numerical value of 6. When participants finished their surveys, they brought them to a table and laid them facedown.

All twenty-five group members completed all thirty survey questions of the PEI. Surveys were collected, shuffled, and placed in a folder. The shuffling of surveys was done to assure the anonymity of participants. The surveys were assessed to determine the current evangelism practices amongst LCC members, and the goal was met. The surveys revealed that the group members had little evangelistic activity or concern.

Goal 2

The second goal of the project was to develop an eight-session curriculum to equip church members to engage in personal evangelism conversations.⁵ The evaluation

⁵ See appendix 4, “Equipping Personal Evangelists Eight-Week Study.”

of the curriculum was conducted by an expert panel who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum.⁶ This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level.

The expert panel consisted of two leaders from the Kentucky Baptist Convention, two pastors who held graduate degrees, two pastors who had planted churches, and one vocational evangelist. Each panel member was emailed a copy of the curriculum and the rubric for personal evangelism training.

The evaluations revealed that no areas were insufficient or needed work. Four of the seven evaluations found the curriculum to be exemplary with no exceptions. All the evaluators deemed two of the three questions within the scope section to be exemplary. The methodology section received the weakest evaluations with less exemplary responses than the other sections, but still satisfactory.

Each evaluator left some level of feedback on the curriculum. Next are some key comments from the evaluators that I found to be helpful.

1. “The course material does a good job of offering a survey of current and recent personal evangelism tools available to the church member.”
2. “This is truly a hands-on approach for implementing evangelism into the local church. There is a strong biblical support all throughout this project. The various charts and diagrams for various diagrams for various exercises will allow participants to interact and measure effective evangelism in their lives.”
3. “This is very good. You have crafted a balanced, scripturally grounded, and practical curriculum. There are some typos that I have marked on a separate document.”
4. “Make a lot of ‘practical training’ as part of training.”
5. “The material seems to offer a good framework for becoming an evangelistic person but is not as strong on one particular approach to personal evangelism.”
6. “Overall, a good course that, with willing participants, will, I believe, bear fruit”

⁶See appendix 2, “Evaluation Rubric for Personal Evangelism Training.”

In addition to submitting an evaluation, one evaluator also phoned to give me some advice. This particular evaluator suggested that I utilize group activities at the end of each lesson. The suggestion to include group activities was adhered to and proved to be successful.

The curriculum was written, evaluated, and was deemed sufficient. I had developed an eight-session curriculum, which would equip church members to engage in personal evangelism conversations. The second goal was met.

Goal 3

The third goal was to increase the practice of personal evangelism at LCC through an eight-week class that consisted of increasing an awareness of the lost, a knowledge of the gospel, and knowledge of gospel techniques. This goal was accomplished through the teaching of the eight-week class. The goal was measured by re-administering the PEI to group members to measure the change in their practice of personal evangelism. A *t*-test for dependent samples was used to measure any real difference from the eight-week class. This goal was considered successfully met when the results showed a statistically significant improvement.

The course was conducted over a period of eight weeks. Classes were held on Sunday afternoons with a total of twenty-five participants. The lesson for week 3 was postponed to the following Sunday due to snowfall, thus making the eight-week class last a total of nine weeks.

Each class was conducted in the youth area of the LCC. The area was very open, which allowed for the placing of tables and chairs to accommodate the group in a comfortable fashion. The youth area also was equipped a large screen television on a stand, for easy viewing, and was equipped with an Apple TV. The Apple TV allowed the keynote presentation to be synced with a MacBook so the class could see the keynote on the large screen. The environment was comfortable and informal and group members often brought snacks and cookies for other participants.

Participants were given a workbook that contained all eight lessons.⁷ The eight-lesson curriculum was designed to be taught in one setting for no more than two hours at a time. Each lesson in the workbooks included group discussion questions, fill-in-the-blanks, personal reflection questions, and details on how to conduct a group activity. A Keynote presentation matched the material in the workbooks and included relevant graphics and (when necessary) the answer for the blanks in the workbooks. Participants could keep and take their workbooks home with them.

The content of the lessons was derived from the research found in chapters 2 and 3. Lesson 1 was titled “Introduction to Personal Evangelism.” The lesson focused on the Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8 and included important definitions for the study (such as equipping, the lost, gospel, evangelism, personal evangelism, and the personal evangelist). The lesson concluded with a study of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch from Acts 8:26-40.

Lesson 2 was titled “Three Biblical Examples of Personal Evangelism.” The study focused on Paul’s evangelistic encounters in Philippi. This included Lydia (Acts 16:11-15), the demon possessed girl (Acts 16:16-16-24), and the Philippian Jailor (Acts 16:25-34).

Lesson 3 was titled “What Is the Gospel?” The lesson taught that a gospel definition must include the subjects of cross, resurrection, and invitation. The class then explored various scriptures that dealt with the subjects of cross, resurrection, and invitation.

Lesson 4 was titled “Identifying the Lost.” 2 Timothy 4:5 reminded participants to do the “work of an evangelist.” Group members explored Oscar Thompson’s concentric circles of concern. Group members examined various activities in which they were involved lost people may be involved in as well. Group members identified connections to lost people within their own personal networks.

⁷ See appendix 4, “Equipping Personal Evangelists Eight-Week Study.”

Lesson 5 was titled “Praying for the Lost.” During class, various scriptures were utilized to show the importance for praying for the lost. Group participants were then encouraged to list the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the lost within their networks.

Lesson 6 was titled “Gospel Techniques.” During class, group participants were introduced the “Share Jesus without Fear” gospel presentation. Group members were also given a list of various gospel techniques to research at home.

Lesson 7 was titled “The Use of Personal Testimony in Evangelism.” During class, various scriptures were utilized to show the importance of a personal testimony in personal evangelism. Group members were then instructed to write out a brief evangelistic testimony utilizing Rick Warren’s model for creating an evangelistic testimony.

Lesson 8 was titled “Evangelism and Encouragement.” Various statistics and research were used to illustrate both why people are discouraged and how people can be encouraged when evangelizing. The lesson utilized Rick Warren’s “fishing guidelines.” The “fishing guidelines” focused on the sending out of the seventy from Luke 10:1-11 and the instructions that Jesus gave to them. Participants were challenged to contextualize those instructions or “fishing guidelines” to their personal situations. The lesson concluded with a final page that was intended to serve as a conclusion to the entire study. The final page encouraged participants to keep evangelizing and to apply what they had learned. The final PEI would reveal that they did apply what they had learned.

The teaching of the class heavily relied on group discussion. The printed questions sparked lots of dialogue that I helped guide. All participants were encouraged to be open and contribute. Often when one person made a statement, I followed that statement by stating, “Would anyone like to piggyback off that thought.” One group member commented, “As for someone who learns from others experiences it’s good for me to hear everyone else’s take in the subject that’s being discussed.”

Group discussion played an important role in the project but was guided to ensure that the group was also taught the material in the workbook. To cover all the printed teaching in a timely manner, I made sure that the clock was not ignored. It was communicated to the class that sessions would last no more than two hours (which would include a ten- or fifteen-minute break). To fulfill that commitment, I had to be mindful of time.

The teaching of the class included a personal reflection section toward the end. The personal reflection section was intended for participants to reflect on what was taught during the night and internalize the teaching. The personal reflection questions were listed in the workbook with appropriate space for writing. About five minutes were allotted for participants to write their responses. The participants did not share these responses with the group.

The group activity was conducted as the last part of the class. The group activity was printed in the workbook and was intended to reinforce the principles taught in fun and memorable ways. Some examples of the group activities included recitation of Scripture, role playing evangelistic strategies, placing a pin on a map of where the participant lived (symbolizing the various Christian lighthouses scattered through the county), and various other activities. The group activities approximately five to ten minutes at the closure of each class.

The group reassembled on Wednesday night, March 6, after regularly scheduled Wednesday night church activities, in the church auditorium. The participants were given a blank copy of the same PEI that they completed before the first class. Participants were reminded to write their four-digit identification number at the top of the survey. The four-digit identification number was used to pair the first survey with the second survey while still remaining anonymous.

All but five participants were present on March 6. One participant came early to pick up a copy of his survey (because he was feeling ill) and had his wife deliver the

survey that evening. Two participants took a survey home to their spouses (which were not able to make it but were members of the study) and then returned it the next day to the church offices. Two group members had to wait till Sunday March 10 to complete their surveys during the normal Sunday service times. All late surveys were shuffled into the other returned surveys to maintain anonymity.

Each pre-and post-PEI was then tabulated for an overall number. A Microsoft Excel sheet was utilized to record and add each participant's final score. A *t*-test for dependent samples was then used to measure any real difference from the eight-week class. When comparing pre-course to post-course PEI scores, there was a statistically significant improvement ($t_{(24)} = 4.38, p = .0001$) demonstrated by a paired, one-tail *t*-test.

The third goal of the project was to increase the practice of personal evangelism at LCC through an eight-week class. The goal was accomplished through the teaching of the eight-week class and was measured through the re-administration of the PEI to group members to measure the change in their practice of personal evangelism. Finally, a *t*-test for dependent samples was used to measure the real difference from the eight-week class. The third goal of the project was accomplished

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to equip personal evangelists at LCC in Owensboro, Kentucky. Three goals were established to fulfill the purpose and each of the three goals were successfully met and measured through the predetermined means. The conclusion of the project produced a group of people who were successfully assessed on evangelistic practices, a curriculum that was deemed sufficient by an expert panel, and the completion of an eight-week class and that was successfully measured for change. The purpose of equipping personal evangelist at LCC in Owensboro, Kentucky was successful.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to equip personal evangelists at Life Community Church (LCC) in Owensboro, Kentucky. LCC was planted with the intention of becoming a Kentucky Baptist Convention High Impact Church (HIC).¹ LCC has baptized many new believers in the church's short history, but many of these new Christians came from the pastor's outreach or a new members class that presented the gospel. This project created a curriculum to train LCC members to conduct personal evangelism. This chapter evaluates the implementation of the project and offers insights about lessons learned through the duration of the project.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of the project was determined by analyzing the LCC context. The context of the church revealed a high value on reaching the lost for Christ, a physical location in a neighborhood with much need, and that over half of the growth had been by transfer and not conversion.² The context results then formed the rationale of the project. The project was conducted because most baptisms were not the result of church members leading someone to Christ because the members did not frequently share the gospel with others. Many members recognized the need to share the gospel but needed help to do so.³

¹ The Kentucky Baptist Convention's High Impact program desired to aid church plants in becoming churches that would evangelize the lost, exceed an attendance of 250, and be active in planting other congregations.

² See chap. 1 for a detailed explanation of the context and how these assumptions were derived.

³ See chap. 1 for a detailed explanation of the rationale and how these assumptions were derived.

The purpose of the project was informed through the research conducted from chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 2 argued that Scripture indicated that the pastor must provide evangelistic training to his congregation to produce church members that will share their faith with lost people. Chapter 3 then argued that evangelism should primarily occur as a result of the development of personal evangelists through pastoral training. These two ideas formed the basis behind the project's purpose.

Chapter 2 utilized four biblical texts to argue the point that the pastor must provide evangelistic training for the congregation. These four texts included Acts 8:4-14, 2 Timothy 4:1-5, Acts 16:11-34, and Ephesians 4:7-16. After exegeting the passages, it was clear that the project's purpose was in alignment with biblical teachings.

Acts 8:4-14 emphasized the story of Phillip's evangelistic work in Samaria. After a great revival in Samaria, under Phillip's leadership, the Jerusalem church sends Peter and John to investigate the claim that Gentiles were saved. The event leads to Peter and John experiencing the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Samaritans and affirming Gentile salvation. The passage informed the project's purpose by demonstrating that church leaders were to be involved in the act of personal evangelism. If the pastor is to be involved in personal evangelism, then the pastor should be able to lead the church in evangelism training because of the examples of church leaders such as Peter and Phillip.⁴

The next passage to be exegeted was 2 Timothy 4:1-5.⁵ The passage, written by the aging apostle Paul, instructed Timothy to do "the work of the evangelist." Paul

⁴ See chap. 2.

⁵ Second Tim 4:1-5 reads,
I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead, and because of his appearing and his kingdom: Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching. For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear what they want to hear. They will turn away from hearing the truth and will turn aside to myths. But as for you, exercise self-control in everything, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

wants to ensure that Timothy will be actively involved in the task of evangelism after Paul has passed. Like Timothy, all pastors should realize that they too are commissioned to do the work of the evangelist to ensure that the gospel message continues forward. The pastor must understand that he cannot do this work alone. The pastor must be involved in training others in evangelism to properly do the work of an evangelist.

Acts 16:11-34 was then exegeted.⁶ Paul encounters three different types of people in his evangelistic journey in Philippi. The passage indicates that when Paul evangelized during these events he did so with an evangelistic team. Paul is modeling evangelism for the team. The modern-day pastor must model evangelism, and this can be done through evangelism training.

Finally, the exegesis of Ephesians 4:7-16 informed the purpose of the project by demonstrating that pastors are given for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry.⁷ The exegesis revealed that roles such as “evangelists” and “pastors and teachers” are different, but both are given for the purpose of helping the church fulfill its ministry. Since all Christians are commissioned to evangelize, Ephesians 4:7-16 would demonstrate that the duty of the pastor can and should involve equipping through the providing of evangelistic training.⁸

⁶ This rather lengthy passage highlights Paul’s evangelistic journey in Philippi, focusing on Lydia, the demon-possessed girl, and the jailer.

⁷ Eph 4:9-16 says,
Now grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. For it says: When he ascended on high, he took the captives captive; he gave gifts to people. But what does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower parts of the earth? The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, to fill all things. And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, equipping the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness. Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head—Christ. From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part.

⁸ See chap. 2.

Chapter 3 utilized four main points to argue that evangelism should primarily occur as a result of the development of personal evangelists through pastoral training. The four points included (1) the teaching of a biblical and adequate definition of the gospel, (2) identifying and praying for the lost, (3) exposure to various gospel techniques, and (4) the building of confidence when leading someone to Christ. These four points were reached by researching theoretical issues regarding evangelistic training and helped inform the purpose of the project.

The first theoretical issue that informed the purpose of the project was “the teaching of a biblical and adequate definition of the gospel.” For a person to properly share the gospel, he must know what he is to share. The research revealed that the gospel presentation must include three main points: (1) sin, (2) cross and resurrection, (3) the invitation. After church members are taught an adequate definition of the gospel they should be expected to go out and share the gospel. The pastor equips personal evangelists through the teaching of a biblical and adequate definition of the gospel.

The second theoretical issue that informed the purpose of the project was the issue of “identifying and praying for the lost.” Many pastors may be tempted to rely on gimmicks and marketing to evangelize. Instead, the pastor was encouraged to train the members to identify the lost within their own personal networks. Resources such as Oscar Thompson’s *Concentric Circles of Concern*⁹ and Tom Mercer’s *Oikos, Your World Delivered*¹⁰ were influential.

The third theoretical theory that informed the purpose of the project was “exposure to various gospel techniques.” Research revealed key elements why gospel

⁹ Carolyn T. Ritzman and W. Oscar Thompson, *Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples*, ed. Claude V. King, rev. ed. (Nashville: B & H, 1999).

¹⁰ Tom Mercer, *Oikos, Your World, Delivered* (Chapel Hill, NC: Professional Press, 2008).

techniques were important.¹¹ Evangelists experience feelings of fear or inadequacy when sharing the gospel; therefore, evangelists need to learn gospel techniques to assist them when sharing the gospel. When personal evangelists have been taught various methods, they are then free from excuses for not knowing how to share the gospel

The fourth theoretical theory that informed the purpose of the project was the “building of confidence when leading someone to Christ.” Due to the increasing secular nature of the United States, evangelists may be discouraged when attempting to share their faith. Research revealed several myths that people believe about the lost and the reality that many secular people do want to hear the gospel.¹² Training should encourage evangelists to root evangelism in God’s glory and not numerical results. Personal evangelists can be equipped by the pastor through the building of confidence when leading someone to Christ.

The purpose of the project was to equip personal evangelists at Life Community Church. An analysis of the context, biblical issues, and theoretical issues revealed a need for the project. The need for the project then led to the formation of a rationale for the project. The purpose would be further fleshed out through the creation of the three project goals.

Evaluation of the Project’s Goals

The project attempted to fulfill three goals in order to accomplish the project’s purpose. The first goal of the project assessed evangelistic practices of the participants.

¹¹ Gospel techniques are tools or aids that assist the evangelist when evangelizing. Chap. 3 detailed five reasons why gospel techniques were necessary. The five reasons included (1) personal evangelists will likely have struggles when presenting the gospel, (2) gospel techniques aid the personal evangelists in initiating a gospel conversation, (3) gospel techniques include a faithful, systematic, and helpful layout of Scripture texts, (4) a gospel technique may present an opportunity to share a personal testimony, and (5) gospel techniques assist the evangelist with the leading of a lost person to the point of decision.

¹² See chap. 3.

The second goal was to write and have assessed an evangelistic curriculum. The final goal was to reassess the group to learn how the class affected group members.

Goal 1

The first goal of the project was to assess the current personal evangelism practices amongst various members of LCC. The goal was accomplished by administering the Personal Evangelism Inventory (PEI).¹³ The PEI's were assessed to determine the current evangelism practices amongst LCC members, and the goal was met with twenty-five completed PEI's. The PEI revealed that many of the participants had now shared their faith, were praying for the lost, and viewed the practice of evangelism as a form of obedience. The process of administering the PEI and assessing the data proved to be useful for fulfilling the purpose of the project.

By assuring the group that their responses would be kept in anonymity, the group could give responses without trepidation or attempt to impress their pastor (who was administering the PEI). Before administering the PEI, the importance of truthful answers was stressed. It was then reaffirmed that as the one who would be collecting data, I was not interested in who answered what as long as they answered honestly. The use of the four-digit code was not only valuable for comparing the PEI's but also allowed the participants to know that their names would not be known.

The assessment of personal evangelism practices revealed that many group members were not actively involved in evangelism, felt unequipped, and were even fearful. The project attempted to provide resources and teachings to the people of LCC to become personal evangelists. If personal evangelist practices were not assessed, then there would be no way to know how to equip the group. The first goal of the project proved to be necessary to fulfill the project's purpose.

¹³ See appendix 2.

When the first goal was completed, I obtained a better understanding of the context. The group had little evangelistic desire, knowledge, or courage. They would require encouragement, teaching, and resources to become personal evangelists.

Goal 2

The second goal of the project was to develop an eight-session curriculum to equip church members to engage in personal evangelism conversations.¹⁴ The goal was accomplished when the curriculum was written and then evaluated by an expert panel. The curriculum was written, evaluated, deemed sufficient, and the goal was met. The process of developing an eight-session curriculum was necessary to fulfill the purpose of the project.

The first step for developing the curriculum was to determine the means of equipping personal evangelists at LCC. There were several options to choose from to fulfill this project; one choice could have been to preach a series of Sunday sermons. Instead, I chose to create an interactive equipping class. The hope of such a class allowed for group discussion, group activities, and personal attention to group questions. As a pastor, I was already aware that church members approach the subject of evangelism with fear and anxiety. To equip personal evangelists at LCC, I reasoned that an ample amount of time to ask questions and teach the material would be necessary. Therefore, a written curriculum was necessary to help fulfill the purpose of the project.

Second, the evaluation of the project ensured that the curriculum was effective to accomplish the goal. The evaluators of the project consisted of two Kentucky Baptist Convention leaders, two pastors with graduate degrees, two pastors who had planted churches, and one vocational evangelist. These panel members were well versed in evangelism practices and theology and therefore able to properly evaluate the curriculum

¹⁴ See appendix 4, "Equipping Personal Evangelists Eight-Week Study."

utilizing the rubric for personal evangelism training.¹⁵ Four of the seven evaluators found the curriculum to be exemplary with no exceptions. All the evaluators deemed two of the three questions within the scope section to be exemplary.

Goal 3

The third goal of the project was to increase the practice of personal evangelism at LCC. This goal was accomplished through teaching the eight-week class. The goal was measured by re-administering the PEI to group participants to measure the change in their practice of personal evangelism. Like the preceding two goals, the third goal was necessary to fulfill the purpose of equipping personal evangelists at LCC.

To increase the practice of evangelism it was determined that an intervention had to occur. In the case of this project, the eight-week equipping class was the means of impacting personal evangelism practices for the positive. The curriculum was designed to impart evangelistic knowledge and techniques to participants. The class time allowed the group to participate in discussions, pray for each other, and practice evangelistic techniques. These benefits were in addition to the benefit of the evangelistic theological training given during the class. The teaching of the curriculum was necessary to fulfill the purpose of the project.

The measuring of the goal demonstrated an increase in the practice of personal evangelism practices. The comparison of the post-PEI and the pre-PEI demonstrated a significant improvement.¹⁶ If the post-PEI were not re-administered and compared to the pre-PEI, then there would have been no way to determine if the purpose of the project was accomplished. Goal 3 was necessary to complete the purpose of the project.

¹⁵ See appendix 3.

¹⁶ See chap. 4, goal 3, for more details.

Summary

The first goal of assessing the evangelistic practices of the participants relied upon the use of the PEI. Group members were given the PEI during the first session of the class and were given an adequate amount of time. I was available if anyone had questions.

The second goal ensured that the curriculum was effective. Competent church leaders and convention leaders were chosen to assess the material. The curriculum was emailed to the leaders with a rubric attached for grading. The leaders returned the rubrics with helpful feedback. The feedback of this group proved to be helpful for the finished product.

The third goal of the project was to increase the practice of personal evangelism. A two-hour class was conducted on Sunday evenings. The class was informal, fun, and group oriented. The second PEI was administered a week after the final class. Group participants completed the PEI in the church auditorium.

Strengths of the Project

The equipping personal evangelists project had many strengths. The first strength of the project was the gathering of various LCC members to reflect on evangelism practices. The gathering occurred during the first administration of the PEI. Participants had to honestly think about and evaluate their practices as they completed the PEI. Though the participants knew they lacked in the area of evangelism, they may have never paused to reflect their practices.

The reflection of personal evangelism practices can be beneficial to a local church. All Christians are commanded to share their faith, but all are not obedient. Sadly, many Christians may not give evangelism much thought. Having a group of people think through their evangelistic practices may cause them to consider the Great Commission and their obedience.

The second strength of the project was its ability to produce an *oikos* list for each participant.¹⁷ Group participants were able to see evangelism within their relational networks as opposed to a distant person on a distant island. Participants had no problem listing those in their relational circles that did not know Christ. The exercise resulted in the participants acknowledging that they had a personal mission field to evangelize.

The participants' *oikos* list was referred to often in the group. Group members began to personalize the lessons, such as identifying certain hobbies in which their *oikos* was involved, listing prayer needs for their *oikos*, or updating the group about the evangelization of their *oikos*. The use of the *oikos* list provided participants a real-life mission field for them to work.

The third strength of the project was one of the delimitations placed on it—the attempt to create personal evangelists from church members who had never led a non-familial adult to Christ. Group participants were only considered if they could meet that requirement. The advantage of this delimitation surprised me as it resulted in the success of the overall project. Group participants were only considered if they could meet that requirement.

All group members knew in advance of the prerequisite for being part of this project. The knowledge of this requirement created a thread of commonality amongst group members. No “expert evangelist” emerged in the group discussions. Instead, group members were honest with each other, encouraged each other, and even prayed for each other. This honesty and encouragement may have fostered an environment for proper evangelistic equipping amongst those who admittedly needed it. At the minimum, the commonality reminded individuals that they were not alone in their struggles with personal

¹⁷ Chap. 3 details Mercer's use of *oikos* relational evangelism strategy. Mercer writes, “God has given each of us, on average, anywhere from eight to fifteen people who He has supernaturally and strategically placed in our relational worlds. . . . This is the world He wants to use each of us to change, our individual world.” Participants were encouraged to list the names of various people in various relationships to them that did not know the Lord. This list of names became the participants' *oikos* list and was often referred to throughout the project. Mercer, *Oikos, Your World, Delivered*, 34.

evangelism and encouraged them to grow. This strength naturally led to the final strength of the project.

The final strength of the project was the use of group discussion and the use of group activities. Each lesson had some form of mini-lecture to the group, but all lessons began with group discussions and ended with a group activity. By allowing the group to openly discuss the lessons, each group meeting became a very personal meeting. Group members shared ideas, personal stories, struggles, and even doubts about evangelism. One group member sent me a text after one of the classes that read, “I thought the discussion was really good. As for someone who learns from others experiences it’s good for me to hear everyone else’s take in the subject that’s being discussed. That said, I learned tonight that I’m weak at leaning in the spirit when it comes to sharing the gospel.”

The group activities were just as healthy as the group discussion; they often hinged upon “fun,” “humorous,” and sometimes the serious (such as the recitation of Scripture or evangelistic role-playing). The activities also served as an excellent bookend to the lesson, reinforcing the night’s content and allowing members to interact with each other. The group activities encouraged participants to become personal evangelists.

Weaknesses of the Project

The project was not without weaknesses. The first weakness of the project was the creation of the curriculum prior to the PEI. The curriculum was based on the research gathered from chapter 2 and chapter 3. If the PEI was conducted several months before the class, then the material could have been customized for the particular class and, perhaps, the results could have been positively affected.

The second weakness of the project was the focus on one gospel technique. Lesson 6 taught the need for gospel techniques¹⁸ and then highlighted the *Share Jesus*

¹⁸ Gospel techniques may include the “Share Jesus without Fear” method, “3 Circles” conversation diagram, the use of an evangelistic testimony, or other tools or aides that help the evangelist better articulate the gospel message.

without Fear method. The method was highlighted for its excellent use of Scripture when sharing the gospel, but some participants asked how this method would work when witnessing to someone who did not accept the authority of Scripture. Only one lesson focused on gospel techniques when exposure to more gospel techniques may have been beneficial.

The third weakness of the project was the time used for prayer requests at the beginning of each lesson. The prayer request time was intended to give updates about evangelistic encounters and to pray for the lost. Instead, the prayer request time became a standard prayer request time that focused on prayers for a variety of needs. The time spent receiving prayer requests cut into the teaching time allotted for the group.

The fourth weakness of the project was its use of makeup classes. Each participant was instructed that every lesson was critical; therefore, completing make-up classes were critical. One lesson was recorded, but the sound level of the recording was poor. For all other makeup lessons, I utilized QuickTime to record my screen with me narrating the slides for those who missed. The makeup videos were then posted onto YouTube for participants to access. Though sound quality was excellent from the screen recordings from my computer, it lacked the group discussion (which served as a significant strength of the project).

The fifth weakness of this project was the time it was held. The group met on Sunday evenings at 4:00 p.m. The time was chosen to allow people to rest after church services and to eat. I was also aware that a few members of the group were part of another Bible study group that met at 6:00 p.m. Even though it was stressed to members that were part of the 6:00 p.m. Bible study that they would need to stay for the completion of the class, this did not always happen. Those connected to that Bible study group were very loyal and left early to travel to the Bible study group.

The sixth weakness of the project was the lack of an apologetics lesson. An additional lesson instructing group participants on how to react when rejected would have

been helpful. Some brief examples of basic apologetic responses could have been provided. If participants had knowledge of basic apologetic responses, then they may have been less fearful when presenting the gospel.

The seventh weakness of the project was the lack of a group evangelistic experience. The group was not given the option to collectively go out and evangelize during a class session. If the group was sent into the streets of the community after a lesson, then they would have been able to directly apply what they had learned. By not doing this exercise the project relied on each participant to do evangelism without guidance, which may have discouraged the overall evangelistic effort.

What Would I Do Differently

When reflecting on the weaknesses of the project, I would have done four things differently.

First, I would have conducted the first PEI before writing the curriculum. The content of chapter 2 and chapter 3 still could have been implemented in the formation of the material, but the PEI could have better tailored the curriculum for the group. It would not have been a problem to have conducted the PEI in addition before creating the material and could have bettered the class experience.

Second, I would have highlighted more than one gospel technique. Though *Share Jesus without Fear* is my personal choice of sharing the gospel, I should have taken into consideration that others may have connected better with other presentations. Less time could have been spent explaining why gospel techniques were necessary and more time demonstrating other gospel techniques to the group.

Third, I would have moved all prayer requests to the end of the lesson. Prayer requests were essential to the group and should be heard, but in this context, it would have been better to place them after the content was discussed. By placing the prayer requests at the end, the group may have tailored their requests more toward the lost. The group could have begun with an opening prayer and then transitioned into the content.

Fourth, I would have recorded all classes with better audio-visual equipment. A better recording method would have proved beneficial to those that missed the class because they would have been able to hear the group discussion. Group members who missed the class received the content through the make-up videos that utilized the screen recordings but missed the discussion that other group members contributed.

Fifth, I would have spaced the class from any other church events. The class could have easily been held at 3:00 p.m. without any objection from group members. By conducting the class at 3:00 p.m. instead 4:00 p.m. there would have been no dilemma for the group members committed to the other 6:00 p.m. Bible study group.

Sixth, I would have included an apologetics lesson. A basic lesson on how to apply apologetics could have been helpful for many of the group participants. The utilization of apologetics would have been helpful to at least one group member who questioned the “Share Jesus without Fear” model. The group member was concerned what would happen if the lost person did not accept the authority of Scripture. An apologetics lesson could have helped her explain how Scripture can be trusted.

Seventh, I would have led the group in an evangelistic exercise. The church is surrounded by houses that would have been easily accessible for the group members to engage. A coordinated activity of front door evangelism may have been a memorable and powerful teaching moment missed.

Theological Reflections

During this project, several theological reflections were made clear. First, church leaders should be involved in the equipping of people in evangelism. Ephesians 4:11-12 clearly states that God gives church leaders for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry. Church leaders take the lead to teach and train people in the area of evangelism. Church leaders should train and equip church members because they are given by God to do so. Likewise, church members should expect adequate training from their leaders in the area of evangelism. When the pastor is fulfilling Ephesians 4:11-12 he

is helping the Great Commission to be furthered through his church and into his community.

The story of Peter, John, and Phillip was of particular importance to church leaders. Peter and John, both Jews, are called to the front lines to see the salvation of the Samaritans. The passage encourages me to leave my comfortable settings for the cause of the gospel. As a leader, I need to be willing to go wherever and to whomever God calls me to present the gospel. I am not exempt.

Paul's Philippian ministry illustrates how evangelism can occur in a variety of settings. Paul had a pleasant encounter with Lydia, but a not so pleasant encounter with the demon possessed girl. The Philippian jail was a time of suffering for Paul, but God's miraculous demonstration of power resulted in the jailor being saved. Each of these scenarios were different from one another but demonstrated the variety of contexts of how evangelism may occur. As a church leader who trains people to evangelize, I need to realize that various settings may call for various techniques.

Paul's charge to Timothy can be a reminder of the expectation of church leaders to do the work of the evangelist. Church leaders will find themselves with many tasks that are demanding of time. It is possible that church leaders could see evangelism as a low priority. When reading Paul's words to Timothy I am reminded to endure the hardship and be involved in evangelism.

Second, the Word of God is the basis for evangelism training and biblical evangelism. Many scriptural promises are given about the sufficiency of Scripture. The project reminded me that the Scriptures are sufficient to teach evangelism. Group participants read scriptural commands out loud and even recited scriptural commands to evangelize to each other. The success of this project hinged upon the use of Scripture for evangelistic training.

The Scripture is also sufficient in leading someone to Christ. Many diagrams and tools can be utilized to share the gospel with people, but all should utilize the

Scriptures. Even though the *Share Jesus without Fear* method is just one of many methods, it should be commended for its reliance on the Scripture.

Third, God has sovereignly placed people in the lives of other people. Through the study of Paul's Philippian evangelism it becomes clear that God is orchestrating evangelistic conversations.¹⁹ The *oikos* list is more than just an amusing exercise to teach evangelism—it serves as a way to see how God connects people to share the good news. When a person sees the lost they are connected to, they immediately become accountable to the Great Commission. They must begin the work of the evangelists.

Fourth, all people are called to evangelize. The Great Commission is not the Great Suggestion.²⁰ The project served as a reminder that all types of Christians are responsible for delivering the good news to those around them.²¹ If time permitted, an extra lesson on world missions would have been appropriate to reinforce the idea that all Christians are to share the good news of Jesus.

Personal Reflections

I began this project with the mindset that it was another part of the doctoral requirements to graduate. Through the duration of the project and upon completion of the project I now see it as a milestone in my life. God used this project to do great work in my life and the lives of other people.

The entire project from completion to ending was a delight. I found myself invigorated to get to the equipping classes and then rejuvenated when I left the classes. I

¹⁹ See chap. 2.

²⁰ The phrase “The Great Commission is not the Great Suggestion” was said by one of the men who evaluated the eight-week curriculum. The statement has impacted me, and I have used it on several occasions since he shared it with me.

²¹ The group had a variety of people in it. Some were extroverted, and others were noticeably introverted. Some were young in their faith, and others had been Christians for some time. Regardless of each person's life circumstance, the group served as an example that all people need to be trained and participate the work of evangelism.

was touched to see group members praying for their lost loved ones with other group members. It was encouraging when group members shared prayer requests for the lost in a group Facebook thread. I was thankful to see lives changed. One participant wrote this in the group Facebook thread, “There are so many times where I was ‘numb’ or in the back of my mind I just thought it was someone else’s job. . . God commands me to open that door.” Messages like those showed me that training people to evangelize is a passion that God has given me. God used this project in my life in a powerful way.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to equip personal evangelists at Life Community Church. The project fulfilled three goals and was measured by utilizing various research methods. The project had a variety of both strengths and weakness but overall was considered a success in fulfilling its purpose.

The project not only trained members of Life Community Church to be personal evangelists, but the project also had a lasting impact on me. The project helped me gain a deeper and more biblical understanding of evangelistic training.

“But as for you, exercise self-control in everything, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Tim 4:5).

APPENDIX 1

NON-SCIENTIFIC SURVEY

Two voluntary non-scientific (survey monkey) surveys were sent to the membership of LCC via email. The surveys were intended to gain a basic understanding of the practice of evangelism at LCC. The surveys were done in anonymity. These surveys were then used to help determine the nature of the D. Ed.Min project. The following questions were asked.

1. Is Jesus the only way to Heaven?
2. Is it a "SIN" not to share the gospel?
3. How many "lost" (non-Christian) people are you personally connected to?
4. Have you ever personally led someone to accept Christ?
5. If you have children or grandchildren, would you feel comfortable enough leading them to accept Christ, without bringing them to the Pastor?
6. Do you feel adequately trained and prepared to present the Gospel to a lost person?
7. How comfortable do you feel engaging the church neighborhood with the Gospel?
8. When was the last time you shared the plan of salvation with a lost person?
9. When you pray, do you regularly pray for a specific person to be saved? (This can include your children or a loved one, but a specific prayer that they will accept Christ).
10. Could you quote at least one specific scripture (from memory with a reference) that would help someone accept Christ?

A follow up survey was sent out a week later, with the last question specifically asking if a person would be willing to be part of an evangelistic training group. The following questions were asked:

1. Did I complete the previous survey?
2. In your opinion, what is the greatest obstacle keeping you from sharing your faith?
3. Have you ever led an adult to Christ that was not a family member (i.e. a neighbor, coworker, associate, etc.)?
4. Have you ever shared the plan of salvation (sinner, Christ died, rose again, and is the only way to Heaven) to another adult that was not a family member?
5. If you have never led an adult (non-family) to Christ, would you be willing to participate in an evangelistic equipping course taught by your Pastor?

APPENDIX 2

PERSONAL EVANGELISM INVENTORY

Personal Identification Code (please choose and remember a four-digit code): _ _ _ _

Agreement to Participate (part 1)¹

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to assess your level of understanding of evangelism in our church. This research is being conducted by Kenneth Rager for purposes of project research required for the Doctor of Educational Ministry (D Ed.Min.) degree at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

By your completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Agreement to Participate (part 2)

To be included in the project, please place a check beside each statement:

- I agree to submit a pre-survey using an anonymous four-digit code.
- I agree to participate in all of the eight-week trainings, either on the scheduled dates or during a makeup course.
- I agree to submit a post-survey using the same anonymous four-digit code.
- I agree to participate in an eight-week practical application period.

I. PERSONAL OPINION (Please indicate your opinion using the following scale).

SD = strongly disagree

D = disagree

DS = disagree somewhat

AS = agree somewhat

A = agree

SA = strongly agree

¹ The Personal Evangelism Inventory is adapted from Bell's Appendix 1 Evangelism Survey. Stuart Allen Bell "Equipping Members at First Baptist Church, Centerton, Arkansas to Evangelize and Assimilate Internationals" (D.Min. project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016).

1.	I have shared the gospel with another person since becoming a Christian.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
2.	I have led someone to receive Christ.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
3.	I am able to clearly explain the gospel using Biblical references.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
4.	I can articulate my salvation experience.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
5.	I have an ongoing friendship with a lost person.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
6.	I have shared my faith with a person involved in a different world religion or cult (i.e. Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Mormonism, Jehovah Witness, and etc.).	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
7.	I have initiated a spiritual conversation, with a lost person, within the last week.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8.	I have verbally told someone that Jesus is the only way to Heaven.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
9.	I am disturbed that a specific person may spend an eternity in Hell.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
10.	I have not shared my faith with a lost family member.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
11.	I have invited someone to church, but have not explained the gospel to them.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
12.	I have invited a lost person to lunch or coffee with the intent to discuss spiritual issues.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
13.	I am able to assist as a counselor (during the invitation time), if someone was to come forward for salvation.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14.	I can train other Christians how to share their faith.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
15.	Presently, I am in disobedience to God, in regard to sharing my faith with others.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
16.	I know at least 3 people within a ½-mile radius of the church.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
17.	I pray for opportunities every day to share my faith with others	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

18.	I know the names of my neighbors and I am actively pursuing friendships with them.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
19.	I am not actively seeking to share my faith with a person of a different nationality.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
20.	I have an urgency to share my faith with the lost.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
21.	I have read a book about evangelism.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
22.	I could present at least one evangelistic method to a lost person.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
23.	I have never asked my life group to pray for a lost family member or friend.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
24.	I am willing to share the gospel with a person of a different ethnicity.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
25.	I consider myself a personal evangelist.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
26.	I know the names of at least 5 lost people.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
27.	I have been trained in personal evangelism.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
28.	I have never warned someone about the dangers of Hell.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
29.	I have shared the gospel within the last month.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
30.	I am praying daily for a non-familial lost person to be saved.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

APPENDIX 3

EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR PERSONAL EVANGELISM TRAINING

The following evaluation rubric was sent to an expert panel consisting of two Kentucky Baptist Convention leaders, two Pastors who hold graduate degrees that are not associated with LCC, two Pastors who have planted churches that are not associated with LCC, and one vocational evangelist. The panel evaluated the course curriculum, measuring its biblical faithfulness, scope, teaching methodology, and applicability.¹

¹Dustin Brady Goodwin, “Equipping Leaders for Care and Counseling at the Village Church in Dallas, Texas” (D.Min. project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017). This rubric was adapted from Goodwin’s appendix 8.

Name of Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Evaluation Rubric for Personal Evangelism Curriculum					
.1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Faithfulness					
The course curriculum is biblically and theologically sound.					
The course curriculum effectively establishes the scriptural basis for personal evangelism.					
Scope					
The course curriculum adequately covers each topic it addresses.					
The course curriculum is content appropriate for lay church members.					
The course curriculum provides a basic understanding of personal evangelism concepts.					
Methodology					
The course curriculum effectively teaches a basic biblical personal evangelism methodology.					
The course curriculum effectively utilizes various personal evangelism methods.					
Applicability					
The course curriculum is applicable for personal evangelism.					
The course curriculum will effectively equip leaders in personal evangelism.					

Please include any additional comments below:

APPENDIX 4
EQUIPPING PERSONAL EVANGELISTS:
AN EIGHT-WEEK STUDY

EQUIPPING PERSONAL EVANGELISTS

“How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news”

Romans 10:14-15¹

Thank you for being willing to grow and be developed as a personal evangelist. This study will attempt to equip you with the necessary tools to share the Gospel. The study is divided into eight different sessions, with each session lasting between 1 ½ hours to 2 hours (or less), with each session meeting once a week, and is intended for those who have never led an adult to Christ:

1. Introduction (Great Com/ Acts 1:8/ Definitions)
2. Three Biblical Examples of Personal Evangelism
3. What is the Gospel?
4. Identifying the Lost
5. Praying for the Lost
6. Gospel Techniques
7. The use of testimony in personal evangelism.
8. Evangelism and Encouragement

Three Challenges

1. Actively participate in and complete every lesson of the study.
2. Be open and willing to step outside of your comfort zone.
3. Begin sharing the Gospel (today, through the duration of the study, and for the rest of your earthly life).

¹ All Scripture quotations are from the Christian Standard Bible.

Equipping Personal Evangelists at Life Community Church
Lesson 1: Introduction to Personal Evangelism

Group Discussion

- What comes to mind when you hear these words: Great Commission, evangelism, and evangelist?

- Who first shared the Gospel with you? What was that situation like?

- Is “not sharing” the gospel sinful? Why or why not?

- Do you need help in knowing how to evangelize, if so why?

- Do you consider yourself as a “personal evangelist?” Why or why not?

Matthew 28:18-20 (The Great Commission)

“Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Acts 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Group Discussion

- What command is given in the Great Commission? How does this apply to modern day Christians?

- What command is given in Acts 1:8? What promise is given in Acts 1:8?

Definitions

Equipping. Equipping should be understood as the act of making someone qualified for a task at hand. The term is often used in relationship to Eph 4:12 and comes from the Greek word καταρτισμός (*katartismos*) meaning “complete furnishing, a preparation or training that fully qualifies.”²

The Lost. The lost should be understood as a sinner who has not experienced the salvation of Jesus Christ. As commentator Trent Butler writes, “Sinners are lost until they repent of their sins and find salvation.”³ Jesus himself used this term in Luke 19:10 when he stated, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.”

The Gospel. The gospel, from the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον (*Euangelion*), is to be understood as the historical story of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as a substitute for the atonement of man. R.H. Mounce refers to the gospel as “. . . God’s redemptive activity in Christ Jesus on behalf of humans enslaved by sin.”⁴

Evangelism. Evangelism should be understood as the act of sharing with a lost person how they can be right with God through Jesus Christ. Evangelism is “The proclamation of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ with a view to bringing about the reconciliation of the sinner to God the Father through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit.”⁵

Personal Evangelism. Personal evangelism should be understood as the act of individuals embracing and fulfilling evangelism in their own lives. *Baker’s Dictionary of Practical Theology* states this about personal evangelism, “Every Christian carries the responsibility of priesthood. The priest is one who ‘stands on the God-ward side of man.’ His function is to lift men up to God in intercession, then to take the message of the gospel and proclaim it to them. To this responsibility Christians need to be awakened, but more than this, they need to be trained”⁶

The Personal Evangelist. The Personal Evangelist may be understood as someone who will engage the lost, both within their personal networks and amongst strangers. As Oscar Thompson points out, this is not global evangelism but an evangelism that targets the personal world that is unique to the evangelist.⁷

² James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 2938.

³ Trent C. Butler, *Luke*, Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 3 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 248.

⁴ Robert H. Mounce, “Gospel,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 512.

⁵ T. P. Weber, “Evangelism,” in Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 410.

⁶ F. Carlton Booth, “Evangelism in the Home Church,” in *Baker’s Dictionary of Practical Theology*, ed. Ralph G. Turnbull (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967), 173.

⁷ Carolyn T. Ritzman and W. Oscar Thompson, *Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples*, ed. Claude V. King, rev. ed. (Nashville: B & H, 1999), 29.

Group Discussion

- In your opinion, which of the above terms are most church members uninformed on?

- Which of the above terms is most helpful for you (in regard to your equipping for personal evangelism)?

- Is there a difference between inviting someone to an event (or services) and the act of personal evangelism?

- Can invitations to events (or services) be part of the process of personal evangelism, if so what would be necessary for this to be considered as an act of evangelism?

An example of Personal Evangelism from Acts 8:26-40

“An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip: “Get up and go south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is the desert road.)²⁷ So he got up and went. There was an Ethiopian man, a eunuch and high official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to worship in Jerusalem²⁸ and was sitting in his chariot on his way home, reading the prophet Isaiah aloud.

²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, “Go and join that chariot.”

³⁰ When Philip ran up to it, he heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, “Do you understand what you’re reading?”

³¹ “How can I,” he said, “unless someone guides me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³² Now the Scripture passage he was reading was this:

He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb is silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

³³ In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who will describe his generation?

For his life is taken from the earth.

³⁴ The eunuch said to Philip, “I ask you, who is the prophet saying this about—himself or someone else?” ³⁵ Philip proceeded to tell him the good news about Jesus, beginning with that Scripture.

³⁶ As they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The eunuch said, “Look, there’s water. What would keep me from being baptized?” ³⁸ So he ordered the chariot to stop, and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him any longer but went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ Philip appeared in Azotus, and he was traveling and preaching the gospel in all the towns until he came to Caesarea.”

Group Discussion

- What do you notice in this text?

- Is the above definition for “the lost” appropriate for the Ethiopian? If so how?

- How is Philip prepared for this encounter?

- Are there any parallels between this passage and Acts 1:8 and the Great Commission?

- What does this text teach you about the act of personal evangelism?

Personal Reflection

- Have I been obedient to the Great Commission?

- What do I specifically “need” in order to be better equipped as a personal evangelist? _____

- How can I practically be involved in the work of evangelism?

- What information is absolutely necessary to communicate when sharing “the gospel?” _____

- Am I willing to join Jesus in his mission to “seek and save the lost?” What is hindering me from joining this mission?

- What is your greatest insight from this lesson?

Group Activity

Pair up with someone in the group. Take turns reciting the Great Commission to each other from memory. As one person cites the Commission, the other person should check for accuracy. When one person finishes reverse roles.

Equipping Personal Evangelists at Life Community Church
Lesson 2: Three Biblical Examples of Personal Evangelism

Please share any evangelistic updates with the group.

Group Discussion

- Have you ever known someone who actively shared their faith? Recall some insights about that person.

Paul's Philippian ministry gives three examples of personal evangelism.

Context

In Acts 15:36-41, a division occurs between the apostle Paul and Barnabas regarding Mark. Paul opposes Barnabas' desire to take Mark with him on the next evangelistic journey. As a result of this disagreement, Barnabas chooses Mark and Paul chooses Silas.

Chap. 16 begins with Paul and Silas discovering Timothy (another pupil who will accompany Paul in his evangelistic efforts). The text then shifts to a vision that Paul receives. In the vision, Paul receives instruction to go to Macedonia (Acts 16:6-10). V. 10 uses the word "we." It is here that the author of Acts, Luke, joins the evangelistic party already consisting of Paul, Silas, and Timothy. The party's first stop will be the Roman colony of Philippi where three very different people will experience Christian conversion.

Example 1: Lydia (Acts 16:11-15)

"From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, the next day to Neapolis,¹² and from there to Philippi, a Roman colony and a leading city of the district of Macedonia. We stayed in that city for several days.¹³ On the Sabbath day we went outside the city gate by the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and spoke to the women gathered there.¹⁴ A God-fearing woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, was listening. The Lord opened her heart to respond to what Paul was saying.¹⁵ After she and her household were baptized, she urged us, 'If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house.' And she persuaded us. "

Personal Evangelism Observations

- The team has an evangelistic strategy.
 - Paul normally begins his evangelistic ministry in a synagogue.
 - In Philippi, Paul seeks out a "place of prayer."
 - There is probably a lack of Jews in Philippi since the first evangelistic encounters are women by a river and not men in a synagogue.
- A conversation is initiated.
 - This is obviously a "gospel" conversation.
 - Lydia is listening. Lydia is described as one who "worshipped God" (v. 14). There was an extensive Jewish community in Lydia's hometown of Thyatira; therefore, it is likely she came to believe in God that way. (Polhill, *Acts*, 349).
- The Lord is present.
 - Lydia's heart is opened.
 - The opening of her heart resulted in a response to Paul's message.
 - Lydia and company will be baptized.
- One evangelistic encounter may open the door to other evangelistic encounters.
 - Luke (the author of Acts) mentions that Lydia is dealer in purple.
 - Macedonian women were known for their independence and (if freeborn or freed) their ability to undertake business dealings. Luke

intentionally mentions that Lydia is a dealer in purple. This fact would indicate that she is a person of wealth, Polhill writes, “She is described as a dealer in goods dyed purple, a likely occupation since Thyatira was indeed a center of the purple dye trade. Lydia’s business is not an incidental detail.” Lydia’s finances and influence could have been a significant help for the beginning Philippian church. Her being wealthy seems likely, especially since she invites the evangelistic team to stay with her in her house.

Group Discussion

- What role does strategy play in personal evangelism?

- What role do conversations play in personal evangelism?

- How does the Lord’s presence encourage us?

- How does one evangelistic encounter lead to more? Who led you to the Lord?
Do you know who led that person to the Lord?

Example 2: The Demon Possessed Girl (Acts 16:16-24)

“Once, as we were on our way to prayer, a slave girl met us who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She made a large profit for her owners by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ As she followed Paul and us she cried out, “These men, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation, are the servants of the Most High God.” ¹⁸ She did this for many days.

Paul was greatly annoyed. Turning to the spirit, he said, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!” And it came out right away.

¹⁹ When her owners realized that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities. ²⁰ Bringing them before the chief magistrates, they said, “These men are seriously disturbing our city. They are Jews ²¹ and are promoting customs that are not legal for us as Romans to adopt or practice.”

²² The crowd joined in the attack against them, and the chief magistrates stripped off their clothes and ordered them to be beaten with rods. ²³ After they had severely flogged them, they threw them in jail, ordering the jailer to guard them carefully. ²⁴ Receiving such an order, he put them into the inner prison and secured their feet in the stocks.”

Personal Evangelism Observations

- Evangelism efforts can attract the enemy.
 - A slave girl interacts with the evangelistic team.
 - She can predict the future (which her masters may have profited from).
 - The girl’s “spirit of prediction “ in v. 16 should be of interest. Polhill points out that the literal Greek speaks of a “python spirit.” This “python spirit” would draw the image of the mythical python that guarded the Apollonian temple. The myth was later used to refer to oracles who would receive their information through the spirit of the said python. Even the pagan generals had a reputation for consulting the oracles before going to war. Gangle observes that the slave master who owned a person with a “python spirit” would be a “gold mine for her master.” Gangel, *Acts*, 271-72.
 - Longenecker writes, “Later the word python came to mean a demon-possessed person through whom the Python spoke—even a ventriloquist was thought to have such a spirit living in his or her belly. Undoubtedly all who knew the girl regarded her as neither fraudulent nor insane but as demon possessed and able to foretell the future. “ Longenecker, *Acts*, 462.
- Demonic attacks can frustrate the evangelism process.
 - She continually announces Paul and Silas as “servants of the Most High God.” Paul and Silas did not want an endorsement from a demon. The girl’s proclamation would have confused people.
 - Paul was annoyed and cast out the demons
- Evangelism efforts could bring suffering.
 - The slave girl’s owners are not happy, they bring Paul and Silas before the authorities.
 - Paul and Silas are singled out as “Jews.” (Hints of racism are seen).
 - Lies are told about Paul and Silas.
 - Paul and Silas are beaten and jailed.

Group Discussion

- Why would the enemy be interested in your personal evangelism activity?

- What are some common frustrations you experience when you attempt to share the Gospel?

- What type of sufferings could you experience for sharing your faith?

- If personal evangelism could lead to hardship, why do it?

Example 3: The Jailer (Acts 16:25-34)

“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the jail were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s chains came loose. ²⁷ When the jailer woke up and saw the doors of the prison standing open, he drew his sword and was going to kill himself, since he thought the prisoners had escaped.

²⁸ But Paul called out in a loud voice, “Don’t harm yourself, because we’re all here!”

²⁹ The jailer called for lights, rushed in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.

³⁰ He escorted them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

³¹ They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” ³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him along with everyone in his house. ³³ He took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds. Right away he and all his family were baptized. ³⁴ He brought them into his house, set a meal before them, and rejoiced because he had come to believe in God with his entire household.”

Personal Evangelism Observations

- The world watches to see if our lives are consistent with our message.
 - Paul and Silas are singing in the jail cell.
 - The prisoners are listening (not merely “hearing” Paul and Silas, they are giving their full attention to the words).
 - Williams brings attention to the use of the Greek in v. 25, he writes “The Greek verb implies that the prisoners gave them their closest attention, and the tense (imperfect) shows that the missionaries held it throughout.” Williams, *Acts*, 288.
- The world will see God’s power in our lives.
 - Supernatural events take place (an earthquake, the opening of prison doors, the loosening of chains, and no escapes).
 - The jailer threatens to kill himself until he realizes that no prisoners have escaped.
 - Longenecker writes, “In Roman law, a guard who allowed his prisoner to escape was liable to the same penalty the prisoner would have suffered. Thus the jailer drew his sword to kill himself, believing the prisoners had all escaped.” Longenecker, *Acts*, 464. Longenecker’s explanation would explain why the jailer was about to commit suicide.
 - The jailer desires salvation. (The beatings, singing, praying, earthquake, and lack of a prison escape has caused this man to seek spiritual salvation from Paul and Silas. The entire episode is evangelistic).
 - *Note: When evangelizing God may not send an earthquake to verify the message, but he can use your Christian life to verify the message. Never underestimate what your testimony (due to the power of the Holy Spirit) can contribute to your evangelism.*
- The world needs an explanation of the Gospel
 - Paul and Silas declare to the jailer, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”
 - The jailer and his family accepted Christ and were baptized.

Group Discussion

- Why should our lifestyle be consistent with our message?

- Can others see the power of God in my life?

- Even though a consistent Christian life is important, is it enough to clearly present the Gospel?

- If someone asked you “what must I do to be saved?” What would tell them?

Personal Reflection

- Which of these three examples do you relate to the most?

- Which of these three examples encourage you the most?

- From the three examples, what did you learn about personal evangelism?

Group Activity

Paul and Silas sung in the prison. Compile a group play list of hymns and praise songs that could encourage each other to share the Gospel.

Equipping Personal Evangelists at Life Community Church
Lesson 3: What is the Gospel?

Please share any evangelistic updates with the group.

Group Discussion

- If a Christian cannot explain the Gospel can they can be committed to the Great Commission? Why or why not?

- Dr. William Henard, author and Executive Director of the West Virginia Baptist Convention, believes the lack of gospel understanding is so widespread that many “Christians” are actually “closet universalists,”⁸ believing that all people will make it to heaven regardless of their response to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Would you agree or disagree with Dr. Henard? Why or why not?

⁸ William Henard, “The Great Commission Leader: The Pastor and Personal Evangelist,” in *The Great Commission Resurgence: Fulfilling God’s Mandate in Our Time*, ed. Adam W. Greenway and Chuck Lawless (Nashville: B & H, 2010), 269.

A Personal Evangelist must be able to articulate the Gospel.

So what is the Gospel?

Let's review the definition of "The Gospel," from lesson 1.

The Gospel. The gospel, from the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον (*Euangelion*), is to be understood as the historical story of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as a substitute for the atonement of man. R.H. Mounce refers to the gospel as ". . . God's redemptive activity in Christ Jesus on behalf of humans enslaved by sin."⁹

Authors, Gilbert and DeYoung, in their book *What is the Mission of the Church? Making sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission*, give a simpler definition.

The Gospel is. . .

"the message that sinners can be forgiven through repentance and faith in the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ."¹⁰

Therefore, the Gospel presentation is a message. If either of these definitions are to be followed, then the gospel presentation must include these topics

- Sin
- Cross and resurrection
- Invitation (encouraging a response to the presented message)

Group Discussion

- How are the two definitions different? How are they similar?

- If the Gospel is a message, what is NOT the Gospel?

- Which of the three topics (sin, cross and resurrection, and invitation) do you feel most uninformed about?

⁹ Mounce, "Gospel," in Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 512.

¹⁰ Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 106.

Sin

There may be a temptation to speak about the love of God while excluding the topic of sin. Will McRaney cautions the evangelist: “By elevating tolerance and removing sin from our vocabulary, we still cannot eliminate the consequences of sin or the need for removal of that sin.”¹¹ When omitting the depravity of man, the evangelist cheapens the death of Jesus.

Consider memorizing these verses.

Romans 3:10

“. . . There is no one righteous, not even one.”

Romans 3:23

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”

Romans 6:23

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”

¹¹ Will McRaney, *The Art of Personal Evangelism: Sharing Jesus in a Changing Culture* (Nashville: B & H, 2003), 84.

Group Discussion

- Why is the topic of sin necessary for a Gospel presentation?

- Could an exclusion of the topic of sin eliminate the need for forgiveness? Could an exclusion of the topic of sin confuse people?

- What is a wage? What is a gift? What is the consequence of sin?

- What does “death” mean? How would you interpret Romans 6:23 in light of Revelation 21:8?

Cross and Resurrection

The Gospel message must include the cross and resurrection. DeYoung and Gilbert write of a person holding only a handful of leaves, but claiming that they are holding a tree. DeYoung and Gilbert illustrate the leaves as the blessings one receives from the gospel and the tree as the message of the Gospel. One cannot hold leaves and insist that they are holding a tree, likewise, one cannot discuss the blessings of the Gospel without discussing the message of the Gospel. Declaration of the cross of Jesus is necessary to present the gospel accurately. They write,

“You cannot proclaim the “full Gospel” if you leave out the message of the cross, even if you talk for an hour about all the other blessings God has in store for the redeemed. . . . In the same way, unless the blessings of the Gospel of the kingdom are connected to the cross, you don’t have a Gospel at all.”

The Gospel message must include Christ dying on a cross as a sacrificial substitute.

Norman Geisler writes, “There is no salvation apart from Christ’s resurrection (Rm 4:25). As Paul said, “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins” (1 Co 15:17). The resurrection of Christ is a *sine qua non* (necessity!) of salvation. Not only is salvation not achievable without it, but one cannot be saved without believing in it. For the Bible declares that salvation comes only “if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rm 10:9). Hence, the resurrection is truly one of the great fundamentals of the Christian faith.¹²

The Gospel message must include the resurrection of Christ.

Consider memorizing these verses.

Romans 5:8

“But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

1 Peter 3:18

“For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”

1 John 4:10

“Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

1 Corinthians 15:13-14

“If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁴ and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain, and so is your faith.”

¹² Norman L. Geisler, “The Resurrection of Jesus Christ,” in *Holman Christian Standard Bible: Harmony of the Gospels*, ed. Steven L. Cox and Kendell H. Easley (Nashville: Holman Bible, 2007), 331.

Romans 4:25

“He was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.”

Romans 10:9

“If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Group Discussion

- How is love proved in Romans 5:8?

- Revisit 1 Peter 3:18. According to this verse, why was the death of Jesus necessary?

- In 1 John 4:10 who is doing the loving? Who is not doing the loving? What does this act of love look like?

- Why is the resurrection of Jesus necessary for someone to be saved?

Invitation

When commenting on 2 Timothy 4:2, Henard writes, “Paul admonishes Timothy to invite people, to urge people, to plead and to beg with them in regard to their spiritual condition.”¹³ This observation illustrates that the seasoned apostle trained the younger Timothy in the art of evangelism. Timothy was trained to present the gospel and then to encourage the person to respond to the gospel.

Consider memorizing these verses

2 Timothy 4:2

“Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching.”

Acts 2:40

“With many other words he testified and strongly urged them, saying, “Be saved from this corrupt generation!”

Acts 28:23

“After arranging a day with him, many came to him at his lodging. From dawn to dusk he expounded and testified about the kingdom of God. He tried to persuade them about Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets.”

¹³ Henard, “The Great Commission Leader,” 276.

Group Discussion

- Is there a danger in just presenting information but not encouraging a response to the Gospel?

- Does the act of encouraging someone to respond to the Gospel replace the work of the Holy Spirit?

- What if someone does not respond to your invitation to follow Christ? Is this the end of your evangelism with that person?

Personal Reflection

- How would you describe the Gospel in your own words?

- Is it easy or is it difficult to encourage someone to respond to the Gospel?

- What is your greatest insight from this lesson?

Group Activity

Pair up with someone in the group. Pick one of the verses from the list of potential memory verses. One person should attempt to recite a verse while the other person checks for accuracy, then reverse roles.

Equipping Personal Evangelists at Life Community Church
Lesson 4: Identifying the Lost

Please share any evangelistic updates with the group.

Group Discussion

- Have you ever said (or heard another Christian say), “I just don’t know any lost people.” How truthful is a statement like this? Why do Christians make statements like this?

- Do some churches isolate themselves from the lost communities that surround their church buildings? Do individual Christians isolate themselves from the lost? Why or why not?

A Personal Evangelist must identify the lost within their networks.

The work of the evangelist.

"But as for you, exercise self-control in everything, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." 2 Timothy 4:5

- There is an estimated 160 million unchurched people in the United States! ¹⁴
 - Some may be backslidden or wayward Christians.
 - It is likely that the majority are lost.
 - Now consider a global population of over 6 billion people.
- Churches should want and desire to grow numerically, but is numerical attendance (in a church service) the answer?
 - The Brooklyn Tabernacle is one of the largest churches in New York City and has reached many New Yorkers with the gospel. Cymbala writes about numerical church attendance: "The Bible does not say we should aim at numbers but rather urges us to faithfully proclaim God's message in the boldness of the Holy Spirit. This will build God's church God's way"¹⁵
 - A proclamation of the gospel (not attendance) is the answer.
- Personal evangelists must be intentional.
 - Must go outside their normal activities.
 - Must establish new relationships.
 - Must be confrontational (in the sense that we must come to the point that we confront people about their need for Christ).¹⁶

Activities I am involved in.

Church Activities	Secular Activities	Possible New Activities

¹⁴ Thomas S. Rainer, "A Resurgence Not Yet Fulfilled: Evangelistic Effectiveness in the Southern Baptist Convection since 1979," in Greenway and Lawless, *The Great Commission Resurgence*, 39.

¹⁵ Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire: What Happens When God's Spirit Invades the Heart of His People* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 124.

¹⁶ Henard, "The Great Commission Leader," 269.

Group Discussion

- There is an estimation of 160 million unchurched people in the USA (with the majority being lost). Consider the global population of 6 billion people. What kind of emotions or thoughts come to mind?

- Why do we celebrate attendance more than a “faithful proclamation of the Gospel?” What affects would a “faithful proclamation of the Gospel” have on attendance?

- Which of the three components of being intentional do you find the most challenging? Why?

- What activities (that you are involved in) include lost people? What could you be involved in to find more lost people?

Engaging the lost.

John 4:35

“ . . . Open your eyes and look at the fields, because they are ready for harvest.”

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come! ¹⁸ Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. ¹⁹ That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ’s behalf: “Be reconciled to God.” ²¹ He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

- A common temptation for Christians may come in the form of disassociating oneself from those that do not know Christ. Many Christians tend to ignore the lost around them. Henard offers an explanation for this for phenomena:

- “Truthfully, most Christians probably do not like being around non-Christians. Once Christ has transformed an individual, that person will often become very aware of the behavior of others. People outside of Christ become offensive in the language they use, in the attitudes they demonstrate, and in the behaviors they accentuate. As a result, many Christians isolate themselves from non-Christians.” (The Great Commission Leader, 273-74)
 - Isolation is not an option. Sadly, the Great Commission has become the “Great Omission.”
- Be encouraged: 8 out of 10 unchurched people indicate that they would come to church if invited.¹⁷
 - Be encouraged: 75-90 percent of those who come to faith did so through a friend or relative.¹⁸
 - Understand your οἶκος (“*oikos*”), Greek for household).
 - Your “*oikos*” are those who are in close connection.
 - Evangelistic opportunities in MY WORLD.
 - Tom Mercer writes, “God has given each of us, on average, anywhere from eight to fifteen people who He has supernaturally and strategically placed in our relational worlds. . . . This is the world He wants to use each of us to change, our individual world.”¹⁹

Oscar Thompson believed that the most important word in the English language is the word “relationship.”²⁰ Thompson reached this conclusion by observing the outward wave that the gospel traveled in the book of Acts (from Jerusalem to Judea, then Samaria, and then the uttermost parts of the earth).²¹ In Thompson’s view, the gospel continues to move outward in the Christian’s relationships, beginning with those in close relationship with the Christian and then extending out to acquaintances and strangers.

¹⁷ Rainer, “A Resurgence Not Yet Fulfilled,” 39.

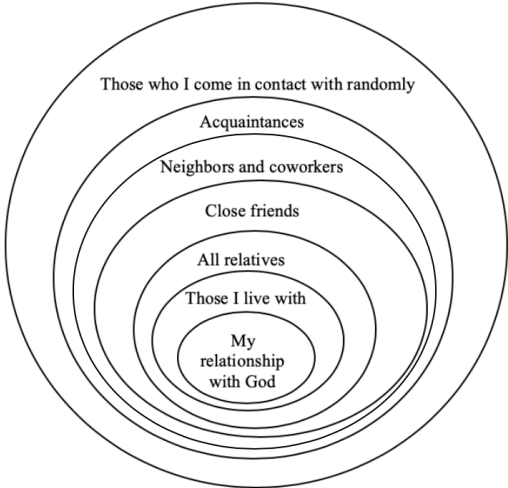
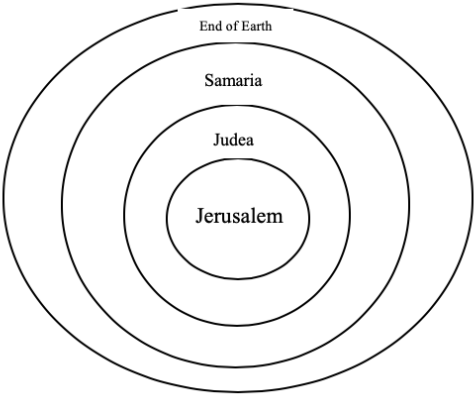
¹⁸ Tom Mercer, *Oikos, Your World, Delivered* (Chapel Hill, NC: Professional Press, 2008), 37.

¹⁹ Mercer, *Oikos, Your World, Delivered*, 34.

²⁰ Ritzman and Thompson, *Concentric Circles of Concern*, 8.

²¹ Ritzman and Thompson, *Concentric Circles of Concern*, 16.

Thompson's Concentric Circles



Personal Reflection

- Share with the group the total number of “lost” within your “oikos.” Also identify the column that has the most “lost” in it.

- If your stronger relationships are already Christians, how can you strengthen the weaker relationships?

- What is your greatest insight from this lesson?

Group Activity

Each group member should identify where they live on a city map. Physically mark the map to represent your home as lighthouse for that area. Pray for the city.

Equipping Personal Evangelists at Life Community Church
Lesson 5: Praying for the Lost.

Please share any evangelistic updates with the group.

Group Discussion

- When prayer requests are taken in a Bible study or during a prayer meeting, why do people rarely mention the names of the lost?

- What do you commonly pray for? How often are you praying for the lost?

A Personal Evangelist must pray for the lost within their networks.

Why we pray for the lost.

After identifying the lost within your relational network, you should now begin praying for those individuals. Prayers are utilized to attune the believer to the instructions of God. Both Mercer and Thompson, advocates of the relational evangelism model, believe that prayer is of utmost importance. Mercer writes, “Listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. This is very important. As you move into this *oikocentric* lifestyle, you will find more and more that you’re hearing that small whisper guiding you. Listen to Him.”²³ Thompson writes, “You must intercede for those in your circles. You must pray for God to meet their spiritual, physical, or whatever needs they have. You are his vessel. You must be available.”²⁴ Mercer and Thompson would suggest that the relational evangelism model requires the believer to pray for those in their networks.

Beyond this, the Scripture itself teaches that we are to pray for the lost.

Romans 10:1

“Brothers and sisters, my heart’s desire and prayer to God concerning them is for their salvation.”

Matthew 9:37-38

“Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few.³⁸ Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.”

John 6:44

“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

1 Timothy 2:1-4

“First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone,² for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.³ This is good, and it pleases God our Savior,⁴ who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

²³ Mercer, *Oikos, Your World, Delivered*, 103.

²⁴ Ritzman and Thompson, *Concentric Circles of Concern*, 125.

Group Discussion

- Which of these verses speak to you the most about praying for the lost? Why?

- John 6:44 indicates that evangelism is a spiritual process. How does prayer factor into this? Also consider 1 Timothy 2:1-4.

- Paul said it was his “heart’s desire” for the lost to be saved. On a scale of 1-10, what level of concern do you have for the lost? Does the level of concern affect the way you pray?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Identifying prayer concerns for the lost

Thompson writes, “You must intercede for those in your circles. You must pray for God to meet their *spiritual, physical, or whatever needs* they have.”²⁵

As we pray for these needs we are ultimately praying that God will meet them and at the same time soften their hearts to the Gospel. What good will it do if a person is healed from a sickness but spends an eternity in Hell?

Consult your “oikos” chart. Identify one name from your list and complete as much prayer information about them as possible.

Relationship	Name	Physical Need	Emotional Need	Spiritual Need (in regard to their salvation)
<i>Example</i>	<i>Joe Smith</i>	<i>Suffering with cancer</i>	<i>Under stress</i>	<i>Salvation: To quit using hypocrites as an excuse not to be saved.</i>
Who I live with				
Relative				
Close friend				
Neighbor/coworker				
Acquaintance				
Random Contact				

²⁵ Ritzman and Thompson, *Concentric Circles of Concern*, 125.

Let us pray.

- Cymbala is not surprised that an evangelism focus would require spiritual means. In his view, an evangelistic effort should call the Christian to forsake time-consuming hobbies and instead engage in activities like prayer and fasting for the lost.^{26,27} Let's schedule a day of fasting for one lost person in your "oikos."
 - ¹⁶“Whenever you fast, don't be gloomy like the hypocrites. For they make their faces unattractive so that their fasting is obvious to people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,¹⁸ so that your fasting isn't obvious to others but to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” Matthew 6:16-18

I will be praying and fasting for _____
on _____ 20_____. .

Be prepared to share during the next session any insights, observations, or encounters as a result of your prayers and fasting.

²⁶ Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, 180.

²⁷ Consult a physician if you feel you have any dietary concerns regarding fasting, especially if you are a diabetic. Fasting can also take the forms of abstinence from activities like television or social media. Replace those activities with prayer for a lost person.

Personal Reflection

- How will your daily prayers be different as a result of this lesson?

- What kind of effects does praying for a lost person have on you?

- What is your greatest insight from this lesson?

Group Activity

Partner with someone in the group and begin praying for the lost.

- Pray for their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.
- Pray for open hearts, opportunities, boldness, and receptivity.

Equipping Personal Evangelists at Life Community Church
Lesson 6: Gospel Techniques.

Please share any evangelistic updates with the group.

Group Discussion

- Do you find it difficult to initiate a spiritual conversation with someone? Why or why not?

- What types of fears and struggles do Christians encounter when attempting to share their faith? Why do they experience this?

A Personal Evangelist can utilize Gospel techniques when presenting the Gospel.

The Need for Gospel Techniques

- Definition: a Gospel technique is designed to assist personal evangelists in the process of sharing the Gospel.
 - “but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.” 1 Peter 3:15
- The evangelist will likely have struggles when sharing.
 - Some may justify “not sharing” the Gospel because “they don’t know how.”
 - A gospel technique confronts this excuse through the teaching of a systematic process of presenting the gospel.
- Gospel techniques assist the personal evangelists in initiating Gospel conversations.
 - When presenting the gospel, the evangelist must understand the importance of a conversation. Harry Reeder writes, “Evangelism should be a dialogue. . . You can find out where people are spiritually, and challenge them to think about their faith . . .”²⁸
 - A gospel technique should adequately encourage a conversation between the lost person and the evangelist.
- Gospel techniques include a faithful, systematic, and helpful layout of Scripture texts.
 - “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.” Romans 10:17
 - Gospel techniques can assist with the lost hearing the Word.
- Gospel techniques may present opportunities to share a personal testimony.
- Gospel techniques assist the evangelist with the leading of a lost person to the point of decision.
 - Most gospel techniques include steps to becoming a Christian. The idea is for the personal evangelist to explain the gospel to the lost person, dialogue with them, and then encourage them to believe and place trust in Christ. This encouragement comes at the end of the technique.

²⁸ Harry L. Reeder III and David Swavely, *From Embers to a Flame, How God Can Revitalize Your Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2012), 197.

Group Discussion

- Do you feel that Gospel techniques take away from the work of the Holy Spirit?
Why or why not?

- What Gospel techniques are you familiar with?

Share Jesus without Fear

One excellent example of a conversational gospel technique is William Faye's *Share Jesus without Fear*. Faye's gospel technique involves asking a lost person thought-provoking questions. Faye argues that questions are valid for two reasons: it allows the other person to express opinions, and it allows the questioner to be in control without putting the other person on the defense. The *Share Jesus without Fear* technique would greatly encourage personal evangelists by equipping them with spiritual conversation starters and helping them overcome fear.²⁹

The *Share Jesus without Fear* technique begins by asking the lost person five conversational questions:

1. Do you have any kind of spiritual beliefs?
2. To you, who is Jesus?
3. Do you think there is a Heaven or Hell?
4. If you died where would you go and why?
5. If what you are believing is not true, would you want to know?

If the person says "yes" to question 5, the evangelist then presents a series of seven scriptures to the lost person. Using a marked New Testament, the evangelist has the person read the scripture aloud. The evangelist then asks, "what does this say?" If they do not correctly interpret the Scripture ask them to read it again.

Rom 3:23

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Rom 6:23

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

John 3:3

"Jesus replied, 'I assure you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'"

- Faye suggests asking "Why did Jesus have to die?" after reading this Scripture.

John 14:6

"Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'"

Rom 10:9-11

"⁹ If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame,"

²⁹ For a thorough understanding of Faye's technique, obtain and read Linda Evans Shepherd and William Fay, *Share Jesus without Fear*, reissue ed. (Nashville: B & H, 1999),

2 Cor 5:15

“And He died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised.”

Rev 3:20

“Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and have dinner with him, and he with Me.”

The model begins with dialogue questions, transitions to a systematic presentation of Scripture, and then concludes with four questions for the lost person. The questions are intended to make the person reflect upon what they just heard and then respond.

1. Are you a sinner?
2. Do you want forgiveness for your sins?
3. Do you believe Jesus died on the cross and rose again?
4. Are you willing to surrender your life to Jesus?

If the lost are ready to surrender their lives to Christ, then the personal evangelist will lead the lost person in a prayer of belief and repentance.

Sample prayer:

“Dear God I admit that I am a sinner. My sins have separated me from you. I believe that Jesus is the Lord. I believe he died for my sins, was buried, and rose again. I want to turn from my sins and turn to Christ. The best that I know how, I commit my life to you. Come into my life and save me. Thank you for saving me. In the Name of Jesus. Amen”

- After the person receives Christ.
 - Congratulate them.
 - Briefly tell them about the importance of Baptism.
 - Connect them to a local Bible-believing Southern Baptist Church.
 - Connect them to a Life Group or Sunday School class.
 - Go to their baptism, offer ongoing prayer and Bible study with them.

Personal Reflection

- What are the pros and cons of the *Share Jesus Without Fear* technique?

- What is your greatest insight from this lesson?

- Familiarize yourself with other Gospel techniques and be ready to briefly share about it next week.
 - Two ways to live— <http://www.matthiasmedia.com.au/2wtl>
 - Life on Mission: 3 Circles— <http://lifeonmissionbook.com/conversation-guide>
 - The Bridge to Life— <https://www.navigators.org/Tools>
 - One-Verse Evangelism— <http://www.navigators.org/Tools>
 - The Story— <http://spreadtruth.com/thestory>
 - Life in Six Words— <http://www.dare2share.org/mobile-app/>
 - Evangelism Explosion— <http://evangelismexplosion.org>
 - The “G.O.S.P.E.L.”— <http://www.dare2share.org/products-resources/free-teen-stuff/>
 - 411— <http://noplacelleft.net/411-gospel-conversation-training/>

Be prepared to report about one of the various methods at the beginning of next week’s session.

Group Activity

Two volunteers are needed. One volunteer will role play the lost person and the other volunteer will role play the personal evangelist. The personal evangelist will utilize the *Share Jesus Without Fear* technique.

Equipping Personal Evangelists at Life Community Church
Lesson 7: The Use of Testimony in Personal Evangelism.

Please share any evangelistic updates with the group and a Gospel technique you learned.

Group Discussion

- Where were you and how old were you when you received Jesus as Savior?

- Why are personal stories so compelling?

A Personal Evangelist can utilize personal testimony when presenting the Gospel.

Utilizing personal testimonies

- The testimony is validated through Scripture.
 - “The one who believes in the Son of God has this testimony within himself.”
1 John 5:10
 - “They conquered him (*Satan*) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.” Revelation 12:11

- The testimony connects.
 - Rick Warren writes, “Unbelievers would probably lose interest if you started quoting theologians, but they have a natural curiosity about experiences they’ve never had. Shared stories build a relational bridge that Jesus can walk across from your heart to theirs.”³⁰

- The testimony is my story.
 - No one can refute my personal story.

Group Discussion

- How can the use of testimony aid your personal evangelism?

- What “necessary information” is needed when giving an evangelistic testimony?

³⁰ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?*, expanded ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 288.

The Blind man who was healed (John 9:13-17, 24-27)

“They brought the man who used to be blind to the Pharisees. ¹⁴ The day that Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes was a Sabbath. ¹⁵ Then the Pharisees asked him again how he received his sight.

‘He put mud on my eyes,’ he told them. ‘I washed and I can see.’

¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, ‘This man is not from God, because he doesn’t keep the Sabbath.’ But others were saying, ‘How can a sinful man perform such signs?’ And there was a division among them.

¹⁷ Again they asked the blind man, ‘What do you say about him, since he opened your eyes?’

‘He’s a prophet,’ he said.“

—————
²⁴ So a second time they summoned the man who had been blind and told him, ‘Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.’

²⁵ He answered, ‘Whether or not he’s a sinner, I don’t know. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see!’

²⁶ Then they asked him, ‘What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?’

²⁷ ‘I already told you,’ he said, ‘and you didn’t listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You don’t want to become his disciples too, do you?’”

- Review the text. What insights did you gain about personal testimonies from this passage?

Writing your Evangelistic testimony

- Rick Warren’s specific method for sharing a gospel testimony is worth noting. Warren encourages the division of the testimony into four parts for gospel effectiveness. The testimony is used to reiterate the gospel message.
 - What was my life like before I met Jesus?
 - How I realized I needed Jesus.
 - How I committed my life to Jesus.
 - The difference Jesus made in my life.

Evangelistic testimonies are meant to be shared in personal evangelism conversations. The personal evangelist should limit the length of the testimony to ensure that all four parts are emphasized in the conversation. It is recommended that the personal evangelist limits the testimony to five minutes.

What was my life like before I met Jesus.	1 minute
How I realized I needed Jesus.	1 minute
How I committed my life to Jesus.	1 minute
The difference Jesus has made in my life.	1 minute

Write out the four parts of your evangelistic testimony.

What was my life like before I met Jesus?

Equipping Personal Evangelists at Life Community Church
Lesson 8: Evangelism and Encouragement.

Please share any evangelistic updates with the group.

Group Discussion

- Can personal evangelism be discouraging? Why or why not?

- What has been the greatest challenge you have experienced when sharing your faith?

A Personal Evangelist needs encouragement.

Discouragement is real!

- Historical discouragement.
 - A survey of the New Testament reveals persecution and hardship.
 - “I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.” John 16:33
 - “Five times I received the forty lashes minus one from the Jews. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked. I have spent a night and a day in the open sea. ²⁶ On frequent journeys, I faced dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my own people, dangers from Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers at sea, and dangers among false brothers; ²⁷ toil and hardship, many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, often without food, cold, and without clothing. ²⁸ Not to mention other things, there is the daily pressure on me: my concern for all the churches” 2 Corinthians 11:24-28
 - History records the continuing persecution of subsequent generations through the hands of Roman emperors and rival religions.
 - Throughout time, Christians have been isolated, had property confiscated, ridiculed, tortured, and even martyred for the gospel.
- Modern discouragement.
 - Persecution of Christians still exists in various parts of the world.
 - The United States (often referred to as a “Christian” nation) is not a nation that is predominately Christian.
 - 1 in 5 Americans claim no religious identity.
 - Protestant Christianity has fallen from 53 percent of the US population to 48 percent.³¹
 - The American Christian is a minority, and being in the minority may be complicated and intimidating when sharing the gospel.

³¹ James Emery White, *The Rise of the Nones: Understanding and Reaching the Religiously Unaffiliated* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 16.

Discovering Encouragement

- Don't believe the myths! ³²
 - Myth 1—There is no religious consciousness amongst the lost.
 - The truth—extensive evidence exists that people are “incurably religious”.
 - Myth 2—The lost have no morals
 - The truth—the lost experience some of the same moral struggles Christians face.
 - Myth 3—Those who are resistant to Christianity are well-read, philosophical, intellectuals.
 - The truth—many are very naïve and superficial (with no real understanding of the Christian faith).

It may be true that most Americans are not Evangelical Christians, but the Christian should be encouraged that the lost may be religiously-minded, concerned about morals, and may not know much about Christianity. Such facts should encourage the Christian to share the gospel.

- Rejection is not guaranteed!
 - Thom Rainer's study of the previously unchurched yields encouraging data.
 - Over one half indicated that someone from the church they joined shared Christ with them.
 - Another 12 percent stated someone other than a member at the church they joined personally evangelized them.
 - The data indicates that many people who came to Christ did so because of their connections. In these situations, the Christian's message was not rejected but was received. ³³
- Big Hitters aren't the only option!
 - A pastor, vocational evangelist, career missionary, or some other type of “big hitter,” are not the only people that the lost respond to.
 - John Dickerson, author of the *Great Evangelical Recession* writes, “The vast majority of unbelieving Americans do not come to Christ—or to a church—because of a big hitter. They come because of a friend or relative”³⁴ Dickerson so believes in the effectiveness of personal evangelism that he calls for the church to

³² George G. Hunter, *How to Reach Secular People* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992), 42-43.

³³ Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched: Proven Ways to Reach Them* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 43-44.

³⁴ John S. Dickerson, *The Great Evangelical Recession: 6 Factors That Will Crash the American Church . . . and How to Prepare* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 206.

quit relying on evangelists and programs and instead to invest in the training of Christians in personal evangelism.³⁵

- View suffering as a blessing
 - “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs.” Matthew 5:10
 - The Christian should understand persecution as a sign of faithfulness to the Great Commission and as an act of glorifying God.

- The goal of evangelism is the glory of God.
 - Andrew Davis writes, “Root all evangelism in the glory of God. Teach that God’s glory is supreme—more important than even the value of a human soul—but show that the greatest display of God’s glory in the universe is the salvation of sinners through faith in Christ.”³⁶
 - Proper teaching of evangelism places the God of the Bible in his proper place, declaring that Jesus has sufficiently atoned for the sins of the world. This gospel message is the most important message in all the world. If Christians understand this, then they will endure suffering because the message is more important than the comforts of man.

³⁵ Dickerson writes,

Just like industry, the 20th century model for evangelism in the United States relied on the heavy, big hitters like Billy Graham. Locally, we relied on inviting folks to big events like Christmas or Easter outreaches. That used to be a fine model, but it’s grossly outdated because it ignores the Long Tail (what George refers to as the normal Christians), the millions of other “non-hit” evangelical Christians. It ignores us normal people—and God’s plan to use all His people. (Dickerson, *The Great Evangelical Recession*, 204)

³⁶ Andrew M. Davis, *Revitalize: Biblical Keys to Helping Your Church Come Alive Again* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), 204.

Group Discussion

- Which of the myths have you falsely believed?

- Does it make sense that a friend or relative may respond more to you than a “big hitter?” Why or why not?

- Have you experienced any suffering (or hardship) when attempting to share the Gospel? Did you view it as a blessing? Why or why not?

- Do you agree with Andrew Davis’ statement that evangelism is to be rooted in the glory of God? Why or why not? How does your view of the glory of God impact your evangelism?

Time to Fish!

- View evangelism the same way you view fishing.
 - “¹⁹ ‘Follow me,’ he told them, ‘and I will make you fish for people.’”
Matthew 4:19
 - Fishing requires patience.
 - Rick Warren believes the sending out of the 70 in Luke 10 demonstrates the “fishing” methodology of Jesus. When observing how the 70 were to operate, Warren writes, “Before Jesus sent out his disciples to evangelize, he gave them specific instructions about whom they were to spend their time with, whom they were to ignore, and what they were to say, and how to they were to share it.”³⁷ Warren believes these instructions identify “fishing guidelines” for the evangelist.

Luke 10:1-11

“After this, the Lord appointed 70 others, and He sent them ahead of Him in pairs to every town and place where He Himself was about to go. He told them: “The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest. Now go; I’m sending you out like lambs among wolves. Don’t carry a money-bag, traveling bag, or sandals; don’t greet anyone along the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this household.’ If a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they offer, for the worker is worthy of his wages. Don’t be moving from house to house. When you enter any town, and they welcome you, eat the things set before you. Heal the sick who are there, and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near you.’ When you enter any town, and they don’t welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ‘We are wiping off [as a witness] against you even the dust of your town that clings to our feet. Know this for certain: the kingdom of God has come near.’ I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town.”

³⁷ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 186.

Warren’s Fishing guidelines³⁸

<p><u>Go where the Fish are Biting</u></p> <p>(Who in your “oikos” may be the most receptive to the Gospel?)</p>	<p><u>Learn to think like a fish</u></p> <p>(What is this person dealing with? What’s consuming their thoughts?)</p>	<p><u>Catch the fish on their terms</u></p> <p>(How can I best communicate the Gospel to this person?)</p>
<p><i>Example: Sally Smith (seems the most open to the Gospel)</i></p>	<p><i>Sally is passionate about the PTO. She is very involved in the school her son goes to.</i></p>	<p><i>I can meet with Sally and then share about my child’s experiences in the school. I may even volunteer with Sally in the PTO, to build a relationship with her. I will share with Sally that I pray for the school and the kids everyday and will then transition the conversation into a spiritual conversation.</i></p>

³⁸ Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 187-96.

Personal Reflection

- Do I tend to be more negative or positive about evangelism? How can I be more positive?

- What is the greatest insight from this lesson?

Group Activity

Share with the Group some details about your “fish.”

You Did It!

Congratulations! You have completed eight weeks of Personal Evangelism training! Thank you for investing your time and energy in learning your part in the Great Commission. You have been provided tools and resources to equip you to share the Gospel. As you share the Gospel recall these words from the epistle of James.

James 4:17

“So it is sin to know the good and yet not do it”

You are equipped, accountable, and expected to share the Gospel. Sharing the Gospel begins today, continues tomorrow, and will last for the rest of your earthly life. Sharing the Gospel is “good,” don’t sin by not sharing it.

Closing Prayer

“Father, I come to you in the Name of Jesus. I thank you for sending Jesus to die on the cross for my sins and raising Him for my justification. Thank you for sending someone to me that shared the Gospel with me. I am to fulfill the Great Commission by being involved in the work of Personal Evangelism. People will not be able to call on you to save them unless they hear the good news.

Fill me with your Spirit to share the Gospel with the lost.

Give me boldness and courage to share the Gospel.

Give me a heart and a passion to share your Gospel.

Give me a love for those that are lost.

Give me a love for your word. Give me a love for you.

In the Name of Jesus I pray.

Amen.”

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING PERSONAL EVANGELISTS
AT LIFE COMMUNITY CHURCH IN
OWENSBORO, KENTUCKY

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019
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Chapter 1 builds an argument for the need to equip church members to become personal evangelists. The chapter outlines the context of Life Community Church, a church plant located in Owensboro, Kentucky, and the reasons for an equipping class. The chapter explains the purpose of the project, the desired goals of the project, and how the project was conducted and measured. Definitions and delimitations specific to the project are also included.

Chapter 2 argues that the pastor should be able to lead his church in evangelism. The chapter exegetes four biblical texts to build the argument. The first section exegetes Acts 8:4-15 to show that the pastor should lead the church in evangelism because of examples of church leaders. The second section exegetes 2 Timothy 4:1-5 to show that the pastor should be able to lead the church in evangelism because he is commissioned to do the work of an evangelist. The third section exegetes Acts 16:11-34 to show that the pastor should be able to lead the church in evangelism by modeling evangelism. Finally, the fourth section exegetes Ephesians 4:7-16 to show that the pastor should be able to lead the church in evangelism because his duties involve the equipping of the congregation for ministry.

Chapter 3 argues that evangelism should primarily occur as a result of the development of personal evangelists. The chapter is divided into four sections that utilize the thoughts of various authors in regard to evangelism occurring through

personal evangelists. Section 1 illustrates that evangelism occurs when the evangelist is taught a biblical and adequate definition of the gospel. Section 2 illustrates that evangelism occurs when the evangelist identifies and prays for the lost. Section 3 illustrates that evangelism occurs when the evangelist has exposure to various gospel techniques. Section 4 illustrates that evangelism occurs when the evangelist is encouraged through the building of confidence when leading someone to Christ.

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