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RELATIONAL EVANGELISM STRATEGIES
FOR CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH,
GREENWOOD, INDIANA

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APPROVAL SHEET

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FOR CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH,
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I dedicate this project to my amazing wife, Nerissa who was my support, my helper, and my slave driver when it came to completing this project. I dedicate this project to the wonderful Kent and Lori Preston who mentored and loved me. They believed I was someone special when I thought I was a nobody.

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PREFACE

This study is made possible by the contributions and influence of the following. Doctor Bob Whitesel and Charles Arn from the Indiana Wesleyan University. Their knowledge in church growth, church health, and church revitalization has caused me to understand the importance of relationships when it comes to church goers and new converts. Dr. Ted Cabal of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary had taught me not to do apologetics on adversarial terms.

I thank Christian Simpson of the John Maxwell group for his guidance in developing rapport building methods. I give immense praise to God who brought me to all the incredible stories I will share in this study. There is no way I could have found these stories by myself. The final thanks I will give is to Dr. Tim Beougher. He has been a Superman. He has made time in his incredibly busy schedule to assist me as an advisor. He has caught the ten million mistakes I have made, and he has given me the pushback I needed to create a better study.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Jesus taught us to love one another, but sometimes the way that love is expressed becomes secondary in sharing the gospel. Churches preach the gospel, but they may be neglecting the importance of building relationships. Relationships are key in both attracting the lost and nurturing new converts. This study examined the question of whether a church can increase its influence by becoming relationship oriented in its evangelistic efforts.

Context

Calvary Baptist Church began in 1962 as a church plant of Trinity Baptist Church near Indianapolis, Indiana. It is in Greenwood, Indiana which is a southern suburb of the Indianapolis metropolitan area. Since its inception it has grown from twenty-three members to more than five hundred. Most of the congregation is older than sixty-five. Thus, few young families are drawn to Calvary. In fact, members aged twenty-five -to-fifty-five constitute less than 20 percent of the congregation. The absence of young families has created challenges.

The generational gap causes a rift in church unification. Less than ten young adults attend the contemporary service, but most of the congregation attends the traditional service. The lack of young families and their children has caused the cancelation of Children's' Sunday school. The church does have opportunity to connect with the younger community. It sits in an area of the suburbs that contain many young adults.

While our pastor and outreach coordinator are making efforts to connect with

the local community, the church at large is not effectively mobilized for evangelism. Calvary's leaders have made outreach a priority and utilize the Evangelism Explosion (EE) curriculum as the primary outreach strategy. They maintain a wide focus, sharing the gospel with all people. Street canvassing and spontaneous conversation are the go-to methods of interaction. Even though evangelistic success is not simple to measure, the results of Calvary's outreach strategy is poor. The EE questions do not seem to connect with nearby residents and evangelistic encounters are often met with complacency, disinterest, or hesitation.

The focus of this project was to identify relational elements of evangelism that lead to conversion.

Rationale

To address these significant outreach weaknesses, Calvary must become intentional in both listening and speaking. As we engage these families, we ought to know what types of concerns they have. This approach supports the idea of building rapport. With our current approach we are engaging in conversation to be able to present the gospel. This type of conversation however does not seek to know the individual, it only lays the groundwork so that the gospel might be preached. Unless we know the individual on a personal level, we will not know how to minister to their specific needs.

Goals

The purpose of this project was to identify relational elements that lead to conversion so that Calvary Baptist church can better their community canvassing and evangelizing. This was accomplished through a three-step process. First, the Bible was searched for rapport building episodes. Second, secular rapport building techniques were collected. Third, the Bible techniques and the secular techniques were weighed against twelve autobiographical accounts of conversion. From the data, an analysis was done to identify the strongest rapport building techniques that can be used in the Calvary's

evangelistic efforts.

Research Methodology

A grounded research technique was used. Data was collected through the above process. Relational elements that were mentioned were recorded and classified. Then, the classified data was measured by mode. The elements that were mentioned the most were determined to be the strongest relational elements that lead to conversion.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

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

Oikos evangelism. Oikos evangelism often translates to household evangelism which applies to the family, blood relations, clients, and friends, i.e. a person's social network.¹

Jivita. The force that governs thought and consciousness. When the jivita is present the being is alive. When the jivita is gone the being is not conscious and cannot think, it is dead.²

Prana. Breath, winds, or life-giving force. The prana flows through channels in the body. It is responsible for bodily functions such as movement, digestion, respiration, and sustenance of the life force.³

Avicii. Hell, in Buddhism. It is surrounded with seven iron walls making it impossible to escape. The suffering is incessant. Flames torture those who commit one of the five cardinal sins: killing one's mother, killing one's father, killing a monk or a layperson who has attained Nirvana, injuring a buddha, or causing disunity in the

¹ Charles Arn and Win Arn, *The Master's Plan for Making Disciples: Every Christian an Effective Witness Through an Enabling Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 36.

² Robert E. Buswell and Donald S. Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2013), 395.

³ Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 662.

Buddhist order.⁴

Maitreya Lama. His name comes from the Sanskrit word *maitri* meaning unattached and unconditional. This word describes his love, unconditional. He is called Maitreya Lama the Christ. The reincarnate of God on Earth. The reincarnation of Jesus Christ.⁵

Mara. In Sanskrit his name means “maker of death”. He is known as the Buddhist devil. He distracts or lures beings away from attaining freedom from rebirth. If a being is free of rebirthed, or reincarnation, then it has conquered death. They will not be born again so they will not die again.⁶

Yama. The lord of the dead. He holds the wheel of life. There are four rings on the wheel. The second ring is judgment. The good and bad karma are weighed. The third ring is punishment or reward. The good Karma is rewarded with reincarnation as a god, demi-god or human. Bad karma is punished with the reincarnation as an animal, hungry ghost⁷ or sentenced to hell.⁸

This project had four limitations. First, Calvary’s congregation has diminished to the point that no volunteers for a real-life approach to research can be done. Second, I am only a member of the congregation, so I am not in the position to make changes in the

⁴ Chinese Buddhist Encyclopedia, “Avichi Hell,” Chinese Buddhist Encyclopedia, accessed August 11, 2020, http://www.chinabuddhismencyclopedia.com/en/index.php?title=Avichi_hell. This site is an online encyclopedia built like Wikipedia. It has a searchable data base and sectioned off categories for more in depth studying about Buddhism.

⁵ BuddhaMaitreya.org, “Who is Buddha Maitreya the Christ?” Buddha Maitreya the Christ, accessed August 11, 2020, http://www.buddhamaitreya.org/Buddha_Maitreya/About-Buddha-Maitreya-The-Christ/. The site explains the Maitreya’s lineage which links him back to Christ. It also contains his teachings and ministers to the soul care of Buddhists.

⁶ Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 530.

⁷ A hungry ghost is a spirit that has unquenchable thirst and unsatisfied hunger. It wanders looking for water and food. When water or food is found it vanishes before the ghost can reach it. If the ghost manages to eat or drink, their throats will burn as they swallow it and their stomachs will be tortured with unbearable pain.

⁸ Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 1045.

church, but I do have the privilege of offering considerable suggestions.

Third, as I have moved, I have little contact with Calvary but still am welcomed to offer my results.

Finally, the COVID-19 virus has left us unable to conduct face to face interviews. Thus, the project has been altered from including volunteers for interviews to collecting autobiographies to gather the necessary information.

This project had no delimitations: I used stories from all walks of life. There is no age group focused on. There is no religion focused on. There is no life situation focused on.

Conclusion

Sharing the gospel is important. However, it may be more effective when it is done on a personal level. Chapter two examined Jesus' interaction with sinners to gain perspectives on how we should treat the lost. I also highlighted examples of how the early church was instructed to relate to the lost.

CHAPTER 2

EXAMPLES OF RAPPORT BUILDING IN THE BIBLE

Sharing the gospel is much more than asking questions to open conversational avenues. It is about presenting the good news in a context that will be warmly received. Throughout this chapter I used accounts to demonstrate how Jesus Christ and his disciples sought to understand more about their hearers and build rapport so that the gospel could be preached and warmly received.

Paul's Hearing in Athens (Acts 17:16-34)

When Paul arrives in Athens, he finds temples erected to other gods. According to the Bible, Paul begins to burn with a jealous anger, the same pain or anger that God experiences when his people turn to idolatry.

Despite his anger Paul does not begin to witness on an adversarial note. Instead he presents the gospel in peaceful ways. Through his sermon, Paul builds rapport with those who are unaware about Christ. First, he observes Athenian history and culture by recognizing their gods and utilizing their poetry. Second, he finds a path of commonality by leveraging their observance of the unknown God. Third, he exposes contrasting views by comparing the one true God to their traditional way of thinking. Last, he makes them aware of their offenses and calls for repentance.

Paul Observes Culture and History

Paul is observant of Athenian culture. He notices their temples and idols. He is already familiar with their tradition and poets as he can quote them in his sermon. Even though he notes that other gods are worshipped, he does not seek confrontation. Instead, he preaches the gospel in the marketplace which arouses curiosity.

To have a full grasp of Paul's task, it is important to note the two schools of thought that were prominent in Athens at that time—Epicureanism and Stoicism. Epicureans believe that the greatest good is happiness and pleasure. They reject any thought of life beyond the world. Though they do not deny the existence of the gods, they believe that they are uninvolved in the world. Stoics on the other hand, are taught that self-sufficiency and fate acceptance is essential. They believe that the spark of divinity is in all creation and so life is to be lived in harmony with nature. Since they believe every created thing had a spark of divinity within it, they saw each as a part of a universal brotherhood.¹ Understanding these two schools of thought was crucial for Paul's argument before the men of the Areopagus.

These techniques prove useful today. Christians who enter a foreign culture would do well to observe customs and ask about traditions before sharing Christ. This allows the evangelist to explain the gospel in ways that the other culture can understand. Doing this allows them to establish rapport and show genuine interest and curiosity. Also, it builds an understanding of commonalities which the evangelist can use to share the gospel.² There is however one caveat, evangelists should not embark on a mission without doing some research on the foreign culture they wish to introduce Christ into.³

Commonality

When Paul is brought before the Areopagus, he begins his defense by complimenting the Athenians on their religiousness. This encourages an open mind to his message.⁴ He continues his discourse using their poets to point out that all men are God's

¹ Dennis Gaertner, "The Visit at Athens," in *Acts*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1995), Logos Bible Software.

² A. Scott Moreau, Harold Netland and Charles Van Engen, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 350.

³ Moreau, Netland and Van Engen, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, 494.

⁴ David G. Peterson, *The Acts of Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 495.

children, which appeals to the Stoics' view that all mankind has a divine spark within them.

Furthermore, he puts God in the context of their polytheistic tradition. Since the audience is open-minded to hear about new gods, Paul can introduce the one true God as the unknown god that they already erected a temple to. In other words, he makes the most out of their unawareness to the gospel.

There are several relational elements in Paul's account. First, be alert for both unawareness and interest. Asking questions about an unbeliever's understanding of the gospel can reveal blind spots in their understanding (cf. Acts 8:26-40). Also, Christians can look for signs of genuine interest in Christianity. Just like Paul's situation, his hearers asked for him to share the strange things he brought to their ears. His hearers were genuinely interested to hear what he had to say.

The second thing modern Christians should be aware of is Paul's use of cultural context to share the gospel, but at the same time staying true to its meaning. As Philip Bence notes "It has always been good missionary policy to express the gospel in terms that would be intelligible to the hearer without altering the essence of the message."⁵ David Sills agrees when he says "The goal of critical contextualization is to preach, teach, translate and minister in ways that are both faithful to the Word of God and sensitive to the culture."⁶

Contrasts

Although Paul establishes agreeable terms with the men of the Areopagus and uses cultural context to explain Jesus, he also exposes contrasts in their beliefs. He begins

⁵ Philip A. Bence, *Acts: A Bible Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 1998), 175.

⁶ M. David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 211.

to show how the one true God is different from all other gods. Bruce Winter reveals contrasting points Paul uses in his sermon.⁷

First, the Areopagites require that a new god is formally proposed for approval of the council. Paul counters this by pointing out that the Areopagites already recognized the existence of his God as the unknown god. Second, the Areopagus requires that a parcel of land be purchased, and funding be provided to erect a temple for the proposed god. Paul counters this by saying that his God does not dwell in a temple built by human hands. Third, the Areopagus requires that a feast be given, and sacrifices be provided at least once a year to honor this proposed god. Paul counters this by saying that his God has no need of anything because it is, He who gives life and breath and all things to all his creation. Fourth, approval needs to be sought for admission to the Athenian Pantheon. Paul counters this by proving his God does not need to be housed, saying God is not far from us which comes from a quote their poet Epimenides, the Cretan wrote "In him, we live and move and have our being." He also uses Aratus in his *Phaenomena* quoting, "we are also his offspring" which creates a connection between Paul's God and mankind.

Last, the Areopagus believes that when a man dies, the earth drinks of his blood and there is no resurrection. This is the traditional remit of the August council of the Areopagites. Paul counters this by claiming his God resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead and that in the final days, He will judge all mankind.

Paul's method is of interest to the modern Christians in that he understood the cultural context in which he was introducing his beliefs. In fact, he was so astute in his knowledge that he was able to put forth informed argumentation. John MacArthur notes that Paul was brought up under the strictest Pharisaical discipline, a Roman citizen with knowledge in military and political matters. His rich education made him thoroughly familiar with Greek culture, manners, religion, art, and philosophy. Because he was a

⁷ Bruce W. Winter, "Introducing the Athenians to God Paul's Failed Apologetics in Acts 17," *Themelios* 31, no. 1 (2005): 48.

scholar, well-read and well-traveled, he was able to interact with the Athenians in their own native context.⁸ Paul's method is of benefit to the modern Christians in that they should take the time to understand the culture or lifestyle that they are introducing Christ into. They ought to note counterpoints in which they can introject with biblical principles to inform their audiences unawareness. In other words, find the blind spots that your hearers are not aware of, ask questions to find out their opinion and seek to enlighten them. Dan Story suggests asking questions about the person's opinion on issues and if it is counter to the Christian belief, challenge them to defend their stance. By doing this, we were able to identify inaccurate data, inconsistencies, and especially hidden assumptions. Story describes these inaccurate data, inconsistencies and hidden assumptions as roadblocks that must be removed to pave the way to salvation.⁹

Repentance

When Paul introduces a new point, he presents it so that his hearers receive it in a personal way. First, he compliments them on being very religious and notices that they have erected a temple to an unknown God. This appeals to them and leaves them open minded to hear what he is saying.

Second, he says that his God does not need to be served by human hands, but rather gave humans life and gave life to the world. This reveals to them where their life came from and paints God as a life-giving God who they should be thankful for.

Third, he states that since we are God's offspring, he is not a golden image. Then he says that in the past God would have overlooked this unawareness, but now he calls for repentance. This statement makes the hearer aware of how they have offended

⁸ John MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 139.

⁹ Dan Story, *Engaging the Closed Minded: Presenting Your Faith to the Confirmed Unbeliever* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999), 64–65.

God. This is what John Wesley describes as a spiritual awakening.¹⁰ In his sermon, *The Means of Grace*, he describes a man who is unaware of God or his offenses against God, yet an awakening message by the preacher convicts him. He begins to search for answers either through counsel or the reading of God's words, meditating day and night. The more he struggles to find answers the more he is convicted and, at some point of time, he sees what Christians do and gives in to the moving power of the Holy Spirit, thus he comes forward to confess his faith in Christ, and he is reborn into the family of God. Naturally as humans, when we are aware, we have offended someone, we want to make things right. It is an act of conscience. Therefore, Paul calls for repentance.

Finally, Paul makes them aware that they will be held accountable and that they will be judged. This is a consequence that might make some of his hearers feel uncomfortable. Then comes the thunderbolt. He proclaims that this God is so powerful and is real because he had raised a man from the dead.

It is important to stop here and note the cycle that Paul uses to create interest in his listeners and create change. First, he makes his message personal. Second, he makes his hearers aware of their sins. Then he makes them aware of judgment and finally, he reveals that this God can do something they never thought possible, raise men from the dead. So, Paul's pattern was, making the message personal by identifying with their culture and from there he proclaims the Gospel revealing their sinful nature, but then offering the gift of forgiveness in Christ Jesus.

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (John 4:4-30)

The text tells us that when Jesus arrived at the well in Samaria, he was tired. He asked a Samaritan woman for something to drink. This would have damaged Jesus' reputation because Jews do not associate with Samaritans. Also, she is a woman, married

¹⁰ John Wesley, *Forty-Four Sermons* (Seattle: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 76.

five times, living with a sixth man. Despite this, Jesus has the heart to carry on. His witness at the well demonstrates four steps in which we can share the gospel with those of opposing cultures or those who are deeply rooted in a life of sin. First, he looks past cultural tension by ignoring the conflicts that separate them. Second, he looks past racial and social differences by seeing the woman as an equal. Third, he sees a need for the gospel and sympathizes with her broken life. Subsequently, he shares the good news which gives the woman hope for a new life.

Disputes

The surface reading of this text does not expose the tension between the Jews and Samaritans. First, when the nation of Israel was invaded by the Babylonians, only the wealthy Jews were led away, thus the rest of the Jews were left behind and were inter-married with the Babylonian occupants. Because of this, they were considered half bred.¹¹

Second, the Samaritans only acknowledged the Pentateuch and not the rest of the Old Testament. Third, they had adopted other foreign gods with Yahweh only being one of them. Therefore, they were considered as polytheists.

Fifth, when the temple was rebuilt by Nehemiah, Samaritans had offered to help, but their offer was refused.¹² Moreover, there was a long-standing debate on which temple was the holiest between the two nations. Samaritans had built their temple on Mount Gerizim which was decreed by Moses in Deuteronomy 12:5.¹³ More than that, they believed God first appeared to Abraham here and that Jacob first lived here. Also, this was the place where Joseph first looked for his brothers and the same place where his

¹¹ Beauford H. Bryant and Mark S. Krause, "Introduction," in *John*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co., 1998), Logos Bible Software

¹² Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 227.

¹³ Joseph Dongell, *John: A Bible Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 1997), 77.

bones were buried. Another thing is that; this place was a city of refuge and where Joshua read the blessings and curses and where he delivered his valedictory address to Israel (John 24:1). Most importantly it was considered the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel.¹⁴

Samaritan tradition also taught that Paradise was situated here, and Adam was formed from the dust of Mount Gerizim. It was also taught that Adam, Seth, and Noah built their altars here and Noah's ark came to rest on this mountain.

Finally, it was believed that Abraham attempted to offer Isaac here and that this is where he first met Melchizedek. Not to mention that this was the Bethel where Jacob had his ladder dream.¹⁵

Yet the Jews believed that the temple should be built on Mount Moriah because God said he would select the spot for his worship (Deut. 12:5-11, 1 Kgs 9:3, 2 Chr 3:12).¹⁶ This animosity culminated circa 128 B.C. when John Hyrcanus I destroyed the Samaritan temple.¹⁷

The tension between the two people was tight. Each nation wanted to proclaim themselves most sacred, but this argument did not matter to Jesus. He was ushering in a new kingdom, one that included people of all nations.¹⁸

For modern Christians, this means to look beyond social conflict, whether it is racial tension, or religious tension, or tension between nations. The fact that Jesus was willing to look beyond these tensions to have a meaningful moment should set an

¹⁴ Bryant and Krause, "Jesus Reveals Himself," in *John*. The College Press NIV Commentary, Logos Bible Software

¹⁵ Bryant and Krause, "John 4:20"

¹⁶ Bryant and Krause, "Jesus Reveals Himself"

¹⁷ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press; 1991), 222-223.

¹⁸ This is made apparent in Jesus' Great Commission in Matt 28:19.

example for us. Instead of stereotyping our neighbor, we ought to see him/her as an individual. All individuals have a need, and some may have a need for healing in their soul. Leon Morris puts it best when he states, “Jesus is a ministry for all people. John is clear that Jesus came to bring salvation for people of all races.”¹⁹

Social Differences

As mentioned above, the woman was considered half-bred. Not only that, but there was also a Jewish law that made those who interacted with Samaritans unclean for fear of incurring ritual defilement. Even worse, Samaritan women were considered menstruants from their cradle and therefore perpetually in a state of ceremonial uncleanness.²⁰ Yet, Jesus who was tired and thirsty saw it right to ask her for a drink of water.

Knowing the context, we can understand the shock that he, being a Jew, would ask her for a drink. There is more to the story than this. Women were second class citizens, according to Josephus:

But let not a single witness be credited; but three, or two at the least, and those such whose testimony is confirmed by their good lives. But let not the testimony of women be admitted, on account of the levity and boldness of their sex, nor let servants be admitted to give testimony on account of the ignobility of their soul; since it is probable that they may not speak truth, either out of hope of gain, or fear of punishment.²¹

Also, there are theories that a man seen talking with a woman at the well could be considered courtship. This follows the skeletal elements of “betrothal type scene” where a man travels from a foreign land, meets a woman at a well.²² Considering what type of woman she was, married five times, and living with a sixth lover, this would look

¹⁹ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 225.

²⁰ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 217-218.

²¹ Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 219.

²² Danna Nolan Fewell and Gary A. Phillips, “Drawn to Excess, or Reading Beyond Betrothal” *Semeia* 77 (1998): 27.

bad for Jesus.

Furthermore, women would walk in groups to draw water, but this woman walked alone, which may have been a sign that she was shunned by her own society.²³ Even in today's standards, a woman of this type would be the center of gossip circles. Still, overwhelming thirst and tiredness caused Jesus to ask her for a drink. Jesus knew what type of woman she was, but that did not stop him from conversing with her.

If the modern Christian were to hold this image in their mind, they would understand where the gospel is sorely needed. The good news is not so much to be shared with the "ideal person." It is to be shared with the lost, the outcast, the immoral, and the unethical. They are the ones most wounded and the ones in desperate need of help. In Christ's own words, "It's not the healthy that need the doctor, but the sick" (Mark 2:17). Interacting with an immoral person without judging them, gives them comfort to open and share with us even their deepest hurts and darkest secrets.

The Need

Even though we do not see Jesus asking probing questions, we know that he has deep knowledge of this woman's life. Is it possible that he realizes her need for the gospel? Imagine if we discovered that this woman had five separate husbands and was living with a sixth lover. We have two initial reactions. Our first reaction is to disassociate ourselves with her. Our second reaction is to feel compassion for her.

Glen Copple believes that her question of where to worship might be an attempt to get the focus off her and her sin.²⁴ Sometimes people may interject with questions to divert our probing questions that may expose inner hurts. The best way to react to this is to share the gospel as Jesus did. As explained beforehand, he already knew

²³ Bryant and Krause, "Jesus' Request for Water," in *John*

²⁴ Glen M. Copple, *Getting to Know Jesus*, vol. 6 (Torrence, CA: New Hope Gospel Ministries, 1999), 25.

her situation. Why was it then that he decided to share the gospel with her?

Perhaps it was her response to Jesus' weariness and thirst. Even though she was shunned by Jews she still felt compassion for this weary traveler no matter what his ethnicity was. If this is true, Jesus reciprocates by offering her a water that will quench an even deeper thirst—compassion begets compassion. Jesus saw her need for living water, or the redemption and forgiveness, thus he offers her a way to escape her immoral lifestyle and begin anew.

The point here is that modern Christians should find the need in unbeliever's life and use these hurts as opportunities to share the gospel. Although it was through divine knowledge, Jesus knew this woman was thirsty, and that she could be feeling ashamed of the number of lovers she has had. While we do not have divine knowledge, we do have the ability to ask questions with true compassion or pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us in our interaction.

Sharing the Gospel

To paint a fuller picture of this final concept, we should realize that the Samaritans were already looking for a Messiah they knew as Taheb or the Restorer. When the Samaritan woman spoke with Jesus she wondered if he was greater than Jacob, the founder of the well. She thought him to be a prophet, which was highly esteemed. She told him she knew that their Messiah, or Taheb was coming, and when he does, he would explain everything to them. When Jesus reveals that this Messiah is him, she lights up with excitement.²⁵ Not only because of his revelation, but because he had told her everything she had ever done. His deep knowledge of her life causes her to believe his declaration.

Referring to our discussion about Paul and the Athenians, we recognize that both Paul and Jesus make the most out of the people's unawareness and a desire to know.

²⁵ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 226-227.

The Athenians knew of an unknown God, and so Paul educated them on who this God was. Likewise, Jesus understood that this woman was unaware about the worship of God. He tells her that the time is coming where God's true worshipers will worship him in Spirit and in truth. This implies that there is no sense in debating which temple is the best temple to worship, because the time is coming (after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection) when true believers or Christians will worship God through the Holy Spirit and in the truth, that Jesus had died for the sins of the world. This alludes to the teaching he gave her that he had water that she could drink and never be thirsty, the Holy Spirit.

Once again, modern Christians can learn from both passages that it does good to see the unawareness of an unbeliever. Perhaps they have a misconception of God that needs to be corrected. Perhaps they do not believe in God because of past hurts. Or it just might be possible that they have never been introduced to the one true God and his gift of Jesus Christ. A final concept that needs to be grasped, is that teaching must be so powerful that it cuts to the heart of the unbeliever

Peter's Sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-41)

Pentecost begins in chaos. As the disciples gather in the upper room a roar is heard from heaven and fire descends. Each follower of Christ is touched by the fire, and given the ability to speak in all kinds of different languages. The onlookers are in disarray. They look for answers. Some believe the men are drunk. Others are puzzled, but Peter takes charge of the situation. His powerful sermon serves as prime example of how to build rapport with those who already know the scriptures. First, he diffuses hostility by using humor. Second, he explains scripture in a way his audience can understand. Third, he exposes wrong thinking through reasoning and evidence. Finally, he provides means of reconciliation, constantly pleading with and praying for the lost.

Hostility

When the disciples of Jesus were baptized with the Holy Spirit, they went out

to the streets speaking many different languages. For onlookers, it was a strange thing to experience, since they did not understand the languages that were being spoken. They assumed the disciples were drunk, but as Peter began his sermon, he reasons that it is too early to be drunk, since it was only nine in the morning.

This statement can be taken in two ways. Either Peter was appealing to reason, since it was customary to abstain from food and drink at this hour to devote one's self to prayer²⁶ or, more likely he was making a joke since it was too early in the day to be drunk.²⁷

It does not matter whether it was reasoning or humor since both are useful techniques to capture an audience's attention. Think of it this way; there were men running about the streets speaking in strange languages, then a man stands up and attempts to explain what is going on. He is immediately seen as an authority figure since he seems to have an explanation. Modern Christians can benefit from this example by training themselves to recognize moments where the listener does not understand or is hostile. If they are hostile, a joke may diffuse the situation. On the other hand, if they are confused, try explaining things in a reasonable way.²⁸

Scripture

Peter had two tasks; explain the confusion and reveal the Messiah. Taking on the first task he uses Joel (Joel 2:28-32) saying in the last days God will pour out his Spirit, and sons and daughters will prophesy in his name. In the Jewish tradition, it was

²⁶ John Peter Lange, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Acts* (Bellingham, WA: Publisher, 2008), 40.

²⁷ F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 60.

²⁸ A good example of this is witnessing to Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons. These groups may have views different from Christianity, but staying lighthearted helps build rapport. Once rapport is established the Christian can take incremental steps to introduce their views on scripture.

only believed that the Spirit of the Lord rested on select individuals. Between the time of Jesus and the end of the Old Testament, rabbis had taught that the Old Testament prophets were inspired by the Spirit of God. Also, the Torah was believed to be written under the inspiration by the Spirit of God. Finally, as John the Baptist arrives, he too is said to be filled with the Spirit. Thus, the Spirit was an exclusive gift. Now however, the Spirit was poured out onto all people.²⁹ A Jew seeing these sights, might begin to feel the excitement and wonder of what this power is. Perhaps you even begin to feel an urge to know and have this Spirit. Yet, you might question where this power comes from. This was Peter's second task, to proclaim the messiahship of Jesus.

It is necessary to pause here and explain the magnitude of Peter's task. Since the Jews believed there was only one God (Yahweh), Peter had to find a way to explain that this same God had revealed himself in Jesus of Nazareth, without alienating his audience. So, he leverages the writings of David. These were some of the most trusted writings for the Jews.³⁰

To demonstrate that Jesus was the Messiah, Peter quotes Psalm 16 which refers to the one who will survive death and not see decay. Any Israelite would agree that this could not have been David, because he had not survived death. In fact, his death was a matter of public record and his tomb was still in existence. Therefore, the passage must have been speaking of another person as the Messiah.³¹

Peter furthers his point by quoting Psalm 110. The quotation is the phrase, "The Lord said to my Lord" (Messiah), "sit at my right hand" which indicated that it could not have applied to David since he did not ascend to heaven.³² The Jews did

²⁹ Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 6 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999), 379,

³⁰ Gaertner, "Jesus the Lord and Messiah," in *Acts*. Logos Bible Software

³¹ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 148.

³² Gaertner, "Paul's Encounter with Philosophers," in *Acts*

believe that a descendant of David would sit on the throne of Israel and reign forever, this was the Messiah.³³

Now was the time to prove that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Peter goes about proving this by stating that Jesus did not see decay, in fact he had appeared to Peter and the other disciples when he was resurrected. Second, he proclaimed that Jesus ascended to the right hand of God and was given the power to pour out the Holy Spirit, which had caused the commotion of that day. Finally, he makes a proclamation so powerful that it pierces the hearts of his hearers.

What do modern Christians have to gain from this example? Simply put, Peter built up his case, piece by piece. He used scripture so that his case was understood. To teach a person, one may consider that each truth is understood little by little. If this is not done, then the final proclamation would not have its full effect. If Peter's audience could not follow his facts, then the truth could not have been received in a life changing manner. Modern Christians must ensure that their hearers are following their case step, by step, so that when the revelation comes, through the work of the Holy Spirit, it is received with an open mind and a heart ready for life change. Revealing the Messiah

Just like the two previous passages we have studied, Peter has presented what the Jews could not see. All this time they had been waiting for their Messiah, but they were unable to recognize him. Using passages that they trusted, Peter was able to show them the truth, that Jesus was the true Messiah.

He reminds the Jews that Jesus was handed over to be crucified. Perhaps some of them were in the crowd that day shouting, "Crucify him." Then he reminds them that Jesus, their Messiah, had died a shameful death by being crucified, which was a Roman form of torture reserved for criminals. Even their own scriptures say, "cursed is him who is hung on a tree."³⁴

³³ F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 64-65.

³⁴ Philip A. Bence, *Acts: A Bible Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Indianapolis, In:

To state it bluntly, they betrayed their deliverer, handing him over to the Romans to be executed and shamed. What had they done? Remorse hit the men in such a painful way that it cut straight to their heart, and it was this remorse and pain that caused them to cry out, “Brothers what shall we do?”

Notice what Peter had done here. He did not use a full-frontal assault on the men. He did not speak in an adversarial tone. Instead, he won them over with humor and explanation. Then enlightened them using their own scripture.

Because Peter did not preach in a condemning way, he was able to reveal the truth in increments. Then the Holy Spirit opened the hearts of men and revealed the truth, they felt such remorse that they wanted to make things right.

For modern Christians, this incremental approach may be in the form of Bible study or close conversation with those who have been led astray, but at the same time, they must pray that the Holy Spirit will help them in revealing the truth. When it comes to acts of conversion, man can only do so much, it is not through sheer reason that we convert, but also through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Repentance

When the audience cried out, “Brother’s what shall we do?” Peter offered an answer, “repent and be baptized.” This was an immediate response to their remorse. Although the response was quick in Peter’s sermon, a modern Christian should not anticipate the same effect since this was the day of Pentecost and an immediate outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Yet like Peter, Christians should put themselves in the position to be sought for solace. It takes time to build friendships and it takes time to build trust. To bring a person out of a cult means to have them trust you more than they trust the misconceptions they have been taught.

A second idea to be noted is that Peter warned his listeners and plead with

Wesleyan Publishing House, 1998), 45.

them. This terminology shows that Peter had a genuine interest in the souls of his hearers. Every Christian should examine their motives. Are we witnessing because it is a commandment by God? Or are we witnessing because we truly care? Like Peter we should evangelize because we know what is in store for those who do not believe. We ought to witness to our neighbors because we want to see them happy in heaven, not burning in hell. Hence, a great way to build rapport is to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Conclusion

Rapport is built when our hearers feel that we understand them. Knowing what their circumstances are, what their history is, what their culture is like and what they believe helps us custom tailor the gospel message. This can come either through observing the culture, asking questions or doing a background study. The goal is to be able to present the gospel in ways that a different culture can understand. Always keeping in mind not to compromise the core message of the gospel.

Furthermore, we should see individuals as individuals, meaning that we do not let any social, racial, or religious tension cause separation. Likewise, we should hold true to the fact that sharing the gospel is for everyone no matter what their choice of lifestyle. Sympathy, empathy, and concern gives the hurting soul a place to rest and perhaps one day through the work of the Holy Spirit will draw them closer to God.

Rapport is built through love even if it is love for our enemies. This means keeping it kind and light heart even through accusations or hostile interactions. This might mean using humor or turning the other cheek. Understand that there are some who have a misconception about the scripture. As evangelists, we should see these misconceptions as roadblocks to God's salvation. Considering the other person's point of view may open counterpoints for us to introduce the gospel. Walking a lost soul through the scriptures point by point may serve to build trust and interests. Yet we should understand that a battle for souls is not won over night nor is it won solely through our efforts.

Building rapport is about building a trusting relationship. We should take sincere interest in unbelievers, praying for the Holy Spirit to work in their heart. Unbelievers should feel that they can confide in us and seek us in times of trouble, so that when the time comes, we can point to the one that can make things right—the shed blood of Jesus Christ

CHAPTER 3

SUGGESTED TECHNIQUES FOR BUILDING RAPPORT

Evangelism can be done one of two ways, either by targeting a specific audience or by scattering the seeds of the Gospel far and wide. Both may bring results, but it is better to understand the listener so that the Gospel can be custom tailored for their life. One of the ways to do this is by using the U scale.

The U scale was developed by Thom Rainer. It measures the receptivity of the Gospel. It was developed with the intention of measuring the unchurched, but I used it to measure the state of the person when the Gospel came to them. ranging from most hostile to most receptive. When an evangelist identifies the listens to the responses of religious questions, they will be able to see the unchurched individual falls on the Rainer Scale, and have an idea how to appropriately respond to the unchurched individual.¹ U5 Highly Resistant

Individuals who are in the U5 category are most negative toward the message of Christ and Christians in general. Usually this hostility has come from a past negative experience with either a church or a Christian. This past hurt has also given them a negative and untrusting view of clergy.

As well as a negative view of the church, the U5s have taken up a disbelief of God. They either are agnostic or atheist. However, according to Rainer, these individuals have personal problems such as drug usage, alcoholism, depression, and/or other mental

¹ Thom S. Rainer, "The U Scale," in *The Unchurched Next Door: Understanding Faith Stages as Keys to Sharing Your Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003).

issues. Since the U5s do not put much value in the Bible and do not pray, an evangelist will push himself away from the hurting U5s if he only speaks of God and quotes scripture.

U4 Resistant

Individuals who are U4s tend to have an idea of God but believe that Buddhists or Muslims or Jews or any other religion worship the same God. While they do pray, they only pray as a spiritual safety net or when bad things happen. They do not have a clear conception of a heaven and half believe there is a heaven and half believe there is not a heaven. When it comes to a hell the U4s are opposed to it. Their reasoning is that an all-loving God cannot possibly send people to a hell for eternal torment.

The one thing that sends U4s into an emotional tirade is the profession that the only way to heaven is through Jesus Christ. In fact, they believe in the historic Jesus and may believe his teachings were good, but they do not believe he was the Messiah or the son of God.

Rainer says a good way to reach the U4s is through a home Bible study. He does say however that U4s are timid about attending church. He suggests that if evangelists go invite U4s to church, that the evangelist should be waiting at the door to greet them. That is, the evangelist must be the conduit in which the U4 becomes familiar to the church and eventually familiar to the message of the gospel.

U3 No Receptivity

Individuals who are U3s believe in God but do not have a clear view of who he is. They pray but address it to “Someone up there.” They also believe in a heaven and a hell but not in a biblical sense. U3s probably have attended Sunday School as a child or an adult small group which makes them open to coming to church but only if invited. Just as the U4s, the inviter should be waiting for the U3s at the door and be free to show them around.

The two final points of a U3 that should be mentioned is that they are open minded enough to hear the message of the gospel and are willing to attend a Bible study if a friend invites them. Thus, the best way to reach a U3 is through friends as Rainer points out. This concept will also be explored later.

U2 Receptive

Individuals who are U2s are accepting to the message of the gospel. In fact, they are open to Christian conversation. While they do believe in a heaven and a hell, they do not know how to be saved. Many of U2s have had religious parents and have respected them for instilling in them a religious mentality.

The caveat here is that the U2s are sensitive because most of them have had a hurtful church experience, they would only open to kind and polite evangelists. This is where rapport building comes in. If evangelists develop good rapport with the U2 they will have a good chance to win the U2 to Christ. One last thing is that U2s are open to attending church or a Bible study if invited by a friend.

U1 Highly Receptive

Individuals who are U1s are prime candidates for becoming Christian. They have a regular prayer life and have attended church off and on through their life. They believe in a heaven and a hell and think that to get there, they must be good and do good things. This position gives them a works-based mentality instead of a faith-based mentality. This is where the evangelist can step in.

Rainer's study showed that most U1s had a positive experience of church when they were younger, but do not attend now because they are either lazy or see no value in church. Rainer suggest that the best way to attract these individuals to church and Christ is to ask if they have any needs that can be prayed for. This question is a door opener and allows for friendship and rapport to be built.

Evangelism Explosion

Most of Rainer's research noted that the unchurched were open minded if a friend was active in the evangelistic approach. This exposes the flaws of the EE method. Some churches describe the EE method as confrontational. John Christy writes that while the method is good, because it allows Christians to share their faith, it does have its shortfalls for two reasons. The first reason is that it becomes pre-rehearsed and artificial, meaning that the Christian is more focused on the script rather than a genuine conversation.

This leads to the second shortfall, which is, the conversion may not be a true profession of faith. The potential convert may feel backed into a corner and gives in to the high-pressure sales routine, not because he is convicted but because he feels cornered. This means that the profession of faith is artificial and not because the person feels true conviction in his heart.² When people feel pressure into something they do not want, they become rebellious and resentful.³

Rainer's research backs this up. He calls EE canned evangelism, meaning that all the scripts are learned which leads to an, "uncaring and notch-belt approach to evangelism." The EE approach seeks to avoid this by providing an outline of the presentation and allowing the evangelists to put his personal touch to it. Yet, even with the personal touch the EE presentation can seem artificial and impersonal.

Rainer records an unchurched saying, "I felt like they were meeting a soul quota with me. They just wanted to spill their presentation and move on. But I would have been happy to talk with them for a long time if I felt they really cared."⁴

² John Christy, "Methods of Evangelism," accessed June 10, 2020, <http://www.johnchristy.com/blog/methods-of-evangelism>. Christy is a media driven apologist. His website contains his articles podcasts and video that explore biblical issues.

³ Kurt W Mortensen, *The Laws of Charisma How to Captivate, Inspire, and Influence for Maximum Success* (New York: American Management Association, 2011), 95.

⁴ Thom S. Rainer, *The Unchurched Next Door* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 29.

The founder of the EE method, D. James Kennedy, admitted that the method did come across as a little abrasive.⁵ When the Evangelistic Explosion board surveyed churches, they found that half the churches surveyed had a negative view of EE because it came across as confrontational and weak relationally.

The same survey asked how EE could change. The six main recommendations were to: simplify the training, allow for more flexibility in sharing the faith, teach more about relational skills, emphasize discipleship and follow-up visits, redesign material to be more reader friendly.

The final insight that came from the EE survey was that the original questions used by EE had grown irrelevant. When the Evangelistic Explosion method was started thirty years ago the main question was, “Is the Bible true.” The questions now are, “is there a God,” and “What happens after I die.”⁶

This illustrates how the EE approach may have negative setbacks. U5s are already aggressive to the gospel. So, the EE’s method of confrontation may result in a heated debate. U4s believes in some type of god, but instead of a conversation of their beliefs with a friend, the EE method would send them into a tirade, since one of the first professions is that Jesus is the only way to God.

The direct approach may affect U3s since they are only comfortable with attending Bible studies or church with a friend. The U2s may be the most affected since they are seeker sensitive. The confrontational style would not come across as a friendly method, but instead the aggressiveness may further distance the U2s from church or Christ.

⁵ Kim A. Lawton, “Evangelism Explosion Retools Its Approach,” *Christianity Today* 41, no. 3 (March 3, 1997): 58.

⁶ Lawton, *Evangelism Explosion Retools Its Approach*, 59.

Finally, while the U1s may be completely open to Christ and church, the EE approach may come across as a pressured conversation, and even further once a conversion had been made, there may not be relationship built, which could lead to a falling away from the faith. In other words, if there is no effort made to disciple the new Christian, they will have no means of growth in the spirit.

Oikos Method

Oikos evangelism focuses on a Christian's social network. The idea is a Christian will have more credibility and influence on those he knows. Michael Green notes that this was a method common to the early church.⁷ Oikos, did not just mean household or family, it meant all of those who were acquainted with the Christian. An example of this is Cornelius calling together his close friends and family to hear Peter share the gospel (Acts 10:24).

Oftentimes we see entire households come to faith in Christ, like the centurion and his entire household coming to faith after seeing the centurion's son live (John 4:53). Other examples of households coming to faith in Christ include Zacchaeus and his household (Luke 19:9), Crispus and his household (Acts 18:8), Stephanas and his household (1Cor. 1:16).

New converts also brought members of their oikos to faith in Christ. Andrew finds Peter and tells him that he found the Christ (John 14:40-41). Phillip finds Nathanael and tells him they found the Christ (John 1:44-45). Matthew introduced many other tax collectors and sinners to Christ, and some believed. (Mark 2:14-15).

Notice here that the gospel was not spread through a door to door campaign, rather the gospel was spread as believers shared their faith with people they knew. Thomas Wolf writes, "the early church did not do forced evangelism, going reluctantly,

⁷Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 322.

flinching, and embarrassingly door to door to encounter people they did not know, to explain a message that did not make sense, to an audience totally uninterested or unfriendly.”⁸ Trust must be established before a person opens up and discusses deep issues such as life situations and spirituality. A person is more likely to share these situations with a friend rather than a door to door evangelist.

Trust is important since unbelievers usually find Christ during tough times in their life. These tough times could include death of a loved one or a friend, difficulty or problem that does not have easy solution, illness and situation change such as job, marriage, divorce, birth of a new child, etc.⁹ The Holmes/Rahe scale, a stress test developed by two doctors given to 750 people concludes the more stress people has in life, the more receptive they are to life transforming message of the gospel.¹⁰

Bob Orr goes on to say that the Christian friend should look for points of hardship and know that prevenient grace is moving in the unbeliever’s life. It is at this time the unbeliever will be most receptive to the gospel. If the unbeliever gives their lives to Christ the cycle begins again. This has a strong impact when one considers that the average Christian has eight to fifteen unbelievers in their oikos who are unchurched and live within a reasonable driving distance.

If that was not enough, Charles Arn lists a few reasons to transition to the

⁸ Tom Wolfe, “Oikos Evangelism–The Biblical Pattern,” Apostolic Information Service, accessed June 10, 2020, <https://www.apostolic.edu/oikos-evangelism-the-biblical-pattern/>. AIS is a subscription-based site owned by Indiana Bible College. It provides articles, bible studies, sermon outlines, evangelism programs and other ministry helps.

⁹ Dr. Bob Orr, “4 Reasons Relational Evangelism Is Most Effective,” TheEvangelismCoach.Org, accessed June 10, 2020, <https://www.evangelismcoach.org/4-reasons-relational-evangelism-works/>. The website offers 105 pages of evangelism articles. Its mission is to equip churches and individual with better evangelism skills.

¹⁰ Thomas H. Holmes and Richard H. Rahe, “The Social Readjustment Rating scale,” *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* 11, no. 2 (1967): 213-218.

oikos method:¹¹

1. It is the natural way churches grow.
2. It is the most cost-effective way to reach people.
3. It is the most fruitful way to reach people.
4. It provides a constantly enlarging source of new contacts.
5. It brings the greatest satisfaction to participating members.
6. It results in the most effective assimilation of new members.
7. It tends to reach entire families.
8. It uses existing relationships.

Finally, Thom Rainer's research finds that family members are a big reason why the unchurched attend church and eventually become Christian. He reports that wives who pray are a main tool for bringing their husbands to faith. Likewise, he reports that winning children to church helps bring the parents to church. Last, an unchurched family member will attend at least once a year, most likely during major holidays like Easter or Christmas.¹² Because of these results, the EE method has changed to leverage a new believers' oikos.¹³

Now that we have seen the importance of relationships in evangelism, let us move on to the manner of planting. The seeds of the gospel can be spread far and wide as Christ has made clear, but the ability to build rapport may make the hearts of the hearers more receptive.

¹¹ Win Arn and Charles Arn, *The Master's Plan for Making Disciples Every Christian an Effective Witness Through an Enabling Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 59.

¹² Thom S. Rainer "Shattering Myths," in *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001).

¹³ D. James Kennedy, "Handling Objections," in *Evangelism Explosion* (1972; rep., Carol Streams, IL: Tyndale House, 1970).

Building Rapport

When rapport is built trust is built, but not just trust, an open mind. What is important in the building of rapport is that the other side can come to the talking table with the feeling that they are being treated fairly. Jack Schafer and Marvin Karlins pull examples from their FBI encounters where a simple technique is used to get the opposite side to talk, that is without using force.¹⁴

Warming the Heart

If we are focused on bringing an unbeliever to Christ we must first understand that people won't change, unless they respect and trust the one helping them with that change.¹⁵ The Christian being that one person, must gain rapport by making the unbeliever feel that he is important.

Some ways that a Christian can make the unbeliever understand that they are important is to pay them sincere compliments.¹⁶ A similar way to build rapport is to praise the good points, such as praising the good points of an atheist argument, then set out to discuss the points that are not agreed upon. People feel valued when you listen to them.¹⁷

This principle should be held tightly, as Dale Carnegie mentions two principles in argumentation; 1) everyone believes that he is right and 2) a person convinced against his will is an unconvinced person still. This is known as cognitive dissonance,¹⁸ where a

¹⁴ Jack Schafer and Marvin Karlins, "The Friendship Factor," in *The Like Switch: An Ex-FBI Agent's Guide to Influencing, Attracting, and Winning People Over* (New York: Touchstone, 2015).

¹⁵ Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends & Influence People*. (Sydney, Australia: Angus & Robertson, 1992), 251–56.

¹⁶ Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, 19–26.

¹⁷ Kurt W. Mortensen, *The Laws of Charisma: How to Captivate, Inspire, and Influence for Maximum Success* (New York: AMACOM, 2010), 106.

¹⁸ For example, if a person is smoker and he know he should quit smoking because it is

person simultaneously holds two contradictory beliefs but resolves the contradiction to reduce the discomfort.¹⁹

Michael Nichols notes that most people want to be listened to and it hurts when we are not listened to.²⁰ Being not listened to builds up anger and frustration which can burst out in a tirade later.²¹ However, when we listen we draw the unbeliever closer to us because we become a listening ear to his arguments or to his problems. Kurt Mortensen adds that people want to talk about two things, themselves, and their problems. When you listen to their problems, they would see you as sympathetic, understanding, and respectful.

This leads to another way to build rapport, empathy. When we empathize with the unbeliever, in any way, they begin to feel understood and when they feel understood they are at ease when express their religious views.

The EE on the other hand is built on a systematic presentation of the gospel. Therefore, it does not allow for an opportunity for the unbeliever to share their personal story or empathy. Also, true questions of conflict or curiosity are taken as objections not as questions of interest.²² The big concept here should be grasped. To be heart-warming to an unbeliever is to treat them kindly and with great respect. Pay compliments when compliments are due. Listen to them when they have something to say. Discuss the disagreements if needed. Finally, empathize with their situation so that you can

harmful to him, it will be hard for him to decide the better of the two.

¹⁹ David J Lieberman, *You Can Read Anyone: Never Be Fooled, Lied to, or Taken Advantage of Again* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: YLP Publications, 2012), 134.

²⁰ Michael P. Nichols, *The Lost Art of Listening: How Learning to Listen Can Improve Relationships* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2009), 11.

²¹ Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched*, 235–51.

²² Kennedy, "Witnessing as a Way of Life," and "Sharing Your Testimony," in *The Evangelism Explosion*.

understand them on a more personal level. This is just the beginning points of nurturing rapport, now to move on to nurturing rapport in the realm of conversation.

Lending Your Ear

When conversing about spiritual matters we should be aware that this topic is personal. If we push too hard the person might shut down or experience anxiety.²³

Michael Nichols suggests that a good way to open conversations is to use the word “how.” At first it could be a simple question such as “How are you doing nowadays.” The idea is to keep the conversation at a good tone, but as the conversation seems friendlier the evangelist might use the phrase, “How do you feel about Jesus.”

Depending on where the person registers on Rainer’s scale, they may be very welcoming to the question or very aggravated.²⁴ The EE method does this by asking diagnostic questions and determining the person’s spiritual condition.²⁵ If they are aggravated, the best practice is to hear them out. Respect their point of view and let them run themselves down. At this point, we should paraphrase their statement and make sure that we hear their position correctly. It is important to keep the conversation from escalating into a heated argument by separating facts from emotions.²⁶

If the evangelist has listened to the outburst, he may have heard certain statements, like “I can’t understand how a loving God could condemn people to eternal suffering.” Now the evangelist has an opportunity to share the gospel, but he should not

²³ Nichols, "You Only Hear What You Want to Hear," in *The Lost Art of Listening*.

²⁴ Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion*, 53.

²⁵ The openness to the gospel is determined by two questions. Have you come to a place in your spiritual life where you can say for certain if you were to die today you would go to heaven? Why should I let you into my heaven?

²⁶ Robert M. Bramson, *Coping with Difficult People* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 68.

do it in a dominant fashion, because the unbeliever may become argumentative.²⁷

For example, Nichols suggest that we neutralize the situation by saying “I might have said something that angered you, I’m sorry.”²⁸ On the other hand instead of apologizing, the EE takes the aggression of the unbeliever and turns it against them in the judo technique. It starts with the question “What do you understand that the Bible teaches as to how a person may have eternal life?” What is your understanding about what the Bible teaches on this subject?” This leads to a response from the evangelist saying, “You have rejected the Bible without even understanding its main message, for your answer is not only incorrect, but it is also diametrically opposite to what the Bible teaches.”²⁹

These are two contrasting approaches, but one may have bad results. Patrick King points out that when we tell a person they are wrong or attack their opinion they shut up and avoid us because we have attacked their idea.³⁰ Apologizing on the other hand, helps neutralize the situation and gives the evangelist an idea of what words or statements to avoid.³¹

Being cautious of what to avoid, the evangelist can restate the question and listen to the unbeliever’s response. This assures the unbeliever that they are being listened to. It also ensures that the evangelist understands what the unbelievers are saying.

Another way to connect positively would be to ask the unbeliever their personal story. Remember that earlier I said that an evangelist should keep an open heart and be empathetic with the unbeliever. This is where empathy brings evangelism to a

²⁷ Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, 130–31.

²⁸ Nichols, *The Lost Art of Listening*, 130.

²⁹ Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion*, 84–85.

³⁰ King, *Magnetic Charisma*, 131.

³¹ Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, 143–52.

very personal level. Suppose the unbeliever sees God as evil, because he let the unbeliever suffer abuse from a drunken parent, the evangelist might be able to put himself in that situation, and the unbeliever becomes less hostile and more in need. Still, there is a way to react and it does not begin with “I.”

Michael Nichols says there are two dangers with using “I.” First using “I” in terms of “I understand” or “I’m sorry” closes the conversation.³² When a person is opening up the idea is to keep them talking. The more that they confide in you, the closer to you they become.³³ So a better way of winning their trust is to say, “Can you tell me more” or “what else” or “you must have felt horrible.”

Empathic statements are an ideal way to show sympathy but at the same time keep the conversation flowing. An empathic statement starts with the phrase “You must have” or “I’m sure you were” or “You seem.” It does not matter if this observation is right or wrong, if it is right the speaker will affirm it. If it is wrong, the speaker will always correct your assumption and then provide more information.³⁴ Corrections of assumptive statements can work in your favor because it will provide you with more information to use as a conversation thread. Conversational threads are important because it allows you to dig deeper into a person. The more a person talks about himself the better they feel around you.³⁵

A person will not care what you say until they know that you care about them.³⁶ The best way to show that you are caring about the person’s statement is to lean

³² Nichols, *The Lost Art of Listening*, 124.

³³ Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, 89–120.

³⁴ Schafer and Karlins, *The Like Switch*, 77, 139.

³⁵ King, *Magnetic Charisma*, 93.

³⁶ King, *Magnetic Charisma*, 27.

forward, nod your head at what they are saying and make direct eye contact.³⁷ Direct eye contact shows true sincerity.

It should be known that the speaker wants their feelings affirmed and validated.³⁸ So simply listening brings us closer to their heart. If the Holy Spirit prompts us to share the Gospel us to we can soften the conversational transition by saying, “Would it be okay if I share a few words with you?” or “Do you mind if I give you my opinion?”. The idea here is to ask the speaker’s permission before you speak.³⁹ He should feel in control of the conversation, not that you are controlling it.

When it is time for you to share the gospel, it is better to use stories rather than scripture, this would include a personal testimony. There are a few reasons for this. First, unbelievers view the Bible as being just a book of moral teachings, or a self-help book that can be bought from online bookstores.⁴⁰ Second, stories lower people’s defenses, it also draws them in and builds rapport.⁴¹ The third reason is that stories stick better than straight information.⁴²

As the stories are being told the evangelist should stop from time to time and ask questions such as, “What do you think about that” or “Does this sound right to you.” We want to keep them interested and involved. Also, their responses will give us create conversation threads to pursue.

³⁷ Schafer and Karlins, *The Like Switch*, 45.

³⁸ Nichols, *The Lost Art of Listening*, 14–15.

³⁹ Nichols, *The Lost Art of Listening*, 198.

⁴⁰ George Barna, David Kinnaman, and Scott Pollak, *Churchless: Understanding Today's Unchurched and How to Connect with Them* (Austin, TX: Tyndale Momentum, 2014), 79-81.

⁴¹ Mortensen, *The Laws of Charisma*, 100.

⁴² Chip Heath and Dan Heath, *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* (New York: Random House, 2010), 3–18.

These conversations will range from family, to sports, to hobbies, or anything that is important to them. The best thing that can happen is that we find things in common. Similar interest is a building block of friendship and it can open avenues of influence.⁴³

Another element that contributes to friendship and influence is trust. Despite what some may think, trust cannot be built on a one-time encounter. Kevin Hogan states that trust happens over an extended period when two people are interested in each other's well-being. It also grows as we fulfill promises and reach agreements on things we see differently.⁴⁴ This may even include religion.

A strong friendship is also built on respect. Robin Dreeke remarks that respect comes when we are nonjudgmental. This means we keep an open mind, listen to their opinions and put our best effort in to understand.⁴⁵ Similarity, trust, and respect these are elements that build a relationship, but there are more components we have yet to discuss.

Actions

As I had mentioned earlier, the FBI has developed techniques to build rapport and trust with their people of interest. Before I dive into that, it would only be fair to include the EE's method of interacting with the unbelievers. The EE's method is designed to use sales techniques. The method goes as follows: attention, interest, desire, conviction and the close. They demonstrate the method by using the episode of Jesus meeting the woman at the well.

Jesus draws attention by asking the woman for a drink of water. He creates

⁴³ King, *Magnetic Charisma*, 91.

⁴⁴ Kevin Hogan, *The Secret Language of Business: How to Read Anyone in 3 Seconds or Less* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2013), 107.

⁴⁵ Robin Dreeke, Cameron Stauth, and Joe Navarro, *The Code of Trust: An American Counterintelligence Expert's Five Rules to Lead and Succeed* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2017).

interest by telling her that if she knew who he was, he would give her a living water. He convicted her by exposing her sin of having many husbands. Jesus goes for the close by redirecting her question about the place of worship and focusing it back to her need of being saved.⁴⁶

The FBI method is built on experience of winning over antagonists. Now in evangelism, we are not interrogating people of interest, but we are trying to soften up the unbeliever so that they will be open to our message. This FBI technique can be remembered by the formula (Proximity + Frequency + Duration + Intensity = Friendship).⁴⁷ Proximity is the distance between individuals, perhaps in this case it could be sitting across the aisle of a classmate or a co-worker. It should also be noted that a curiosity hook draws in the person you wish to talk to. In the case of the FBI, an agent sat in front of the person he wished to talk to and did nothing in his interrogation session but read the newspaper. In the case of the evangelist, he could read from the Bible at a daily point of time.

Frequency pertains to how often the Christian and unbeliever cross paths. This plays into the evangelist's favor if he has an unbeliever as a co-worker or if he crosses the unbeliever's path on a daily walk. The FBI used this technique simply by sitting on a park bench on the route the person of interest always took to work.

Duration pertains to the amount of time individuals spend together. For example, when a person first comes on the job, he is unused to the people around him, but as he spends more time with them, he becomes familiar with them and may even develop friendships with the people he seems to like. Just like reading the newspaper in front of the person the FBI wanted to interrogate, the fact that he did it daily made the person of interest more and more familiar with the FBI agent.

⁴⁶ Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion*, 46–47.

⁴⁷ Schafer and Karlins, *The Like Switch*, 4.

Intensity pertains to an event where the Christian and unbeliever would be involved intensely. This does not mean aggressively as in a confrontation, but it means in a concentrated effort such as working together to complete a task or even competing together in a sporting event. The idea is that being involved in an intense action releases endorphin which gives the body a warm and pleasant feeling. When this experience is shared together the two individuals draw closer.⁴⁸

Now suppose we have taken the steps to build rapport and likeability with the unbeliever. Suppose we have engaged in a spiritual dialogue with him. What will that tell us? Is he becoming receptive to the gospel? One way we can tell is to read the subconscious signals he is sending. His mouth may be telling one story, but his body is telling another story.

The Body Is Talking

Before we delve into the world of body language, I should take a moment to explain a little more about how the brain reacts. Already I have talked about the brain's receptivity of synchronized movements, but what is important here is the brain's split-second fight or flight reaction. Recall earlier that the EE method was labeled as confrontational. When we investigate a little more about the functions of the brain, we learn that the amygdala is triggered when we are confronted. It has a split second to determine, friend or foe, and then fight or flight. Once this split-second reaction is made, it is sent through our limbic system which causes our body to react before we can even think.⁴⁹ Physically what has happened is that the neocortex, which is that part that can make logical decisions, never had a chance to make a decision, since the amygdala felt

⁴⁸ Schafer and Karlins, *The Like Switch*, 103–10.

⁴⁹ Daniel Goleman, "Anatomy of Emotional Hijacking," in *Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (New York: Bantam, 2006).

threatened by the confrontational style of the EE method.

This short detour into the function of the brain is necessary because the limbic brain does not forget the initial reaction of the amygdala.⁵⁰ This could mean that even if the EE method was successful, there will still be an underlying mistrust for the evangelists who shared the gospel. It may be interesting to investigate how many EE conversions followed through on their confession and started to attend church on a regular basis. Perhaps there is a large percentage that do or perhaps John Christy is right, and the conversions were made in a pressured interaction.

Now that we have taken that detour, we can begin to learn nonverbal actions that show us what our unbelieving friends are thinking. One note, since the realm of body language is so broad, I have arranged the descriptions into states of mind. First, we must bring with the cardinal rule of body language. Always establish a base line behavior so you can compare signals versus normal behavior.⁵¹ With that established, let us move into the states of mind.

Receptivity is indicated by a tilted head, dilated pupils, and mirroring.⁵² Widened eyes and dilated pupils are associated with good feelings.⁵³ Widened eyes say I like what I'm seeing or hearing going, go on.⁵⁴ This means the soil is right for planting the seed of the gospel.

A tilted head combines with other bodily movement such as crossed legs or leaning forward is another sign of interest.⁵⁵ Once again, if prompted by the Holy Spirit

⁵⁰ Navarro and Karlins, *What Everybody Is Saying*, 36.

⁵¹ Schafer and Karlins, *The Like Switch*, 13.

⁵² Mirroring is the act of matching another's movement subconsciously. For example, if one person crosses their arms, the other person will do the same subconsciously.

⁵³ Hogan, *The Secret Language of Business*, 39.

⁵⁴ Schafer and Karlins, *The Like Switch*, 172.

the evangelist might take the time to ask personal questions or ask permission to share something with the believer. Just as I mentioned earlier, stories stick much better than scripture. So, it would be wise for the evangelist to share a narrative from the Bible or to share their own testimony.

Mirroring in this case would be a returned smile, copied hand gestures or matching voice tonality.⁵⁶ Mirroring is good both ways. If the unbeliever mirrors you it means that you have become likeable and they are now open to new ideas.⁵⁷

This is not to say that the evangelist should be manipulative and mirror the unbeliever's mannerisms just to increase his likeability. Rather it is to say that mirroring has its place. For example, if we mirror the sensory⁵⁸ ways that each individual process information we will be able to tailor our statements so that the unbeliever can better understand.⁵⁹ Another example is to mirror the unbeliever's rate of speech. This ensures that we do not speak too fast or too slow for them to understand. A final example is to use words and gestures they use so that we can put our message into the context of the unbeliever's life.⁶⁰

Uncertainty is identified by self-soothing, eye motions, body movement and

⁵⁵ Schafer and Karlins, *The Like Switch*, 37.

⁵⁶ Mortensen, *The Laws of Charisma*, 113.

⁵⁷ Hogan, *The Secret Language of Business*, 49.

⁵⁸ Sensory refers to how individuals process thoughts. There are three types of sensory perceptions: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Visual means that individuals can see ideas in their head, it can be noticed using words such as, I see what you are saying. Auditory means that individuals learn by listening to what is said. This can be noticed using words such as I am listening to what you are saying. Kinesthetic means individuals learn by holding, feeling or being in real life situations. It can be noticed using phrase such as I felt great.

⁵⁹ Michael Brooks, "The Representational Type," in *Instant Rapport* (New York: Warner Business Books, 1990).

⁶⁰ King, *Magnetic Charisma*, 126–28.

short answers. When a person responds with short answers it is an indication that he is uncomfortable with the topic.⁶¹ It may be possible for the unbeliever to open up if trust is built or rapport grows stronger.

Another way to identify discomfort is watching where an unbeliever positions himself. If he begins to back away it exactly what it seems, an attempt to run away or hide. Other actions can indicate the same thing. Leaning the torso back, slowly distancing himself from the conversation a conversation, or tuning his feet towards the door.⁶²

Eye movement is another sign of discomfort. If a person is nervous their eyes will dart back and forth.⁶³ A deer in head lights look means the unbeliever has been caught off guard or feels threatened. If this does happen it may indicate that the topic of salvation may have been brought up too sudden or too soon.

If the topic of salvation has been brought up there are two indicators that the unbeliever is struggling with their thoughts. Rapid blinking can indicate nervousness or inward struggle.⁶⁴ This can also be accompanied with self-soothing behavior such as adjusting clothes or rubbing parts of the body.⁶⁵

Resistance is indicated by eye movements, delayed answers, and touching the face. Face touching includes covering the mouth, stroking the chin or cheeks, and hiding eyes. This leads to the next indication, delayed answers to questions. Self-soothing done by touching the face relieves the stress that the resistant is experiencing while they think of how to answer the question.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Schafer and Karlins, *The Like Switch*, 215.

⁶² Schafer and Karlins, *The Like Switch*, 60–62.

⁶³ Hogan, *The Secret Language of Business*, 98.

⁶⁴ Lieberman, *You Can Read Anyone*, 46.

⁶⁵ Lieberman, *You Can Read Anyone*, 183.

⁶⁶ Barbara Pease and Allan Pease, *The Definitive Book of Body Language: The Hidden*

The last indication is eye movement. This includes rolling the eyes, constricting pupils, and a high chin with a downward gaze. Rolling the eyes is a signal that you are perceived as being stupid and if any conversation will be met with negativity.⁶⁷ Constricted pupils is sign of tension and aggression.⁶⁸ If this is noticed, the evangelist should not push further or else the discussion might erupt into a heated debate.

Aggression is indicated by sarcasm, a disingenuous smile, and an authoritative stance. At this point the message of the gospel may be met with sarcasm or a disingenuous smile.⁶⁹ The topic is pushed forward the evangelist may be met the signs of true aggression. These signs may include a tensed jaw, crossed arms, threatening eyes or a puffed-up chest.⁷⁰ If the evangelist finds himself in this position, he should not use anger or aggression to get his point across. It will trigger the fight or flight reaction and a heated debate can escalate to a physical fight.⁷¹

Now that we have seen indications for each state of mind, we can look at ways our body language can build rapport. Since this area is broad, I will just give a few suggestions that the evangelist can take into consideration

The first factor is eye contact. When listening keep eye contact and give them undivided attention. Make them feel like you have all the time in the world.⁷² Keep eye contact when you speak. Your words will be perceived as truthful and trustworthy.⁷³

Meaning Behind People's Gestures and Expressions (New York, Bantam Dell, 2004), 199.

⁶⁷ Schafer and Karlins, *The Like Switch*, 52.

⁶⁸ Hogan, *The Secret Language of Business*, 118.

⁶⁹ Schafer and Karlins, *The Like Switch*, 260.

⁷⁰ Schafer and Karlins, "The Golden Rule of Friendship," in *The Like Switch*.

⁷¹ Schafer and Karlins, *The Like Switch*, 33.

⁷² Mortensen, *The Laws of Charisma*, 108.

⁷³ King, *Magnetic Charisma*, 31.

When we do break eye contact we have to be careful not to look off to the side because it gives the unbeliever a notion that we have seen something more important. Instead we should look down because it is an act of submission or respect. We can relate it to Japanese culture where a lower bow is considered a sign of respect.⁷⁴

The second factor is called proxemics. Proxemics is the study of spatial separation, as it pertains to an individual. Personal space is relative to the amount of rapport that is built, violation of it creates tension.⁷⁵ Friendship ranges from two feet to four feet while new acquaintances range from four feet to twelve feet. Normal face to face conversations should be avoided. It brings feelings of intimidation, pressured, or being trapped.⁷⁶ Instead the evangelist should take a side-by-side position. This feels unthreatening allows them to open up more.

The final factor is behavior. If you are uncomfortable or nervous, it makes the other person uncomfortable and nervous.⁷⁷ If you are perceived as being tense or upset you repel people. If you lack confidence people will doubt what you say.⁷⁸ The way to influence people is the opposite of these things. Being calm eases the other person.⁷⁹ Being sympathetic makes others feel good.⁸⁰ Being confident attracts those who are unsure about their direction in life.⁸¹

⁷⁴ Hogan, *The Secret Language of Business*, 37–40.

⁷⁵ Mortensen, *The Laws of Charisma*, 177.

⁷⁶ Hogan, *The Secret Language of Business*, 135.

⁷⁷ King, *Magnetic Charisma*, 51.

⁷⁸ Mortensen, *The Laws of Charisma*, 18.

⁷⁹ Mortensen, *The Laws of Charisma*, 168, 175.

⁸⁰ Dreeke, Stauth, and Navarro, *The Code of Trust*, 241.

⁸¹ Mortensen, *The Laws of Charisma*, 17.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have explored many techniques to build rapport. First, we learned how to identify unbelievers based on their disposition to Christianity. Second, we made the argument of why there should be a shift made toward the oikos method of evangelism. Third, we learned the importance of listening to the unbelievers in our oikos, how to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and how to be subtle about bringing in the message of the gospel. Fourth, we looked at what we could do to increase the rapport that we already have with those in our oikos. Finally, we became aware of nonverbal cues and learned what they may be telling us about how the unbeliever feels throughout our conversations about God, Christ, or religion.

It should be noted here that this is not a step by step process. Rather it is a check list for an evangelizing Christian to go by. He may see that he is doing a few things right, but it may also help him to identify things he can add so that the message of the Gospel could be even more welcomed to unbelievers' hearts.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

Since this project is to identify relational elements that lead to conversion, I have chosen to review autobiographies. The advantage of reviewing autobiographies is that they chronicle the journey to conversion. It is like viewing a photograph. We can study in detail what is in front of us.

I used autobiographies from different walks of life because an atheist would not have the same experience of a Jew. The twelve autobiographies chronicled the individual's journey to Christ. Whenever a relational element was mentioned it was written down and at the end of each story I made a summation that tied the elements. As said in the research method the elements that were written down were categorized and then measured by mode. The result showed the elements that were the prominent in evangelism.

Chuck Colson—Watergate

Chuck Colson was indicted for his involvement in the Watergate scandal. The scandal centered around Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers. Ellsberg was part of an anti-war movement to end the war in Vietnam. Ellsberg was an analyst for the Department of Defense. His position gave him access to top secret material, the Pentagon Papers being part of it. The papers exposed America's ability to end the war. Instead the government was allowing the war to continue.

Ellsberg made copies of the papers and circulated them through the press sparking more protests about the war in Vietnam. Nixon felt the circulation of the papers

might influence the results of the coming presidential election. Facing this crisis, a scheme was created. Burglars were to break into the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Washington D.C. Watergate Office Building. There they would obtain Ellsberg's psychiatric records.

When the burglary was successful Colson became involved. His job was to blackmail Ellsberg by leaking his psychiatric records. This is what tied him to the Watergate scandal. He was indicted for obstruction of justice because of his attempts to discredit Ellsberg. He would later plead guilty but only after his acceptance of Jesus Christ.

One day, before a meeting with the president of a large company in New York, Colson was feeling empty. He did not know why. He had a great marriage. He had a successful career. He did not have any problems, but he still felt like something was missing.¹

As he made his way to the meeting an employee pulled him aside. He told Colson that something had changed the president. He calls it a "religious experience" so lookout he can come on too strong.²

Inside the office Colson and the president, Tom Phillips, talked in a friendly manner. Although the conversation was pleasant, Colson still felt empty inside. He wished he could have the joy and happiness that Phillips had. He remembers the warning about the religious experience and coming on too strong.

He asks Phillips about the religious experience.

"I've accepted Jesus Christ," Phillips exclaimed.³

¹ Charles W. Colson, *Born Again* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 2008), 91.

² Colson, *Born Again*, 92.

³ Colson, *Born Again*, 93.

Colson said nothing but inside he was thinking, “What are you talking about? Jesus lived 2,000 years ago. He was a great moral leader, and doubtlessly a divinely inspired leader, but how could one accept him or commit one’s life to him? As if he were around today.” Trying to keep the peace Colson said maybe we can talk about that later.⁴

When the secrets of Watergate were discovered Colson became uneasy. He searched for security, but it was nowhere to be found. He remembers Phillips and his peace and joy. Maybe that could calm his spirit.

When Colson arrived, Phillips happened to be hosting a Bible study. Glad to see Colson he invites him into the study. Now Colson’s mind was open. Now he was ready to hear the gospel.⁵

The first question Colson asks Phillips is, why does he have so much joy. Phillips told Colson that he had felt empty. Although everything was going great for him, he still felt empty. He did not know why, so he searched the Bible for answers. It was then that something hit him. He realized that he needed a relationship with God, but he did not know what that meant.

When he was in New York on a business trip, he heard that Billy Graham was preaching. So, Phillips slipped in. Graham was preaching that the only way to have a relationship with God is to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Phillips’ friend, who was at the bible study shared his testimony. When he accepted Jesus Christ, he felt peace, and Jesus’ presence inside him. His joy was to walk through the streets of New York and appreciate its beauty.

Phillips leans toward Colson asking gently, “Are you ready to let him in.” Colson backs off and says no. Phillips says, “That’s okay. You have to really want him in

⁴ Colson, *Born Again*, 93–94.

⁵ Colson, *Born Again*, 109–15.

your life to ask him in.”

Colson remains on his argument. Jesus was just a historical figure, to ask him means you must believe he is alive today and his spirit is in him. Colson added that he does not want to immediately believe because he does not want to have Foxhole Christianity. A person can pray to God when things go bad, but when it is all over, they are back to their same self again.

Phillips respects Colson’s argument instead of starting a debate. Colson was a little interested but says he must think through and answer questions he still had.

On that note Phillips asks if he could pray for him. Colson accepts. When Phillips was praying Colson felt emotions sweeping through him. He almost felt like crying.

After the prayer Phillips asks if he could read something to Colson. Colson allows him to. Phillips opens C.S. Lewis’s *Mere Christianity* a passage on the evil of pride. Since Colson has always looked for pride in all his career and in his life, he feels every word pierce his heart. Colson described it best when he says he felt naked and ashamed standing before C.S. Lewis. As the passages went on Colson became so convicted, he began to cry.

When it was time for Colson to leave, he felt so deeply convicted that he asked Phillips to pray with him again. Phillips agrees and prays. Colson was so amazed at Phillips’ prayer, it was almost like he was talking to God, and again Colson felt the emotions sweeping through his body.

Now it was time to go. Colson got into his car and started driving away. As he drove, the words of C.S. Lewis still convicted him. He wanted to go back to Phillips’ home, but it was dark, everyone was in bed.

He had to drive home, but he did not get far. A few miles up the road he had to stop. His tears washed over his face; his cry is so painful. He did not know what to do, but then he let go of all his pain, all the time he was proud, all the time he did things to

gain pride. He cries to God wanting him to help. He finally wanted to know who Jesus was.⁶

The next morning Colson woke up and walked through nature. Each step was a debate with himself. The long debate wore away the day. He realized he was always putting the decision off. It was time to make the decision final. He knelt and prayed and asked Jesus to come into his life.

Rapport

Colson would register as a U3 on Rainer's scale. He had attended Sunday school, but it never made an influence on his life. He did pray though, just before he led his platoon on a night mission he prays for protection from God.⁷ The oikos method and repetition is present. Colson encounters God four times. His parents brought him to Sunday school. His second wife Patty Hughes was catholic. Richard Nixon wished he could convert so he could have something secure to grab hold of,⁸ and the fourth being Tom Phillips the man who would lead him to conversion.⁹

One of the ways Phillips brought Colson to Christ was giving his testimony. A testimony is a story and stories stick. It can be a situation they can churn over in their mind even when the meeting has ended. Even better the listener can identify with the storyteller. If the two of them had been in the same situation. Both Tom and Chuck felt empty, but Tom was able to testify to how he filled that happiness. Now Chuck has a story and possibility he can churn over in his mind.

Another rapport skill that brought Colson even closer was Phillip's prayer.

⁶ Colson, *Born Again*, 116–17.

⁷ Colson, *Born Again*, 31.

⁸ Colson, *Born Again*, 73.

⁹ Colson, *Born Again*, 93.

Colson's emotions swept through his body. When he heard Phillips' prayer, it was sincere not full of thees and thous. It was like Phillips was talking to God in that very room.

Lacey Sturm—Singer

Lacey Sturm is a Christian singer who uses her voice to praise God and minister to the body of Christ. Her passion began when she became a Christian, but she found Jesus in the most heartbreaking way.

When she was ten years old her stepfather picked her up from school. She was confused. She had never been picked up by her stepfather before. She asked what him what was wrong. Her stepdad was silent at first but then said, "Your cousin Kelly is dead." Lacey was shocked. Maybe her stepdad was good at pulling pranks, but this was too harsh of a prank to pull. At first, she did not believe it but when she saw her mom crying uncontrollably, she started to believe it was true.

Lacey's baby cousin Kelly was playing with his stepdaddy, they were playing too hard because his stepdaddy hit him in the stomach and now, he is dead.¹⁰ Kelly was only three years old.

The tragedy hit the entire family. Kelly's funeral was planned, but the family did something special for him. Kelly's mom knew his favorite toys to play with were his Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles toys. The toys were placed around him in the casket.

When Lacey came up to say goodbye, she saw bruises all over Kelly's body. These are not bruising you get when you are playing. Kelly's stepfather beat him to death.

That night she mourned; she was deep in sorrow, but her sorrow turned to hate.

¹⁰ Lacey Sturm, Franklin Graham, and Brian Welch, *The Reason: How I Discovered A Life Worth Living*, illustrated ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014).

Not hate towards Kelly's stepdad, but hate towards God. "I thought you were so big, but you couldn't stop a tall man from killing a little boy?" she burned with anger, "If there is a god, then why didn't he help Kelly?" She was through believing there was a god, if there was, Kelly would have been rescued and he would still be alive today. There is no god. That was when she became an atheist.¹¹

Her hurt and hate deepened when she was assigned to sing the song that was played at Kelly's funeral. The hurt cut to her soul when the school taught the students about abuse. One was physical abuse, and the other was emotional abuse. One took Kelly's life and the other will claim her life.

Lacey's abuse began when her mom would yell at her or smacked her. She would run to her room, lock the door and write in her journal. She began to believe that no one loved her,¹² but the answer was in school.

Ryan was the new kid that sit next to her in class. He was handsome and challenged authority. The teachers' answers weren't always right. Lacey saw a bit of herself in him. They were drawn together and eventually began to date. That was until Christmas break. Lacey was going to her grandmother's house for Christmas, but Ryan was staying home. Lacey was able to come home early, but when she went to see Ryan, she caught him with another girl. Lacey's heart shattered. Now she had all the reasons to die.

God never showed up. Her cousin is dead. No one loves her. She cries herself to sleep. Her boyfriend cheated on her. Her life was hopeless. Suicide was the only way out.

Lacey planned her suicide, but on the day she was going to take her life her

¹¹ Sturm, Graham, and Welch, *The Reason*, 43–45.

¹² Sturm, Graham, and Welch, *The Reason*, 51.

grandmother invited her to church. Lacey agreed. She didn't want to fight with her grandmother on her last day alive.

When Lacey is in the sanctuary, the pastor felt something. He stopped his sermon and said, "There is someone thinking about suicide in here. Please come up here so we can pray for you." Lacey knew it was her, but she didn't go up. The pastor began to cry and so did the congregation.¹³

When the service was over a man pulled Lacey aside. She could feel pure love in him. His face and eyes shown with pure love. He said that the Lord wanted him to speak to her. He began, "Even though you've never had an earthly father, he will be a better father than any earthly father could be. He has seen you cry yourself to sleep at night. He sees your pain. Jesus died to take that pain way." Then he asked Lacey if he could pray for her. She told him yes. So, he prayed, "Heavenly father wrap your arms around this girl, you care for her just like the loving father you are." As he prayed a great warmth wrapped around Lacey, she felt a sense of holiness like God was wrapping his arms around her. It felt familiar to her, it felt like she was finally home.¹⁴

Rapport

Lacey registers as a U5 on Rainer's scale. She is most negative toward the gospel because something horrible happened in her life. She would ask, "If there was a God why did he let my three-year-old cousin get beaten to death by his stepdad?" For this case there is no relational aspect found except one. Genuine love. At the end of her story a man grabs her arm and says the Lord want him to speak to her. Now a strange man gripping your arm is very creepy, but we read why she let her guard down. His eyes shown with pure love. She felt pure love in him. Genuine love and care for a person can

¹³ Sturm, Graham, and Welch, *The Reason*, 106.

¹⁴ Sturm, Graham, and Welch, *The Reason*, 107-9.

lower their guard. Lacey lowered her guard enough that she would listen to God's message and then allow the stranger to pray for her. Genuine love is what brought her back to God and filled her with Christ.

Michael Leehan—Satanist

Michael Leehan's life was filled with misfortune. At age nineteen he was drinking beer waiting for his friends to come over. When his beer had run out, he went back to the store to get another six pack. While on the way his knee started to hurt. He had suffered a knee injury playing sandlot football. When he came home, he took three pain killers to ease his pain in his knee.

He drank half of his six pack, but his knee hurt again. When he went to get more pain killers. He had none left. He could not remember if he had been taking more while he was drinking. He had taken too many. He woke up in a hospital.

He was dying. He felt the doctors and nurses working on his body, trying to bring him back. A voice spoke to him, "Not yet son I have too much for you to do." His life returned. He heard the doctors call his name. He felt the medical equipment all over his body. His parents were with him. He survived the ordeal, but he felt like something was wrong with him. He was moving in slow motion and was not able to act the way he wanted to.

One day he was fixing an air conditioning unit in an attic. The brace he was standing on gave way. He fell nine feet, headfirst, to the concrete floor below. The only thing he could remember is waking up in the hospital with bandages around his head.

Michael was pursuing his MBA degree. During this time, he met his soon to be wife Amber. They married and had three children, but tough times put a strain on their marriage, so they divorced.

Michael hit rock bottom. He laid on his couch thinking about all the misfortune that plagued his life. He started to hate God.

He began to reason, “I can’t believe, I won’t believe in God, He abandoned me early on, he wouldn’t put me in this situation.”¹⁵

Reasoning came to him.” God created everything, he created evil. Then he is controlling everything, good and evil. So, he can be evil at the same time, then he is responsible for the bad things in my life. He put me in this situation, so God didn’t care for me, he controlled the tragedies in my life.”¹⁶

He continued, “So if God is in charge of this world, I will serve his alter ego the evil side, his alter ego is that of Satan.”¹⁷ His hatred continued thinking that God is a tyrant just waiting for a follower to sin so he could make an example of him to keep all his other followers in line. The moral law was stacked against us so we can never match up. God created Hell as a fear-based system so that knees will bow to him not out of love but fear of self-preservation. I will not serve a god of fear and punishment who forces his followers to follow him by fear of self-preservation.¹⁸

Michael grabs a knife, slashed his forearm, and let the blood flow. “Satan you are now my god. Use me and control me for your will and purposes.”¹⁹

He feels spirits fill him. The next day he goes to the bookstore and buys *Satanic Bible* and the *Book of Shadows*. Soon he was doing the deeds of Satan.

One deed is to feed on sexual desire. Leehan joins ministries for singles groups He finds women there who are easy prey. They are undiscerning. They are desperate for a relationship. They give in to a man who does anything or says anything just to get what

¹⁵ Michael Leehan, *Ascent from Darkness: How Satan’s Soldier Became God’s Warrior: A True Story* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011), 23.

¹⁶ Leehan, *Ascent from Darkness*, 23.

¹⁷ Leehan, *Ascent from Darkness*, 24.

¹⁸ Leehan, "Turning to the Darkness," in *Ascent from Darkness*.

¹⁹ Leehan, "Turning to the Dark Side," in *Ascent from Darkness*.

he wants. Leehan lures lukewarm Christian women into a life of sin.²⁰

Leehan attacks new Christians. They are loved into the Kingdom or the church. When they get in, they are abandoned. They are left unloved and unmentored. He attacks them and makes them ineffective for the Kingdom.²¹

Leehan was well versed in the Bible. He would join Bible study groups and twists scriptures like James 4:7 removing the “submit yourself then to God” leaving only, “resist the devil and he will flee from you.”²² He planted seeds of doubt into minds. He points at scripture and asks is that what it really means.

The most important part of these attacks is that Leehan, the Satanist attacks lukewarm Christians, he is unable to attack solid Christians because they have a hedge of protection around them.²³

Leehan was a self-professing Satanist but despite that he had two friendships that would reconcile him with God.

Bob was the father of one of Leehan’s friends. Bob was a psychologist and was open and curious about Leehan and his story. They would meet for coffee, talk about religion, life, or other things. The important thing is that Bob always heard Leehan out and did not try to press his Christian beliefs on Leehan. That was the reason why Leehan liked him.²⁴

This relationship contained several rapport building aspects. Bob stayed open minded and respected Leehan’s point of view. He did not argue. He was truly interested

²⁰ Leehan, *Ascent from Darkness*, 28.

²¹ Leehan, *Ascent from Darkness*, 61.

²² Leehan, *Ascent from Darkness*, 64.

²³ Leehan, *Ascent from Darkness*, 45.

²⁴ Leehan, *Ascent from Darkness*, 49.

in Leehan. He always met Leehan for coffee. Bob frequently saw Leehan. Their conversations built up the intensity of their relationship. Leehan grew so close to Bob that he wanted to visit him when he was on his death bed.

When Leehan entered the room, Bob was not awake, he had not come to his senses when he was in the hospital. Leehan talked to him as if he could hear him. He told Bob that he loved him and that he missed their time together. Then he confessed to Bob that he was looking for Christ, but he was not sure if he wanted him.

With that said and moments had passed Leehan got up to walk away. He heard Bob's voice. "Michael," Bob was almost sitting up. "I know you'll find Christ; you'll be okay, I'll be okay" a short while after that Bob had died.²⁵

Maggie was the second friendship that would reconcile him with God. Leehan and Maggie bonded over a mutual interest and they built rapport.²⁶ Maggie was a designer, Leehan was a builder. They would talk for hours about plans to build or restore homes. It is strange to think that this mutual interest built a bond so close and so strong that twelve years later, Maggie would save Leehan's life and bring him back to God.

The story goes, Maggie and Leehan were so close that they shared a house together as a home and as an office. Because of their close bond Maggie was able to get Leehan to go to church. Leehan agreed, but he went for the reason to prey on new Christians. Leehan refused to listen to the message or set foot into the sanctuary but Maggie had a clever scheme. She would ask Leehan to bring her coffee during service. Leehan did not want to go into the sanctuary but he would have to if he was going to give the coffee to Maggie. So, into the sanctuary he went. The process repeated every Sunday. He would go to prey on Christians and she would ask for coffee.

²⁵ Leehan, *Ascent from Darkness*, 196–97.

²⁶ Leehan, *Ascent from Darkness*, 95.

One Sunday Leehan was entering the sanctuary he was greeted by a pastor named Chris. Chris was a loving pastor and he said that Leehan was always welcome at his church. That was until they found out that Leehan attempted to kill a pastor.²⁷

Leehan previously attended a different church, he hated the pastor and Satan hated the church. One Sunday, Leehan was giving the chance to prove his loyalty to Satan. If he killed the pastor, he was loyal to Satan.

That morning Leehan loaded his gun, concealed, and entered the church. He went over the plan. How he was going to reach the pastor. Where he was going to shoot him, how he was going to escape.

When the service started Leehan made his way towards the sanctuary and reaches for his gun, but a security officer stopped him before he could fire a shot. A description of him was given to all the local churches.

A church security guard at Chris' church noticed that Leehan matched the description. Leehan was quickly ushered into a meeting room. Chris and other church leaders asked a series of questions, one being Leehan's relationship with God. Leehan was not a believer, he was a hater and a failed pastor killer. He was escorted out. He was told that the leaders would have to deliberate whether he could return to the church.

A few days later Chris called Leehan and tells him that the church had forgiven him and wants him to come back. Leehan was in disbelief. The church had forgiven an attempted murder suspect and want him to come back to church. This experience was one of the few that started to break away Leehan's hatred towards God.²⁸

Chris gave Leehan a number to a men's ministry group known as the Damascus. Leehan called and arranged to attend one of their meetings. When he attended

²⁷ Leehan, *Ascent from Darkness*, 146.

²⁸ Leehan, *Ascent from Darkness*, 167.

the meeting, he was turned off by the atmosphere. He decided that he would not attend another meeting.

Michael Leehan had no hope left. He questions his Satanic connections. When he thinks of God he is filled with hate. There is no place to turn. He finds no comfort. He will hang himself tomorrow. He already prepared the noose.

The next day he did things to keep him busy so that he would not think about the suicide and so the time will come quickly. The time arrived. He stopped his chores and walked to the spot; he wrapped the noose around his neck. He took a deep breath and just before he jumped the phone rang. “What are you doing?” Maggie’s voice asked on the other side of the phone. Their bond has become so close that Maggie had the urge to call at that moment.²⁹

“There’s a men’s ministry retreat, I think you should go” Maggie said. Of course, Leehan rejects. Maggie continued to urge, Leehan finally gave in. He will go to the retreat, but it seems like he cannot make it. He ran out of gas halfway there. Leehan called Maggie trying to weasel out. He told her that his tank is empty, and he cannot make it. Maggie told him to stay there. Thirty minutes later she showed up with more gas.³⁰

There was no way Maggie was going to let Leehan back out. That was the strength of their friendship. Maggie refused to quit; she was determined to save Leehan.

God was waiting at the retreat. Leehan did not want to fellowship. He was there to curse God. When the men participated in an activity, Leehan broke off. He walked through the wilderness to clear his head. All that came to him was the misfortune, his loyalty to Satan, his hopelessness. He burned with anger and shouts to God. “If you

²⁹ Leehan, *Ascent from Darkness*, 201.

³⁰ Leehan, *Ascent from Darkness*, 203.

really love me show me, show up now.” Leehan experienced a Godly moment. He saw a battle for his soul. White glowing angels fought off dark spirits that had captured Leehan’s soul. God said to Leehan I love you. I will be with you. I will be a godly father to you.

Leehan broke down and cried. He was reconciled with God. He will finally accept Jesus Christ into his life.³¹

Rapport

Michael would register as a U5 on Rainer’s scale. After unfortunate events and a failed marriage, Leehan blames God. In his rage he devoted himself to Satan.

Leehan fell deep into Satan’s ploys. He served the pleasures of the flesh. He led weak Christians astray. He attempted to kill a pastor.

It would be extremely hard to build a loving relationship with a person like that, but Bob did. Bob kept an open mind to Leehan’s views. He didn’t debate with Leehan, he just listened. Listening coupled with respecting of a person’s views is a great rapport building. Leehan grew so close to Bob that he visited him on his death bed.

Maggie and Leehan hit it off. They had the same interest in construction and designing. Mutual interest is a rapport builder. Remember, conversations bring out mutual interests. If your favorite football team is the Chiefs and their favorite football team is also the Chiefs, you have a mutual interest that can build rapport. Building rapport from mutual interest can create frequency such as being invited to watch the Chief’s game or being invited to a cookout. A mutual friendship will be created and, at some point, God may come up and you will have the chance to share the Gospel. If they accept Jesus you will have a new friend in Christ.

³¹ Leehan, *Ascent from Darkness*, 209–13.

Bernard Nathanson—Abortion Doctor

Nathanson began his practice as a gynecologist. He delivered babies and aborted babies. He was a professional, professional enough to abort his own child. He had a hard decision to make when his girlfriend became pregnant. He could let the baby live and become a father but If the baby was born it would take him away from his schooling. After some deliberation he found decided that his studies were more important. So he and his girlfriend aborted the baby.

Nathanson admitted that the abortion affected him emotionally, but it was only a few days of crying, but then went back to work. He continued to perform abortions, blind to the fact that he was ending the life of babies.

When his wife became pregnant, he wanted the baby aborted. He didn't want the baby to take him away from his profession. Even though his wife protested Nathanson aborted the child himself.

He put his wife into position then went through the normal abortion procedure At the end his baby was aborted. He had no feelings. He got up from, documented the information, then left the room.

People ask Nathanson how he felt when aborting his own child. He tells them, that he felt accomplished, with the pride of expertise.

Nathanson was a cold-hearted abortionist. He cycled through woman after woman. Aborted baby after baby. To him the process had no moral significance. Then there was one machine that opened his mind.

Nathanson also delivered babies. So, he had the practice of using the ultrasound machine. At first it was business as usual, but Nathanson began seeing life inside the womb. Even at that stage of pregnancy the babies were alive. The more he saw the ultrasounds, the closer he grew to the baby.³² His other job was to end their lives. He

³² Nathanson, *The Hand of God*, 129–31.

saw the inhumane thing he was doing.

He became a prolife advocate. His statement is life is a constant growth we just give names to it as it goes on. Fetus, to baby, baby to child, child to adolescents, adolescents to grown human. Aborting a child refuses them the right to become a citizen of this world.

Nathanson performed his last abortion in 1979. After that he became a prolife advocate. As a gynecologist he could tell crowds about the medical consequences of the aborted child and the mother aborting the child. He had an idea of showing the ultrasound as a baby was aborted.³³ Reasoning did not deter doctors, but the sight of a fetus suffering created a paradigm shift. The doctors' view of abortion changes.³⁴

Nathanson's conversion is a strange event. He was not led to faith by an evangelist, he was led to faith by his eyes gradually opening. The ultrasound images warmed his heart toward the babies he was aborting. His moral compass was changing. He woke up at night feeling the burden of what he had done, aborted many thousands of babies, he had three marriages that failed, and more bad things he could not remember. He needed something to lighten his burden. He read through his spiritual books including Saint Augustine, but he did not find anything.³⁵

A few days later Nathanson attended a protest by Operation Rescue. He filtered through the crowd conducting interviews. As he took notes, he noticed the love in people's faces. Occasionally the crowd would pray. They would pray for the unborn children. They would pray for the confused mothers. They would pray for the police and media covering the protest. Then they prayed for each other.

³³ Bernard Nathanson, "The Silent Scream," YouTube, online film, accessed June 5, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gON-8PP6zgQ&has_verified=.

³⁴ Nathanson, *The Hand of God*, 144.

³⁵ Nathanson, *The Hand of God*, 188.

Nathanson was astonished by the love of the crowd. They prayed for everyone. They put in all this effort for the babies who would never be able to thank them. Nathanson began to think that there was a force behind this, then for the first time in his adult life he began to think of God.³⁶

This was not the end of the story. Days and weeks after the event, Nathanson read through everything he had that was spiritual, from Augustine to a book written his former professor. It took a lot of time for him to think through his decision. He was at the threshold of faith but still was not ready to jump.³⁷ It was sometime later that Nathanson finally made that decision and leap into faith and Jesus Christ.

Rapport

Nathanson's experience was an uncommon one. There was no evangelist in his life so there was no rapport that was built. Likewise, the lack of an evangelist does not allow us to rate him on Rainer's U scale. We can say the Holy Spirit opened his eyes. He saw what he was doing. His experience was like the Saul-Paul conversion. Nathanson's eyes were opened. He saw the babies, he regretted what he had done, and that incident led him to join the crusade to protect the babies who will never have the chance to live.

Take note Nathanson said it was not his conscience that convicted him, it was true love and change of heart that did. He said this "It was not like you are Christian and then you are prolife. I was prolife and then I was Christian." We will have to chalk this one up to the Holy Spirit

³⁶ Nathanson, *The Hand of God*, 193.

³⁷ Nathanson, *The Hand of God*, 195.

Mitsuo Fuchida—Japanese Airman

Mitsuo Fuchida is the Japanese lead pilot that led the attack on Pearl Harbor. His success elevated his name and rank in the Japanese air force. His rank did not keep him from danger. He faced death several times.³⁸ Once he was on a reconnaissance mission, but his plane was not equipped with the proper homing devices like large ships were. They got lost and soon ran out of fuel. They had to make a crash landing toward a Chinese boat. The captain of the Chinese boat had them pulled in just before Mitsuo's plane sank.

In the battle of Java Mitsuo's plane was badly damaged. It leaked fuel out of one wing. The plane could crash into a high mountain. The plane was too heavy, it could not fly over the mountain. Mitsuo and his crew would have to throw out all their cargo. It was not enough, the plane crashed down into the jungle. They could not clear the mountain, but at least they were still alive. They walked through the jungle for three days then heard a plane landing. They raced up to it and found that it was a Japanese plane.

Mitsuo's last mission was a suicide mission. His squadron would land on the U.S. landing strip in Guam, then attach bombs to the wing of American planes. The bombs had short fuses, so he would have to run fast enough to escape the blast. The mission was canceled when the U.S. dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

After the war, Mitsuo returned to his life as a farmer. When he was alone, he would think over the war. How did he survive? He saw many of his crew die but somehow, he survived. There was some force protecting him. He turned his eyes toward nature, the plants, the cattle, and everything else. Somehow something had created this. He grew ashamed of his view that man can create under his own power.

As time went on, Mitsuo tended the land built, a house and lived alone, then

³⁸ Mitsuo Fuchida, "I Bomb Pearl Harbor," in *From Pearl Harbor to Calvary* (Escondido, CA: Christian Audio, 2011).

news spread that the Japanese prisoners of war were returning. He got a copy of the list of returning prisoners. On it was a name he recognized, a sergeant that he had served with during the war. Mitsuo would go to visit him.

When Mitsuo visited the sergeant, he asked him what the treatment was like in the United States prison camps. The Sergeant told Mitsuo that it was good. He told Mitsuo about this one girl.³⁹

There was an American girl that came into the camp that served the men. She told us if we had any need or discomfort let her know. The sergeant found this strange. The Japanese were the enemies, how was it that they would receive treatment like this.

A prisoner asked her why she was acting so nice. She said her parents were missionaries to the Philippines. When they learned about the war they fled into the mountains for safety, but when the Japanese military found them, they ordered her parents to be put to death because they thought her parents were spies. Before they killed them, her parents asked for a Bible. They read it for a few minutes, prayed and then were put to death.

The girl wondered what her parents had prayed for before they were put to death. It is her thought that they had prayed for their enemies and asked for their forgiveness. The girl's heart was changed, and she remembered Jesus' words to love your enemies. So, she showed up to the camp to serve the men.

A little later after the meeting with the sergeant, Mitsuo was summoned to the military headquarters. At the train station he noticed another American missionary who was handing out leaflets. Mitsuo took one and read it. It was about a Sergeant of the American military, who was furious when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. After the news he enrolled into the military determined to kill the enemy.

When he was at war he was captured by Japan. Then he was put into the war

³⁹ Mitsuo Fuchida, "I Learn the Miracles of Love," in *From Pearl Harbor to Calvary*.

camps where he was beaten and tortured. At that time, he wished that all Japanese would be obliterated from the earth. He then remembered a lesson from Sunday school, Jesus said to repay evil with good.

The sergeant wanted to see if that was true. He asked for a Bible and was given one for only three weeks. He read it over and over, it touched him so much his eyes filled with tears, he accepted Jesus into his life. After that, his attitude toward the Japanese changed. He was much more loving to them. The Japanese did not understand it but said that must be a wonderful book because it has the power to change men.

Those two stories stayed in Mitsuo's head. There seemed to be some magic force that drove them to love. They should have hated Japan for what they had done, instead they treated them kindly.

It was a few weeks later that an editorial came out. It said that the Bible was the number one selling book all over the world. It is so popular it has been translated into all languages of all civilized culture. Mitsuo thought this was a sign. He purchased a Bible and started reading through it. There was one verse that pierced his heart, Luke 23:34 "God forgive them for they know not what they do." This must have been the prayer the missionaries said before they were killed. This must be the verse that the girl at the prison camp lived by. This was the prayer that changed the sergeant's heart. Mitsuo realized that they all forgave the Japanese with love. It was that love. Tears came to Mitsuo's eyes as he surrendered his life to Jesus.

Rapport

Mitsuo is another uncommon case. He does not register on Rainer's scale. Wonder is what drew him in. He wondered if there is a force that kept him alive. He wondered if there is something that created the earth. He wondered what the power was that changed hatred into love.

The stories about the book changing hearts made him wonder. What was in

that book that changes people? When the editorial comes out, he takes it as a sign. He would get that book and it will answer his questions. He reads through it until he found the answer to the love of the missionaries. It was their forgiveness of those who they should hate. The girl should hate the Japanese because they killed her parents. The sergeant should hate the Japanese because of their strike on Pearl Harbor and because of his torture in the prison camp. It was Luke 23:34 that caused them to change.

The power of conversion here is sincerity. The missionaries lived by the scriptures. If they forgave their enemies, they would sincerely serve them with love.

Michael Minot—Atheist

Life was going good for Michael. He had just graduated law school, had a few opportunities to practice law, got paid so well he had a great place and keys to a new convertible. It was at that time a friend from law school called him. He was happy to know how well Minot's career was going. He said now how well things were going he might have to step back and review the scriptures and find the real plan for his life.⁴⁰ Minot was up for the challenge, but he was skeptical there was no God and the scriptures aren't true. He did not want to plan his life with something that was not true.

He had to prove that God's existence is wrong. He will use scientific books to discover facts for himself. He did not want to be talked into, or debated into Christianity.⁴¹ He will make the decision when he had enough evidence.

The first research question was how the universe came to exist. He used the big bang theory but the more he studied it the more he found evidence of cosmic fine tuning. Our sun was perfectly positioned in the galaxy. The sun is stable enough to hold planets

⁴⁰ Michael Minot, *The Beckoning: Examining the Truths That Transformed an Atheist Attorney into a Believer in God* (New York: Morgan James Publishing, 2015), 4.

⁴¹ Minot, *The Beckoning*, 27.

in gravitation. The planets were spaced out in predictable mathematical calculations. The earth was placed perfectly so that it had the right temperature for life and the right balance of oxygen, nitrogen, and carbon to create clouds and atmosphere. Earth generates its own electromagnetic field to protect itself from harmful solar waves from the sun. ⁴²

He then turned his study to life. First came the human body. The very bottom of building blocks are cells. Inside cells lies DNA. DNA is a code using letters A, T, G, C. The DNA code in one cell has 3.1 billion of these letters. Most fascinating is that different combinations create different cells and their composition and their function. ⁴³

Animal behavior gripped Minot's attention. Birds know how to migrate south just before the winter. They fly to the same area each year; they know the pattern without using a GPS. Bees know the exact way to create a honeycomb that is in a perfect geometric pattern. Salmon and sea turtles have the instinctual way to move from their birthplace into their natural habitat. These were not learned behaviors; the animals are born with this instinct.

From this Minot reasons that there is something that created this purposely. The rotation of the earth to create seasons. The animals provided to be preyed upon, but reproduction to keep the food chain going. It was a plan to keep the earth perpetually going. ⁴⁴

Minot's combs through the scriptures to find any explanation for the laws of nature he noticed. His first discovery was Job 12:7-8 "listen to the animals and they will teach you, ask the birds of the sky, and they will tell you, or speak to the earth and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you."

⁴² Minot, *The Beckoning*, 16–17.

⁴³ Minot, *The Beckoning*, 18–19.

⁴⁴ Minot, *The Beckoning*, 19–20.

Minot began to think about himself. He started as a tiny cell and now he is a grown man that can eat, think, hear, taste, feel, and do all kinds of tasks. This can be physically tracked but what cannot be explained is the existence of the mind. Science can explain how the brain can operate but they cannot explain the thoughts we have, our dreams, or emotions. It is something that operates outside the physical body.⁴⁵

Minot had completed the first phase of his study. There could be an intelligent source behind the creation but was it really God? The Bible was the story of God and his love, but Minot knew arguments why the Bible was not true. First came the inaccuracy of the places named in the Bible. While there were places that had the same name today, there had been no proof of rulers such as Belshazzar, and he was not a ruler of Babylon. The last known king of Babylon was Nabonius.⁴⁶ Another claim was that the Hittite empire was fictional so the Assyrian king Sargon mentioned in Isaiah 20 never lived.⁴⁷

He challenged these claims and found that two stone tablets found in Baghdad mentioned Belshazzar served as co-regent with his father.⁴⁸ Clay tablets found in Turkey marked the places that served as the Hittite capital and Sargon's palace was discovered in Iraq.⁴⁹

The book of Daniel was also in question. Daniel prophesied the rise and fall of the Greek empire. It was so accurate that some assert that it was written during or after the Greek empire existed. Minot on the other hand was amazed at how perfectly the prophecy fit. He tested other prophecies like Isaiah's prophecy that Babylon would be

⁴⁵ Minot, *The Beckoning*, 21.

⁴⁶ Minot, *The Beckoning*, 31.

⁴⁷ Minot, *The Beckoning*, 32.

⁴⁸ Minot, "God's Authentication Process," in *The Beckoning*.

⁴⁹ Minot, "God's Authenticating Process," in *The Beckoning*.

conquered by the Medes. At the time Isaiah gave the prophecy it seemed like an impossibility. Babylon was at the peak of its empire. How could anyone take them down? Yet it became true.⁵⁰

With the prophecies of the Old Testament fitting, Minot turns to the New Testament. As a skeptic his stance was miracles were not possible because nature's laws are unchangeable, and they only operate in predictable ways. Things that would be acceptable would be those that can be reproduced in a laboratory.⁵¹

His view began to change as he read through the miracles in the Bible. First, he noticed that the miracles occurred in the sight of many people the healing of a crippled man. (Mark 2:1-12), the healing of the blind man who testified to the pharisees (John 9) and raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11). As a skeptic Minot believed since the miracles were performed in such large crowds there would have been sources outside of the Bible that mentioned it. The investigation was fruitless. In all the records of the time, including Josephus, made no mention of Jesus' miracles.⁵²

Minot also found that Jesus' presence on the earth was unnoticed. Biblically speaking Jesus' life was fulfillment of many Old Testament predictions.⁵³ The fulfillment of the predictions fed Minot's curiosity. He took note of the places Jesus visited, the miracles he performed and the teachings he had made, but he came across one passage that opened his eyes. In Matthew Jesus describes his death and his resurrection. Minot entertained the thought that maybe prophecies in the Old Testament laid the

⁵⁰ Minot, *The Beckoning*, 33.

⁵¹ Minot, *The Beckoning*, 35.

⁵² Minot, *The Beckoning*, 39.

⁵³ His birth place (Micah 5:2); his tribal descentance (Gen 49:10); his birth of a virgin (Isa 7:14); kings will travel to pay him homage (Ps 72:10-11); children would be slaughtered in an effort to kill him (Jer 31:15); he would be taken into Egypt to escape the slaughter (Hos 11:1).

groundwork for what was about to happen.⁵⁴

It was not until a little later that Minot started to connect the research. He says it came together like a tapestry. The scientific evidence of cosmic fine tuning and the structure of the body and the cells, this had to be an intelligent creator. Therefore God is real.

Then came God's message, the Bible. Minot read through the entire Bible, but the last few pages of Revelation gave Minot the impressions that God was showing us his future. So, what happens now we can see as a big part of God's plan. He has a great future planned for us. It would seem not that all the scriptures were showing the way we could reach that point at the end, where we could be with God forever.

Minot's view had changed. The Bible was not a book of stories or written history of a book on how to live moral lives. Scripture speaks of ways to engage in relationships on an intensely personal and emotional level.⁵⁵

The understanding of God's love and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ made sense to Minot, but his decision would have a consequence. He would become Christian but lose all his friends.⁵⁶ Sure enough when he told his friends about his decision, they all abandoned him, but the story has a bittersweet ending. Minot may have lost his friends, but after telling a pastor his story he was welcomed into a church with warmth and understanding.

Rapport

Minot registers as a U3 on Rainer's scale. He was neutral. It was his Oikos that created the interest. First his friend talked to Minot with excitement and challenged him

⁵⁴ Minot, *The Beckoning*, 65.

⁵⁵ Minot, *The Beckoning*, 158–60.

⁵⁶ Minot, *The Beckoning*, 181.

to look in the scriptures. Rapport had already been established through another FBI technique, repetition. Since they had gone to school together, they knew each other well, and quite possibly had a strong friendship.

One thing that is important to point out is that Minot was an atheist. He did not want to be debated into believing that God was real. He wanted to arrive at the conclusion himself. Minot was open minded because his friend planted a seed of curiosity in his mind. This is to say atheists will not come to Christ through debate, but the rapport building technique of listening and asking questions and showing genuine interest could create so much rapport that they would just seek you out to have a conversation, or anything more like friendship.

Tenzin Lhakpa—Buddhist Monk

Tenzin was dedicated to the Buddhist temple when he was fifteen. His mother believed he must have done something special in his former life because he was clever, kind, and smart. He did not want to be dedicated but before he could argue his mother asked, “Don’t you want to honor me.” The only answer was “yes.”

A son who became a monk gave his parents high respect in the community and earned his mother a place in heaven, sparing her from Avicii.

Honoring his mother, Tenzin enters the temple. His first teacher was a shaman who led Tenzin to the spirits. “Close your eyes my son. The spirits are here. Invite them into your soul. Let them flood your thoughts and control your mind. Let the spirits guide you and teach you. Let them live in you and through you. They know the path and will lead you to enlightenment.”⁵⁷

Wind swirled in the chamber; the ground was uneasy under Tenzin. He was

⁵⁷ Tenzin Lhakpa and Eugene Bach, *Leaving Buddha: A Tibetan Monk’s Encounter with the Living God* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2019), 63.

afraid. "Don't be afraid my son," the shaman said. "You will not die. There is no death there is only transition. In the grand time of the universe, we only change body, shape size, sex, and species, but we never die." The shaman taught on. "There is no good and evil. We must wipe our minds of such dualism because it does not exist. There is only one single power that controls us all and it is neither good nor evil." Tenzin accepted these teachings but soon the spirits would abandon him.

A few years later the Panchen Lama was assassinated by the Chinese government. Now that he was dead the Chinese government saw it fit to select the new Panchen Lama. Tibetans opposed this. Their view was China could choose communism, but they should let Tibet practice its own religion which included selecting its own Panchen Lama.

The Tibetans staged protests, but some protest became threatening. China responded with martial law.⁵⁸ Tenzin felt a need to stop the protests. He set himself to obtain the enlightenment that he needed. He prayed to receive the ten powers of Buddhism⁵⁹ then sets off to his journey.⁶⁰

The journey was disappointing. Tenzin hoped to find higher enlightenment, but he found there was division among the monasteries. Now Tenzin was stuck. He could not go down to any village for safety. If the people saw him, they would riot more. The only place he could go is Nepal.

The only way to reach Nepal was a two-thousand-mile hike through the Himalayan mountains. The hike challenged Tenzin's strength and will. First came

⁵⁸ Lhakpa and Bach, "The Search for Abhidharma," in *Leaving Buddha*.

⁵⁹ The following are doctrines and universal truths of Buddha: The power of life; the power of the mind; the power over material things; the power over actions; the power over birth; the power over desire; the power over prayer; the power over miracles; the power over wisdom; the power over dharma.

⁶⁰ Lhakpa and Bach, "Joining the Resistance," in *Leaving Buddha*.

hunger. Hunger came easy to Tenzin. He was a monk; he was used to fasting. Soon it became harder for Tenzin to resist the desire to eat. He focused his mind on the eight vows⁶¹ that obtained Abidhamma.⁶²

The recitation of the vows grew weak. Tenzin was hungry. He needed to eat. The trail was worse. Tenzin could barely breathe. His feet were cut from the jagged rocks. He lost his strength. He stopped his chanting and praying. Reincarnation lost its comfort. The thought of death brought fear.

He begged for a chance to rest. Two monks helped him walk the rest of the way. Finally, they reached Nepal.⁶³

Tenzin was not impressed with Nepal. It had no potential. So, he used it as a go through to get to India. India excited Tenzin. The monastery of the Maytreya Lama was there. When Tenzin entered the temple, the Maytreya Lama was teaching. He stopped in the middle of his lesson. His eyes rolled back in his head. His voice changed. His forehead darkened. His eyes lit up. He turned toward Tenzin. “What keeps you from finding enlightenment is Mara.”

“Mara is sinking his fangs into your soul and fills you with the blackness of doubt. He spins a web of angry souls that surround you and fill you with misery and doubt. He is the agent of antagonism. He hurls passion, greed, and lust at you to obstruct your meditation. But can he hurt you? Can Mara kill you?”

Matreya sees deeper into Tenzin’s soul, “Your grief is like music to Mara because your grief leads to the creation of bad karma. When you have bad karma long enough you soon find it solidified in the finality of death. Yama, the lord of death waits

⁶¹ A vow against killing, against stealing, sexual impurity, lying, drugs; a vow to maintain fasting, rid myself of personal indulgences, to stay clear of myself in prideful positions.

⁶² To overcome difficulties and sharpen moral conduct.

⁶³ Lahkpa and Bach, "I Can't Go on any Longer," in *Leaving Buddha*.

for you in the underworld and holds the keys for your jivita to pass from one world to another. The lords of karma await to assign to you the next lifetime, which will go backward because of the bad karma that you carry. Your pain and misery will be amplified, and Mara will be victorious.”⁶⁴

Tenzin was troubled. How could he escape Mara? How could he free himself from misery and grief? He needed an answer, but this answer was a dangerous and evil demon.

While he was in India Tenzin was met by an uncle that he had not seen in a while. His uncle was sent by his father because his father was worried. He had not heard from Tenzin since he started his journey.

Tenzin was happy to see his uncle. He asked how things were. His uncle told him that he now lives in America and was doing good. He had a house, a car, a good job, everything was good. Tenzin was curious about how his uncle got to America. Tenzin’s uncle explained that a church had helped petition him. A man came to their city talking about Jesus. He listened to him and what he said. He became a Christian and it changed his life. He had never been happier and was doing better than any generation before him.

Tenzin was suspicious. He had heard about Christians, but Tibetans hated them. He had heard about Christians sneaking around like snakes trying to trick Tibetans into believing their religion. Once you accept their religion you become their slave and do what they tell you to do.⁶⁵

Tenzin’s uncle said that Jesus spoke to him in his dreams. Jesus was telling him that Tenzin was alone. Tenzin was shocked that Jesus would speak to his uncle. His uncle told him it was something new. He had thought that Jesus would bypass all his

⁶⁴ Lahkpa and Bach, *Leaving Buddha*, 136–38.

⁶⁵ Lahkpa and Bach, *Leaving Buddha*, 146.

physical body and only talk to his spirit, but Jesus could use his physical mind to talk directly to him. “He did this for us, he can do the same for you,” his uncle said.

Tenzin could not speak to his uncle for long. If the monks at the monastery found out that he was talking to a Christian about religion, he would be beaten to a bloody pulp.

Tenzin had to walk away he needed to return to the monastery. His uncle was persistent. “Don’t you want to debate me? Isn’t that what monks do, debate?” he asked. “I’ll be staying here tonight will I see you tomorrow?” Tenzin could do nothing but walk away.

That night his uncle’s words played over and over in his head, “Aren’t you going to debate me?” He knew that debating in Tibet was to find out what was true and what was untrue. Another monk noticed him up, “troubled minds can’t sleep” he said to Tenzin. “Have you ever talked to a Christian?” Tenzin asked. “Christians,” the monk said, “Don’t ever talk to a Christian. They will suck the prana out of your soul. They will take away your power and strip away your prana. Don’t ever listen to a thing they say.”⁶⁶

Tenzin still felt bad about leaving his uncle. The next day he asked his teachers if he could at least debate the Christian. “Don’t ever mess with Jesus boy,” the teacher said, anger in his voice, “He is more deadly than Mara. He will keep you away from enlightenment. Mara only has a way of tricking you out of your prana, but Jesus can take it away. Mara can conquer you with darkness, but Jesus will conquer you with light. Unlike Mara, Jesus can control the life force of your Jivita.”⁶⁷

Tenzin asked if Jesus was so powerful why did he not hear about him already. The teacher told him that you do not bring something dangerous into the temple to

⁶⁶ Lahkpa and Bach, *Leaving Buddha*, 149.

⁶⁷ Lahkpa and Bach, *Leaving Buddha*, 150–51.

examine it. You keep the danger away. Jesus is like a deadly virus. He is not like other gods; he gets his power by sharing his name and before you know it everyone is infected.

Tenzin could not stop wondering about his uncle's words. If Jesus was so dangerous then why did his uncle share Jesus so happily. He had so many questions to ask.

Tenzin would get another boost to his curiosity. He had waited so long to hear the Dalai Lama speak. It just so happened that the Dalai Lama was visiting and speaking that day. Tenzin made his way to the temple. He was ready for the lesson. The Dalai Lama addressed violence and peace saying that there is so much violence in the world because we focus on things that divide us not on the things that unite us. He added that Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhist all lived together, but they all live in peace.

Tenzin was shocked, he expected the Dalai Lama to mention Jesus, but he did not. Tenzin felt let down. Is this Jesus so dangerous that the Dalai Lama would not mention him? Tenzin went away broken hearted but even more curious.

His father's death brought him to question Buddhism. After his father's funeral Tenzin meditated deeply trying to reach his father's spirit. Hours passed by but Tenzin still could not reach his father's spirit. He was supposed to be able to find his father, that is what Buddhism taught. He began to doubt. What if it was not true?

He tried chanting to focus his meditation, but his voice was shaking. His heart was racing. His breath was almost uncontrollable. Then the question hit him. What if all I've studied and all I've believed was a lie?

The finality of death crept into his mind. There was no reincarnation there was only death. He needed to express his worries, but he could not talk to anyone. He was a senior monk who had studied under the Dalai Lama. People were coming to seek his counsel.

As a knowledgeable monk Tenzin was assigned to reading duty. He was to read the literature of Buddhism to become an expert in it. This included the *Tibetan Book*

of the Dead. When he studied this book, passages leaped out at him. He felt like there was a deity that he had not been exposed. Deep down in his spirit he felt connected to a protecting god who would guide him through the afterlife.⁶⁸

The curiosity led him to include this book in his debates and teach it in his classes. He studied it so much that it alarmed the senior monks. They asked him why he had concentrated on the book so much. Tenzin told them that the book had an indication of a triune god he knew about in the Christian religion.

The mention of Christianity sparked a furious debate. The debate went on but stopped abruptly with Tenzin's coughing spell. He coughed hard and rapid. He was almost unable to breathe. He tried to stop long enough to speak but the more he tried to stop the harder he coughed. He braced himself against the wall to stand up. He put his hand to his mouth to stop coughing, but when he pulled his palm back it was covered in blood.

The other monks were so concerned that they sent him to a hospital to have tests. They were afraid that Tenzin might have lung cancer or something serious. The first tests concerned the doctors. They would have to run more tests. It was possible that Tenzin had tuberculosis.

Tenzin was brought to be evaluated by a doctor before the tests were ran. There was foreign doctor but came in speaking Tibetan. Tenzin was shocked. He had never known of a doctor that could speak his language. Tenzin asked the doctor how he could speak his language. The doctor laughed saying he had been studying on and off, adding that if he was going to work in foreign hospital, he ought to know the language spoken there.

Tenzin noticed a T shaped icon on the doctor's collar. He asked the doctor

⁶⁸ Lhakpa and Bach, *Leaving Buddha*, 171.

what the symbol meant. The doctor told Tenzin it was a cross. It meant he was a follower of Jesus.

Tenzin was lucky. He wanted someone to tell him about Jesus and now there was a person in the room that could.⁶⁹ He asked the doctor if he could tell him about Jesus. The doctor said he would love to, but he had to see more patients. He asked Tenzin if it was okay to give him some literature about Jesus. Tenzin said it was okay. Minutes later, the doctor stepped in to handed Tenzin two small booklets about Jesus. He told Tenzin that there were many Christians praying for him to get better.

When Tenzin was out of the hospital, he read the booklets. Differences started to appear between Christians and Buddhists.⁷⁰ Buddha taught that followers must do many things to earn their way into a better afterlife. Christians taught that God loved the world so much that he gave his only son, Jesus, to die for the sins of humanity. Jesus loved people so much that he gave his own life. The followers of Jesus loved God so much that they gave their lives to tell others about his love. Buddhists are not driven by love they are driven by knowledge and enlightenment. You could say Buddhists love knowledge, but you cannot say they love Buddha because Buddha loved them.

Tenzin was so intrigued that the next time he saw the doctor he asked to have a Bible. The doctor did not have one in the Tibetan, but he did have a Bible in Chinese. He asked Tenzin if he could read Chinese. Although Tenzin's Chinese was weak, he took the Bible excited to study it.

The doctor asked if he could pray for Tenzin but before he could pray the nurses came in. Tenzin had tuberculosis and the chance of survival was slim. Though Tenzin was ready to die the doctor prayed for him. He placed his hand on Tenzin's arm

⁶⁹ Lahkpa and Bach, *Leaving Buddha*, 173.

⁷⁰ Lahkpa and Bach, *Leaving Buddha*, 175.

and prayed in his native language. Tenzin had no idea what the doctor prayed, but a warm feeling flowed into his shoulder then his chest and then flowed through his entire body.⁷¹

That night a man in appeared in Tenzin's dream.⁷² He was wearing a white robe and his presence felt warm. As the man approached, Tenzin felt like something was wrong with the man's hands. It seemed like they had wounds in them. The man spoke Tibetan. His voice was like a loving father. "Follow me," the man said.

"Are you Jesus," Tenzin asked.

"Follow me" the man said again.

"Are you the one that will show me the path through?" Tenzin asked.

"Follow me Tenzin. I am the path. I am the way. I am the truth. No one comes to the path but through me," the man said.

"Ok. I'll follow you" Tenzin said. The next thing he knew he was waking up in a hospital bed.

He wanted to read the Bible even more. He took his Chinese Bible and began to read. He came across the word that man in white spoke to him. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." That brought back Tenzin's comparison between Jesus and Buddha. The long stay in the hospital gave Tenzin a good amount of time to think, but the more he read the Bible the more he felt like a fraud. All his life he had been seeking the ultimate truth, but he was looking in the wrong place.

Still reading the Bible, Tenzin came to this passage. "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."

Tenzin closed his eyes and prayed, "Jesus if you are there, I am knocking I am

⁷¹ Lahkpa and Bach, *Leaving Buddha*, 179.

seeking. I am asking.”⁷³

The next morning Tenzin woke to an excited doctor. He had good news. Tenzin’s tuberculosis was entirely cleared up. The doctor was amazed, he had never seen anything like that. Tenzin asked, “Do you think Jesus did it?” The doctor said maybe, a lot of people were praying for him.

A few hours later Tenzin’s doctor was walking him out of the hospital. Tenzin asked if he would see the doctor again. The doctor said maybe. Tenzin wanted someone to teach him more about Jesus.

The doctor stopped. He tells Tenzin that he was going to ask him a very important question so he should think carefully. It was then he asked Tenzin if he wanted Jesus to come into his heart. Tenzin thought back to his prayer the night before. If Jesus was there Tenzin was knocking at the door and seeking and asking. Tenzin nodded. He knew he wanted Jesus. The doctor held Tenzin’s hands telling him to repeat the prayer he was going to pray. Tenzin’s prayer invited Jesus to come into his heart and into his life. As soon as he prayed the prayer Tenzin was overjoyed. He was ready to tell his fellow monks about his experience and about Jesus. So, he went on his way.

Rapport

Tenzin would register as a U2 on Rainer’s scale. Although Tenzin had never learned about Jesus, he became interested when his uncle shared his personal story. That brings us to another advantage of the oikos method—credibility. Tenzin had heard nothing but bad things about Jesus including draining your soul and becoming master of your spirit.

Another rapport aspect was oikos. The first person that introduced Tenzin to Jesus was his uncle. Tenzin heard bad things about Christians but the fact that his uncle

⁷³ Lahlkpa and Bach, *Leaving Buddha*, 179.

had introduced Jesus to him he became so curious about it that his refusal to talk to his uncle bothered him all night. Just being excited and just mentioning Jesus was enough to spike Tenzin's curiosity. It opened a door of wonder in Tenzin and it was that curiosity that kept him on the long path of accepting Jesus.

Another thing to point out was the warning Tenzin gave. The monks would beat him to a bloody pulp if they found out he was talking to someone about Jesus. An abrupt approach to sharing the gospel does not consider the issues and context in the person's life.

Another rapport skill was the same skill that Paul used in his message to the Athenians. The doctor had studied the Tibetan language so he could talk to his patients clearly. Paul was familiar with the Athenian culture so he could connect with them.

The fact that the doctor could speak Tenzin's language relaxed Tenzin. He could ask the doctor about Jesus.

The last aspect to point out is the aspect of frequency. As mentioned before frequency is one of the techniques the FBI uses to build rapport. The doctor didn't intentionally do this, but he showed up several times while Tenzin was in the hospital. The formula of commonality, comfort and frequency built so much rapport that Tenzin came to the doctor to learn more about Jesus and the doctor was able to pray with Tenzin to invite Jesus into his life.

Lisa Brockman—Mormon

Lisa came from a different world. A world where God was a man who was exalted to Godhood because of his obedience⁷⁴ Lisa's only guarantee of everlasting life was to marry a Mormon man in a Mormon temple.⁷⁵ Her sacred duty was to have many

⁷⁴ Lisa Brockman, *Out of Zion* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2019), 20.

⁷⁵ She would be sealed for eternity if she married in a Mormon temple remained faithful, obeyed the laws and ordinances.

children so premortal spirits had a mortal body to fill.⁷⁶

Lisa met her boyfriend in college. He was a born-again Christian. Lisa really did not know what that meant. He kept sharing his beliefs with her. It was irritating. One day he asked Lisa “How do you know Mormonism is true?” Lisa replied, “Because there is a burning in my bosom.”⁷⁷

Gary was not satisfied. He hit her with a barrage of questions. Have you looked into the history of Mormonism, how do you know that Joseph Smith is a real prophet from God, how do you know the *Book of Mormon* is God’s Word?

The walls seemed to close in on Lisa. Every instinct in her wanted to run. Adrenaline rushed through her body. She began to panic. She could not defend her faith with any adequate answers.

She believed Mormonism was the only true church on earth. They possessed the fullness of the gospel. All other churches were wrong. She had always believed that wholeheartedly, but it only took a few questions to see her answers were weak at best.⁷⁸

If she were not aware of flaws in her faith, she could not question them, that would be betraying her parents, her church, and her family that stretched back five generations. A desire burned in her to defend her faith, but for the sake of her relationship she would study the Bible with Gary.⁷⁹

Both agreed that Jesus’ death had saved them and gave them the promise to be resurrected, but they had a different view of sin. Gary believed that Jesus’ blood covered us completely and our sins are forgiven. Lisa believed that Jesus’ blood wiped our soul

⁷⁶ Brockman, *Out of Zion*, 23–24.

⁷⁷ This is the way Mormons were trained to respond if their religion was questioned.

⁷⁸ Brockman, *Out of Zion*, 12–14.

⁷⁹ Brockman, *Out of Zion*, 14.

free of Adam's sin, but we are responsible for keeping ourselves free of sin. So, we are worthy for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Worthy for God's blessing. Worthy for a temple wedding and receiving eternal life.⁸⁰

Gary believed in the virgin birth. Lisa was taught that while he was flesh and bone Heavenly Father had intercourse with Mary who give birth to Jesus.⁸¹ Lisa doubted this, but she was told to accept it by faith.⁸²

The Mormon way of life was too much pressure. When Lisa reached college, she threw the pressures off. In college she attended parties, had fun with friends and even have some drinks.⁸³ She began to see two Lisa's. Lisa Halverson who is eighteen years old, plays tennis for the University of Utah and lives in Salt Lake City, Utah. Or Lisa Halverson who is 40 years old a farmer's wife with three children living in Missouri.⁸⁴

The images were in her head the next time she met with Gary. She was open minded but nauseous. She did not want to be the 40-year-old farmer's wife, but she was afraid of her parents finding out about her questioning her faith.⁸⁵

Gary began to lead her to Christ.⁸⁶ Lisa was taught that by grace she is saved after all that she could do. Gary tells her that she is saved by grace not by works so that none could boast (Eph 2:8-9). She would have no worries about doing the things

⁸⁰ Brockman, *Out of Zion*, 26–27.

⁸¹ She saw this as adulterous and intestinal. Heavenly Father had intercourse with Heavenly Mother who gave birth to Mary. Now that Heavenly father impregnated Mary, he was unfaithful to heavenly mother by having intercourse with his daughter Mary.

⁸² Brockman, *Out of Zion*, 62–63.

⁸³ Brockman, *Out of Zion*, 67–69.

⁸⁴ Brockman, *Out of Zion*, 72.

⁸⁵ Brockman, *Out of Zion*, 90.

⁸⁶ Brockman, *Out of Zion*, 96–97.

necessary for earning eternal life.⁸⁷ God has given her eternal life through Jesus (1 John 5:11-12). She would have no fear of God's spirit leaving her. His spirit will never leave you (Heb 13:5). She would be sealed with God and enjoy life in his eternal Kingdom. If she just accepts Jesus' death for her, she could just step into his kingdom.

All the debates stop there. Gary did not win her over. It was the book *Beyond Mormonism* written by James Spencer. Lisa read through it but when she came to the last chapter, she realized how much God had loved her. Jesus died for her and when she accepts his sacrifice, she can walk into God's kingdom. She realized that she was created for friendship, a relationship with God. She can walk into his Kingdom and he will adopt her as his daughter. He has extended his invitation to her. There was nothing she needed to do. She was welcome to come into his Kingdom.

The ease of the invitation touched her so much, tears rolled down her cheeks. She fell face down on her bed weeping. She confessed the sin in her life. She knew nothing she could do would ever atone for it. She confessed that God was the only God. She asked for forgiveness and she asked for him to come into her life. Finally, after the months of wrestling with Gary and God, she was at rest. She started a new life with God.⁸⁸

Rapport

There are many things we can learn from Lisa's story. First, she registered as a mix between U4 and U5. She did believe in a god, one that is different than the Christian God. She was highly resistant to the beliefs of born-again Christians because she was a Mormon.

⁸⁷ Clothed in her white Temple Marriage Gown, paying a full tithe, actively attending church services, obeying the Word of Wisdom, faithful to the Temple Ordinances, and the list goes on.

⁸⁸ Brockman, *Out of Zion*, 97-100.

Lisa could not be argued into Christianity. The point where her eyes began to open was when she saw her two selves. She could be a tennis player or a farmer's wife. Her mind was changing. She grew tired of the Mormon life. It is not that her heart was open, it was more like she was through with Mormonism. It was this point where she met the real God. The one that would never leave her. The one whose forgiveness is eternal. She did not have to try to please him. The messages lifted the burdens off her. It was the Holy Spirit that let her see the two versions of herself. It was the Holy Spirit that drew her out of Mormonism, and it was the Holy Spirit that brought her the message from the Word of God. The spirit opened her mind to more influences.

She had been browsing the bookstore when she noticed the book *Beyond Mormonism*. Even though it was a book this is another aspect of relationship building, relating to the other person. Think of it as the "me too" response. Lisa was curious about the book because Spencer had wrestled with Mormonism too. Remember it was the final chapter that brought tears to Lisa's eyes. She understood and experienced the invitation God had extended to her. In a few of our stories it was not the right here and now decision of the convert to accept Christ. They left the conversations with the thoughts circling in their mind. It takes time to think things through. It is when they are alone that they made the decision and gave their life to Jesus.

Jonas Abraham Davis—Jew

Jonas' story dates all the way back to 1813 AD, born in London he did not have a healthy upbringing. He met with many physical and emotional troubles, physical being scarlet fever, stomach ulcers, double broken arms, and diagnosed as deaf.⁸⁹ He was emotionally hurt when his mother died, he was the youngest of the family, only six years

⁸⁹ He was not completely deaf. He says he was not able to hear his grandmother's words at her death, but he writes the rest of the book with dialogue he has had and hearing on stage speakers.

old.⁹⁰

In school Davis was taught to hate Jesus. There were songs and stories that drag Christians through the mud but Davis was just a child the lessons were just like games to him.⁹¹ It wasn't until his teen years at boarding school that the hate for Jesus and Christians set in.⁹² He was the only Jew in the boarding school. His desk was isolated, and the Christian boys would hurl insults at him. One boy was daring enough to throw a piece of pork at Davis and taunt, "I had a piece of pork I put it on a fork." The treatment was too much. His anger boiled over and now, he began to detest Christians. They were sons of the dead one hung on a tree.⁹³

As Davis grew into adulthood, hatred burned in his heart. That was until he was attracted to a beautiful young lady during a local event.⁹⁴ The girl was accompanying another girl who was betrothed to marry Davis' brother. While Davis and the accompanying lady made good conversation, Davis' brother rejected his fiancé. It was all a money issue; her estate was not large enough to catch his attention.

Davis and the young lady were still enjoying conversation and he asked the lady if he could continue to see her. The young lady thought for a while and promised Davis he would hear from her in a week. Just like any man who has been in love, the wait seemed like it took forever. The time finally came, she arrived to speak with David, but the answer was not good. They were from different religions. His religion was not to keep company of one of a different nation. Her religion was not to be equally yoked with

⁹⁰ Jonas Abraham Davis, *Judaism Excelled: OR the Tale of a Conversion from Judaism to Christianity: Being the Autobiography of Jonas Abraham Davis* (Philadelphia: Wagenseller, 1870), 23.

⁹¹ Davis, *Judaism Excelled*, 36.

⁹² Davis, *Judaism Excelled*, 83.

⁹³ Davis, *Judaism Excelled*, 83.

⁹⁴ Davis, *Judaism Excelled*, 112.

an unbeliever.⁹⁵

Davis was shocked, his hate for Christians had destroyed his chance of love. He was heartbroken, he tried philosophy reasoning quotes, anything for her to change her mind. None were strong enough to change her mind. In desperation Davis spurts out, “I swear to God!”

The young lady checked him, “Mr. Davis, swearing is not polite, brave nor fashionable and it is unbecoming of a gentleman.” Davis gets up to leave, the sweet but cunning smile of the lady lures him back. “Mr. Davis,” she begins. “what has become of Jerusalem?” The young lady’s peering eyes put Davis on the spot. He did not know or care about Jerusalem since he had England to live in.

The pressure was too much, he did not want to admit that he did not know. He tried to slip out of the room, but the lady’s mother spoke up. “Mr. Davis do you want to continue to see my daughter?” He nods yes and then finally was able to leave the room. The embarrassment of not knowing about Jerusalem caused him to study the topic so that the next time they had met he would be able to answer her.

A few days later he went to the young lady’s home to speak with her. This time he was so studied up on Jerusalem that he practically gave her a lecture on the subject, but the lecture was not enough. She again asked him what had happened to his country and his people. Davis grew tired of the subject and retorted “You seem to care more about my people than I do.” That struck a nerve and Davis was about to hear about it.

“Let me tell you, Mr. Davis, about the moral downfall of your country. Our savior Jesus Christ was arraigned before Pontius Pilate by your people for no offense against either the laws of Heaven or earth, Pilate declared he found no fault in Him, and had to release him; but your people were vehement in their cries against him that he may

⁹⁵ Davis, *Judaism Excelled*, 113.

be crucified, even declaring that they would rather let loose in the community a common robber, who had been fairly tried and found guilty and condemned for sedition and murder. Pilate then asked, what shall I do to your king. Your people then flew in the face of their law and cried; we have no king but Caesar. Caesar was not a Jew! Still Pilate tried to reason with the crowd and plead his release. But your people were mad in their cries for his crucifixion. So, Pilate passed the unjust sentence of death upon the cross. Then as a token of his disapproval of the whole proceeding, he took water and in the presence of your nation washed his hands averring, I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it. And your people with one voice cried out, let his blood be upon us and our children.”⁹⁶

Her lip quivered, her voice failed, her eyes filled with tears. She turned her head to hide her feelings. He saw her tears flow fast, heard her cry, but he could do nothing but gaze at her. The words “our savior” pierced his heart. It was the same “savior” that he hates. He was not touched by her tears. He was insulted instead. He grabbed his hat, exited in range, returned to his room, then vowed to put a distance between them forever.

Davis went to bed that night thinking nothing of the episode of the day. He was going to release everything from his mind. God would have it differently. The words “his blood be upon us” echoed in his mind. He could find no rest during the day or in the evening. He began seeing everything as blood. Wine was blood. He dreamed of blood. Book pages seemed to be covered in blood. The phrase “his blood” would never leave him.

He had no peace, but an idea hit him. Maybe the Messiah had come, but there was no one he could consult. The Christians would give him the same answer, Jesus was

⁹⁶ Davis, *Judaism Excelled*, 120–21.

the Messiah. The Jews would treat his inquiry as a blasphemy. If he were to find out, he would have to do the searching himself. To begin he would search the Old Testament for any answer to his question.⁹⁷

Davis studied the Bible for months, but the answers lead closer and closer to Jesus. When it seemed evident, Davis rejected the idea. His hatred for Jesus was so deeply rooted that when he came across a copy of the New Testament, he took it so no one could read it. The strange thing is while it was in his hands, he had an urge to read it.

His initial purpose was to find fallacies to expose the lies of Christianity. He opened the book. The first chapter he read was John 8. Its content was so infuriating that he almost burnt the book, but he had to read more. He poured through the chapter and finally found the fallacy he was looking for. The fifty-first verse, “Verily, verily I say unto you, if a man keeps my saying, he shall never see death. Davis laughed. All Christians die just like us, and there is no Christian that “keeps” the saying of Jesus.⁹⁸

With this newfound fallacy he ventured to return to the lady’s house. He was going to slam the bible down, turn it to John 8:51 and expose the lie. Everyone dies. Jesus was just insane, and” had a devil”. God would not have this. Just before Davis was going to knock on the door he was stricken with pain. It radiated from his left side. He was hurt and was going to go home, but even before he could turn towards home the door opened. The mother of the lady saw how pale he was, she brought him and took him to rest.

“What seems to be the matter?” she asked him. “I’m in trouble,” Davis replied. The woman must have had a calling from God. “Would you like to come to church with us next Sunday?” she asked. Davis had never been so insulted in all his life. He did not speak, and in a while the pain had subsided.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Davis, *Judaism Excelled*, 126.

⁹⁸ Davis, *Judaism Excelled*, 144.

⁹⁹ Davis, *Judaism Excelled*, 145–46.

He returned to his home and put the book up. He was not going to touch it again. The next Saturday night, Davis was awakened. He had time to think through the events of last week, the Bible verses, the fallacy he was going to expose, then the pain and the invitation. Now he had an urge to get up dress himself and go to church.

When morning came, he tried to shrug off the urge, but it was too great. He thought at least he could attend and again find flaws in their faith. There were no flaws to be found, only surprise. The service seemed to be modest, but the surprise came at the end of the service. The preacher bowed his head in prayer. Davis was shocked that the prayer was honest and heartfelt. Of all the things the preacher could pray for, it was the conversion of the Jews. Davis looked for the honesty in the prayer. If the preacher was being honest in his plea maybe the Christians were not as bad as he thought.¹⁰⁰

After the prayer, the pastor read from John 8. A voice in Davis said “run, run” but Davis was drawn in. The fifty-sixth verse convicted Davis. “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.”

The verse may have stirred emotions just as the lady’s tears, but Davis could not accept it, his heart was hardened. He made his way back from the service cursing the pastor in his heart. Then concluded that the lady and her mother were witches who conspired with the pastor to make the sermon to convict him. When he arrived home, he tried to think the sermon over, but he could not relent to any idea of Jesus being the Messiah, his hatred would not give in.¹⁰¹

Davis tried harder to find flaws in the Christian faith. One argument he praised was, If God could have one son why not two or more and even a daughter. He came up with a few more arguments but despite his hate for the Christians, he felt drawn to return

¹⁰⁰ Davis, *Judaism Excelled*, 148.

¹⁰¹ Davis, *Judaism Excelled*, 149.

to the church. He did not want to be noticed so he slipped in.

When the service started, Davis paid no attention in the worship session. His only intention as to hear the message. The message was based on Mathew 22:42. “Who think ye of Christ. Whose son is he, they say unto him the son of David”. The words of the sermon cut deep into Davis’ soul, but still there was a voice saying that his argument was weak, there was no proof of what he was saying, but the subject of the next sermon kept Davis’ interest. The next service would be based on Jesus’ lineage and how he was the son of God.¹⁰²

Davis returned home. Despite his interest, the hate in him searched through the scriptures for a flaw. The Trinity, that was the flaw. It would be impossible for the pastor to explain. Even though he settled on the flaw it became harder to sleep. The closer to Sunday it came, the more discomfort he experienced.

When Sunday came Davis made his way to church. He slipped in again, trying not to be noticed. Something felt different. In the church he could feel a holiness, like God’s presence was there. The worship drew Davis in, he participated in the songs and prayer.

Then came the message. The pastor showed who the Christ was by tracing his lineage showing how he related to David’s family. Then came the miraculous conception (Isa 7:14) and capitalizing with Isaiah 9, more evidence came. Each bit of proof added to the weight of burden on Davis’ shoulders. Each piece of evidence exposed the sin of hatred against the Messiah. Then came the crushing blow. The very same guilt that drove the lady to tears. The cries of crucify him. The hate in the crowd of the Jews. That hate swirled in his body and rooted deep in his soul.

His sin was too overbearing, but then the pastor read the prayer of Jesus,

¹⁰² Davis, *Judaism Excelled*, 155.

“Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” David felt like Jesus’ prayer was just for him. Even though he hated Jesus, Jesus forgave him for hating him.

Davis wept bitterly. He hid his face to cover his emotions, but he saw the mother and the lady, the very person who wept in his presence. Her tears became Davis’ tears, but this was not the end of the journey.

Davis may have been touched but his heart was still hard. He did not want anyone to see his emotions, so he slipped away before the service was over. He came back to his room playing over in his mind, “He is not, he will not.” Davis refused the idea that he was beat. The sermon might have proof, but he will find the errors.

For days he churned the evidence over in his head. There had to be flaws that the pastor omitted. So, Davis went into deep study. He read the New Testament through several times. He compared the Old Testament with the New Testament, combed through the Hebrew, but it did not help. The more he studied the more the connection was made to Jesus.¹⁰³

Davis thought that if Jesus were the Messiah and there was no way he could be forgiven he was too hateful, too sinful. His heart was still repulsed by the idea of yielding to Christ. The constant war of his emotions took so much of a toll on him that his health declined. He had to make the decision, but he could not. A voice inside of him said pray. He was not strong enough to pray by himself, but the voice kept saying pray.

It was a voice that would not go away, but Davis did not have the courage to pray alone. The words of Matthew 6:6 came to him. “But when you pray go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.” With that Davis went into the secrecy of his closet, pulled the door shut and, in the darkness, he prayed to God to forgive him of all

¹⁰³ Davis, *Judaism Excelled*, 163.

his sins, even his hatred ,and then invited Jesus into his life.¹⁰⁴

Rapport

We know that Davis is a U5 on Rainer’s scale. He did not just have hatred towards Jesus he had insults, and accusations. There however are two rapport building aspects of this story. One thing that cracked his armor was the passion of the lady. It is said that passion is love and anger combined. The lady loved Christ but hated what the Jews did to him. It may seem odd to turn this into a good thing, but it goes along with the FBI tactic of intensity. Going back to the episode, notice that the phrase “his blood” that tormented Davis. Maybe this rapport skill can be built into a passionate message from the pulpit. This was an attribute of Peter’s speech at Pentecost.

The other rapport building skill is mercy. Davis was stricken with pain and the door was open. The mother of the lady was there. She took care of Davis, bringing him in and asking him what the matter was. Remember Davis had constantly come by to prove them wrong. But when he was in pain at their door, they took care of him

Michael Franzese—Mafia Member

Franzese grew up as an ordinary kid. His father was proud of his school performance and always encouraged him to do better. Michael had developed a love for baseball. He and his father played games to sharpen his skills. Michael’s father always showed up at his game dressed in a black business suit with five men following him. Michael’s father was known as an underboss of the mafia world.

As Michael grew, his bond with his father also grew stronger. It was that bond that drew him into the mafia world. One day the FBI arrived at their home. They were there to arrest Michael’s father and for the charges of murder, larceny, and conspiracy to

¹⁰⁴ Davis, *Judaism Excelled*, 170–72.

rob a bank. Michael was irate. He believed that a bunch of drug addicts made up the story as a “get out of jail free” pass.¹⁰⁵ When the FBI took his father away, he was determined to get his father back. The things he needed was power and money.¹⁰⁶

Michael knew the only way to gain the power and money was to join the mafia. He would then have to drop out of premedical school, but it did not matter, his father was the most important thing in his life.¹⁰⁷

Michael already had a window into the mafia since his father was an under boss. Michael was accepted and put through the newcomer mafias training. At the completion of his training he was inducted into the Colombo family, but with a blood oath. The blood oath was this. Michael was taken into a room where mobsters were present. He was to dip his hand, and a burning altar with a saint was dropped into his hands. Then a mobster say, “Tonight, Michael Franzese, you are born into a new life, La Cosa Nostra.¹⁰⁸ And if you violate this oath, if you betray your brothers then you will die and burn in hell just like this saint burns in your hands.” Then Michael’s hand was grabbed. A finger on his hand was slit. His finger was squeezed tight. His blood spattered over the floor.

“This oath is sealed by your blood. If you violate this oath your blood will be shed.”¹⁰⁹ Michael was now a member of the Colombo. His father had connections that would set Michael to become the head of the Colombo family. From the beginning Michael was high enough in the ranks that he had one hundred men under him for any

¹⁰⁵ Michael Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father: The Michael Franzese Story* (Colorado Springs, CO: Outreach, 2009), 26–27.

¹⁰⁶ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 30.

¹⁰⁷ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 26–27.

¹⁰⁸ Italian for “our thing,” which refers to the Cosa nostra.

¹⁰⁹ Franzese, *From Godfather to God the Father*, 28–30.

scheme he would develop.

Michael had a few schemes that did not work but the one that did work gained him notoriety. He devised a scheme to defraud the United States out of a few billion dollars on gasoline tax. He was earning thirty-five cents on each gallon of gasoline. That paid him five million to eight-million dollars a week.¹¹⁰

The scheme was so successful it grabbed the attention of both the mafia and the FBI. In the fall of 1984, Michael was indicted of twenty-nine charges of violating the Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organization Act (RICO).¹¹¹

Michael was being tried by the Government, but he also would be questioned by the Mafia. Michael and his Father got a call from the Colombo family. The head wanted to see them. Michael was scared, he never went to see the head, but he had heard about these kinds of meetings. You go in and you either leave or you do not. You would be dead. He called for his father wanting them to go together.

His father refused to go with him. Michael was so insistent he grabs his dad by the shoulders, turns him to look in his eyes. "I always thought we'd fight together, we'd either win, or we'd go down together," he said. His father shrugged him off. "That's not how it's done."

His father was a mobster, he was true to the oath no matter what. The father Michael swore to free from prison showed no gratitude, he did not worry about his son, his mind was only on the mob.¹¹²

His father left him. Michael was by himself in total worry. Then a car pulled up. Michael knew how it went. He would get in the car, maybe there was some one there

¹¹⁰ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 34.

¹¹¹ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 36.

¹¹² Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 40.

to strangle him. Summoning his courage, he walks to the car and gets in. They arrived at a dark house; he was led down to the basement. Michael kept on his guard, was there someone coming behind to strangle him? Was there someone hidden aiming to shoot him?

Now his mind was on the room. If it was empty you would be killed. If it was full you are answering questions. The door opened. Michael saw chair in a U shape. He was a little relieved. He kept his eyes on the spot closest to the door. That is where the assassin sat. One wrong word, one wrong answer and you will be killed.

Michael was shaky with his answers at first, but he realized the boss thought he was hiding money from the scheme. He thought that Michael would break off the Colombo family and start his own. Michael had no ambition to do so, and he did not hide any money, so he was free to go.¹¹³

Michael felt relieved but wondered what really was going to. On the way home Michael asks his driver, “Be honest with me, would you have told me if I was going to get killed?” The driver was silent but then told Michael that his father did not help him. Michael’s heart sank. The father that was in his life, the one he played catch with. The one that encouraged him in school, and the one he vowed to get out of jail betrayed him. Michael thought his father would say good things about him and defend him in front of the boss but instead he played dumb and put everything on him. He almost lost his life because of his dad. Now Michael believed, if he could not trust his dad, he couldn’t trust anyone.

Michael had no relief from incidents like this. He had to deal with trials, and investigations, and more trouble with the mafia. He wanted to be away from the trouble. He still had racketeering charges to face, he had constant trouble by mafia members. He

¹¹³ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 48–52.

entertained the idea of pleading guilty to the rest of the charges just to stop his troubles.

He busied himself in other activities. One was showbusiness. He was producing a dancer movie in south Florida. It was there that he met the most beautiful woman he had ever seen in his life. Camille Garcia was one of the dancers in his movie. He describes her with beautiful brown pouty eyes, innocent movements that she had no clue how beautiful she was, but she was like the Pepsi model moving in slow motion.¹¹⁴

Michael made every effort to see her, even to the point of watching the dancers rehearse. When he bumped into her, he would make her promise to go see him in his suite. Every time she would agree, but she would never show up. Michael thought it was because she was intimidated by his position. He was the producer; she was just a dancer.¹¹⁵

In the big picture Camille was a godsend. Michael was still part of the mafia, he still had business to tend to. He was flying to New York a few times a week just to manage his business, but the more he saw Camille, the more he just wanted to be with her, but still he didn't have a chance to talk to her.

One day he was invited to join a group of dancers and production workers to a popular night spot. He accepted the invitation. When he arrived, he noticed his workers talking with the dancers. Michael spotted one of the men talking to Camille. He deposed the man of his seat and finally had a chance to talk with Camille.¹¹⁶ They talked for hours. Michael learned a lot about her, even to the point that she was a Christian, a strong Christian.

Part of the conversation was witnessing to Michael. She told him about how

¹¹⁴ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 67.

¹¹⁵ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 68–69.

¹¹⁶ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 70.

she surrendered her life to Jesus Christ, and she has a deep relationship with him. Michael loved Camille and wanted her in his life forever, but she was the only one he wanted a relationship with. He was this powerful mafia Don. If he surrenders to anyone it would be the FBI just so she could be in his life. Quite honestly, he listened about Jesus because she talked about him, but that was all Jesus was getting from him.¹¹⁷

Michael told Camille about his mob activity and about his trials and possibility to be put in jail. Camille said she would pray for him and trust God for his decision. Camille had loved God and Jesus so much. Michael realized that if he wanted to spend his life with Camille, he would have to hang up the mob life and keep his nose clean, no more illegal activity for him.¹¹⁸

Camille's prayers worked. Michael was found not guilty in his last trial. Michael and Camille were so excited they married at Christian chapel on the Las Vegas strip.¹¹⁹ This is when his new life began. Michael admits that the only reason why he was interested in Christ was because Camille talked about him all the time. When they officially married in a church near Camille's home, she asked the pastor to talk to Michael about Jesus.

Camille kept urging Michael to accept Christ and that he would be your help in times of trouble. Michael realized he would have trouble with the mob. It was said the only way you leave the mob is in a body bag.

Michael was open to the possibility. It was Camille's persistent that paid off. In a meeting with the pastor of Camille's church, Michael learned about forgiveness. He remembered about forgiveness and eternal life; he had heard about it. He was raised

¹¹⁷ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 72.

¹¹⁸ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 73–74.

¹¹⁹ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 75.

Catholic. He told the pastor all about what he did. The pastor said sin is sin, leave it at the cross. Michael wanted the forgiveness, but he was not going to give Jesus the control. He lived by the creed “God only helps others who help themselves.”¹²⁰

Michael pled guilty to the rest of his charges. The plea gave him the sentence of ten years in prison and five years of probation. His sentence gave him forty months of parole and he would be relocated to a federal prison that was just forty-five minutes away from Camille’s home.¹²¹

When Michael was one year in his sentence a reporter from Life magazine asked for an interview. Michael gave it a chance, the reporter asked about what Michael was planning to do when he got out of jail. Michael told him he was going to keep a low profile.

When the story was published the reporter spun the story. It was not about what Michael was planning to do. It was what Michael was doing. Now both the government and the mafias would be out to get him.¹²²

He was sent death threats; he was put in solitary confinement. The FBI was asking him to testify against his mob members. Things got worse. He had spent years away from Camille and their kids. They were running out of money. He had no way to work and his mafia connections were drying up. Despite all this, Camille kept telling Michael to have faith.¹²³

Camille’s encouragement brought Michael through the years and soon enough he was on probation. One day at the bank he was arrested and thrown into a paddy-

¹²⁰ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 77–79.

¹²¹ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 79.

¹²² Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 81–82.

¹²³ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 82–83.

wagon. Michael admitted that on his parole period he had engaged into some questionable financial activity.¹²⁴ Michael felt like a failure. He was taken away from Camille and his children. They had endured the time away from him but now his stupid mistake is bringing him away. His book about Jesus changing his life was about to be published and there is no way it was coming out. When he heard the iron bars shut, he was devastated. He could spend the rest of his life in solitary confinement. He probably had a mob contact that would kill him.¹²⁵

With all this Michael was hopeless. He described that hopelessness was the worst feeling a person could ever experience. He was locked in a solitary cell. He is there because of his mafia life. He was used to controlling everything, but now he suffered because of what he has done.

He felt excruciating pain in his heart. He prayed to God to relieve the pain. A prison guard noticed him while doing his rounds. “Hey man you don’t look so good tonight.”

Michael replies he is not feeling good at all. The guard disappears, a few minutes later he throws something into the cell. “Maybe this’ll help you out.”

Michael picks it up, it was a Bible. He threw the book against the wall. “God are you kidding me?” he thought. “God is the last thing I need right now. Is this the reward I get for accepting His son? The loss of my family and a lifetime in prison?”¹²⁶

His anger burned against God and against the book. He fumed for a while, but his emotions calmed. Michael realized there were only two people in that cell, him, and God. The last thing he needed was another enemy. He picked up the book and

¹²⁴ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 88.

¹²⁵ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 90.

¹²⁶ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 91–92.

through the pages. A verse jumped out to him. Proverbs 16:7, “When a man’s ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies at peace with him” (NASB).

Michael looked around his cell. Scratched up mirror, stainless steel toilet, prison bars. He asked himself, “Have my ways been God’s ways?” He reasoned that he believed in Christ, but Satan did too. Even though he accepted Christ he did not follow his ways. Camille had told him that he would have to surrender his ways and follow God’s ways.

“Was God trying to tell me something,” he thought. He scanned the Bible further. Another verse jumped to him. Proverbs 3:5 to 6, “Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all of your ways acknowledge Him and he will make your path straight.”

Michael dropped to his knees he bowed his head he admitted he was following his own way and not God’s way. He told God “I would follow you and I would prove myself to you.” Michael’s heart still ached with excruciating pain, but the only message was to read on.

He turned to the Gospels and read Mark and John; the pain began to subside. He was still urged to read more. He read through the letters of Paul and again a message came to him, 2 Corinthians 12:9, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Michael felt like it was Jesus assuring him that he was going to work things all out and that he would never leave Michael’s side.¹²⁷

Michael was sentenced to more time in prison. To avoid any attempts on his life, he was sent back to solitary confinement. It was there where Michael deepened his relationship with Jesus Christ. Toward the end of his sentence God called Michael. The NBA, NFL, NHL and major league baseball were creating a video that discouraged

¹²⁷ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 94–95.

sports gambling. Since Michael knew all about the business, he was asked to be a part of the production.¹²⁸ Michael is now in fulltime ministry, traveling across the United States sharing his story and sharing the message of Jesus Christ.

Rapport

Michael would register as a U2 on Rainer's scale. He was highly receptive to the gospel but only because he was in love with Camille. He was willing to listen anything she said, but Jesus was such a big part of Camille's life that he continuously came up in her conversations. There is a difference between selling Jesus and praising Jesus. When engage in conversation to talk about Jesus we are selling Jesus. When we speak about Jesus in our conversation, we are praising Jesus. A praising Jesus statement would be, "I was afraid at first, but Jesus gave me strength."

Along with consistency, repetition was also a rapport skill. Michael and Camille met constantly. Those who meet constantly grow familiar with each other and eventually the conversations can go deeper than just small talk about sports or weather.

To go on, there was the rapport skill of listening. Since Camille and Michael's conversation went into early hours, they were sincerely interested in each other and were listening to each other.

Victor Torres Gang Member

When Victor was seven his father left for America with big dreams. He dreamed that his children would get better education. He dreamed of a better life. He believed he could get a great job; he was a hard worker. His plan was to go to America alone, get settled in and then send for the rest of the family.

For Victor it was bittersweet, he was going to live a better life, but when they arrived, it was not quite what they expected. It was a small apartment in one of the most

¹²⁸ Franzese, *From the Godfather to God the Father*, 128–29.

violent towns; Brooklyn, with plenty of roaches and rats to keep them company.¹²⁹

One night, Victor was woken by a blood-curdling scream. Victor and his siblings pounded on their parent's door. They told their father that someone was screaming upstairs. Victor's dad raced up the stairs banged on the door and yelled to the lady to open.

The lady was in tears and frantic. "My baby. My baby. A rat bit my baby's face." Victor's dad raced into the room pulled the baby out of the crib and examined its face. A rat had bit the baby's cheek and forehead. Victor's dad helped the lady clean the baby's wounds and then bandage them. He washed the crib's sheets before his neighbor could set the baby down in its crib.¹³⁰

Victor became a shoeshine boy, but the streets were not peaceful. One day another kid came up to Victor, maybe just to make small talk. "What's your name?" he asked. "Victor" he replied. "Are you tough?" he asked. Now Victor was a skinny light weight boy. He could try to talk his way out of the situation, but he was a fighter. His idea was if he were bullied, he would fight. Even if he was beat, he had the reputation of being a fighter. So, kids were more careful taunting him.

This New York boy is picking a fight with Victor. "Are you tough?" he asks. "Can be," Victor replied, but does not look up. The boy kicked Victor to the ground, got on top of him and threw punches at Victor's body. Victor rolled the boy over, mounted him then pounded his face.

The boy sprung free grabbed a pipe swung it at Victor's head. Victor threw his arm, shielded his head, the pipe broke. The boy threw the pipe aside. "You're lucky punk. The next time it'll be your head." The boy walked off. Victor's arm throbbed with pain. It

¹²⁹ Victor Torres and Don Wilkerson, *Victor* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2017), 21.

¹³⁰ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 23.

was broken.¹³¹

Victor learned to be on his guard. Anything could happen. He grabbed protection, a pocketknife. He returned to his work, shining shoes. Things seemed to be okay but a few days later another episode happened. Victor was shining a customer's shoes. The man did not have anywhere to sit so Victor told him just to lean against the car behind him. That was not a good idea. A man shouted "What are you doing? Get off my car!" Victor apologized, "We didn't mean any harm, I'm sorry." Victor began to gather his shoeshine things, but before he could leave, the man grabbed Victor by the hair. "You dirty little spic back off!! This ain't your neighborhood anyway. Get over to the garbage hole where you belong."

The man kicked Victor, picked him up by the shirt then threw him to the ground. Victor lied there in fear. The man rushed at him. "Did you hear what I said?" Victor cursed at the man in Spanish. The man kicked Victor again rolling him into the street. Cars raced by Victor.

Victor pulled himself to his feet and grabbed his pocketknife. The man hurled a punch. Victor dodged, plunged his knife into the man's side. "That little spic stabbed me with a knife. Someone call the cops." People ran to the scene. Victor hid behind a car. Then he saw the blood rushing out of the man. He was in trouble. He ran to his home.¹³²

His mom asked what was wrong. Victor told her that he had just stabbed a man. Did anyone see? She asked. Victor told her yes. She told him to hide under the bed. When the cops show up. They told Victor's mom that they were looking for her son. His mom pretended not to understand English, but the men went in to search. They found

¹³¹ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 24–25.

¹³² Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 26–27.

Victor under the bed. He was taken to the police office he is questioned, then put on probation.

Things were going wrong in Victor's life. He wondered why all this had to happen in his life. He wanted to live a good life for his parents. He had goals and dreams. He learned that if he was going to survive, he would have to be tough. In that decision, Victor's heart hardened, there was no room to be soft on the streets if you did, you would wind up dead.¹³³

School was no different than the streets, Victor had to be on his guard. One day a guy who was known as "Big Ray" approached Victor. He was scared that Big Ray was coming to give him a pounding. "Hey man want to go to a party?" Big Ray asked. Victor felt better. Maybe some of the kids were getting to like him.

He asked Big Ray about the party. Big Ray told him he was going to go there to see if the guys liked him and if the chicks loved him. The more Big Ray talked about the party the more Victor wanted to go. So, he tells Big Ray that he will be there. Big Ray gave him the address and that night Victor showed up.¹³⁴

The party was held in a vacated basement. In the front of the door was spray painted "Roman Lords." When he entered the room, he saw a familiar face that put him at ease. There were people dancing in the middle, guys and girls sitting along the sides. There were a few drinking. "Want a taste?" one kid asked, offering Victor a bottle of beer. "Um, sure" victor said taking the bottle and sipping from it.

Then he caught a different smell in the room. Something he said smelled like oregano. A person gave him the oregano smelling cigarette. "Do you want to try something new?" he asked Victor. "What ya got?" Victor asked trying to look cool.

¹³³ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 28.

¹³⁴ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 30.

“Grass man, you ever smoke grass?” Victor shook his head no. The guy showed him how to smoke it. He had his mouth closed, coughed a bit then blew it out. “That’s how you get high man. Keep it in lungs for a long time,” he said offering Victor the cigarette.

Victor took the cigarette and took a long drag. He smokes it all the way through. At first, it did not seem like anything was happening. Then he felt at ease. He was in the middle of the floor dancing with girl after girl after girl. Then he was with the guys relaxed, talking and having a good time. The outside world of the city and reality was gone. He loved this feeling. He wanted to be there forever.¹³⁵

Victor came to the parties enough that he was given the chance to join the gang. Victor saw the advantage of being in the gang. Now he had protection on the streets, and he would not have to fend for himself. The way to be initiated to the gang was to fight with a member to show that you could take a beating from rival gangs and survive. Victor’s opponent was chosen and after fifteen minutes of swings, punches, bleeding and wrestling the fight was called off. Victor had passed the initiation.

Gang life was not just a subtle thing, it was constant war. Victor’s gang, The Roman Lords, were planning an attack on a rival gang, the Liberty Boys, because of what they did to a girl gang member, Nina.¹³⁶ The attack wouldn’t be an all-out brawl, the Roman Lords were led in military fashion.¹³⁷

Before the strike, gang members choose their weapons: pipes, bats, brass knuckles, blades, and guns if you can handle them. After equipping themselves, the Lords marched against the Liberty Boys. The two gangs fought ferociously for almost six hours,

¹³⁵ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 32–33.

¹³⁶ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 39.

¹³⁷ They were to march in groups of six, three in the front the other three two feet back. When the leader gave the signal, all groups slit and attack. If the cops came do not run in groups scatter all over so it would be impossible for the cops to pursue them.

but the cops came, and everyone ran.¹³⁸ The brawl was so fierce that it made the newspapers the next day.¹³⁹

One day when the lords were getting high together, Victor noticed a few guys in a corner acting strange. One guy was rubbing his nose, another was running his fingers over his face and another leaned over the curb and vomited. This happened every day. It kept Victor wondering. It was like they were in a dream or in a different world. They were high, but on something so powerful that it got them dreamy and made them act strange. Other gang members knew what the drug was, Heroin.¹⁴⁰

This frightened Victor so much he told his parents. They both agreed that the stuff was bad, and Victor would stay way away from it. Victor kept avoiding his friends. If he was offered the drug, he would say no. One day, he was playing pool and a gang member came to talk. He pushed the drug on Victor.

All this pushing put a bit of curiosity in Victor's mind. He asked what it was like. The friend asks, "How would you like to get rid of your hassles right now?" Victor stayed silent. His friend described a beautiful world and amazing sensations. Then he said, "Follow me."

He took Victor to a roof top where a few guys were huddled in a corner. Victor saw how they were acting. "This ain't for me man I'm goin'" he said starting to walk away. "Wait Victor" his friend said. "How about I just give you a taste. A little sample. It can't hurt you trying just once." Victor figured that he was right. He could try it one time and know what it was and why the guys were acting so strange. He accepted and his friend injected on shot of heroin into Victor's vein.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 43.

¹³⁹ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*.

¹⁴⁰ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 64.

¹⁴¹ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 66–67.

The first thing he heard was a guy saying, “Make sure he doesn’t fall, we don’t want him to die from overdose.” His heart beats faster. A sensation overcomes him. He is in euphoria. He is drowsy and feels good. His stomach churns. He feels sick, he throws up and loses his balance. “This is too much. I can’t take it” he says.

“You’ll be alright. Everyone feels that way the first time.” His friend says. Victor shakes his head and mumbles, “too much, too much.” He falls against the stairwell door dizzy.

Fifteen minutes later the dizziness faded. He was able to walk. He heads down the stairs to walk off his high. He vows never to take that drug again.¹⁴²

Things changed the next day. Victor wanted more of the heroin. The sickness was mild compared to the euphoria he experienced the night before. Victor told himself he was not hooked, but tracked down his friend and asked, “Where can I get more of that stuff?” His friend smiled. “You like it don’t you?” he said. “Yeah I just want to try it a few more times” Victor admits.¹⁴³

Victor’s friend showed him where he could buy the heroin. He bought his second dose for five dollars. The next day he bought three. Then the next day he bought five. He realized he was hooked when he was all out of money. He figured he could go a while without it, just until he had more money. That was not the case. By three o’clock his body was shaking, He sweats all over, he felt sick, then there came the desire to have more. In his clear state of mind, he knew he was hooked, and it was not a good thing.¹⁴⁴

The addiction was so bad that Victor went begging junkie after junkie just to have a taste of heroin. One junkie told him he could get rid of his shakes by buying a

¹⁴² Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 68.

¹⁴³ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 69.

¹⁴⁴ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 71.

bottle of cough syrup and drinking the whole thing. The cough syrup helped Victor for the night but the next day he was on the hunt again. In a clear state of mind again, he realized that he was not getting the heroin for the high, he was sick, and the dose kept him alive.¹⁴⁵

He resorted to crime to feed his needs. He would break into stores, get televisions, and sell them for money to get his fix.¹⁴⁶ He stooped so low that he would steal from his family. He took money from his mom's purse or rob his brother.¹⁴⁷ His parents knew about his drug use but could not stop it. Whenever Victor came into the house, his father would rant "What are you doing to us? You might as well put a knife or a bullet in us. You are killing us. We watch what you are doing to yourself. We cannot stand it seeing our very own son turning into an animal, a thief, and a dirty dope addict. You cannot keep doing this to yourself and to us. Do you want your brother and baby sister to grow up a junkie too?" His mother loved him just as much. The nights he came home she would plea for him to stop. Victor would listen to his mom and most of the time even care.

His Dad had it. One day Victor came in, his dad yelled, "Why don't you just stay away and leave us alone." Victor swore at him and said, "If you just give me five bucks I will." His dad points to the door, "Get out, get out, don't you dare ask for a penny from us!"

Victor jumped up flipped over the table asks his mom for money or else he will do something drastic. She tells him, "You heard your father, I don't have a dime to give."

Victor argued with his dad, in a flash of anger he yelled "You can go to hell."

¹⁴⁵ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 72.

¹⁴⁶ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 73.

¹⁴⁷ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 74.

He stormed out of the kitchen into the living room grabbed a lamp yanks the cord out of the socket. “I’m going to sell this lamp and get straight.”

His father swung a fist at him. Victor lunged out to tackle; he missed and fell to the floor. His father stood over him,” you see what I mean. This boy is a demon. I do not even think God can change his life. He is going to destroy himself and take us with him. I can’t take it any longer”¹⁴⁸

Victor’s mother was so emotional, she was in tears she wanted Victor back. She believed God could change Victor. She was a devout church going Christian. She was a loving mother and a prayer warrior. She asked her whole church to pray for Victor. She asked her home prayer groups to pray for him. Victor’s mom believed that God could intervene in Victor’s life. What she did not know was that Victor rejected God, renounced the church and the religion.¹⁴⁹

Victor could have rejected the love of God, but he could not reject the love of a mother. One day he was shooting pool at the local neighborhood hang out, when one of the guys caught his attention saying, “Victor your mom is here,” Victor looked up from the table, his mom was standing. She took his arm saying, “Son, I want you to come home.” Victor shrugged her off, “Go home mom,” he said and then ignored her.

Victor stayed away for three or four days, but his mother looked for him, asked anyone if they had seen him. No matter where Victor was, in basements, on roof tops, blocks away she always managed to find him. “Please come home” she would plea.

Victor never came home. He stayed in the streets, but danger always followed him. One day he had gotten into a heated argument with other addicts. They accused Victor of beating them out of money. There would be no more arguing this time. They

¹⁴⁸ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 74–75.

¹⁴⁹ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 75.

had knives and switchblades. Victor talked one of them before they could attack, but there were too many of them. They wrestled Victor to the ground and brought him over to the ledge preparing to throw him over.

At the same time Victor's mom was praying for him when the Lord spoke to her, "Victor is in trouble go up to the roof top." Victor's mom managed to find him. She rushed into chaos. She managed to get Victor free enough that he could run away. She had saved him that day.¹⁵⁰

Victor came home one night when his mom was praying. He heard her prayer, "Oh God, save my son. Give him a new life. Give us a new son. Listen to my prayer. Please, God. You are our only hope of salvation." She prayed like God was in the room with her.

Victor was laying down in his room. His mom came in, and wrapped her arms around him, the tears flowing from her eyes. Victor rolls away, "You're wasting your breath. You really think God is going to help me? The only thing that will give me peace is dying from an overdose or getting shot by a cop. His mom was not going to believe what anyone says. She knows that there is a part deep inside of him that wants to be free and God will get a hold of and change him deep inside."¹⁵¹

Victor's mom continued to pray for his healing and telling Victor about God, that he wonders about what this God was and maybe he could help him. One night when Victor was walking through the kitchen to get to his room his mother stopped him and put a white handkerchief on his chest. She cried and prayed thanking God. Victor was so puzzled that he asked his brother what had happened. His brother told him that his mom had gone to an open-air preaching service a day ago. The evangelist prayed over the

¹⁵⁰ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 76.

¹⁵¹ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 77.

handkerchief and said that if she places it on Victor's chest he will be healed.¹⁵²

Victor's healing began. His mother found a place that would help him. Victor and his parents visited the center. Victor was greeted by a man who shook his hand and said, "God bless you." Victor was unsure where he was. He heard singing in the lobby. He was greeted with "God bless you" and when he entered the office he could be cured, and that cure is Jesus Christ.

There it is, Victor had figured it out. This was not a hospital it was a church, but the way they talked about a cure, made him interested. The guide told him that he could not make the decision today because he was high, he would have to come back tomorrow when he was sober. Victor did not like that. If that is what he had to go through to meet God, then forget about it.¹⁵³

The next day Victor battled through the cravings and the withdrawal symptoms. He wanted to be cured and so did his family. Victor's emotions began coming out. As his parents brought him to the center, he realized how good his parents were to notice the signs of his addiction, and then love him so much as to find him a cure.¹⁵⁴

When he arrived, a person came to tell him that his bed was being made ready, but in the meantime, he could read the Bible. Victor flipped through it, it meant nothing. He was too high to care.

Victor was taken to his room and introduced to his roommates. Victor began looking for the T.V. he asked where it was. His roommates told him that there was no entertainment just the Bible. Victor asked them if they get medication. They reply they get a lot of medication; it was the Bible and Jesus Christ. Then they began to witness to

¹⁵² Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 95.

¹⁵³ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 98–100.

¹⁵⁴ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 101.

Victor about how they got cured and how they are now born-again Christians.¹⁵⁵

Victor was hit hard by the withdraw. He got cold, then real hot. He was tormented with pain. A pastor was doing his evening rounds, he came across Victor and saw he was in withdraw. Victor told him he felt so bad. The pastor woke everyone up and told them they had to go to the chapel and pray.

They all went to the chapel and each one of them prayed for Victor's healing, but every prayer made him feel worse. He was encouraged to pray. Victor never prayed to God, but his pain opened his mouth. "Oh God help me."¹⁵⁶ After the prayers the group went back up to the room. Victor put his sight on the door. He remembered that they could not keep him there and he was free to leave whenever he wants.

The next morning, he felt a little better, but he made frequent stops to the restroom to throw up. Most of it was blood since he did not eat much. That night, he was still in pain. He would imagine stacking blocks to ease himself to sleep, but whenever he slept then he would be awoken by the symptoms of his withdraw.

During their rounds, the pastors saw Victor still in pain. A pastor came back, put a bed by Victor. He soothed Victor to sleep and then prayed for him through the night. When he was tired another pastor came to soothe Victor and to continue to pray for him. Victor did not understand why they kept praying for him. He did not think he was getting any better. The prayers annoyed Victor, but the more he thought about it, he began to respect them for the attention they were giving. Still, the next day he would leave the center.

As soon as he woke up, he began to leave but a pastor came to talk to him. "Victor your problem isn't drug or the needle. You are a sinner and you need Jesus to

¹⁵⁵ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 102.

¹⁵⁶ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 103.

forgive your sins and come into your heart and cleanse you completely. You are not a sinner because you shoot dope—you are an addict because you are a sinner first. Your sin came first, then you drug habit. Sin is like a cancer. In some people, it breaks out one way, in other, another way. Drugs in your case are only a product of sin. It is a fruit on a tree that is corrupt. As soon as you ask Jesus to come into your heart, he'll forgive you of your sin and clean you up inside—then the drugs will automatically disappear.”¹⁵⁷

The pastor speaks softly to him. “This is one thing we can't do for you. We can pray—sure. But until you ask Jesus personally yourself—this cleansing and freedom will not come.” Victor would not ask. He was determined to leave. In the past seventy-two hours he had not slept. He could not keep any food down. His bones were brittle, he was in so much pain because he had not use heroin for three days and God had not done anything with him like the promised.

He did feel a little guilty because he had gotten so much attention there and they were so concerned about him that they prayed for him and soothed him and took care of him, but he did not have faith. How could God take an addict like him and make him better?

Two hours later he mustered up all his courage to just walk out. He sat on a bench in the lobby. Through the doors was the streets, freedom, and a delicious bag of heroin. He would wait until no one was looking, he did not want to hear another sermon. At the timing he rushes through the lobby, grabs the knob, turns it,

“Victor, Victor,” a pastor yells out to him approaching.

“Listen man you've only been here two almost three days.” The pastor takes him over to the bench. Victor started to feel strange. His heart started pounding. Suddenly he felt guilty about trying to leave. Even more guilty about his addiction. A strange

¹⁵⁷ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 104–5.

feeling swept through him.

He thought about God and began crying. He turned toward the chapel and walked in and reached the middle. He got down on his knees. A feeling inside him tells him to call out to God. He cries out to God asking him to clean a dirty drug addict like him, make him a new man, come into his heart, and let all the addiction be gone.

He humbles himself, throws himself on God's mercy. If God could do anything take away his addictions. His past flashed through his eyes. All the heroin shoot ups, all the times he acted like an animal, all the fights at home, the faces of his family. Now, he was crying like a baby.

"Don't let me live like this anymore, Please Jesus, he begs. "Touch me with your almighty power and make me a new person."¹⁵⁸ Victor's prayers were heard. At Chapel service his hands stopped shaking. That night he slept soundly. The next day, he was able to enjoy his food without it coming back up. He did not know the term at the time, but he truly was "Born Again."

Rapport

Victor's story is different We see how he was drawn into the life he had. First, surviving fights, an attack by a pipe, kicked into the street, he needed to protect himself. Then he gets drawn into a gang. Being in the gang got him protection, but then it had drugs. Victor did have a good conscience. He did not want to get involve with the heroin, but it was pushed on him so much that he tried it, that one try was a gate to hell.

Victor's mother showed the most touching rapport skill. She never gave up on him. She saw the innocent child or the charming young man that Victor could be. More than that, she loved him deeply, what mother would not love her children.

The touching action was wherever Victor was, she found him, asking him to do

¹⁵⁸ Torres and Wilkerson, *Victor*, 106.

the same thing, “Son, come home.” The rehab center showed a little more of the same skill. They soothed Victor to sleep then prayed for him and before he left, he was called back and was reasoned with.

What rapport skill is this? It is genuine love, love so much that if a person is making bad choices, we can always reach them with a prayer.

Nerissa Luneta—Jehovah’s Witness

I asked Nerissa to share her story because she came to Christ in a different way. Most Christians debate with Jehovah’s Witnesses trying to disprove their doctrine. It was not a debate that freed Nerissa from Jehovah’s Witness it was something else.¹⁵⁹

Nerissa was born into a poor family in the Philippines. There were two things she has a love for, God and America. At the age of five she wanted to know and love God. She wanted to be close to him. Her family knew of God. Her father would tell her that there was a powerful being up there and his name was God.

God was Nerissa’s first love; America was her second. Her father worked for an American naval base. He would always come home with treats and gifts from the Americans. Her love for America grew when she was looking through an American magazine and saw a chubby cheeked blue-eyed blond-haired baby. She fell in love. The Americans were so nice, and their children were so cute. Her mind was made up. She would marry an American, come to America and have lots of blue-eyed blond-haired babies.

Things were wonderful in Nerissa’s world but then her life shattered. She discovered that her father, the one she respected and loved, was having an affair. Her heart broke, her family was all she had. That night she was in anguish, crying and praying to God. She had to find him.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Nerissa Luneta, August 16, 2020.

The answer came the next day. When Nerissa visited her grandmother a group of Jehovah's Witnesses were studying the Bible with her. They offered to include Nerissa in the study, and she agreed. Every question she asked was answered with verses from the Bible. At that time, it felt right. She had finally found God.

Her father came back. God had answered her prayers. The Jehovah's Witnesses she studied the Bible with became her friends. She was so in love with God that she joins the Witnesses on their house visits.

In May of the following year she was baptized to become a Jehovah's Witness.

Her next step was to do house to house evangelism. She had to let go of everything she knew about God, the Trinity, Jesus Christ, and his Messiahship. She was to attend meetings three times a week. Two were to learn answers to questions and role-play door to door ministry.

Nerissa was told she could not read anything that was outside Jehovah's Witness publication. She was to study from the Jehovah's Witness' bible, read Jehovah's Witness' literature and memorize answers to questions she will get during her door to door ministry.¹⁶⁰ She was to obey strict rules that would make her feel so guilty when she sinned. She was not to have interfaith associations with worldly Christians. Worldly Christians say they love God, but they always sin and never do God's will.

Nerissa's dream of marrying an American came true. The pen pal she loved proposed to her. She would come to America and marry. She was happily married but without God. She had to find Jehovah's Witnesses. When she found a group, she hid it from her husband she knew he was opposed to their doctrine. When her husband was at work, she would go to the Jehovah's Witnesses' Kingdom Hall.¹⁶¹ Eventually her

¹⁶⁰ Watch Tower Staff, Reasoning From the Scriptures (Watchtower, 1989).

¹⁶¹ The Kingdom Hall is equivalent to a church.

husband found out about these secret meetings with the Jehovah's Witnesses. He did not want her in that religion he wanted her out. They argued about biblical passages and religious beliefs. Their passions elevated so high that at a time they separated. They spent three days apart, until they were reconciled with each other.

After three years of marriage Nerissa became pregnant. She and her husband were happy, but they knew that the baby had a fifty percent chance of having cancer.¹⁶² Both prayed daily that the baby would stay free from cancer, but despite their prayers, their first baby was born with cancer.

Nerissa was heartbroken. Despite her prayers her baby was born with cancer. A long road of treatments was set before her. First, she would have to nurse the baby through chemotherapy, surgery, and radiation treatments. This is where God found Nerissa.

A Chinese doctor was explaining the radiation treatment plan for the baby. After the explanation, the doctor quietly shut the door. "I'm a Christian first" he said, "can I pray for you daughter?" Nerissa heart was truly touched. No one had ever asked to pray for her or her and her baby.

Nerissa had nursed her baby through chemotherapy and surgery. Now she was at the end of the hopeful plan, radiation treatment. When Nerissa was in the waiting room, she met another mother that also had a child with cancer and was receiving the radiation treatment. Nerissa become friends with the woman. She found that the woman lived two hours away from the treatment center. The woman's church came together to help her. First, there was a man who had a house near the treatment center. He was going to sell it, but he would let the woman live in it for as long as her child was getting the treatments.

¹⁶² Retinoblastoma is a hereditary a cancer of the retina that causes blindness.

She had also learned that the woman's church prayed for her and her child. People from the church would come down to clean the home and prepare home cooked meals. There were others in the church that supported the mother and her children financially.

Nerissa was touched by the kindness of the woman's church. She asked what her church's name was. Deep down Nerissa was hoping it was a Jehovah's Witness Kingdom Hall. The woman told her it was a Christian church and said she would ask the church to include her and her daughter in their prayers.

Another day when Nerissa brought her daughter to treatment, she was exhausted with the traveling on top of all the mothering she did. She dozed off in the waiting room, but the other woman noticed. She told Nerissa that she could sleep at her house and she would take care of her children so she could get a good rest. Nerissa was grateful for the woman's offer; she did need rest.

When Nerissa woke from her sleep the woman offered her lunch. As they were eating Nerissa thanked the woman for her kindness. The woman told her that she was just extending the same kindness that her friends at church show her. When Nerissa was leaving the, woman handed her a check for two-hundred dollars. Nerissa was surprised the woman told Nerissa she such an overflowing blessing that she wanted to share it, that is what we do as Christians. Nerissa's heart was touched again.

Nerissa's daughter's cancer was finally in remission. Now her focus was raising her children spiritually. She and her husband agreed that they should be bringing them to a place for spiritual nurturing. Her husband was dead set against bringing the children to Kingdom Hall. So, for the sake of their children, Nerissa allowed her husband to bring them to a church.

The church that her husband brought the kids to made Nerissa very skeptical. She did not want to step a foot in the door. It was a huge church that the Jehovah Witnesses were absolutely against, but Nerissa was worried that her husband might get

lost. So, she went inside to help her husband with the children.

Her husband wanted to attend service he chose seats in front near the stage. Nerissa followed him toward the seats, but then the music started. It was like a rock concert. Lights everywhere, loud music, people clapping and moving, a worship leader who had tattoos and piercings. This was not what worship was about, Nerissa remembered. She was ready to leave but could not. She was sitting in the front with her husband and she had children in their classes.

For a whole year Nerissa would go with her husband and children. Every time she would tune the message out, she held on to her Jehovah's Witness' beliefs. They embedded deep in her heart and mind. She could not just abandon them. She felt guilty, Jehovah's Witness was the true religion. If she left it, she would not be living in the paradise earth, instead she might go to hell.

Nerissa could not break free. The doctrine was embedded in her heart and mind she would be shunned by the witnesses and she would lose her place in paradise earth and instead be in hell.

That was until Easter of the following year. The message that Jesus loved her so much that he died for her sins struck her heart. Memories came to her. Looking for God when she was five, living in poverty, the heartache from her father's affair, her children battling cancer and the two Christians that prayed for her and blessed her. She wanted to pray with someone when she went up to the stage, she was met by the worship leader with the piercings and tattoos. He offered to pray with Nerissa and her husband. He took their hands and prayed. His prayer was so sincere that Nerissa could feel it. That is when she finally let go and surrendered her life to God.

Rapport

Nerissa would register as a U1 on Rainer's scale. She loved God and was looking for him, unfortunately the Jehovah's Witnesses got to her first. Just like Lisa the

Mormon, Nerissa could not be debated out of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Love was the only thing that brought Nerissa out. The doctor that prayed for Nerissa and her daughter had love for Nerissa and her daughter. He understood the trouble that they were going through. He had so much love for them that he was led to pray for them.

The woman that Nerissa met at the treatment center had so much love for her that she offered everything she offered Nerissa a place to sleep and finances to help her travel. Love is seeing someone in need and having the heart and desire to help them, like the good Samaritan.

Love brought Nerissa to God, but the sincerity of the worship leader's prayer was so touching that Nerissa let go and surrendered her heart to God.

CHAPTER 5

A NEW THEORY

This study endeavored to find relational elements that lead to conversion. I have suggested that evangelists equip themselves with rapport building skills to better their approach to the unbeliever.

Results

My research determined that there are few rapport building skills involved in conversions. There were four aspects that are prominent in conversions. The evangelist is responsible for two and God is responsible for the other two.

Love and sincerity of prayer played a big part in bringing unbelievers to Christ. Sincerity of prayer was shocking to the converts. They expected insincere prayers filled with “thees” and “thous” but converts who were prayed for, said the experience was like the evangelist was speaking to God, like he was in the room. Sincere prayer touched the converts when they felt that the evangelist was really praying for them.

Love was either seen or felt. Lacey Strum felt love in the man who prayed for her. Nerissa Luneta felt loved when the woman she met gave her a place to rest. Love was seen when Bernard Nathanson attended a prolife action. Love is not a skill to learn, it is what a person can become.

God contributed to the conversion with scripture and guidance. Luke 23:34 is the scripture that pierced the enemy’s hearts. God used other books to speak to other converts. Tenzin’s revelation came while reading the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Lisa gave herself to God after reading *Beyond Mormonism*.

The other power from God was the Holy Spirit. The spirit opened Bernard Nathanson's eyes. Nathanson saw it was a living baby he was aborting. Lisa became receptive to God's message when she saw two versions of herself, Lisa the farmer's wife and Lisa the champion tennis player. When she drew closer to God, scriptures relieved her of the burdens she had as a Mormon.

The graphic below shows the rapport skills that contributed to conversions, and their prominence

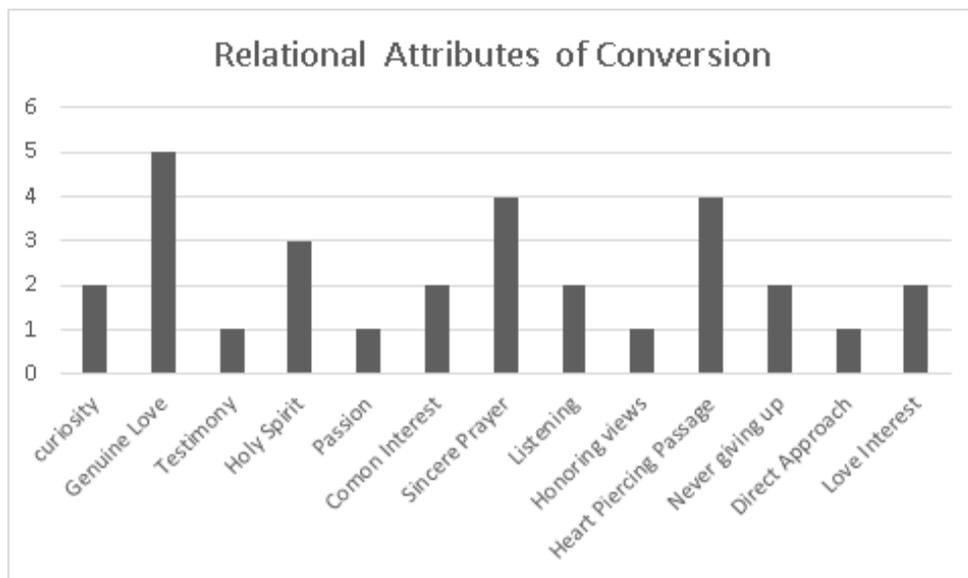


Figure 1. Rapport in Conversions

Oikos Results

The study was also to measure the effectiveness of the oikos method. The results show that there is little difference between oikos and non-oikos conversion. In this study there is only one-person difference.

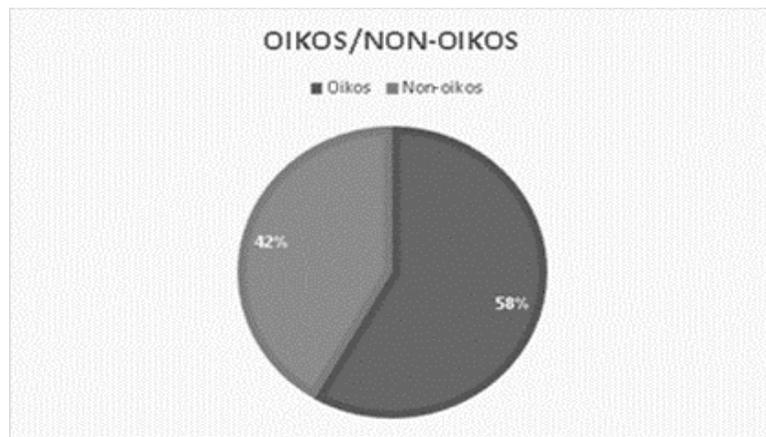


Figure 2

Other Important Findings

The first finding is that conversion does not happen on the spot. Converts took time to think about their decision. The second finding is that converts have a deeply lived life. A direct approach for evangelism does not see a girl's hurt because her three-year-old cousin was beat to death by his stepfather.

The third thing I found was that passages from the Bible or excerpts from a book can convict the unbeliever and bring their sins to light. In the stories I have read, the ones that have been convicted this way tear up and feel strong emotional pain.

The fourth thing I had found was that unbelievers are shocked by sincere praying. In their mind the prayers are just an act. Like Colson had said he expected a prayer with "thees" and "thous" in it.

The last thing I will mention is acts of love can open the hearts of the

unbelievers. Actions like feeding and caring for the enemy, actions like offering a place to sleep and caring for children, actions like forgiving Satanist for his past sins and inviting him to church.

Future Studies

I have studied an array of unbelievers. I have found relational aspects that lead unbelievers to Christ, but my scope was not to dig into affinity groups. Could the relational aspects that lead a Satanist to Christ be the same aspects that could lead another Satanist to Christ?

I invite other researchers to test the validity of my study. Does the researcher come up with different findings or does the method produce the same results? If the same, then it can be a theory to build upon?

There would be a final question of how this study would help evangelists today. My answer is, even though I studied Satanists, Buddhists, wrongdoers, Atheists, Abortionists, etc. the relational elements are the same. Love, Sincerity, the Holy Spirit and scripture is effective. However, there would be no training for it because love cannot be taught no sincerity. These are emotions of the heart. The only way to nurture this type of evangelists is to create the same culture in church,

CHAPTER 6

PROJECT EVALUATION

This project focused on relational elements of conversion. I read twelve autobiographies to measure what rapport building skills were involved in conversion.

The purpose of this project was to find relational elements that lead to conversion. Identifying relational elements is a must. In my studies I found that sincerity of prayer shocked the unbeliever. Sincere prayer brought a man to tears, caused a woman to give her heart to God, made an enemy feel cared for, and brought a gang member to Christ.

It is needed because street canvassing evangelism does not see the mess that is in the person's life. One girl had a three-year old cousin that got beaten to death. She was mad at God. She would reject the evangelist, but the evangelist would never know why.

The goal of reading and reviewing autobiographies was key. The autobiographies told the person's story, disclosed their thoughts, and described their physical feelings like, "I felt sick". The autobiographies gave me a detailed view of the person's life. In Michael Leehan's autobiography I saw how and why he became a Satanist. Evangelists could build rapport and find out about the person by just saying, "tell me your story."

The goal of learning rapport building skills was not so effective. I could identify a few techniques that were present, but the conversions were more of an emotional journey. It would have been great to understand what the person was thinking and why would they think that way. Maybe not to equip evangelists with abilities to determine the psychological stat, but it would be a good avenue of study to build on to.

The strength of this project was seeing inside the convert's world. I was able to

hear their thoughts and know why they did what they did. I knew why Lacey Strum wanted to commit suicide. I knew how a Mormon feels when they are debated with. I learned how some Atheists come to Christ, not by a debate but from personal study.

The weakness of the project was matching rapport skills to the stories. Rapport skills were nonexistent in the conversion process. The same with studying body language. Body language would have nothing to do with conversion. It is more about how people are feeling and what they are thinking. Another weakness was matching the converts with Rainer's U scale. There were a few converts that did not register on the U scale. The only thing the U scale was helpful for was understanding U5's. It is very helpful to know that the U5s are resistant because of some bad experience they have had either at the church or outside of life.

The things I would do differently would be to do as I said, study the converts on a psychological and emotional level. I know the psychological word brings up red flags, but I would not be using human subjects and I would do it for research purposes, not as material to be taught to evangelists. Another thing I would do differently would be to dig deeper into affinity groups. I wonder if the conversion experiences would be the same. Another thing I would do differently is have a group of people, maybe two or three, give their opinions on what the relational elements were. That way I have two or three other people to notice things that I did not notice.

My personal reflection is that I am amazed at how far God will go to call us in to his kingdom. Michael Leehan witnessed a battle for his soul. Tenzin had a dream where Jesus appears to him and tells Tenzin that he is the way and to follow him follow It is amazing to me that Jesus would come in Tenzin's dream speak his language and calling Tenzin by his name. He knew Tenzin; Tenzin was not just part of the crowd.

The other odd thing I noticed was the presence of warmth. When the man prayed for Lisa, she felt warmth like God was wrapping his arms around her. When the doctor prayed for Tenzin, he felt warmth come from the doctor's hand into his shoulder.

This makes me curious.

I noticed that love interests brought people to Christ; this would be an interesting study to pursue.

I had not experienced this when I accepted Christ, but I am shocked to find that people have extreme emotional moments before or during their conversion. Victor went to the middle of the sanctuary and cried out to God. Colson cried so painfully tears kept him from seeing and the conviction he had was so painful.

The thing that leaves me in awe is that God uses Luke 23:34 to pierce the hearts of enemies. I cannot comprehend what that verse means to those it pierces.

My takeaway from this study is to check who I am and pray sincerely. I will take interest in anyone's thought and opinions and stories. I will be relational meaning have many friends that feel like they can trust me. There will be some that I could eventually win to Christ, but then there will be others that I cannot reach I can pray and pray and pray for God to call them into his kingdom.

Conclusion

Relationships help us preach the gospel with love and sincerity. How can we love someone without knowing them, and how can be sincere if we didn't know what to pray for? The pastors at the rehab center loved Victor because they knew he was struggling with an addiction. Tom Phillips prayed in sincerity because he knew Chuck Colson was looking for God.

There are people out there that have a heart ache like Lacey Strum. If a mother lost her son to gun violence how could we sincerely pray for her if we did not know her heart ache? There are people out there like Jonas Abraham Davis, they have done someone wrong but deserve forgiveness maybe Luke 23:34 could touch the hearts of prisoners.

Preaching the gospel can win souls to Christ, but after the victory the souls

need guidance. Relationships provide that guidance. There are some people out there like Tenzin Lhakpa. They gave their life to Jesus but have no one to teach them about him.

With our built relationship we can return the next day and start a Bible study. For some giving their life to Christ means giving up their former life. When Michael Minot announced he was Christian his friends abandoned him. Relationships usher them into a new family, a family of believers.

I leave the reader with this lasting image. When converts give their life to Christ, they enter the Kingdom of God. Without a relationship they are alone with no guide and no map. When a relationship is built, they are led through the kingdom by hand. The reader is to decide which is best.

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ABSTRACT

RELATIONAL EVANGELISM STRATEGIES FOR CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, GREENWOOD, INDIANA

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This project challenged the street canvassing method of evangelism. It argued that rapport should be built before sharing the gospel. Rapport building techniques were identified then compared to 12 autobiographies of converts to determine if the rapport-building techniques were present during the conversion process. The analysis showed that love, scripture, sincerity of prayer, and the Holy Spirit were the dominant forces that brought converts to Christ.

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