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TRAINING THE MEMBERS OF CENTRAL GEORGIA  
VIETNAMESE BAPTIST CHURCH, WARNER  
ROBINS, GEORGIA, IN PERSONAL  
EVANGELISM

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

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

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by  
Long Tan Nguyen  
May 2023

**APPROVAL SHEET**

TRAINING THE MEMBERS OF CENTRAL GEORGIA  
VIETNAMESE BAPTIST CHURCH, WARNER  
ROBINS, GEORGIA, IN PERSONAL  
EVANGELISM

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Defense Date: March 16, 2023

For the glory of God

To Jesus, my Lord, who keeps me longing

To Valerie, my wife, who keeps me loving

To Timothy, Daniel, and Hannah, our children, who keep me learning

To those people who carry out the Great Commission, who keep me inspiring

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## PREFACE

I wish to express my gratitude to my professor, Dr. John M. Klaassen, who has taken the time to guide and coach me when it comes to doing evangelism and completing this project. Thank you for helping me to think further and beyond. I would also like to thank Dr. An Van Pham and Dr. Timothy Beougher, who taught and inspired me to do the work of an evangelist while serving as a pastor and pursuing a doctoral degree.

To the great people of Central Georgia Vietnamese Baptist Church, who have participated in the training and partnered with me on the local mission fields. Thank you. This project could not have been done without your love, support, participation, and prayers.

I thank God for my wife, Valerie, who has faithfully served the Lord with me for years. She compensates for my inability sometimes at church. She cheerfully touches many people's lives with her compassion, hospitality, and friendliness. Many times, in my absence at home and church, she has been a major source of encouragement and comfort for our people as well as for our children, Timothy, Daniel, and Hannah, who also have faithfully served God with us. Thank you so much for all you do and for all your support in the work of ministry through the years. I love you all so much!

Finally, I give all honor, glory, and praise to Jesus, my Lord and Savior. He graciously saved me. I give thanks to Him for how he wonderfully directs my path. I know he will continue to lead my path as I continue carrying out the Great Commission to the changing world.

Long Tan Nguyen

Warner Robins, Georgia

May 2023

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Context**

Central Georgia Vietnamese Baptist Church (CGVBC) started its mission in the fall of 2004 for the Vietnamese community. The church building is located in the city of Warner Robins, Houston County. The city is approximately fifteen miles south of Macon, Georgia. Houston County has a Vietnamese population. The United States' 2010 Census<sup>1</sup> and the research done by the local church showed that within a radius of twenty miles, the Vietnamese population was more than 600.

In June 2011, *Wired Magazine* listed Warner Robins as one of twelve small cities that were driving the “Knowledge Economy,” the economy based on intellectual capital.<sup>2</sup> The rankings featured small cities that attract skilled workers and entrepreneurs, and that already had a relatively high percentage of creative workers. Young Vietnamese workers also moved into Warner Robins to catch the wave of opportunities that stimulated the growth of the Vietnamese population in this region.

Several factors affected the church's evangelistic methodologies. The Vietnamese population was significantly small compared with other races, the Vietnamese also intermingled with other ethnic groups, and the majority of Vietnamese residents were usually unlisted, which made finding them more difficult. Thus, all of these factors have made the evangelizing of the unchurched more challenging.

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<sup>1</sup> USA.com, “Warner Robins Metro Area Population,” accessed September 28, 2013, <http://www.usa.com/warner-robins-ga-area.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Adam Hayes, “Knowledge Economy,” Investopedia, last modified January 22, 2021, <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/k/knowledge-economy.asp>.

In 2004, the church launched a mission to serve the Vietnamese community and had a good reputation within the Vietnamese community. The church demonstrated positive support of public events in the past, especially to the Vietnamese community in the region. However, the local church is seemingly unknown to those Vietnamese who have recently moved into the area.

CGVBC has grown slowly over the past five years. The local church has only baptized twelve new converts, while forty-five new members are due to transfer growth. Twenty-two people left the church for new jobs, which made an average resident membership of seventy-two, with a growth rate of 5 percent. The baptismal growth lagged behind the transfer growth significantly in comparison. The church has averaged 2.4 baptisms over the past five years. It takes, on average, about twenty-five members to lead one person to Christ at CGVBC. The church has an average of seventy-two attendees in Sunday worship services. The number of attendees is about one-tenth of the Vietnamese population in the region, which shows signs of it being an unhealthy church. The church needs to reach out and bring the gospel to the other 90 percent of the lost living in the region. The leaders of the church must design an effective training plan for the church, one that involves transitioning into a healthy and growing church.

CGVBC is a small rural church with members commuting from surrounding counties in central Georgia. Many members are commuting an average of 30-40 minutes to attend prayer meetings, Bible studies, and Sunday morning worship services. Most members are new believers, and they do not have experience in personally evangelizing the unchurched. Even though the church's baptismal numbers are low, they indicate a slight improvement over the past five years. It is evident that a significant improvement in personal evangelism is needed. Also, an effort for following up with both non-believers and the unchurched as well as with new members who desire baptism and conversion membership is essential.

The church membership consists of a diverse group of individuals, from skilled laborers to professionals. Because of the large population of small-business owners and medical and technical professionals, our outreach tends to focus on the white-collar population of both major cities—Warner Robins and Macon. Focusing our outreach in this manner results not only in growth among young married couples but also in adults in the middle-aged category. These young-to-middle-aged adults are being drawn to CGVBC through connections with our members working in the community.

As shown above, the church was very weak in personal evangelism and outreach. Even though the number of members doubled within the last five years, the conversion rate was low. First, the church did not successfully reach out to the high school and college students in the region. Second, only a few of the members of the church voluntarily took evangelism training. Third, some of the members refused to support any evangelistic events. The church tried to organize programs at least twice a year for evangelizing the community in the Christmas season and Lunar New Year, but the results did not meet expectations. Finally, several senior members made efforts to witness to their unchurched friends but saw little fruit, causing them to get discouraged. In brief, the church did not have any effective means to communicate to the unchurched in the region. All participants and leaders should get trained prior to evangelizing the lost.

### **Rationale**

Members at CGVBC need to be able to witness to unbelievers on their own. Personal evangelism eliminates the dependency on groups and partners and leaves the work of conveying the gospel message—for the purpose of conversion—solely on the individual. If people ask Christians about their faith and their beliefs, Christians should respond to them confidently and compassionately, regardless of those individuals' place in life and resistance to the gospel. While CGVBC has a few social outreach initiatives, it

could become even stronger if it were to weave more of a personal evangelistic purpose into every social outreach initiative.

CGVBC currently does not have a formal plan for training the members to personally evangelize. Individual members are encouraged to share the gospel with those they come in contact with; however, most of them do not feel comfortable doing so, and many do not know how. Often, when an opportunity is presented to share the gospel with someone, members allow the opportunity to pass, and then they call the pastor to suggest initiating contact with the person. There is a general misconception that evangelism is primarily the responsibility of the pastoral staff and those with the spiritual gift of evangelism; this concept is not taught from the pulpit.

Thus, this project seeks to accomplish the following three things: (1) to increase the participants' understanding of the biblical foundation upon which personal evangelism is built, (2) to overcome barriers to evangelism, and (3) to help the youth ministry be more effective in performing personal evangelism. First, passages such as Matthew 28:19-20 are studied in light of implementing personal evangelism. The primary step in developing an evangelistic event is to show the biblical mandate to evangelize. Second, barriers to evangelism need to be overcome. If the leaders and participants commit to growth in personal evangelism, this should mentality filter down to the members. Third, this project should help the youth ministry be more effective in doing personal evangelism. Learning to reach people on a personal level and engaging them with the gospel should be a part of the training. Teaching children and youth leaders how to personally evangelize should give them more confidence in witnessing while doing social outreach.

In sum, the church desires to reach the young adult generation that is inhabiting the community. The church has several ministry events for young people throughout the year, and it needs more confident members who are willing to personally evangelize our unchurched visitors.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to train the members at Central Georgia Vietnamese Baptist Church to personally evangelize the lost living in the surrounding Vietnamese community.

## **Goals**

This project seeks to accomplish four goals, which serve as the criteria by which the effectiveness of this project is evaluated.

1. The first goal is to assess congregation members' understanding and practices of personal evangelism.
2. The second goal is to develop a nine-week teaching series on personal evangelism.
3. The third goal is to train the participants in personal evangelism using the nine-week teaching series.
4. The fourth goal is to challenge the participants to proclaim the gospel message in our community with an affable presentation of the gospel as well as to encourage the participants to apply the acquired biblical principles and knowledge in their homes and in the church.

A specific research methodology has been created to measure the successful completion of these four goals.<sup>3</sup> This methodology is described in the following section.

## **Research Methodology**

Successful completion of this project requires the achievement of these four goals. The first goal is to assess congregation members' understanding and practices of personal evangelism. This goal would be measured by administering a church-wide survey to congregation members (see appendix 1). This goal would be considered successfully met when at least two-thirds of the church members complete the survey and the data has been analyzed, yielding a clearer picture of the participants' understanding and practices of personal evangelism in the church.

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<sup>3</sup> All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

The second goal is to develop a nine-week teaching series on personal evangelism. This goal would be measured by an expert panel who would use a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, and relevance of the teaching series (see appendix 3). This goal would be considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criteria meet or exceed the “sufficient” level.

The third goal is to train the participants in personal evangelism using the nine-week teaching series. This goal would be measured by administering a pre- and post-series questionnaire to gauge congregation members’ understanding and practices of personal evangelism (see appendix 5). This goal would be considered successfully met when a positive statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-series questionnaire scores is achieved.

The fourth goal is to challenge the participants to proclaim the gospel message in our community with an affable presentation of the gospel as well as to encourage the participants to apply the acquired biblical principles and knowledge in their homes and in the church. This would be measured as follows: (1) the participants would engage in a four-hour personal evangelism initiative within the neighborhood of CGVBC (see appendix 7); (2) the participants would fill out a covenant commitment card in which the participating families covenant to pray together, worship together in their homes, serve together in a ministry capacity at the church, and reduce their barriers between family, church, and community in personal evangelism (see appendix 9). This goal would be considered successfully met when (1) at least 70 percent of the participants complete the personal evangelism field report and (2) at least 90 percent of the participants sign the commitment card.

### **Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations**

To avoid ambiguity and confusion, it is necessary to define certain terms as they appear throughout this ministry project.



*Gospel.* The “gospel” is the joyous “good news” of salvation in Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup> While there are a number of approaches to presenting the gospel, the message itself contains four crucial elements: it is a message about (1) God and his holiness, (2) man and his sinfulness, (3) Jesus Christ and his atoning work on the cross, and (4) the summons to repentance and faith.<sup>5</sup>

*Personal evangelism.* “Personal evangelism” is directed toward a certain individual or individuals, as opposed to media evangelism, street evangelism, or mass campaigns, which are directed toward many people. When this project discusses personal evangelism, it uses the term “evangelism” to refer to the intentional method or activity of sharing the gospel with others. The emphasis here is on the actual sharing of the gospel, not just having a spiritual conversation or doing any form of pre-evangelism. For the purposes of this project, evangelism is the proclamation of the gospel to unbelievers or those who are unchurched.<sup>6</sup> On a broad level, evangelism can be defined as follows:

To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gifts of the Spirit to all who repent and believe. . . . [E]vangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God.<sup>7</sup>

*Believer.* The term “believer” is a synonym for a Christian, that is, one who believes in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.<sup>8</sup> In other words, a believer is an individual

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<sup>4</sup> Ronald F. Youngblood, ed., *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, rev. and upd. ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), s.v. “Gospel” (p. 516).

<sup>5</sup> J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 57-73.

<sup>6</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 1241.

<sup>7</sup> John R. W. Stott, ed., *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974-1989* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 20.

<sup>8</sup> George T. Kurian, ed., *Nelson's New Christian Dictionary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), s.v. “Believer.”

who has responded in genuine repentance and faith to the claims of the gospel message, thereby inviting Jesus Christ into one's life as one's personal Savior and Lord.

*Unchurched.* This project uses Thom Rainer's definition of the term "unchurched": "Unchurched are your neighbors, your coworkers whom you know well, and even your family members. . . . They have much in common with us. Many of them have your moral values. Most are not antichurch or antireligion. They are very much like you—except that they are lost without Christ."<sup>9</sup>

*Cross-cultural communication.* "Cross-cultural communication" is a concept that involves the communication of the gospel from one culture or ethnic group to another in manner and language understood clearly by recipients. To communicate clearly cross cultural differences requires an understanding of the characteristics, life-style, and language of the ethnic or cultural group to which the gospel is communicated.<sup>10</sup>

*1.5 generation.* The term "1.5 generation" refers to immigrants who come at a young age who retain their ability to speak, if not always to read and write, the ancestral language as well as Asian values and norms . . . . [They] often act as cultural brokers, regardless of whether they wish to do so, between their grandparents, parents, aunts, and uncles, on the one hand, and the younger, usually American-born members of their families, on the other.<sup>11</sup>

Two limitations applied to this project. First, the accuracy of the pre- and post-series questionnaires depended upon the willingness of the participants to answer honestly. To mitigate this limitation, the respondents were promised that their answers would remain anonymous. Second, the effectiveness of the training was limited by the consistency of the attendance of the participants. If the participants did not attend all of the teaching series, then it would be difficult to measure the helpfulness of the training.

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<sup>9</sup> Thom S. Rainer, *The Unchurched Next Door: Understanding Faith Stages as Keys to Sharing Your Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 15.

<sup>10</sup> An Van Pham, "Establishing a Language-Culture Congregation in the Savannah Baptist Association" (DMin project, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1990), 17-18.

<sup>11</sup> Sucheng Chan, *The Vietnamese American 1.5 Generation: Stories of War, Flight, and New Beginnings* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), xiv.

Four delimitations were placed on the project to keep it focused and convenient. First, most of the church members live in Houston, Bleckley, and Bibb Counties, Georgia. The implementation of the project was limited to the Vietnamese population studies of these counties. Second, while the project addresses personal evangelism in the church, the training did not address the exercise of personal evangelism in the life of the church itself during the training period. Third, the project was confined to a fourteen-week timeframe in order to give me adequate time to prepare and teach the nine-week training series plus administer the post-series questionnaire. Fourth, though personal evangelism is a biblical mandate for the entire congregation of CGVBC, this project was limited to only the participants who were actively involved during the training period.

### **Conclusion**

In brief, the biblical thoughts on personal evangelism indeed began in the heart of God. The Old Testament reveals that the origin of world missionary activity was embedded in God's call to the nation of Israel (Exod 19:6). The New Testament reminds Christians that the Old Testament's redemptive mission continues into the New Testament age (1 Pet 2:9). Christians today can still believe in a loving God who desires to reveal his glory to the nations. Personal evangelism is the essential task of this biblical truth that many Christians and the church have usually neglected. James 2:17 declares, "Faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself."<sup>12</sup> Evangelism must live not only in the minds but also in the hearts and hands of believers. Therefore, this personal evangelism training will help the members CGVBC mature in their spiritual life, contribute to the growth of the church, and—especially—live lives pleasing to God through obedience to the Great Commission (Acts 1:8).

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<sup>12</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB).

## CHAPTER 2

### THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM

This chapter focuses on the theological and biblical basis of personal evangelism by examining individual evangelistic actions in both New and Old Testaments. Separate Scriptures from the Word of God will be used to demonstrate this basis while addressing the authority, priorities, necessities, and responsibilities of personal evangelism.

#### **The Biblical Basis of Personal Evangelism**

By looking at God's mission and the great commission, one could acknowledge his plan for the redemption of mankind carried out through personal evangelism. For this study, personal evangelism is defined as the work of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with unbelievers, calling them to repent of their sins and to receive him as Lord and Savior.

#### **Personal Evangelism in the Old Testament**

Scripture discloses the concern for the lost people beginning in the Old Testament. Roland C. Leavell states that “evangelism had its beginning when a first human being rebelled against God. It means that God did something to restore the relationship.”<sup>1</sup> That clearly indicates that God's desire is to restore the relationship. There in the garden, God promised the rebellious pair, “I will put enmity between you and the

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<sup>1</sup> Roland C. Leavell, *Evangelism: Christ's Imperative Commission*, rev. Landrum P. Leavell II and Harold T. Bryson (Nashville: Broadman, 1979), 17.

woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel” (Gen 3:15). This promise of redemption has been called “the first good news, the first gospel.”<sup>2</sup> Moreover, God’s preparation for missions started in the Genesis era. He would seek redemption for humanity through one isolated individual, Abram, who was promised blessings.

Christopher Wright describes missions as “our committed participation as God’s people, at God’s invitation and command, in God’s own mission within the history of God’s world for the redemption of God’s creation.”<sup>3</sup> The scriptural foundation for understanding personal evangelism in the Old Testament is that every believer must be connected to the missions of God. Specifically, missions refer to the actions of an individual who is accomplishing the assignments. From the beginning of time, God’s mission plan is to bring salvation to all humans on earth.<sup>4</sup>

An examination of personal evangelism through an Old Testament lens begins in Genesis. For example, Genesis 12:3 is a foundational passage which speaks of Abraham’s calling. Expounding on this passage, Walter C. Kaiser describes the great commission:

The Bible actually begins with the theme of missions in the Book of Genesis and maintains that driving passion throughout the entire Old Testament and on into the New Testament. If an Old Testament “Great Commission” must be identified, then it will be Genesis 12:3—“all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you [Abraham].” This is the earliest statement of the fact that it will be God’s purpose

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<sup>2</sup> Leavell, *Evangelism*, 17.

<sup>3</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 22-23.

<sup>4</sup> Wright defines “missions” as follows: “Fundamentally, our mission (if it is biblically informed and validated) means our committed participation as God’s people, at God’s invitation and command, in God’s own mission within the history of God’s world for the redemption of God’s creation.” Wright, *The Mission of God*, 22-23. Wright adds, “That is how I usually answer when I am asked how I would define *mission*. Our mission flows from and participates in the mission of God . . . Generally speaking, I will use the term *mission* in its more general sense of a long-term purpose or goal that is to be achieved through proximate objectives and planned actions. Within such a broad mission (as applied to any group or enterprise), there is room for subordinate missions, in the sense of specific tasks assigned to a person or group that are to be accomplished as steps toward the wider mission” (23).

and plan to see that the message of his grace and blessing comes to every person on planet earth.<sup>5</sup>

This theme of missions is found throughout the Old Testament: The Messiah would restore the people of God and through him nations would receive salvation. Hence, an Abrahamic promise is the start of personal evangelism in the Old Testament.

More passages reveal the personal evangelism that God uses to reach Gentiles in the Old Testament. Indeed, he included all men in the promises given to Abraham. He called individuals to practice personal evangelism in the Old Testament. As a result, there are many Old Testament examples of Gentiles converted, showing they were included in God's promise to Abraham. This section explores a few cases in which Gentiles benefited from the missions.

God's awareness of and concern for all people is manifested broadly through the Old Testament Scriptures. Bryant W. Hicks comments,

God is the great primal missionary. It is from his heart of care and concern that all missions emphasis and understanding spring forth. His example serves to generate a response in his people. He cared for Israel when they were sojourners in Egypt, so now the Israelites are to care for and even love the sojourners in their midst, Yahweh was not just aware of all creation but also had a universal concern for that creation.<sup>6</sup>

The first example is seen in the book of Jonah. According to Kaiser, "It may be the most missionary book in the entire Bible."<sup>7</sup> It is the account of a man (Jonah) who was sent to preach in the capital city of Assyria, Nineveh. Jonah tried to escape this mission. God brought him back and sent him to Nineveh to be his witness to save the wicked. Walter C. Kaiser also states,

Jonah . . . lies in the fact that the special work he had to do (against this almost unbounded evil in Assyria) was a sign to Israel of the mind of God. It consisted of a

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<sup>5</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 7.

<sup>6</sup> Bryant W. Hicks, "Old Testament Foundations for Missions," in *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, and Justice Anderson (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 55.

<sup>7</sup> Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 65.

work that was being committed to this ambassador to a people who were clearly outside the territory of Israel but who likewise needed to be subjected to the call for moral rectitude and godliness.<sup>8</sup>

God called Jonah to go to Nineveh and warn the people that they were going to be destroyed by God. Jonah finally preached the message of judgment which affected the whole city, and people showing signs of repentance. As a result, Nineveh was spared.

Another example is found in Naaman who is one of the Old Testament cases of Gentile conversion. Among the stories associated with the prophet Elisha, 2 Kings 5:1-19 contains one of the most highly developed plots with the largest number of characters.<sup>9</sup> Also, it is unusual because it credits an unnamed Jewish maid as being the key witness to a commander of a foreign army in Syria. In 2 Kings 5:2-3, she is described as “a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman’s wife. She said to her mistress, I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.”

Naaman then goes to his king and relates what the young captive has said. Then he goes down and dips himself in the Jordan seven times, according to the saying of the man of God. Consequently, his flesh becomes like a child’s flesh, and “he was clean” (2 Kgs 5:15). Having been healed so miraculously, Naaman, this mighty commander, comes to Israel and confesses, “There is no God in all the world except in Israel” (2 Kgs 5:15). He realizes that Yahweh is God of all the earth (Isa 54:5), and not just of the nation of Israel.

Commenting on the Gentile believers, Kaiser states,

Of course, not everything is told us about the faith of Melchizedek, Jethro, or Naaman. The argument is that they all put their trust in the same Christ mentioned in the New Testament under the Old Testament terms of “seed,” “Man of Promise,” “Star,” “Rock,” or the like. It is clear that the mission of God is not exclusively

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<sup>8</sup> Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 70.

<sup>9</sup> Walter A. Maier III, “The Healing of Naaman in Missiological Perspective,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (July 1997): 187.

Jewish in the Old Testament. While Israel remains at the center of the story, there was a globalization of the gospel in view.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, the mission of God shows the foundation for personal evangelism within the context of the old covenant. Unquestionably, God already has a plan for missions and evangelism in the Old Testament. His plan is to provide salvation for all people and this salvation is carried out in the Old Testament through personal evangelism. In brief, the stories of Jonah and Naaman thereby present a biblical perspective that the mission of God begins in the Old Testament.

### **Personal Evangelism in New Testament**

The mission of God continues within the pages of the New Testament. It begins with the Four Gospels followed by Acts that record the birth of the church and the spread of the gospel. These books provide many evangelistic passages that speak to the importance of personal evangelism and the believer's responsibility. Personal evangelism requires a remarkably close and personal approach to engaging unbelievers.

G. William Schweer assesses personal evangelism as “the Spirit led person-to-person communication of the gospel of the kingdom by one or more Christians in such a way or ways that the individual recipient has a valid opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and become a responsible member of his church.”<sup>11</sup> For having this opportunity, personal evangelism must be a part of every believer’s spiritual walk because it is his or her responsibility to evangelize.

In particular, the New Testament explains the importance of personal evangelism. Although Jesus travels with his twelve disciples and the crowd, he continues to model reaching individuals on a more personal level. Schweer writes, “The most powerful biblical impetus to personal evangelism is Jesus’ own model. As a personal

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<sup>10</sup> Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament*, 48.

<sup>11</sup> G. William Schweer, *Personal Evangelism for Today* (Nashville: Broadman, 1984), 15.



evangelist, he has no peer. He is the supreme teacher and example. His model is the pattern and design every Christian must strive to imitate. He was not simply ‘a’ model, he is ‘the’ model.”<sup>12</sup>

The sayings and acts of the Lord Jesus show that personal evangelism, reaching out to people at every level of society, is important. Afterward, it also must be very important to Christian’s point of view. John Mark Terry comments about Jesus’s model of personal evangelism, saying,

Jesus’ evangelism was personal in that He dealt with people personally. He did not send a proxy; He came Himself. Jesus’ ministry was incarnational. He truly was God in the flesh (John 1:14), and He identified Himself with humanity. Jesus lived as a person. He walked, talked, ate, slept, laughed, and cried with people. He becomes one with humanity. Jesus could evangelize people because He understood them and spoke their language. Jesus’ evangelism was personal also because He dealt with people as individuals. His method was not “one size fits all”; instead, He varied His approach according to the needs of persons and their level of understanding.<sup>13</sup>

During his ministry, Jesus evangelized people in all types of places and at all times of the day. He met Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46) and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:5) beside the road, and he called Peter (Matt 4:18) and John beside the sea (Matt 4:21). He witnessed to the woman at the well at noon (John 4:7) and to Nicodemus at night (John 3:2). Jesus even witnessed to the thief on the cross (Luke 23:43). Wherever he went and whenever he could, Jesus presented the gospel. Jesus began with people where they were and Jesus’s approach with Nicodemus (John 3) was very different from his approach with the woman at the well (John 4). He challenged the rich young ruler (Matt 19), but he spoke gently to the woman taken in adultery (John 8).

Clearly, Jesus thinks highly of personal evangelism and knows that it is foundational to his ministry. C. E. Autrey agrees: “Personal evangelism is in the center of

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<sup>12</sup> Schweer, *Personal Evangelism for Today*, 73

<sup>13</sup> John Mark Terry, *Evangelism: A Concise History* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 1994), 6.

the gospel preaching of Christ.”<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the Lord Jesus begins his ministry by successfully preaching the gospel to his first disciple, Andrew. Right away, Andrew finds his brother Simon and tells him. Andrew personally witnesses the Lord Jesus Christ to another individual, and by so doing, models Jesus, whose focus is to make disciples that evangelize to make more disciples. Terry writes, “Simon and Andrew made their living catching fish and bringing them to market. Jesus call[s] them to the task of catching persons and bringing them into the kingdom of God.”<sup>15</sup>

In addition, Jesus personally evangelizes and saves the lost in his interactions with Nicodemus (John 3:1-21) and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). This model of personal evangelism is also found in the Gospel of John (John 4:6-10). During Jesus’s visit to Samaria, when he was alone, he took the opportunity to speak the gospel to a woman with an unhealthy lifestyle. The apostle John records,

And Jacob’s well was there. So, Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, Give Me a drink. For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Therefore, the Samaritan woman said to Him, How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am Samaritan (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water. (John 4:6-10)

Jesus’s approach to personal evangelism is to first identify the life giver and then to offer God’s gift. According to Raymond E. Brown, “clearly the living water is not Jesus Himself but something spiritual itself that he offers to believers who can recognize God’s gift.”<sup>16</sup> John also records that Jesus is the gift that leads to eternal life.

This woman’s personal evangelism affects the people of the city. John further records, “From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of

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<sup>14</sup> C. E. Autrey, *New Testament Evangelism* (Philadelphia: Hudson, 1946), 30.

<sup>15</sup> John Mark Terry, *Church Evangelism: Basic Principles, Diverse Models* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 1997), 8.

<sup>16</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John 1-12*, Anchor Bible, vol. 29 (Garden City, NY: Anchor Bible, 1966), 178.

the woman who testified, He told me all the things that I [have] done. So, when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. Many more believed because of His word” (John 4:39-41).

Jesus entrusted the disciples he sent. The purpose of the commission is to go out and make more disciples. Carrying out the witness of Jesus Christ is the ultimate duty of the disciple. It is also the means of evangelism and church growth. John Stott writes, “Evangelism can of course take on a different form as personal evangelism that has had impeccable precedents. It is still our duty, when the opportunity is given and in a spirit of humility, to share Christ with those of our relatives, friends, neighbors, and colleagues who do not yet know him.”<sup>17</sup>

In brief, the pattern of personal evangelism biblically is known from the Old and New Testaments. The people of God who are called out of the world to live a holy life by God’s grace are the chosen people that will be instrumental in soul-winning in this world. While believers are citizens of the heavenly kingdom, they are called to be a blessing to unbelievers in this world through personal evangelism so that the world finds salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **The Theological Basis of Personal Evangelism**

The New Testament unquestionably establishes the theological basis of personal evangelism that starts from the mission of God and continues into the Great Commission. Luke 5:1-11 tells about one of the first lessons Christ teaches his disciples concerning evangelism. The Lord Jesus Christ teaches them to catch men, using the metaphor of catching fish. After an entire night of fishing with no success, Christ says to Peter, “put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch” (Luke 5:4). Any fisherman acquainted with the sea understands that if you do not catch fish at night, you

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<sup>17</sup> John Stott, *The Living Church: Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2007), 48.

might as well settle for no fish. Despite this notion, Peter answers, “Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say [and] let down the nets” (Luke 5:5). Thereafter, the disciples miraculously catch a net-breaking load of fish, and Jesus says, “Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men” (Luke 5:10). This passage is the starting point for personal evangelism.

### **The Authority of Personal Evangelism**

Personal evangelism is mandated for all believers. The theological basis for this mandate is seen in the New Testament. For instance, the promise of salvation is continually addressed throughout the New Testament as God works through Abraham’s descendants to bring the Savior into the world in “the fullness of time” (Gal 4:4). Through this Savior, people are forgiven for their sins, and the created order will be restored as a new heaven and a new earth (Rev 21:1). Such is the good news: God loves sinners and sent Jesus to die on a cross as a sacrifice for their sins (John 3:16). Jesus’s death, burial, and resurrection reveal that “he alone has the power to overcome the broken relationship between the Creator and the creation.”<sup>18</sup> The gospel is about God’s Word bringing salvation to fallen humanity.

God authorizes the Great Commission to spread the gospel. The Great Commission has been identified as Matthew 28:19-20, and the foundation of Commission is presented in verse 18: “all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” John MacArthur comments on the necessity of verse 18, stating, “Jesus first established His absolute, pervasive authority, because otherwise the command would have seemed hopelessly impossible for the disciples to fulfill, and they might have ignored it.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, the Great Commission is the plan of God to reach the nations with his message of

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<sup>18</sup> J. D. Payne, *Evangelism: A Biblical Response to Today’s Questions* (Colorado Springs: Biblica, 2011), 5.

<sup>19</sup> John MacArthur, *Matthew 24-28, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1989), 339.

salvation. The authority of Jesus Christ in the Great Commission should be the motivation for obedience to the command; also, it should be used as a warning if disregarding it. In this regard, David Platt suggests believers to reach the lost by reminding them that they “are the plan of God and there is not a plan B.”<sup>20</sup> With this statement, Platt questions them to recognize one possible point of failure that is the lack of obeying God.

The Lord Jesus, who was without sin, took our sin on himself to be a sacrifice on our behalf. He took our sin and gave us his own holiness. According to J. D. Payne, “This good news we share with others is not only about matters related to life in heaven. This good news includes the fact that we can enter into a personal relationship with the God of universe.”<sup>21</sup> J. I. Packer adds, “Evangelism is just preaching the gospel, the evangel. It is a work of communication in which Christians make themselves mouthpieces for God’s message of mercy to sinners.”<sup>22</sup> This also indicated that personal evangelism is “simply a communication of the gospel of Lord Jesus with the desired outcome of seeing others follow Him as faithful disciples in the local church.”<sup>23</sup> After the resurrection, the Lord Jesus Christ clearly gave his command to his disciples to continue his mission in the world. On a mountain in Galilee, he gave the Great Commission to not only the eleven disciples but also to the whole church, numbering then about “500 brethren” (1 Cor 15:6). He commands the Great Commission to become the authority of personal evangelism.

The authority of personal evangelism also stems from the Father. The Lord Jesus Christ clearly communicates that Christians are individuals who are under authority. Being under the dominion of Christ, believers realize the origin of Jesus’s

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<sup>20</sup> David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2010), 156.

<sup>21</sup> Payne, *Evangelism*, 11.

<sup>22</sup> J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1961), 41.

<sup>23</sup> Payne, *Evangelism*, 1.

authority is the Father. Additionally, Jesus does not receive dominion by self-designation but from the heavenly Father, which is clear when he states in Matthew 28:18 that “all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” Surely, the Lord Jesus Christ shows not only to the reality of his authority but also to its source.

The mandate of personal evangelism is given to all believers based on the authority of Christ. He has received all authority in both heaven and earth. Also, he has the right to command whatever he will of his followers. Thus, his followers are to obey his command and go into the world to declare the gospel to the world. The believers will not accomplish the commission because it will be accomplished by Christ working through them.

Further agreeing that authority is from the Father, Eugene Boring states that “the basis for the words of commission is the claim of the risen Jesus that all authority has been given to him by God.”<sup>24</sup> When Jesus declares the Great Commission to his disciples (Matt 28:16-20), he is signaling the onset of the last days—“the expansion of the gospel to the ends of the earth means that God has indeed granted Jesus the nations as his inheritance.”<sup>25</sup> Jesus’s words do not only declare the war ahead, for they also share that the victory is secure. Thus, a believer must remember that the amplifying conduit of God is not an option, but a mandate.

Authority in personal evangelism is also a fulfillment of prophecy. A witness must share the gospel under this authority. Craig Keener writes about the authority of Christ, that is the believers must recognize that “because Jesus has all authority, because he is king in the kingdom of God, his disciples must carry on the mission of teaching the

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<sup>24</sup> Eugene Boring, *The Gospel of Matthew*, in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 8, *Matthew-Mark*, edited by Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 503.

<sup>25</sup> Russell Moore, “A Theology of the Great Commission,” in *The Challenge of the Great Commission: Essays on God’s Mandate for the Local Church*, ed. Chuck Lawless and Thom Rainer (St. Louis: Pinnacle, 2005), 49.

kingdom.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, in Christ’s authority, soul winners find hope, strength, and encouragement due to his victory.

Some believers claim that they are not called to go to the unreached people and share the message of Christ. Some Christians attempt to fulfill the Great Commission through the financial support of missions due to misunderstanding the term “go.” Actually, the focus does not need to be on leaving one’s current place and moving to a new ministry setting, rather the basis of “go” is to evangelize as one goes throughout daily life. Craig Blomberg, “To ‘make disciples of all nations’ does require many people to leave their homeland, but Jesus’ main focus remains on the task of all believers to duplicate themselves wherever they may be.”<sup>27</sup>

The Lord Jesus empowers each believer with the authority to engage in personal evangelism. Indeed, Jesus’s power and absolute sovereignty over heaven and earth form a platform of universal authority from which he can issue his Great Commission. This directive mandates all believers to engage in personal evangelism grounded in his authority.

### **The Necessity of Personal Evangelism**

The Bible is clear on the necessity of personal evangelism and sharing one’s faith for the purpose of conversion. Personal evangelism is not optional within Christianity. Each believer has received a direct command to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). Christians must be comfortable to share their faith beyond their ministries, the walls of their respective churches, and their social Christian functions. There are three reasons why personal evangelism is necessary for believers when reaching out to unbelievers.

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<sup>26</sup> Craig Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 718.

<sup>27</sup> Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 431.

First, personal evangelism is theologically necessary because Christ alone is salvation. Schweer writes, “The Scriptures represent Christ to be the only God-given means of salvation.”<sup>28</sup> Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life that individuals need in order for them to endure challenges and weather any situation (John 14:6). Schweer adds, “Jesus presents an individual’s relationship to Him as a matter of life or death (John 3:18), and He is concerned not only that people might die without Him but also that they might live without Him.”<sup>29</sup> Often, Christians are often more concerned about a person’s physical nourishments, mental state, and material needs. Even though the physical concerns are important, living in the Lord Jesus Christ and having a relationship with him is critical, even amidst challenging physical conditions. Therefore, all outreach ministries should begin with a focus on personal conversion experiences (John 4:29).

Second, personal evangelism is ethically necessary because, for people of faith, it is simply the right thing to do. Schweer concurs:

If the gospel is all that the Bible claims it is, then those who believe it know that this is true. Something of such value, that we received as a free gift, must not be selfishly grasped but shared as widely as possible. Also, sharing the good news of the gospel during social outreach is not done simply because it is right, but because it is the ethical response of the transforming love of Christ in the light of overwhelming needs.<sup>30</sup>

The Lord Jesus Christ demonstrates his personal love and compassion to sinners (John 3:1-22) by feeding the hungry (Luke 9:10-17) and helping the helpless (2 Cor 5:21). In his ministry on earth, Jesus evangelized people. Jesus sought people. For example, in Luke 19, Jesus seeks Zacchaeus. Jesus intentionally sets out to meet Zacchaeus and even makes an appointment to meet him at the tax collector’s house. He meets Zacchaeus where he is while sitting in a tree (v. 5). In this action, Jesus identifies

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<sup>28</sup> Schweer, *Personal Evangelism for Today*, 23.

<sup>29</sup> Schweer, *Personal Evangelism for Today*, 24.

<sup>30</sup> Schweer, *Personal Evangelism for Today*, 26.



with a sinner, regardless of the consequences (v. 7). Further, Jesus convicts Zacchaeus of his sin. This account shows that Jesus does not just meet sinners; he seeks to *save* them (vv. 9-10). Thus, Jesus is approachable. This quality is seen in John 3, when Nicodemus approaches Jesus by night. Here, Nicodemus is searching for truth (v. 2), and Jesus's reply is direct. He boldly confronts Nicodemus (v. 5). So, Christians are ethically mandated to spread the love of Christ and give opportunities to non-believers to change their lives and live anew in Christ (2 Cor 5:17).

Third, personal evangelism is the best hope for all. It is practically necessary because a transformed person represents the hope of a just society (Eph 2:14-18).

Schweer asserts,

Personal evangelism is the essential success of most other types of evangelism and social outreach. Few Christians realize the crucial role that personal evangelism plays in evangelistic efforts called by other names. It is without reason that well planned, city-wide campaigns are preceded by large efforts in lay-witness training, personal prayer lists, and organized opportunities for visitation.<sup>31</sup>

Besides, Jesus intentionally engaged people personally whenever possible. Terry writes, "Jesus' evangelistic method was personal in that He dealt with people personally . . . and as individuals. His method is not one-size-fit-all. Instead, He varied His approach according to the needs of persons and their level of understanding."<sup>32</sup> According to Leighton Ford, there are "thirty-five examples of Jesus doing personal evangelism in the Gospels."<sup>33</sup> Within these examples, readers of the Bible see that Jesus spends the majority of his three years in ministry going to the people. He does not build a monastery or headquarters and have the people come to him, but he goes directly to the people. This direct interaction is a key principle that the church needs to relearn and put into practice when engaging in evangelism. Indeed, Jesus models and teaches that

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<sup>31</sup> Schweer, *Personal Evangelism for Today*, 27.

<sup>32</sup> Terry, *Evangelism*, 6.

<sup>33</sup> Leighton Ford, *The Christian Persuader* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 63.

believers can reach non-believers one person at a time. Jesus's model is effective because it shows that he dealt with individuals differently, meeting each one at his or her level of understanding.<sup>34</sup>

Clearly, a personal, one-on-one contact with non-believers and unchurched individuals will play an instrumental role for the majority of Christian converts;<sup>35</sup> also, the Scriptures detail that Jesus modeled the urgent necessity to personally witness to non-believers by meeting them where they are (John 4:16-26). Thus, personal evangelism during outreach initiatives is a clear necessity and must be evident in the life of the believer. Effective personal evangelism during outreach is built upon the theology revealed in Scripture that records Jesus's actions.

### **The Priority of Personal Evangelism**

Christians are to bring people who repent and believe in Christ as their Savior into fellowship in the church. This gives them the privileges and responsibilities of family members by baptizing, training, guiding, and pointing them toward an environment in which they can grow spiritually. Expanding the family of God must be the priority for personal evangelism. Delos Miles reminds believers of the place of evangelism in the plan of God: "Evangelism is not an isolated side show of history. On the contrary, it is the main event!"<sup>36</sup> It is truly to grow the family of Christ, and yet there are other noble motives for evangelism. The priority and motivation for personal evangelism are expressed in the Bible as a desire for obedience, a love for God, and a love for the lost.

First, the priority of personal evangelism is a desire for obedience. Christ commands believers to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19). The book of Acts

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<sup>34</sup> Terry, *Evangelism*, 6.

<sup>35</sup> Schweer, *Personal Evangelism for Today*, 27.

<sup>36</sup> Delos Miles, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1983), 138.

reveals that Christ's disciples are scattered about the land, preaching the name of Christ wherever they are and encouraging each other in the act. By so doing, they obey the call on their lives as Christians. They even suffer for what they preach, and yet they continue to spread the good news. Although today most believers are not persecuted in the same ways as the disciples, current believers still suffer for proclaiming the truth of Christ. Witnessing to those who have no desire to hear the message usually causes fears in believers. One of their fears is that non-believers will reject the witness rather than receive it. However, believers must continue to witness because they must be obedient. Mark Dever comments on this high level of obedience by writing,

Paul refers to his own compulsion to preach the gospel. Preaching the gospel was an obligation he had been given, as he wrote to Roman church: "both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to foolish people, I am a debtor" (Rom 1:14). To evangelize was to obey. And the command wasn't only given to these original disciples. One of the clearest in the New Testament where we find the command to evangelize is 1 Peter. In chapter 3, Peter commands young Christians to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks them a reason of the hope that is in them with meekness and fear (1 Pet 3:15a).<sup>37</sup>

Hence, obeying Jesus is part of setting him apart as Lord. With Jesus at the helm, a believer is commanded to share Christ's good news with others.

Second, Alvin Reid emphasizes that personal evangelism is a priority for believers because of a love for the lost, which is established because God desires that people be saved (Luke 1:5; 2 Pet 3:9).<sup>38</sup> Dever adds, God's passion for the lost is the reason that believers share the gospel.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, the message of evangelism is urgent, yet too few believers consistently share their faith. Reid also points out that evangelism must become a priority because it is God's priority. He states, "One need only to turn to

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<sup>37</sup> Mark Dever, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 96.

<sup>38</sup> Alvin L. Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 15.

<sup>39</sup> Dever, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism*, 98.

John 3:16 to see that our Father in heaven wants lost people to be saved. The need of a lost world resulted in the death of the Son of God.”<sup>40</sup>

Thus, it is a godly, Christ-like focus to have compassion and mercy on those in need. Of God himself, Scripture says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). If God loves in this way, believers should also love those who are lost. The love for the lost should be driven by the fact that believers have already been the objects of His saving love. Indeed, the Lord Jesus models this love: “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd” (Matt 9:36). Such compassion should mark believers’ lives and motivate them to engage in personal evangelism.<sup>41</sup>

If God has loved his people so tremendously that he chooses them for his own, then they, too, ought to love the lost. After all, they were once lost too. Believers need compassionate hearts for those who have yet to come into the body of Christ. The gospel is essential to understanding this need for compassion, as it moves believers to see God’s love not only for themselves but for non-Christians as well. The gospel is indeed good news, and believers should love to tell it to those who need it. Therefore, being instructed by God’s own love, the gospel helps believers love the lost. Personal evangelism hinges on the needs of the lost as well as on Christ’s sacrifice. Evangelism is a duty of the Christian that is borne out of love for others.

Third, a love for God also makes personal evangelism a priority. The ultimate motivator for proclaiming the gospel should be believers’ love for God. This love compels believers to see him glorified and praised and to tell of his great love to those who need to hear it. Additionally, believers bring God glory by speaking the truth about

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<sup>40</sup> Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 16.

<sup>41</sup> Dever, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism*, 99.

him to his creation. Although personal evangelism is not the only way that believers can bring glory to God, it is the main way that he has given Christians. Furthermore, it is not a means for bringing him glory eternally in heaven.<sup>42</sup>

Motivating forces for believers' lives must be personal evangelism, a love for God, and the life of the church. At this time, God was doing a marvelous work among his people. The church was faithfully witnessing, and God was giving the increase (1 Cor 3:6). Clearly, the early church knew the seriousness of Jesus's command "to go make disciples" (Matt 28:19). One of the reasons the church continues to exist is evangelism. Today, believers must go into the world with the good news of Jesus Christ. The gospel is good news, and good news is meant to be shared. Furthermore, Christ has commanded the church to be his witnesses of this good news (Acts 1:8). Chuck Lawless writes that "evangelism is itself a spiritual battle, as we take the gospel of light into the kingdom of darkness."<sup>43</sup> As a result, believers should expect opposition and determine to remain faithful in sharing Christ.<sup>44</sup>

Therefore, for believers, personal evangelism should be a God-centered priority, motivated by love for him and for the lost. Moreover, personal evangelism is both needed and expected. Believers must know that God holds all the power to change a person. He can use anyone, anywhere, and anytime he desires in order to draw others to himself. Believers are the messengers, but God is the Soul Changer. For these reasons, personal evangelism is the most critical priority in the lives of believers.

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<sup>42</sup> Dever, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism*, 101.

<sup>43</sup> Chuck Lawless, *Disciplined Warriors: Growing Healthy Churches That Are Equipped for Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 83.

<sup>44</sup> Lawless, *Disciplined Warriors*, 84.

## **The Accountability of Personal Evangelism**

Accountability is when people challenge one another to grow. Believers should hold one another accountable in the task of carrying out the Great Commission.

Accountability is a crucial part of personal evangelism for a number of reasons.

First, accountability is crucial not only because it brings believers together for the purpose of growth but also because it assists them in seeking the leadership of God. Disciples who truly fulfill the command of the Great Commission surrounding themselves with other soul winners. While walking together in accountability, believers must recognize that soul-winning is a task that should be fulfilled through the unity and functionality of the body. Clearly, soul winners must exist in harmony with one another for the sake of encouragement and responsibility.

The book of Acts presents many examples of the accountability of believers. Autrey has suggested that “personal witnessing was the normal activity of all Christians in the first century.”<sup>45</sup> Also, in the book of Hebrews, the author indicates that disciples must encourage one another in the task of obedience to the Great Commission. The author of Hebrews writes, “And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near” (Heb 10:24-25). Reid also presents the importance of accountability when he states, “Our own sense of gratitude for the witness of others should encourage us to have that same impact in the lives of others. The Lord warned the prophet Ezekiel that he was accountable to warn others of their sin (Ezek 33:8).”<sup>46</sup>

Second, accountability is also crucial to evangelism because it is part of the Great Commission passage found in the Gospel of John. John records the ministry and

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<sup>45</sup> C. E. Autrey, *Evangelism in the Acts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1964), 26.

<sup>46</sup> Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 19.

words of Jesus by writing the following command: “Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you’” (John 20:21). In this verse, Jesus is commissioning ambassadors and soul winners for the kingdom. He is also commanding the accountability on his disciples to follow the example that he has set as their teacher. In his earlier ministry, Christ sent the disciples out to gain experience and to put into practice all that they were seeing and learning from him.

Truly, the Lord Jesus Christ set an example to believers who are called to follow, for he modeled the way life should be lived. However, Jesus realized he not only needed to model how to teach and how to live; he also needed to establish a plan of succession because he recognized the shortness of his time on earth, and he would soon depart leaving the ministry in the disciples’ hands. The plan of succession Christ established allows believers to become examples for others, thereby creating new individuals who will take over the ministry in due time. Then, the Great Commission given to believers creates a continuous succession of kingdom laborers.

Furthermore, regarding the reality, the church should define its task in terms of its understanding of Jesus’s task. Any other activity is unproductive if it does not support the work of the kingdom. Neglecting the task to which God has called Christians is sin. Elmer Towns comments,

Jesus commissioned his disciples to preach the Gospel and reminded them of the eternal consequences of their actions. When they led others to Christ, they were remitting sin in that the new convert was being forgiven in heaven. When they failed to obey this commission, they were retaining sin because others were not given the opportunity to trust Christ as Savior.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, it is obvious that individual believers are commissioned by God to be his ambassadors to the world. If followers of God fail in this task, then they fall into the sins

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<sup>47</sup> Elmer Towns, *The Gospel of John: Believe and Live*, Twenty-First Century Biblical Commentary Series (Chattanooga, TN: AMG, 2002), 206.

of not sharing the love of Christ with the nations and neglecting the accountability to develop individuals who will continue to carry out the task.

Third, personal evangelism and accountability also coincide because the New Testament, and especially the Gospels, illustrate the personal acts of Jesus through his own personal evangelism. In Luke 19, Jesus personally seeks Zacchaeus to save him, and in John 3, Jesus directly and boldly confronts Nicodemus. These encounters show how Christians are called to reach out to individuals at various levels of life, no matter if they have different political positions and theological positions. Richard Phillips comments on the call of the Great Commission (Matt 28:16-20): “Furthermore, according to the four gospels of the New Testament, the Christian faith is designed to be shared with others.”<sup>48</sup> Undeniably, believers are personally accountable to go and declare the gospel to the lost.

A number of examples of personal evangelism that follow Jesus’s model are demonstrated in the book of Acts. For example, the apostles used the Old Testament to testify that Jesus was the fulfillment of prophecies made to the nation of Israel concerning the coming Messiah. Reid writes,

Notice the witness of Philip to the eunuch (Acts 8), Peter witnessed to Cornelius (Acts 10), and Paul witnessed to the proconsul (Acts 13). While personal evangelism may seem like an exception today, not a rule; in Acts, the opposite was true. The Great Commission has experienced a great reversal. Therefore, believers must recapture a commitment to aggressive, winsome, unashamed personal evangelism.<sup>49</sup>

He continues on Paul’s accountability regarding to personal evangelism:

Paul consistently shared his faith with individuals. In Acts 13, we read of his witness to the proconsul. Acts 16 also tells of Paul’s witness to the jailer at Philippi. Later, Paul shared personally with Agrippa (Acts 25:23-27). In Paul’s life, as in any church or individual Christian, personal evangelism must be the basis upon which all other methods of evangelizing are developed.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Richard Phillips, *Jesus the Evangelist: Learning to Share the Gospel from the Book* (Orlando: Reformation Trust, 2007), 1.

<sup>49</sup> Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 46.

<sup>50</sup> Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 36.



So, within a healthy church, as believers and members of the fellowship begin to pray for one another and meet each other's needs, accountability occurs. This transformation happens as relationships grow and disciples begin to share, encourage, and challenge each other to fulfill the command given by Christ to be soul winners. The key to forming these strong relationships is that the journey cannot be traveled alone; believers must walk together as a body.

### **Conclusion**

The eternal plan of God is to provide salvation for all men and his salvation is not limited to any particular group of people. In fact, God accomplishes this mission through a globalization of the gospel, which is a foundational element for personal evangelism within the context of the Old Covenant. The New Testament, established on the mission of God as disclosed in the Old Testament, further iterates the significance of personal evangelism through models given by the Lord Jesus Christ that also show how to conduct the Christian life. Indeed, Jesus's earthly ministry is a model of personal evangelism. He demonstrated an evangelistic passion and showed unusual compassion for people, thereby practicing personal evangelism. Many accounts in the Gospels of Jesus's personal evangelism demonstrate these truths.

Moreover, the excellence of Jesus's model is seen in his ability to adapt his presentation to different audiences. He was sensitive to his Father's leadership while being urgent and persistent. Following his model, the early church thrived through theological bases of authority, necessity, priority, and accountability, all of which should be accomplished in personal evangelism. Notably, whenever the believers bear witness to what Christ has done in their lives, they follow the model established by Jesus, his disciples, and the first church. In brief, a theological model for evangelistic living is presented with three foci: saying the Word, doing the Word, and being the Word. These

give the great promise that personal evangelism has the potential to greatly expand the earthly church and, subsequently, the Lord's eternal kingdom.

CHAPTER 3  
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES  
OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM

This chapter presents theoretical and practical issues encompassing personal evangelism among the Vietnamese people. The goal is to identify the effective tools and methods available for training members of Central Georgia Vietnamese Baptist Church (CGVBC) to do personal evangelism. This chapter also addresses the matters in religion and history relating to personal evangelism that will help trainees to establish a greater knowledge base concerning evangelism, discusses common barriers to evangelism, and explores spiritual warfare with regard to evangelism.

**Theoretical Issues of Personal Evangelism**

As Everett Rogers and Thomas Steinfatt note, culture is “stored in individual human beings, in the form of their beliefs, attitudes, and values,” and, therefore, it “influences the perceptions and behaviors of the individuals . . . through beliefs, values, and norms.”<sup>1</sup> Consequently, believers must have a working knowledge of the culture they are serving. This knowledge will greatly equip them to meaningfully and effectively communicate God’s Word to non-believers.

Culture could be broadly defined as a shared way of life that includes values, beliefs, and norms transmitted within a particular society from generation to generation.<sup>2</sup> Patty Lane writes, “God’s truths do not vary from culture to culture. However, their

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<sup>1</sup> Everett M. Rogers and Thomas M. Steinfatt, *Intercultural Communication* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1999), 79-82.

<sup>2</sup> Raymond Scupin, *Race and Ethnicity: The United States and the World*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), 69.

expression and communication within a particular culture will be shaped and influenced by that culture . . . . The truth did not change, but the method of expressing that eternal truth did change. Biblical principles are universal, but when applied in a specific culture, they will reflect the values and priorities of that culture.”<sup>3</sup> Lane adds,

To understand and apply the Bible one must see it within the framework of its culture. This is the basic principle of hermeneutics, a fundamental course of theological training. One need not be a theologian, however, to recognize how important understanding the cultural context of Scripture is in grasping its true meaning.<sup>4</sup>

Two aspects of culture that believers face when doing personal evangelism are the religion and history of people. On the need to understand others for reasons of personal evangelism, An Van Pham explains that one who wants to minister to the language-culture people must know their culture.<sup>5</sup> The goal is to understand their religious practices and their background in order to help believers to communicate the love of God to non-believers through personal evangelism.

### **Different Religions of the Vietnamese People**

Stanley Inouye states that religion and culture are so closely intertwined within Eastern and Western cultures that most people of Asian ancestry view becoming a Christian as not only a conversion of faith but also a conversion of culture.<sup>6</sup> To clearly communicate to people in either culture, believers need to learn distinctive cultural values and look for ways to best communicate the gospel to them. The goal is to introduce them to “heavenly citizenship” while understanding the motives and desires that drive their

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<sup>3</sup> Patty Lane, *A Beginner’s Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multicultural World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 136.

<sup>4</sup> Lane, *A Beginner’s Guide to Crossing Cultures*, 140.

<sup>5</sup> An Van Pham, “Establishing a Language-Culture Congregation in the Savannah Baptist Association” (DMin project, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1990), 68.

<sup>6</sup> Stanley K. Inouye, “Asian,” in *The Complete Evangelism Guidebook: Expert Advice on Reaching Others for Christ*, ed. Scott Dawson, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008), 267.

cultural outlook as well as identifying cultural differences. This collective understanding will help believers minister to people of other cultures more effectively.

Religion affects people's cultural life in many ways. Whether there are people who have never practiced religion or those who claim to follow a particular religion, most people will interact with religious beliefs in some form. Perhaps the interaction begins with a friend or family member, in everyday conversations with one's neighbor, in an interaction in which people discuss their respective beliefs, or when someone defends one's views after hearing global conflicts related to one's religious beliefs. Religion also can affect specific personal habits. A person's beliefs and practices can affect an entire community, region, or nation—and vice versa.

There are three major religions directly affecting the Vietnamese people and influencing the Christians living in the region: Buddhism, Confucianism, and Roman Catholicism.

### *Buddhism*

The founder of Buddhism was Siddhartha Gautama, who became known as the Buddha. Buddhism was soon adopted by most of the people in India, reaching its zenith of popularity during the reign of Emperor Asoka from 273 to 232 BC. In the tenth century, Islamic armies swept across India, persecuting Buddhists because they could not tolerate Buddhism as a rival faith. Thereafter, Buddhism was soon eliminated from the country where it began. Buddhists regard the United States as a prime mission field, and the number of professing Buddhists here are growing rapidly due to surges in Asian immigration. Along with other Eastern religions, Buddhism is influencing the New Age movement. Certainly, Buddhist growth is benefiting from the rapid growth of New Age thought in American life.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> North American Mission Board, "Buddhism," March 30, 2016, <https://www.namb.net/apologetics/resource/buddhism/>.

According to Daniel Heimbach and Vic Carpenter, Buddhism is an impersonal religion of self-perfection, the end of which is death (extinction), not life. The essential elements of Buddhism are summarized in the *Four Noble Truths*, the *Noble Eightfold Path*, and several additional key doctrines. The Four Noble Truths affirm that (1) life is full of suffering (*dukkha*); (2) suffering is caused by craving (*samudaya*); (3) suffering will cease only when craving ceases (*nirodha*); and (4) the cessation of craving can be achieved by following the Noble Eightfold Path.<sup>8</sup> He recalls the pervasiveness of suffering by expounding, “Birth is suffering. Decay is suffering. Illness is suffering. Death is suffering. The presence of objects we hate is suffering. The separation from objects we love is suffering. Not to obtain what we desire is suffering. Everything from A to Z is suffering.”<sup>9</sup> However, George Braswell goes on to state that “the Eightfold Path is the answer to suffering. The goal of life is to break out of this cycle by finally extinguishing the flame of life and entering a permanent state of pure nonexistence (*nirvana*).”<sup>10</sup> So, central to Buddhism is the concept that *nirvana* cannot be reached without the understanding and experience of suffering.

The central theme of suffering in Buddhism gives it popularity. Indeed, suffering is a real issue in Buddhism, so many people see the religion as a path of escape from the suffering of the world. Pham writes,

There is the secret of the strength and appeal of Buddhism to humankind. The most startling thing Buddha said about humankind was that human beings have no soul. This “no soul” doctrine has caused Buddhism to look like a peculiar religion, if indeed deserving of the name at all. In Buddha’s day the concept of soul had come to signify, first, a spiritual substance in accord with the dualistic outlook in Hinduism, and, second, the retaining of its separateness throughout eternity.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Daniel Heimbach and Vic Carpenter, “Buddhism,” in Dawson, *Complete Evangelism Guidebook*, 217-18.

<sup>9</sup> George W. Braswell Jr., *Understanding Sectarian Groups in America* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1986), 243.

<sup>10</sup> Braswell, *Understanding Sectarian Groups in America*, 243.

<sup>11</sup> Pham, “Establishing a Language-Culture Congregation,” 78.

Huston Smith also explains this denial of soul as follows: “Buddha denied both elements in this concept of soul. His denial of soul as a spiritual substance—a sort of miniature self in the head—appears to have been the chief point that distinguished his concept of transmigration from prevailing Hindu interpretations.”<sup>12</sup>

Although Buddhism originated in India, Buddhist missionaries have brought Buddhism to the United States for many years. Further, similar to most immigrants from Southeast Asia, the Vietnamese who came to the U.S. also brought Buddhism with them, and they joined with other Asian Buddhists in shaping the Buddhist system of thought in the U.S. However, as Braswell observes,

American culture has also influenced Buddhism and has been a testing ground for the adaptability of some forms of Buddhism to other cultures. Zen Buddhism has been able to move from China to Japan to America and influence cultural values and forms, if not gain great numbers of persons into institutional membership. The Buddhist Church of America (BCA) adopted in its name—Church—a term amenable to America. The BCA has worship services on Sundays, including the use of organ and piano. Children sing “Buddha loves me, this I know” in their Sunday School.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the extent of Christian influence on Buddhist culture can be an opportunity for Christians’ personal evangelism. But there is a difficulty in learning about Buddhism: if someone asks Buddhists about their religion, they will describe their complicated rituals but may not explain the Buddhist belief system.

### *Confucianism*

Next to Buddhism, Confucianism has been greatly influential in shaping the thought and spiritual life of Southeast Asians, including the Vietnamese people. Josh McDowell summarizes the background of Confucianism as follows:

Confucius was born Chiu King, about 550 BC in the principality of Lu, which is located in present-day Shantung [in China]. He held a minor government post as a tax collector before he reached the age of twenty, but in his early twenties, he

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<sup>12</sup> Huston Smith, *The Religions of Man* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 127.

<sup>13</sup> Braswell, *Understanding Sectarian Groups in America*, 310-11.

became a teacher . . . . He believed society would not change unless he occupied a public office where he could put his theories into practice.<sup>14</sup>

Confucius writings are known as the Sources of Confucianism and are comprised of five classics: The Book of Changes (I Ching), The Book of Annals (Shu K'ing), The Book of Poetry (Shih Ching), The Book of Ceremonies (Li Chi), and The Annals of Spring and Autumn (Ch'un Ch'iu).<sup>15</sup> During the cultural revolution, China knocked down Confucianism; however, China now wants to resurrect a modernized version of Confucianism in order to influence neighboring countries.

Vietnam was under Chinese rule almost continuously for one thousand years. The first three Chinese dominances lasted from 111 BC to AD 939, while the fourth Chinese dominance consisted of a twenty-year occupation of Vietnam by the Ming army (AD 1407-1427).<sup>16</sup> A millennium of Chinese domination has had many impacts on Vietnam, such as Confucianism's becoming the art of living for many Vietnamese. In 2013, China and Vietnam reached an agreement to set up the Confucius Institute at Hanoi University. Since then, Confucianism has exerted its soft power through cultural influences.<sup>17</sup>

An Van Pham also comments on people who consider Confucianism as their religion even though it does not have a common foundational thought, a characteristic essential to many religions. Confucianism, a religion of optimistic humanism, has had a monumental impact on life, social structures, and political structures in China. For many centuries, Confucianism has been the basic belief and life guide of Asian countries, such as China, Vietnam, Japan, and Korea. As their honored teacher and spiritual leader,

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<sup>14</sup> Josh McDowell, "Confucianism," in Dawson, *Complete Evangelism Guidebook*, 221.

<sup>15</sup> McDowell, "Confucianism," 222.

<sup>16</sup> Rachel Tran, "Confucianism in Vietnam," *Vietnam Discovery*, February 6, 2020, <https://vietnamdiscovery.com/culture-arts/confucianism-in-vietnam>.

<sup>17</sup> Vien Dong, "Chinese Confucius Institute Project Raises Concern in Vietnam," *Voice of America*, October 31, 2013, <https://www.voanews.com/a/chinese-confucious-institute-project-raises-concern-in-vietnam/1780894.html>.



Confucius has been a great influence on these countries. The original teachings of Confucius were not a religion at all. However, Confucianism is now and always has been a religion for the southeast Asian people.<sup>18</sup>

Charles Potter explores an additional reason why Confucianism cannot be considered a religion, noting that the Confucians' understanding of religion is narrow:

They have confused religion with their religion or with the general type of religion of which theirs is an example. It is true that Confucius ignored many things commonly thought essential to religion. It was not that he was opposed to these practices, but that he did not consider them essential. He did not encourage prayer, nor assemblies for worship. He did not believe in an anthropomorphic God, nor in immortality.<sup>19</sup>

For nearly twenty-five centuries, Confucius has been the guiding life of the Southeast Asian people. Ch'u Chai observes the effect that this timespan has had on the core philosophies of Confucianism:

[It is] a blend of idealism and realism. It is metaphysical and ethical. It attaches importance to spiritual cultivation and yet has a deep concern for the ordering of the world. It has a vast scope and a great depth, and yet appears to be simple and direct. It has a flexibility and versatility, and yet forms a single thread of unity—one main tradition, one main stream of thought—always having as its goal a particular kind of highest life.<sup>20</sup>

This goal of life is the central theme of Confucianism and is what referred to as the "Art of Living." Concerned with the human as an individual living in social relations, the Art of Living has very little interest in theorizing anthropologically about how humans came into being or speculating about what happens when humans die. The Confucians' teachings have the same central objectives: teach humans how to live and what to live for. First, a Confucian must live by himself or herself, and, second, he or she must live with others. This social aspect of Confucianism is unique in its teachings, as Kenneth Boa examines,

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<sup>18</sup> Pham, "Establishing a Language-Culture Congregation," 74.

<sup>19</sup> Charles Francis Potter, *The Great Religious Leaders* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1958), 138-139.

<sup>20</sup> Ch'u Chai, *Confucianism* (New York: Barron's Educational Series, 1973), 8-9.

It is clear from Confucius' teachings that he was much more concerned about earth than he was about heaven. He had only a vague idea of the future life. But his preoccupation with ethical matters does not mean that he had no regard for religious affairs. Instead, he simply tried to shift the popular emphasis from heaven to earth without completely dropping heaven from the picture. Confucius did not deny the supernatural, yet he did not say much about it.<sup>21</sup>

McDowell concludes that the ethical philosophy Confucius espoused was based on self-effort, leaving no room or need for God. Confucius taught that an individual can achieve everything alone if he or she only follows the ways of the ancients. Confucius also implied that human nature is basically good. Later, Confucian teachers established this thought as a cardinal belief of Confucianism.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the Bible's teachings about human nature and humankind's need of a Savior clearly contrast the teachings of Confucianism. While Confucians may be noble human beings, they have no cure for their sin and fail to recognize that they, just like all of humanity, need a Savior.

### *Roman Catholicism*

Roman Catholicism was introduced to North Vietnam in the sixteenth century. In 1580, Gaspar de Santa Cruz, a Roman Catholic priest, sailed to the Ha-Tien, South Vietnam, from Malacca. At that time, South Vietnam was still largely peopled by the Chams and Khmers. In 1624, Alexandre de Rhodes arrived in Central Vietnam, but in 1645, he was expelled from Cochinchina. Roman Catholicism was defended in Tonkin, where a number of conversions took place. In 1773, as persecution continued and spread, Jesuits were suppressed, and they eventually disappeared from mission work in Central Vietnam. However, Roman Catholicism later established a solid position in Vietnamese society under French rule. In 1954, it was estimated that more than 650,000 Roman Catholics had immigrated to South Vietnam from north of Seventeenth Parallel. In 1975,

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<sup>21</sup> Kenneth Boa, *Cults, World Religions, and You* (Wheaton, IL: SP, 1988), 39.

<sup>22</sup> McDowell, "Confucianism," 223.

Catholics in the South officially numbered about 1.9 million, and the North's less than 1 million Catholics were served by about 3,500 churches.<sup>23</sup>

The headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church is located at Vatican City (Rome, Italy). The authority of the pope reached its height in the thirteenth century with Innocent III, who claimed the title "Vicar of Christ." While the word "catholic" was first applied to the Christian church in its basic meaning of "universal," it became part of the name of the institution representing Christian religion after the middle-second century.

Over the centuries, Roman Catholicism has deeply influenced Vietnamese people and their way of life, and it has developed into the largest religious governmental structure known in history. According to John B. Ness, this structure began from the time of Pope Leo I (440-460),<sup>24</sup> who based his claim to power on what Jesus said to Peter:

And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matt 16:18-19 KJV)

In Roman Catholic teaching, the Church has her earthly head, the Pope, who is recognized as successor to Peter, the first alleged Bishop of Rome. Further, the doctrine of papal infallibility asserts that when the Pope speaks officially on matters of faith or morals, God preserves him against the possibility of error.<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, Roman Catholics have traditionally followed the practice that the laity are excluded from all participation in matters concerning the temporal administration of the Church. They must obey the priest, the priest must obey the bishop, and the bishops are bound to the Pope by solemn oath. However, within the past two decades, this concept regarding the laity has been undergoing change, and the laity is now

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<sup>23</sup> Jeff Hays, "Catholics, Protestants and Christians in Vietnam," Facts and Details, last modified May 2014, [http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Vietnam/sub5\\_9d/entry-3378.html](http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Vietnam/sub5_9d/entry-3378.html).

<sup>24</sup> John B. Ness, *Man's Religions* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 640-41.

<sup>25</sup> Pham, "Establishing a Language-Culture Congregation," 83.

becoming more involved in the administration of the Church. Joseph Pieper, in his discussion of the life of the Christian within the Church, describes the Roman Catholic teaching about the Mass: “Our bodily life demands nourishment. The nourishment of our new life is the Holy Eucharist, the Body of our Lord, made present, and offered up in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and received in Holy Communion. This most Holy Sacrament of the Altar is known simply as the Blessed Sacrament.”<sup>26</sup>

Catholics accept three sources of authority: The Bible, tradition, and the magisterium (i.e., the teaching ministry of the Church). Catholics affirm the sixty-six books of the Protestant Bible plus several apocryphal books that most Protestants consider spurious. Tradition refers to the teachings of the apostles that Catholics believe have been preserved in the Church apart from the Bible. Catholics view Tradition as an authority equal to the Bible. The teaching ministry of the Church (i.e., the magisterium) is also considered equal in authority to the Bible and tradition. “According to Catholicism, the Bible, sacred Tradition, and the teaching authority of the Church are ‘so connected and associated that one of them cannot stand without the others.’”<sup>27</sup>

Protestants and Catholics affirm similar beliefs about God’s nature as well as about Jesus’s nature, death, burial, and resurrection. However, Catholics refer to Mary as “the Holy Mother of God.” They view her as a co-mediator of God’s grace and as a collaborator with the salvation of Jesus, her Son. According to Pope Paul VI, “The Church’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship.

There are seven sacraments in the Catholic Church: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, penance, anointing of the sick, holy orders, and matrimony. For example, Catholics baptize their children shortly after birth, and by baptism all sins are forgiven,

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<sup>26</sup> Josef Pieper, *What Catholics Believe* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1951), 49.

<sup>27</sup> Bill Gordon, “Interfaith Evangelism Belief Bulletin: Roman Catholicism,” North American Mission Board, 2001, p. 1, [http://www.sentoutones.com/RCC/2%20Roman\\_Catholicism%20NAMB%20Belief%20Bulletin.pdf](http://www.sentoutones.com/RCC/2%20Roman_Catholicism%20NAMB%20Belief%20Bulletin.pdf), quoting *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 95.

original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin. Penance (i.e., confession) is the sacrament of reconciliation. In the sacrament, the sinner confesses all mortal sins to a priest. The priest imposes acts of penance and offers forgiveness of sin. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “Bishops and priests, by virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, have the power to forgive all sins.”<sup>28</sup> Further, “according to Catholics, this sacrament reconciles one with God (CCC, no. 1468) and obtains ‘forgiveness of sins committed after baptism.’”<sup>29</sup> The teaching of Roman Catholicism is very different compared to the Bible. Catholicism holds that its traditions are equal in authority with the teachings of Scripture. For Southern Baptists, the Bible is the sole spiritual authority.<sup>30</sup>

### **Brief History of the Vietnamese People**

As Peter Stearns avers, “History helps us understand change and how the society we live in came to be. The past causes the present, and so the future.”<sup>31</sup> As Paul Hiebert and Eloise Meneses affirm, anthropology and sociology help us study people’s social and cultural context by living with people, observing them, and listening to what they say. Psychology helps us examine people’s personal context—their deep emotions and inner conflicts. History gives us insight into the events that have shaped their present.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1461, quoted in Gordon, “Roman Catholicism,” 3.

<sup>29</sup> North American Mission Board, “Roman Catholicism: Overview,” March 30, 2016, <https://www.namb.net/apologetics/resource/roman-catholicism-overview/>, quoting *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1486.

<sup>30</sup> Lee Weeks, “How Do Catholics & Baptists Differ?,” *Baptist Press*, April 18, 2005, <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/how-do-catholics-baptists-differ/>.

<sup>31</sup> Peter N. Stearns, “Why Study History? (1998),” American Historical Association, accessed October 11, 2017, [https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/why-study-history-\(1998\)](https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/why-study-history-(1998)).

<sup>32</sup> Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 369.

The benefit of these connections was modeled in Jesus and his disciples. Jesus referred his Jewish audience back to their history as he tried to contextualize his message (Mark 2:25-28; Luke 4:25-27; 6:23; 13:1-5). Peter, Stephen, and Paul similarly utilized their knowledge of the history of their audience. When they interacted with Jewish audiences, they referred to the history of their ancestors (Acts 3:24-25; 7:1-53; 13:16-22), using it to build rapport and earn the right to be heard. Commenting on historical knowledge in light of personal evangelism, Hiebert and Meneses add, “History gives us insight into the events that have shaped their present. We must make the gospel known not to humans in general, but to real people who live in particular times and places in history.”<sup>33</sup> Successful communication with people of other cultures requires more than just knowing their culture. It is also important to know their historical background—who they are as persons with the ultimate objective of identifying oneself with them and accepting them as they are.

Thus, knowing historical background is necessary to successfully communicate the gospel to people of another culture. What follows is a summary of the historical background of the Vietnamese people who are now present in United States.

#### *From Exodus to Resettlement*

There were four major waves of Vietnamese people’s coming to the U.S.

*Before 1975.* Over the past thousand years of history, the Vietnamese people have rarely escaped their homeland. For nearly one hundred years under French rule (1858-1945), some Vietnamese were forced to leave their country to labor in French colonies. Before the 1950s, there were a small number of Vietnamese Americans in the United States. During the 1950s and 1960s, a few hundred Vietnamese arrived in the U.S.

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<sup>33</sup> Hiebert and Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry*, 369.

for academic- and military-training purposes. Prior to 1975, most Vietnamese residing in the U.S. were spouses and children of American servicemen in Vietnam.

*First wave: 1975-1977.* On April 30, 1975, “the fall of Saigon” ended the Vietnam War and prompted the first of two waves of refugees from Vietnam to the United States. During the spring of 1975, about 130,000 Vietnamese departed their native country. These early Vietnamese refugees faced many difficulties when they first came to the New World. They were moved to military camps and had to live there until an American citizen sponsored them. Many churches and non-profit organizations were their main sponsors.<sup>34</sup>

*Second wave: 1977-1986.* In 1977, a second wave of refugees began fleeing Vietnam; this wave lasted until the mid-1980s. Most of the leaders had a close relationship with the first wave of Vietnamese refugees and were associated with the South Vietnamese government. Their connection to both the former South Vietnamese government and the U.S. government made them targets of persecution with the Vietnamese communist government. The second wave of refugees began as a result of the communist government’s economic, political, and agricultural policies, which included (1) “re-education camps” and the torture of former South Vietnamese military personnel and those presumed to be friendly to the South Vietnamese cause, (2) the closing of businesses owned by ethnic Chinese Vietnamese, (3) the seizing and redistribution of farmland, and (4) the mass forced relocation of citizens from urban to rural areas, called “new economic zones,” that were previously uncultivated or ruined during the war. During this time, about two million Vietnamese fled in small, overcrowded boats. Two-thirds were attacked at sea before finally landing in Thailand,

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<sup>34</sup> Southern Baptist Convention, “Asian Advisory Council Report 2013-2015,” 27.

Indonesia, or Malaysia. Of the nearly 250,000 refugees who arrived in the U.S., about 40 percent were ethnic Chinese.<sup>35</sup>

*Third wave: 1987-2000.* The third wave of refugees began in mid-1980s and continued until 2000. Under communist leadership, Vietnam became one of the poorest and most isolated countries of the world. This reality caused many Vietnamese people to flee Vietnam. These refugees came to the U.S. by airplanes directly from Vietnam. The third wave of Vietnamese immigration to the U.S. included the combination of Vietnamese refugees and immigrants in the Orderly Departure Program (ODP). It was composed of people with various statuses, including former re-education camp detainees and their families, others who left Vietnam under ODP, and Amerasians whose immigration to the United States was made possible by the 1987 Amerasian Homecoming Act.<sup>36</sup> As of 2014, Vietnamese represented the sixth largest immigrant group in the country, making up the 1.3 million Vietnamese immigrants who reside in the United States.<sup>37</sup>

In 1989, the U.S. government signed an agreement with the Vietnamese government about releasing political prisoners. This agreement requested that the Vietnamese government free all former South Vietnamese soldiers, officials, and religious leaders who were held in re-education camps and, consequently, allow them to come to the U.S. In 1990, the first group of former Vietnamese political and re-education camp prisoners arrived in the U.S. under the Humanitarian Operation (H.O.) Program.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> John Powell, *Encyclopedia of North American Immigration* (New York: Fact on Files, 2005), 310.

<sup>36</sup> For a more detailed description of the three waves, see Scott C. S. Stone and John E. McGowan, *Refugees in Southeast Asia and the Western World* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1980).

<sup>37</sup> Laura Harjanto and Jeanne Batalova, “Vietnamese Immigrants in the United States,” Migration Policy Institute, October 15, 2021, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/vietnamese-immigrants-united-states>.

<sup>38</sup> Southern Baptist Convention, “Asian Advisory Council Report 2013-2015,” 29.



*Fourth wave: 2001-present.* The Vietnam Communist Party implemented an economic reform known as Đổi Mới (Doi Moi, meaning “reform” or “renovation”), wherein they transitioned from a centrally planned economy to a socialist-oriented market economy. Under the Clinton administration, the U.S. established full diplomatic and economic relations with Vietnam in 2002. The increase in business, trade, and educational relations between the U.S. and Vietnam continued the flow of Vietnamese immigrants and Vietnamese international students to the U.S., many of whom chose to live here permanently. In addition, Vietnamese Americans usually seek to bring their relatives to the U.S. Some Vietnamese Americans and Americans travel to Vietnam to marry Vietnamese citizens, thus initiating a new round of immigration for their spouses.<sup>39</sup>

According to the United States Census Bureau, from refugees to full American citizens, the Vietnamese American and Chinese Vietnamese American communities have grown to a total of 1.7 million members, making them the fifth-largest group among Asian Pacific Americans (APA).<sup>40</sup>

### *A Ministry Opportunity*

*Refugee’s issue.* The Vietnamese exodus and their resettlement in the United States could not have come at a worse time in U.S. history. A Gallup Poll taken in May 1975 showed that “54 percent of all Americans [were] opposed to admitting Vietnamese refugees to live in the United States[,] and only 36 percent were in favor[,] with 12 percent undecided.”<sup>41</sup> Economic self-interest was a common concern of the American public, who feared that jobs would be taken away from them and that too much public assistance and welfare would be given to the refugees. Apart from specific conditions

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<sup>39</sup> Southern Baptist Convention, “Asian Advisory Council Report 2013-2015,” 30.

<sup>40</sup> Elizabeth M. Hoeffel et al., “The Asian Population: 2010,” United States Census Bureau, March 2012, p. 14, <https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-11.pdf>.

<sup>41</sup> “Refugees: A Warmer Welcome for the Homeless,” *TIME Magazine*, May 19, 1975, pp. 9-10, <https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,945381,00.html>.

resulting from the Vietnam War, “this hostile reception given by the American public represented a continuation of racism and hostility toward immigration minority groups that has prevailed and been documented throughout the United States’ history.”<sup>42</sup>

However, Renée Sanford addresses these issues with a solution: God’s love for immigrants. Sanford writes,

God’s special heart for immigrants shows throughout Scripture. From the beginning, God commanded the Israelites to show special care to the “aliens”—those who came and lived among them as people separated from their country of origin. These were people who were in a position of not having the same rights and resources as they would have had in their own nation, and they were to be cared for in the same way as widows and orphans (Exod. 22:21; 23:9). God reminded the Israelites that they could remember how it felt to be aliens in Egypt and should show compassion—even love (Deut. 10:19). While they were never to adopt the false religion of the foreigners, God warned his people not to mistreat them (Jer. 7:5-7).<sup>43</sup>

Likewise, the early church embraced immigrants, starting with the day of Pentecost and continuing as Christians fled persecution and left their homes to advance God’s kingdom.

*Adaptation’s progress.* The first general observation about Asians, which also applies to Vietnamese Americans, is that Asians are highly relational and group-oriented. They tend to see their relationships with people and groups as permanent. In addition, they are concrete and contextual in the way they think and reason. They are non-confrontational. They do not have a Judeo-Christian worldview.<sup>44</sup> Noting the cultural diversity among Asians living in America, Inouye states,

Asians in the United States are a complex mosaic of different languages, religions, and cultures. They include people who trace their ancestry to such countries as China, India, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and Vietnam. They are U.S. born citizens and recent immigrants. Some are Americanized and some are traditionally Asian. Some safe generalizations can be made that shape a sound and sensitive basic approach to personal evangelism that is effective with most Asians most of the time.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Hien Duc Do, *The Vietnamese Americans*, New Americans Series (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 30.

<sup>43</sup> Renée Sanford, “Recent Immigrants,” in Dawson, *Complete Evangelism Guidebook*, 277.

<sup>44</sup> Inouye, “Asian,” 267.

<sup>45</sup> Inouye, “Asian,” 266.

To the Vietnamese living in America, these generalizations traditionally represent their cultural philosophy through the lenses of family, school, and state or country. As An Van Pham states,

There are three worlds that a man lives in and depends on. They are family, school, and state or country. The father heads the whole family system, the teacher gives intellectual guidance and spiritual birth, and the king is the symbolic representative of the state and community. Oriental philosophy teaches that when a child is born, he or she enters first of all into the world of his or her family. This first world is the smallest world, but it is basic and highly important. The head of the family is the father who has many responsibilities and powers over: all members of his family.<sup>46</sup>

Though practices have changed, to the first generation, the cultural philosophy of the worlds they have lived in, and depended on, still influences them. Meanwhile, the second generation of Vietnamese Americans that see themselves as Americans rather than unwilling exiles is emerging, compared to other established APA communities.<sup>47</sup>

Charles Brock emphasizes the importance of understanding other cultures when he writes, “The planter must live within the culture of those to whom he is ministering. He must adapt to new ways. His mission is not to change culture. His mission is to lead people to Christ who will change hearts, which in turn will influence culture.”<sup>48</sup> In brief, understanding people’s culture is essential for those wanting to minister to them.

*God’s love.* Vietnamese refugees and immigrants were influenced by American Christians during their settlement process. Many American churches and Christian believers opened their arms and welcomed the Vietnamese people. Among these American churches, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), which is the largest Protestant denomination in the U.S., had a significant impact in helping the Vietnamese people and sharing the gospel of Christ with them. Southern Baptist churches (about 150)

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<sup>46</sup> Pham, “Establishing a Language-Culture Congregation,” 85-87.

<sup>47</sup> Chung Hoan Chuong et al., “Cultural Competency and Asian American and Pacific Islanders,” Mayor’s Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, 2003, <https://apia.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/apia/publication/attachments/Cultural%20Competency%20-%20AAPI%20Fact%20Sheets.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> Charles Brock, *The Principles and Practice of Indigenous Church Planting* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981), 40.

are the fastest growing of any denomination among Vietnamese American Christians—the second being Christian and Missionary Alliance churches (about 100). Many Vietnamese Christian churches have been established in the U.S. Christianity is one of the fastest-expanding religions among Vietnamese Americans, who are much more likely to be Christians than Vietnamese who are residing in Vietnam.<sup>49</sup> Vietnamese immigrant communities come to the U.S. from distinct cultural experiences; thus, they are not all the same.

## **Conclusion**

The foundations of culture—religion and history—presented in this section would greatly equip members of local ethnic or non-ethnic congregations to gain a knowledge of the cultural differences relevant to their outreach efforts. Congregations should become familiar with the religious and historical background of other people in order to present the gospel effectively in a cultural manner.

## **Practical Issues of Personal Evangelism**

Christians have created many evangelism resources over recent decades. These methods have been taught to believers as models of personal evangelism. As worldviews shift more to New Age thinking, believers must equip themselves to defend their faith apologetically so that the effectiveness of soul-winning methods will not be minimized. This section details the practical tools, common barriers, and spiritual warfare related to personal evangelism.

## **Practical Tools for Personal Evangelism**

In *The Complete Evangelism Guidebook*, Scott Dawson places the theological basis of evangelism alongside the practical methods that believers can use:

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<sup>49</sup> Southern Baptist Convention, “Asian Advisory Council Report 2013-2015,” 31.

First, use it to sharpen your own skills in evangelism. Allow it to awaken the burden in your soul for those around you. Second, use it as a guide for interacting with someone who belongs to a distinct people group . . . . Third, in conversations with other Christians, you will hear concern for friends whose lifestyles or situations are discussed in.<sup>50</sup>

Practical techniques should play a significant role in personal evangelism. Several contemporary evangelistic methods and tracts highlighted below can be used to train members to share Jesus with non-believers.

### *Continuing Witness Training (CWT)*

*Continuing Witness Training* is an apprentice manual published by the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1982. This resource helps believers learn about God so that they can share Christ with others. The CWT model outlines two points to believers: (1) Gospel (God’s Purpose, Our Need, God’s Provision, Our Response) and (2) Leading to a Commitment (A Commitment Question, Clarification, Prayer).<sup>51</sup>

### *FAITH*

Bobby Welch is the originator of the FAITH evangelism strategy.<sup>52</sup> LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention markets this model as a Sunday School outreach plan. The FAITH Sunday School Evangelism Strategy is a comprehensive ongoing evangelism, ministry, and assimilation strategy that seeks to create a culture of evangelism within the local church by equipping and mobilizing Christians in lifestyle evangelism.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Scott Dawson, ed., “Introduction: Why or Why Not Witness,” in *Complete Evangelism Guidebook*, 14.

<sup>51</sup> *Continuing Witness Training: Apprentice Manual* (1982; repr., Alpharetta, GA: Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1995).

<sup>52</sup> Bobby H. Welch, *Testimonies of Giving Your FAITH Away: Everyone Can!* (Nashville: Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, 2006), 5.

<sup>53</sup> *FAITH Planning and Resource Guide*, Lifeway, accessed October 11, 2017, <http://www.lifeway.com/n/Product-Family/FAITH-Evangelism>.

### *Evangelism Explosion (EE)*

James Kennedy developed *Evangelism Explosion* (EE), a model based on “the biblical concept that the church’s primary task is ‘every-member evangelism.’ The church is to go for Christ.”<sup>54</sup> The program seeks to motivate and mobilize the whole congregation for evangelism. EE has produced great results and has been a popular evangelistic tool in the U.S. since the 1990s.

### *Share Jesus without Fear (SJWF)*

William Fay first published *Share Jesus without Fear* in 1997, with a revised edition following in 2008.<sup>55</sup> SJWF teaches a natural way to share the gospel that eliminates pressure, arguments, and the fear of failure. This method operates on a simple three-step process rooted in the biblical philosophy that success in witnessing comes by (1) living out the Christian life, (2) sharing the gospel, and (3) trusting God for the results. The five diagnostic questions contained within this model can rapidly take a conversation from basic spiritual inquiry to the point of opening the Scriptures.<sup>56</sup> SJWF relies heavily on the use of the Bible and the power of the Holy Spirit to bring a non-believer to Christ. This evangelistic model is simple and effective, and it continues to bear fruit today.

### *Share Jesus without Freaking Out*

Alvin Reid’s *Share Jesus without Freaking Out* is an excellent resource for the church and for pastoral ministry.<sup>57</sup> According to Reid, most Christians are freaked out

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<sup>54</sup> James D. Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion: Equipping Churches for Friendship, Evangelism, Discipleship, and Healthy Growth*, 4th ed. (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1996), ix.

<sup>55</sup> William Fay and Ralph Hodge, *Share Jesus without Fear*, rev. ed. (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2008).

<sup>56</sup> The five questions are as follows: (1) “Are you a sinner?”; (2) “Do you want forgiveness for your sins?”; (3) “Do you believe Jesus died on the cross for you and rose again?”; (4) “Are you willing to surrender your life to Christ?”; (5) “Are you ready to invite Jesus into your life and into your heart?”

<sup>57</sup> Alvin L. Reid, *Sharing Jesus without Freaking Out: Evangelism the Way You Were Born to Do It* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017).

about the idea of talking to non-believers about faith in Jesus. His supplying readers with the appropriate foundation and practical tools to become effective witnesses for Christ. Each chapter centers on a principle that Reid finds necessary for having meaningful conversations about Christ. Also, the author's examples of gospel conversations show readers that talking about Jesus is easier than they thought. The principles mentioned in the book can be used to build a practical approach to personal evangelism.

### *Tell Someone*

Greg Laurie published *Tell Someone* to encourage and inspire believers to engage others with the gospel message.<sup>58</sup> He tells stories of his own failure and success, and he presents biblical principles that believers can apply themselves. Laurie's evangelistic method explores the questions of "Why?" "When?" "Where?" and "How?" that believers can use to share Jesus with non-believers. Taken from the life and witness of Jesus, including his one-on-one experiences, this method is helpful for mobilizing every person in the church to "tell someone" about Jesus Christ.

### *Gospel Tracts*

Reid quotes that Charles Spurgeon said more people are in heaven because of tracts than any other means, and he explains that tracts are valuable not only because they keep the witness on track with the gospel but also because believers can leave them with people for later reading and reflection. Reid also lists six useful principles for employing tracts in witnessing: (1) never use a tract without reading it (some are weak theologically); (2) brevity is desirable; (3) use a tract that is attractive; (4) be enthusiastic about the tract's contents; (5) be sure the tract sets forth the facts of the gospel; and (6) the tract should explain the process by which a person becomes a Christian, particularly

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<sup>58</sup> Greg Laurie, *Tell Someone: You Can Share the Good News* (Nashville: B&H, 2016).

emphasizing repentance and faith.<sup>59</sup> Reid further writes, “Regardless of whether you use CWT, FAITH, EE, Billy Graham’s materials, or any other approach, make sure the presentation believers use emphasizes the need of the lost person, as well as the work of Christ, and the biblical response (repentance and faith). A person cannot be saved unless he realizes he is lost and in need of saving.”<sup>60</sup>

### *Summary*

In the 1990s, Thom Rainer conducted a number of surveys to examine the most effective evangelistic churches in the U.S. His research team found that “effective evangelism is both relational and confrontational,”<sup>61</sup> concluding that it is important to develop relationships with non-believers so that a lifestyle witness is possible. Also, it is crucial to confront individuals with the claims of Jesus Christ. In sum, practical techniques with effective tools are necessary to apply the biblical truths that enable believers not only to share their faith but also to bring others to Christ. According to Timothy Beougher, no particular method is “right,” but “there is a wrong method—to sit back and do nothing!”<sup>62</sup>

### **Common Barriers to Personal Evangelism**

Many barriers to sharing the gospel are also concerns in personal evangelism. Many Christians are afraid to share Jesus with others; they have a “fear of rejection, fear of the unknown.”<sup>63</sup> One may ask, “Why do Christians not witness more often about their

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<sup>59</sup> Alvin L. Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 197-98.

<sup>60</sup> Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 198.

<sup>61</sup> Thom S. Rainer, *Effective Evangelistic Churches: Successful Churches Reveal What Works and What Doesn't* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 198.

<sup>62</sup> Timothy K. Beougher, *Overcoming Walls to Witnessing* (Wheaton, IL: Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 1993), 20.

<sup>63</sup> Dawson, “Introduction: Why or Why Not Witness,” 14.



personal faith in Jesus Christ?” Many Christians have serious reservations about evangelism and, consequently, neglect the revealed will of God. Several barriers threatening personal evangelism need to be overcome in order to successfully spread the gospel message.

### *Lacking Passion*

God uses various approaches to reach all types of people for Christ, but the approach is secondary to the passion that keeps Christians consistently sharing Jesus. Rainer raises numerous questions concerning believers who experience a lack of passion in personal evangelism: “Why do many Christians appear not to care about the spiritually lost in this World?” “Do they seriously contemplate the exclusivity of Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:10-12) and the horrors of a literal hell (Luke 16:19-31; Rev 14:9-11)?” “Is there no real compassion for the lost and dying among the living?” The minimization of two important truths, the exclusivity of Christ and the doctrine of hell, dampen evangelistic fervor in both Christians and the local church.<sup>64</sup>

Beougher comments on this matter, saying, “The single greatest reason we fail to witness is that we do not possess the compassion of Christ.”<sup>65</sup> Facing eternal truths, recognizing life’s brevity, reading the Bible, befriending lost people, and committing to intercessory prayer all contribute to cultivating godly compassion in believers’ lives.<sup>66</sup> Darrell Robinson concurs: “Regardless of the method used to reach people, a passion for souls is the critical factor in personal evangelism. A passion for souls has as its source

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<sup>64</sup> Thom S. Rainer, “An Interview with Thom Rainer,” *Southern Seminary Magazine* 72, no. 2 (2004): 7.

<sup>65</sup> Beougher, *Overcoming Walls to Witnessing*, 28.

<sup>66</sup> Beougher, *Overcoming Walls to Witnessing*, 30-34.

our experience of salvation and a deep love for the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>67</sup> Thus, lacking passion is a significant barrier to personal evangelism.

### *Lacking Priority*

The New Testament clearly shows that personal evangelism is a priority of our Lord for every believer. According to Darrell W. Robinson,

It is clear in the New Testament that personal is a priority of our Lord for every believer. In each of the Gospels and the book of Acts Jesus emphasized that evangelizing the lost is the assignment of every Christian. Some argue that they do not have the gift of evangelism; therefore, they cannot witness. The reality is that witnessing is the assignment of our Lord for every Christian.<sup>68</sup>

Many Christians today are busy, but so was Jesus. There were instances in Jesus’s ministry when demands upon him were so great that he did not take time to eat (John 4:31-35) or sleep (Luke 6:12-16). As Beougher states, every person ever created will exist forever, either enjoying eternal life with God or suffering in hell separated from him. Thus, in addition to life’s various priorities, Christians’ personal involvement in the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) is a high priority.<sup>69</sup>

Also, if believers love the lost, then they cannot withhold the gospel from them. They will continue sharing Jesus until the Holy Spirit opens a way. Robinson advises that in helping Christians carry out personal evangelism, church pastors have to enlist them, equip them, engage them, and encourage them, then God will empower them. Robinson further states, “God has given your church the army that can reach your community for Christ. It is the army of lay people in the church service every Sunday. It is God’s intention for every Christian to witness.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Darrell W. Robinson, “The Priority of Personal Evangelism,” in *Evangelism for a Changing World: Essays in Honor of Roy Fish*, ed. Timothy Beougher and Alvin Reid (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002), 125.

<sup>68</sup> Robinson, “The Priority of Personal Evangelism,” 113.

<sup>69</sup> Beougher, *Overcoming Walls to Witnessing*, 43-46.

<sup>70</sup> Robinson, “The Priority of Personal Evangelism,” 126.

### *Lacking Accountability*

Accountability is an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions. It exists as a basic component in the fabric of society. To the corporate world, Brian Dive comments, "Accountability is vital to organizations for many reasons. Lack of true accountability causes excessive cost, both economic and psychological, de-motivation in those who work for the organization, dissatisfaction in those served by it, and sub-optimal performance in general."<sup>71</sup> People choose whether to be accountable in various walks of life. When Jesus met his first disciples along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, he called them to do more than simply leave their nets behind; he invited them to be deeply involved in the work of God, to embrace both evangelism and discipleship. Today, the Lord Jesus Christ still calls individuals to live radical lives that are wholeheartedly devoted to him.

Research by the Barna Group sheds some light on the lack of commitment and accountability among Christians today. A national survey discovered that "only 5% [of adult professing believers] indicated that their church does anything to hold them accountable for integrating biblical beliefs and principles into their life."<sup>72</sup> A real Christian worldview regarding "biblical beliefs and principles" must assuredly include the practice of personal evangelism. According to the Barna Group, the lack of accountability within churches is driven by two key factors: (1) church leadership is reluctant to initiate any type of confrontation and conflict with congregants, and (2) the ideology of freedom and privacy makes the concept of personal accountability, even in religious matters, "inappropriate, antiquated, and rigid."<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Brian Dive, *The Accountable Leader: Developing Effective Leadership through Managerial Accountability* (Philadelphia: Kogan Page, 2008), 12.

<sup>72</sup> Barna Group, "National Study Describes Christian Accountability Provided by Churches," November 29, 2010, <https://www.barna.com/research/national-study-describes-christian-accountability-provided-by-churches/>.

<sup>73</sup> Barna Group, "Christian Accountability Provided by Churches."

Thus, there must be a great emphasis on accountability in the area of personal evangelism. Beougher states that “we need to recover a Great Commission perspective where every believer accepts his/her responsibility to be involved in witnessing.”<sup>74</sup> Pastors, and other church leaders, must teach their congregations to share the gospel. Since classroom training is rare, few people will move beyond this point on their own choice. Many times, the classroom seems to be both the beginning and the end of one’s evangelistic strength. To overcome this problem, pastors and leaders must build an effective accountability structure within their training efforts that pushes Christians beyond the church walls.

Nearly two hundred years ago, Charles Finney spoke insightful words of truth regarding evangelistic accountability: it is the Great Commission of every Christian to save souls. If people were as careless in preparing themselves for their worldly business as they are to save souls, how do you think they would succeed?<sup>75</sup>

### **Spiritual Warfare in Personal Evangelism**

Chuck Lawless reminds believers that evangelism is itself a spiritual battle. He warns that the church that is ready to expand its evangelistic efforts should be prepared to face spiritual warfare.<sup>76</sup> Proclaiming the kingdom of heaven and the gospel of Jesus Christ will pit believers against the kingdom of darkness. Because spiritual warfare affects personal evangelism, wise Christians will seek to understand the basic principles of spiritual warfare and engage the enemy with sufficient actions. There are three core warfare principles that believers must consider when engaging in personal evangelism: motives, the battle, and prayer.

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<sup>74</sup> Timothy K. Beougher, “Personal Evangelism for the 21st Century,” *Southern Seminary Magazine* 72, no. 2 (2004): 11.

<sup>75</sup> Charles G. Finney, *Experiencing Revival* (Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 2000), 110.

<sup>76</sup> Chuck Lawless, *Discipled Warriors: Growing Healthy Churches That Are Equipped for Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 83.

## *Motives*

Believers must understand the motives for personal evangelism. Jesus focused on God and the kingdom of heaven, He only dealt with Satan and his demons when they presented themselves. By contrast, if believers give too much prestige to Satan and his evil work, one “fails to give proper emphasis to the finished work of Christ and the cross.”<sup>77</sup>

Believers should evangelize from two motives: the love of God (i.e., a concern for God’s glory) and the love of neighbor (i.e., a concern for the welfare of others). According to J. I. Packer, there are two motives that should motivate believers constantly to evangelize. The first is love of God and concern for his glory; the second is love of man and concern for his welfare.<sup>78</sup> So, it is clear that believers glorify God by evangelizing—not only because it is an act of obedience but also because in evangelism they tell the world what God has done for the salvation of sinners. In short, God is glorified when his mighty works of grace are made known.

## *The Battle*

Believers must acknowledge, as Clinton Arnold states, that “spiritual warfare is an integral part of the entire Christian experience. It is a fact of life. Christian could not avoid spiritual warfare.”<sup>79</sup> It is obvious that the success of the early church was not without many battles. Believers faced opposition on several fronts as their enemies tried to shut down the nascent church. They moved forward, preaching both to the masses (Acts 4:10-12; 22:1-21) and to individuals (Acts 8:26-39; 16:27-34). The struggles of the early church show modern believers that they should expect opposition if they are

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<sup>77</sup> Tommy D. Lea, “Spiritual Warfare and the Missionary Task,” in *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, and Justice Anderson (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 635.

<sup>78</sup> J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 74.

<sup>79</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 19.

committed to evangelizing the world. Spiritual warfare is part of this opposition and. It is, as both John Franklin and Chuck Lawless define, “the conflict of two opposing wills—namely that of God and His followers versus Satan and his followers.”<sup>80</sup>

Furthermore, there are examples of spiritual conflict throughout the Old Testament (e.g., the garden of Eden, the life of Job), the New Testament (e.g., the ministry of Jesus, the first church), and church history (e.g., Christian oppression and martyrdom, the Protestant Reformation, continuous moral decay of Christians). Satan and his demons have always attacked the church and Christians on many different strategic fronts, and they continually work to keep non-believers spiritually blind. At the same time, they defeat believers who want to bear witness to Christ. It is clear that the enemy battles against the church to keep it from reaching out for Christ and his kingdom.

### *Prayer*

Believers must pray without ceasing. Supporting prayer in evangelistic efforts, Arnold writes that “prayer is the heart of spiritual warfare . . . Part of spiritual warfare is the recognition that you are not able in your own strength; you need God to hold you by the hand and fight on your behalf.”<sup>81</sup> R. A. Torrey agrees: “The most important human factor in effective evangelism is prayer.”<sup>82</sup> Believers can never reach people for Jesus Christ apart from prayer and the power of God. Prayer is vital because it is at the heart of Christianity; it is communication with God. Further, it is more than talking to God; it is intimacy with God. It is also a reflection of Christians’ desire to know God. Prayer draws believers closer to God, and it leads them away from the world, the flesh, and the devil. As Andrew Murray states, “Prayer is the power by which Satan is conquered[,] and . . .

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<sup>80</sup> John Franklin and Chuck Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare: Biblical Truth for Victory* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2001), 7.

<sup>81</sup> Clinton, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 43.

<sup>82</sup> R. A. Torrey, “The Place of Prayer in Evangelism,” in *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*, ed. R. A. Torrey, A. C. Dixon, et al. (1917; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 3:218.

through prayer the church on earth has access to the powers of the heavenly world.”<sup>83</sup> The Bible is emphatic in teaching that praying engenders intentional evangelism: Jesus said that believers should pray for laborers (Matt 9:36-38); the early church prayed for boldness to witness (Acts 4:29-31); Paul requested prayer for those who needed salvation (1 Tim 2:1).

It seems that Satan attacks people in two ways: he blinds the minds of the unsaved (2 Cor 4:4), and he corrupts the minds of the saved (2 Cor 11:3). A prominent prayer that focuses on snatching people from the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of light is the secret to spiritual warfare.<sup>84</sup> Ralph Herring shows how prayer affects Satan when he writes that “Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees, [so] why not make him tremble? Why not storm the very gates of hell? Nothing could please God more. In the conflict that is upon us, certainly we can afford to neglect one weapon Satan does not have in his arsenal and the one he fears the most—prayer.”<sup>85</sup> Moreover, Calvin Miller advises believers to “never start praying before you’ve stopped to look at God.”<sup>86</sup> So, believers cannot evangelize effectively without prayer. Rainer, in his research on growing churches, discovered that prayer ranked with biblical preaching and teaching as one of the major reasons for churches’ effectiveness in reaching out to the lost.<sup>87</sup> Thus, believers must pray for other believers, for their personal-spiritual needs, for non-believers, for evangelism efforts, and for Christian witnesses.

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<sup>83</sup> Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer* (Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1981), 115.

<sup>84</sup> Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 140.

<sup>85</sup> Ralph Herring, *The Cycle of Prayer: A Creative New Approach to the Study of Prayer* (Nashville: Press, 1966), 62-63.

<sup>86</sup> Calvin Miller, “Praying without Ceasing,” in Beougher and Reid, *Evangelism for a Changing World*, 40.

<sup>87</sup> Rainer, *Effective Evangelistic Churches*, 11-17.

When believers face spiritual warfare, they must recognize that God is in control as the supreme ruler of the universe—as revealed in the Bible, from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation. God is fully capable of accomplishing his holy will. No creature is above or beyond him—no angel or demon, no man or woman. The sovereignty of God “expresses the fact that nothing is beyond God’s ultimate interest, control and authority.”<sup>88</sup> Christians may have courage in their spiritual battles, knowing that “God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom 8:28).

### **Conclusion**

Christians should not overlook the significance of personal evangelism training that allows them to develop their spiritual gifts and to submit to God. When believers gain knowledge of the religious and historical background of others, they can open doors of understanding through which new friendships can be built. As new friendships are built, they are in a position to introduce the greatest friend of all—the Lord Jesus Christ. So, the more believers understand about other people’s religious and historical background, the more common ground they have, which allows Christians to share their faith in Christ at personal level. Also, when personal evangelism training is combined with knowledge of practical matters, Christians are prepared to face non-believers with the courage and confidence needed to share the truth of Jesus Christ—even though believers may encounter difficulties and obstacles in this journey. Therefore, Christians should seek avenues to have a covenant partnership that will strengthen and encourage them to fulfill their mission, the Great Commission. The next chapter details the implementation of the groups of church members at CGVBC to evangelize confidently on a personal level.

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<sup>88</sup> James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 25.



CHAPTER 4  
PERSONAL EVANGELISM TRAINING

This chapter lays out the personal evangelism training for the members of Central Georgia Vietnamese Baptist Church (CGVBC). The training consisted of fourteen consecutive weeks, beginning on December 31, 2017, and concluding on April 1, 2018. My strong desire was to train church members to reach unbelievers and the lost, as commanded in Acts 1:8, especially the Vietnamese living in the area of Warner Robins.

On December 3, 2017, I presented the concept of the project to the leaders and deacons of CGVBC during the church business meeting that is regularly scheduled on the first Sunday of each month. The leaders eagerly approved my project. The project was included in the list of announcements in the worship service bulletin, and it officially started between December 17 and 31, 2017. Table 1 displays the timeline of the project.

Table 1. Timeline of the project

<b>Events</b>	<b>Actions/Results</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Announcement	Church-wide survey (appendix 1)	December 31
Recruitment	Invitation via email/phone call; announcing all participants; curriculum rubric (appendix 3)	January 7
Orientation	Pre-training questionnaires (appendix 5)	January 14
Training began	Started first session for 90 minutes	January 26
Training ended	Concluded last session for 90 minutes	March 9
Sending out #1	Evangelism field reports (appendix 7); Q&A	March 16
Sending out #2	Evangelism field reports (appendix 7); Q&A	March 23
Evaluation	Post-training questionnaires (appendix 5); commitment cards (appendix 9)	March 30
Celebration	Easter worship service	April 1

The personal evangelism training project was divided into four phases as follows: (1) pre-training, (2) training, (3) practicing, (3) and post-training.

### **Phase 1: Pre-Training**

The pre-training consisted of a three-week preparation period (weeks 1-3). This phase implemented the first goal of the project, which was to assess congregation members' understanding and practices of personal evangelism.

#### **Week 1**

On Sunday December 31, 2017, I announced the training project and conducted the church-wide survey during fellowship hours. I invited all church members to participate in this survey prior to the Sunday worship service. I called church members to prayerfully consider participating in an evangelism initiative that focused on personal evangelism training and accountability in fulfilling the Great Commission. The first sermon was delivered: "Reviving the Great Commission" (see appendix 10). After the service, the church-wide survey was distributed to all those in attendance (see appendix 1). The purpose of this church-wide survey was to offer an invitation to church members who were interested in following the Great Commission. This survey was also used to determine if the sermon had produced a change in thinking related to evangelism. The surveys were handed to the congregation (church-wide) after worship for them to complete during the fellowship meal. Roughly 89 percent of attendees responded; they filled out these surveys and returned them on the same day. The results show just how much the congregation was willing to participate in the project.

#### **Week 2**

On Sunday January 7, 2018, prior to the Sunday service, I presented the curriculum evaluation rubric to church leaders and deacons (see appendix 3). As I explained to them in the previous week, they would use this rubric to evaluate the

training materials that I already gave to them. The evaluation criteria exceeded the “sufficient” level of 90 percent (see appendix 4). All panelists marked them at 99.3 percent as a concurrence of proceeding forward.

This training contained the following objectives: (1) to increase church members’ awareness of personal evangelism, (2) to combine personal accountability among church members with the calling of being a witness, (3) to instruct church members about the necessity of evangelism, (4) to equip church members in the mode of urgent evangelism, and (5) to encourage church members to be faithful to God’s command to be his witnesses.

The recruitment occurred during this week as planned. During the church announcement, I called out the names of the fifteen selected candidates before the congregation. These fifteen trainees to-be were enlisted among the church members who previously completed the church-wide survey to participate in the personal evangelism training. I briefly mentioned to the congregation that all recruited persons selected from among church members had to meet certain criteria in order to participate in the training. First, the selected persons must be active members of CGVBC in good standing. This meant that the enlisted participants had to be born again and water baptized. Second, they had to be regularly attending Sunday worship, Wednesday night corporate prayer, Friday night Bible study, or Sunday Bible study. Third, participants had to have either no prior evangelism experience or only a one-time training. The reason for this standard was to ensure that the participants would take the training seriously and that the church had a desire for key people in the congregation to grow in their understanding of personal evangelism and to develop a passion for sharing the gospel.

The second sermon was delivered: “Keeping the Main Thing Main Thing” (see appendix 11). It addressed the priority of personal evangelism. During the fellowship meal after the sermon, I met with the fifteen selected trainees and assigned them into three teams. Table 2 provides a brief profile of the participants for training purposes.

Table 2. Profile of training participants

ID MM/DD	Ages	Sex	Years a Christian	# of Trainings	Team #
T-0101	70+	Male	11-15	Once	2
T-0102	60-69	Female	11-15	Once	2
T-0103	70+	Female	11-15	Once	2
T-0106	40-49	Male	1-5	None	2
T-0124	50-59	Female	25+	Twice	2
T-0126	18-20	Female	1-5	None	1
T-0323	18-20	Female	6-10	None	1
T-0331	40-49	Female	1-5	None	3
T-0509	40-49	Male	1-5	None	3
T-0608	18-20	Male	1-5	None	1
T-0905	40-49	Female	6-10	Once	3
T-1008	18-20	Female	1-5	None	1
T-1014	20-29	Male	6-10	Once	3
T-1015	40-49	Female	6-10	None	3
T-1217	18-20	Female	6-10	None	1

### Week 3

On Sunday, January 14, 2018, the third sermon was delivered: “Chasing the Chariot to Witness” (see appendix 12). It addressed the urgency of personal evangelism. After the fellowship meal, the one-hour training orientation with the fifteen trainees took place. I provided a synopsis of the training to participants. The training consisted of seven sessions held every Friday, 7:00-8:30 pm, from January 26 to March 9, 2018. Upon completion of the seven training sessions, there were two weeks of evangelism field practice. The field evangelism evaluation sessions took place on March 16 and 23, 2018. There was also a post-training evaluation session, which took place on March 30, 2018. Finally, the project concluded with a celebration service, which took place on April 1, 2018.

I also asked the participants to filled out the pre-training questionnaire (see appendix 5) and then return it at the next meeting. The purpose of the questionnaire was

to assess the participants' understanding and practice of personal evangelism prior to the training. All participants agreed to give their information as well as their perception of the personal evangelism practices that that might have. They were asked again to identify their appropriate age group and how long they had been baptized. They were also asked to give their birth month and day along with their name/nickname, previously provided on the church-wide survey, as a way of distinguishing between participants' answers. The results of the questionnaire were used as a baseline for evaluating the effectiveness of the training. The same questionnaire was also given at the end of the training to see if participants' opinions and attitudes changed as a result of the training. As shown in the test results (see appendix 6), the personal evangelism training had a positive impact on the participants, especially in the following areas: an 84-percent increase in Bible knowledge, a 91-percent increase in personal accountability, and a 92-percent increase in evangelistic skills.

## **Phase 2: Training**

### **Week 4**

On Sunday, January 21, 2018, the fourth sermon was delivered: "Sharing Jesus Christ in All Places" (see appendix 13). It addressed the necessity of personal evangelism. The very first training session started on Friday, January 26. The training began with the sharing of prayer concerns and prayer time. I welcomed all participants and allowed participants to introduce themselves. Next, I briefly reminded them about the timeline of project. For the next seven Friday evenings, we would meet to discuss the gospel and learn about personal evangelism.

The presentation started with a discussion on the following questions: Why should we share the gospel? When hearing the word "evangelism," do you think of adventure? If not, what word comes to your mind, and why? These questions were intended to refresh participants' mind about the awareness of evangelism.

I then presented two things that Christians must know before carrying out the Great Commission. The first thing is that believers must know what it means to be “born again”—since only people who are born again can experience salvation and, therefore, care enough to share the gospel to the lost and the people in their personal life. The term “born again” simply means one who is a follower of Jesus Christ. People who are not born again remain in their sin and separated from God. The term “born again” comes from Jesus’s encounter with Nicodemus in John 3. This religious leader, a Pharisee, approached Jesus at night and acknowledged that Jesus came from God. Jesus responds to Nicodemus, saying, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). The term “born again,” or “regeneration,” also appears in 1 Peter 1:3-5, 22-23 and Titus 3:3-7. To be born is a sovereign work of God, not a human word, wherein an individual becomes a new creation in Christ.<sup>1</sup>

The second thing that Christians must know before carrying out the Great Commission is the Great Commission itself. Believers share the gospel because we care and because the Lord commands us to do so. Jesus declares, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt 28:18-20 ESV). These verses are commonly known as the Great Commission. Another way to think of this is as a co-mission; this is a mission for every one of us to carry out together.

Jesus’s words are a command. One can put everything together like this: the Great Commission is to preach and teach; it is to proclaim and disciple. The Great Commission is Jesus’s command that all Christians must go and verbally communicate

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<sup>1</sup> J. D. Payne, *Evangelism: A Biblical Response to Today’s Questions* (Colorado Springs: Biblica, 2001), 30-31.

his good news of salvation to as many people as possible. As the apostle Paul states, “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ” (Col 1:28 ESV). So why should Christians share the gospel? According to the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20), the short answer is this: Jesus commanded us to take this message to the ends of the earth.

## Week 5

On Friday, February 2, 2018, the second training session took place. The topic was what to share. The session began with singing and the sharing of praises and prayer requests. Then, the participants broke into their small groups for prayer. After ten minutes, we all came together and talked about their assignment of writing their personal testimony. I talked to the groups about the gospel that we share. First, the objective is to lead people to the Lord Jesus and to bring them to maturity. God says he is looking “to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him” (2 Chr 16:9 ESV). That is, God wants to use all believers to bring other people to himself.

Second, if evangelism is about sharing the good news, then that assumes that Christians have good news to share. As Payne explains, “It is the Greek word *euaggelion* that is translated as ‘gospel’ and ‘good news.’”<sup>2</sup> What is the good news—the gospel—that we share? *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* defines “gospel” as “the joyous good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.”<sup>3</sup> The Gospel of Mark begins, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (1:1), with the word “gospel” referring to the story about Jesus. The Lord Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom (Matt 4:23; 9:35) and told his followers that the gospel was to be preached throughout the whole world (Matt 24:14). Paul wrote that he was “eager to preach the gospel” (Rom 1:15), and

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<sup>2</sup> Payne, *Evangelism*, 9-11.

<sup>3</sup> Donald F. Youngblood, ed., *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, rev. and upd. ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), s.v. “Gospel” (p. 516).

he and Barnabas preached the good news on their church-planning journeys (Acts 14:15). Finally, the writer of Hebrews notes that “the good news came to us” (Heb 4:2 ESV).

So, the gospel is what Christians are to share with others. It is the message about God’s work through Christ to bring salvation to fallen humanity. Paul notes that the gospel “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom 1:16). Paul also states that Jesus became sin for us so that we could become the “righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21). In the other words, Jesus, who was without sin, took our sin on himself in order to be a sacrifice on our behalf. He took our sin and gave us his own holiness. This is good news! Though this message is considered as foolishness to some, this “foolishness of God” is able to bring about salvation for those who believe (1 Cor 1:21-25).

The good news is not only about the forgiveness of sins but also about abundant life. Jesus declares, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). This good news that we share with others is not only about matters related to life in heaven. It also includes the fact that we can enter into a personal relationship with the God of the universe. It is Jesus’s desire that those who follow him have abundant life here and now. This does not mean that we will have everything we want or an easy-going lifestyle. Rather, it involves having the blessings and joy of the Lord in this life and being a part of the bride of Christ forever (Rev 21:9).

There are two things that one would consider about gospel. First, what is sin? The Bible says, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). Some will protest and say something like “I think I am a good person. I am not a sinner!” But Christians must remind them that the Bible states, “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). Second, what is salvation? The great preacher C. H. Spurgeon is often quoted as saying, “My entire theology can be condensed into four words. Jesus died for me” (1 Cor 15:3-4). This is salvation.



## Week 6

On Friday, February 9, 2018, the third training session took place. It began with the sharing of prayer concerns and prayer time. The main topic of the session was when to share the gospel. Personal evangelism is directed toward a certain individual or individuals, as opposed to media evangelism, street evangelism, or mass campaigns, which are directed toward many people. In the context of personal evangelism, the term “evangelism” refers to the intentional method or activity of sharing the gospel with others. The emphasis here is on the actual sharing of the gospel, not just having a spiritual conversation or doing any form of pre-evangelism. For this project, evangelism is the proclamation of the gospel to unbelievers or those who are unchurched.<sup>4</sup> On a broad level, evangelism can be defined as follows:

To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gifts of the Spirit to all who repent and believe. . . . [E]vangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God.<sup>5</sup>

Also, evangelism is a mandate from the Lord Jesus Christ given to his disciples. This is the Great Commission—to go and make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19-20). Believers cannot make disciples of others unless they have first heard the gospel message and accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Nevertheless, in spite of the many discussions, training opportunities, and seminars in which believers have participated, evangelism is still one of the most evaded and neglected ministries of the church. This is even more evident when it comes to sharing the gospel with people of a different culture. This study covered the importance and know-how of personal evangelism in general, with a specific emphasis on evangelism. It also included helps for

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<sup>4</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 1241.

<sup>5</sup> John R. W. Stott, ed., *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974-1989* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 20.

the participants to overcome their fear of sharing the gospel, especially with strangers. So, when should we share the gospel? The short answer is *whenever*. It is good to go out with the express purpose of telling others about Christ, but Christians must always be available to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. The Bible says we are to “be ready in season and out of season” (2 Tim 4:2)—that is, to be on duty at all times!

Further, evangelism is spiritual warfare because it deals with going into the enemy’s territory, spiritually and geographically. Therefore, it was essential that participants were equipped not only logistically but spiritually. Participants will persist in evangelism if they rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. I spent time explaining what it takes to have the power of the Spirit of God. Personal evangelism can stop when believers have doubts in their mind. For example, What if I do not feel like sharing the gospel? Do I have to offend people when I share the gospel? What if I make a mistake when sharing the gospel? What if someone asks me a question I cannot answer? Am I disobedient if I do not share the gospel with strangers? What if I cannot memorize all of those Bible verses? However, prayer can wipe away all of these doubts (and more).

## **Week 7**

On Friday, February 16, 2018, the fourth training session took place. It began with all participants’ joining together in prayer. The topic was whom we share the gospel to. There are several key points that Christians should know concerning this topic.

First, Christians must have a love for sharing the gospel—since effective sharing starts with caring. Jesus cares, and Luke 15 offers a perspective of how God views those who do not know him. In three metaphors, the Lord Jesus conveys how God loves people: (1) like a shepherd who has lost a sheep (vv. 4-7), (2) like a woman who has lost a coin (vv. 8-10), and (3) like a father who has lost a son (vv. 11-32). In other words, because the Father cares (vv. 11-31), believers should also care—Christians should care like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Second, Christians must allow God to use them. God does not call every Christian to be an evangelist (in terms of spiritual gifting), but God has commanded each of us to evangelize. Thus, persuading others to follow Lord Jesus Christ is our calling. We could ask God to grant us a vision for the lost as well as the power to be effective communicators of the precious gospel of Jesus Christ. Christians have nothing to be ashamed of with respect to the gospel—“for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom 1:16). The gospel changes lives both here and now as well as for eternity!

Third, Christians must pray for those whom they want to lead to Christ. Believers should witness to family members, relatives, and close friends; children; unbelievers or atheists; and anyone with whom they cross paths.

To prepare participants for encounters with unbelievers or atheists, I introduced them to two arguments for the existence of God: (1) the cosmological argument, (2) the teleological argument, and (3) the moral argument. It is important that believers be prepared to answer the objections of unbelievers (1 Pet 3:15), yet these arguments must only be used as a means to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The foundational argument used in this training session was the Kalam cosmological argument, which states the following: (1) Whatever begins to exist has a cause of its existence. (2) The universe began to exist. (3) Therefore, the universe has a cause of its existence.<sup>6</sup> Each participant was encouraged to memorize this syllogism and to consider possible objections to each point. For the most part, participants had not been formally introduced to any extrabiblical arguments for God’s existence. Thus, it was important to examine both the major and minor premises of the cosmological argument before attempting to claim that the conclusion is reasonable. The major premise is based

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<sup>6</sup> William L. Craig, *On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010), 74.

on what is clearly observed in all of creation, namely, that nothing comes into existence without a cause. If this statement is true for everything in creation, then it follows that the statement is true for creation itself. If one were able to reverse the expansion of the universe, then one would eventually end with nothing. Thus, it would be difficult for one to conclude that the universe is eternal. So, it follows that since the universe had a beginning, it has to have a cause. Theists believe that the first uncaused cause of all things, including the universe, is God.

Building on the cosmological argument that merely seeks to establish the existence and initial work of a creator, the teleological argument seeks to take the discussion one step further by presenting the creator as intelligent and purposeful. In order to make this case, participants were encouraged to use the following syllogism: (1) Every design has a designer. (2) The universe has a highly complex design. (3) Therefore, the universe had a designer.<sup>7</sup> It would be an understatement to say that creation is highly complex and has the appearance of design. Unbelievers, however, can be easily blinded to the obvious and will need to be challenged to consider the origins of such design and intentionality in creation. Hence, the participants were challenged to press this point and, in so doing, transition the conversation to the only real and reasonable answer to the design in creation, which is the God of the Bible.

Next, the moral argument was addressed in greater detail. This argument, as presented by William Craig, is as follows: (1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values and duties do not exist. (2) Objective moral values and duties do exist. (3) Therefore, God exists.<sup>8</sup> By introducing the moral argument, evangelists will be able to build on the previous conclusions by showing not only that the creator is intelligent but also that he is holy. Again, this argument, like the others, by itself will not be enough to

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<sup>7</sup> Geisler and Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, 95.

<sup>8</sup> Craig, *On Guard*, 129.

save unbelievers from the wrath of God; however, it can be a bridge to the gospel. Participants were told to immediately transition from the moral argument to the fall of mankind (Gen 3). In light of the holiness of God, unbelievers must be challenged to consider their own fallenness. This truth serves as the basis of the gospel and is the ideal transition to presenting the purpose of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross.

Participants were cautioned not to view any of the above philosophical arguments as an evangelistic presentation. Instead, they were instructed to use these arguments to afford them an opportunity to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, which is itself evangelism.

## **Week 8**

On Friday, February 23, 2018, the fifth training session took place. The session began with prayer, and the topic was how to turn a conversation opportunity into a spiritual thing as well as how to share the gospel. First, participants learned that sharing the gospel with someone must start with prayer, since it is different than a normal conversation. Larry R. Moyer writes,

One can know every way under the sun to turn a conversation, but if God does not provide an opportunity, it will never happen. Nor will it happen, if one does not have the boldness to take advantage of the opportunity. Therefore, one need to pray that God will provide both the opportunity and boldness to speak when the opportunity is given. I can testify firsthand to how He works. Many, many times as I've asked Him for opportunities, He has provided them.<sup>9</sup>

In addition, the apostle Paul revealed a fear in evangelism when requested that believers pray that God would grant him boldness in sharing the gospel—"that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel" (Eph 6:19 ESV). All witnesses need this kind of prayer just as much as Paul did so that when they open their mouth to speak the gospel, it may come out boldly.

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<sup>9</sup> Larry R. Moyer, *Larry Moyer's How to Book on Personal Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 21.

Second, the participants learned how to share the gospel. Specifically, they were introduced to gospel presentations—Evangelism Explosion (EE), FAITH, and Share Jesus Without Fear (SJWF)—so that they could further develop the presentations for their own uses (see appendix 14). At the end of the session, I asked all teams to develop their own gospel presentation by using the following outline: (1) God Loves You (John 3:16; Rom 5:8); (2) All Are Sinners (Rom 3:10, 23); (3) God’s Remedy for Sin (John 1:12; Rom 6:23; 1 Cor 15:3-4); (4) All May Be Saved (Rom 10:13; Rev 3:20a); (4.5) Decision to Receive Christ as Savior; (5) Assurance as a Believer (John 5:24; 20:31; Rom 10:9; 1 John 5:13).

To end the session, we lifted up praise to God and closed in prayer.

## **Week 9**

On Friday, March 2, 2018, the sixth training session took place. It began with prayer for participants’ concerns, and the topic was how to share the gospel with religious neighbors. First, I taught participants how to share the gospel with Confucians.

According to Charles Potter,

The original teachings of Confucius were not a religion at all. However, Confucianism is now and always has been a religion for the southeast Asian people. Confucius was religious himself. He assembled the religious literature of the Chinese and many of the other Orientals. . . .

It is true that Confucius ignored many things commonly thought essential to religion. It was not that he was opposed to these practices, but that he did not consider them essential. He did not encourage prayer, nor assemblies for worship. He did not believe in an anthropomorphic God, nor in immortality.<sup>10</sup>

The central theme of Confucianism is what is called the “Art of Living.” It is chiefly concerned with man as an individual living in social relations. Kenneth Boa comments, “All the teachings of Confucius, is to teach man how to live and what to live for; first, living by himself, and, second, living with others. It is clear from Confucius’

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<sup>10</sup> Charles Francis Potter, *The Great Religious Leaders* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1958), 138-39.

teachings that he was much more concerned about earth than he was about heaven. He had only a vague idea of the future life.”<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, An V. Pham offers some useful suggestions based on his experience for anyone who expects or desires to share the gospel with Confucians.<sup>12</sup> One needs to be prepared to cite and explain specific Bible verses supporting basic Christian doctrines that are related to Confucian teachings, such as the following: (1) family relationships (Exod 20:12; 1 Cor 7:1-16; Heb 13:14; 1 Pet 3:1-7); (2) loyalty to rulers (Matt 17:24-27; 22:15-22; 1 Pet 2:13-17); (3) Christ will return and reign as king (Isa 11:4; Rev 2:26-2), and the millennium and the new heavens and new earth are hope of every Christian (Rev 20-22); and (4) the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Second, I taught participants how to share the gospel with Roman Catholics. Protestants and Catholics affirm the same beliefs about God’s nature as well as Jesus’s nature, death, burial, and resurrection. In addition, Catholics are correct to encourage people to read the Bible (2 Tim 3:15-17). However, the additional Apocrypha to the Bible are uninspired and spurious and, therefore, should be rejected. All religious teachings must be evaluated in comparison with the Bible. The Bereans used the Scriptures to verify the truthfulness of the apostle Paul’s teaching (Acts 17:11). Jesus warned about the possibility of tradition’s perverting the intent of God’s Word (Matt 15:2-3,6; Mark 7:8-9, 13). Neither the tradition nor the teaching authority (i.e., the magisterium) of the Catholic Church has an authority equal to the Scriptures, but Catholics obey the priests, the priests obey the bishops, and the bishops obey the pope, to whom all are bound by solemn oath.

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<sup>11</sup> Kenneth Boa, *Cults, World Religions, and You* (Wheaton, IL: SP, 1988), 39.

<sup>12</sup> An Van Pham, “Establishing a Language-Culture Congregation in the Savannah Baptist Association” (DMin project, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1990), 76.

All of these listed issues are relevant since they align with biblical teaching. Hence, Christians must share the gospel to Catholics in order to win them to God.<sup>13</sup>

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) suggests the following guidelines for effective witnessing to Catholics:

1. Remember that salvation does not depend on church membership but comes through faith in Jesus Christ (Eph 2:8-9).
2. Pray and trust in the Holy Spirit to use the gospel message to reach the hearts and minds of those who are lost.
3. Share a testimony of your personal faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Your testimony of what Jesus has accomplished in your life can have a great impact on them. Keep your testimony short. Avoid using terms that are unfamiliar to Catholics, such as “walked the aisle,” “got saved,” and “born again.”
4. Share the assurance of salvation that God’s grace gives you. Make sure that you communicate that your assurance is derived from trusting Jesus and not from your good works or your ability to remain faithful (1 John 5:13).
5. Give them a New Testament. Catholics are now encouraged to read the Bible. Point out texts that explain salvation (John 3:16; Rom 3:23; 5:8; 6:23; 10:9, 13; Eph 2:8-9).
6. Avoid getting bogged down with secondary issues that are not central to salvation.
7. Keep the gospel presentation Christ-centered.<sup>14</sup>

Third, I taught participants how to share the gospel with Buddhists. NAMB offers the following advice to those who want to share the gospel with Buddhists:

Buddhism is the belief system of those who follow the Buddha, the Enlightened One; a title given to its founder. Saving oneself comes by following a regimen (path or ritual) and by meditation and reciting mantras. There is no personal relationship with the Buddha or any of the bodhisattvas (saviors who have foregone nirvana to stay back and help others to achieve it). Worship is expressed as adoration of the Buddha and one’s ancestors. Buddhists struggle to make sense of this life and to live out one’s expected dharma (required conduct) as the painful and slow road to moksha (salvation) when all desire is eliminated and one achieves final and ultimate enlightenment. . . .

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<sup>13</sup> North American Mission Board, “Roman Catholicism: Overview,” March 30, 2016, <https://www.namb.net/apologetics/resource/roman-catholicism-overview/>.

<sup>14</sup> North American Mission Board, “Roman Catholicism: Overview.”



Buddhism is an impersonal religion of self-perfection, the end of which is death (extinction)—not life.<sup>15</sup>

According to NAMB, “The gospel can be appealing to Buddhists if witnessing focuses on areas of personal need where the Buddhist belief system is weak.”<sup>16</sup> NAMB suggests that Christians keep the following principles in mind when witnessing to Buddhists:

1. Remember that Buddhists have several special interests: attempting to live according to the principles of the Eightfold Path; escaping from the suffering of endless life; and finding peace through meditation (common in American Buddhism).
2. Avoid terms such as “new birth,” “rebirth,” “regeneration,” or “born again.” Use alternatives such as “endless freedom from suffering, guilt, and sin,” “new power for living a holy life,” “promise of eternal good life without suffering,” or “gift of unlimited merit.”
3. Emphasize the uniqueness of Christ.
4. Focus on the gospel message and do not get distracted by details of Buddhist doctrine.
5. Understand Buddhist beliefs enough to discern weaknesses that can be used to make the gospel appealing.
6. While using bridge concepts, be careful not to reduce Christian truth to a form of Buddhism. Buddhism has been good at accommodating other religions. Do not say “Buddhism is good, but Christianity is easier.”
7. Share your own testimony, especially your freedom from guilt, assurance of heaven (no more pain), and personal relationship with Christ.
8. Prepare with prayer. Do not witness in your own strength.<sup>17</sup>

This training session concluded with an encouragement from the words of William Fay and Ralph Hodge: “Success in witnessing is not bringing someone to Christ.

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<sup>15</sup> North American Mission Board, “Buddhism,” March 30, 2016, <https://www.namb.net/apologetics/resource/buddhism/>.

<sup>16</sup> North American Mission Board, “Buddhism.”

<sup>17</sup> North American Mission Board, “Buddhism.”

It is living out your Christian life, and sharing the gospel as you trust God for the results.”<sup>18</sup>

## **Week 10**

On Friday, March 9, 2018, the seventh and final training session took place. It began with prayer, and the topic was using helpful equipment to share gospel. Anyone can learn gospel tracts and booklets and use them well alongside the Bible. Personal evangelism is made easy with tracts. I provided participants with a list of tracts that they could use on the mission field. Some bilingual gospel tracts include *Eternal Life* (Georgia Baptist Mission Board) and *Is Any Religion Good?* (Binh T. Pham). In addition, NAMB has a helpful tract that is available in English: *God’s Special Plan for Children*. Finally, Lifeway has several English gospel tracts available: *Your Ticket to Heaven*, *Father’s Love Letter*, *Don’t Be Left Behind*, *Life’s Ultimate Questions*, *He Did It Just for You*, *Can I Be Forgiven?*, *Don’t Waste Your Life*, *The Number of Hope, 3:16*, *The Evidence of God*, *Born Again*, *Are You Going to Heaven?*, *Love Is . . .*, *Love Worth Finding*, *He Arose*, *The Gift*, *What Is the Gospel*, *How to Become a Christian*, *Hope for Hard Time*, *Quest for Joy*, *Ten Reasons Jesus Came to Die*, and *You Are Special*.

I suggested that all training participants select the tracts that would help them present the gospel. Alvin Reid comments on tracts, saying, “Spurgeon said more people are in heaven because of tracts than any other means. They are valuable not only because the witness on tract with the gospel but because you can leave them with people for later reading and reflection.”<sup>19</sup> Reid also lists six useful principles for employing tracts in witnessing:

1. Never use a tract without reading it (some are weak theologically).

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<sup>18</sup> William Fay and Ralph Hodge, *Share Jesus without Fear*, rev. ed. (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2008), 7.

<sup>19</sup> Alvin L. Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 197-98.

2. Brevity is desirable.
3. Use a tract that is attractive.
4. Be enthusiastic about the tract's contents.
5. Be sure the tract sets forth the facts of the gospel.
6. The tract should explain the process by which a person becomes a Christian, particularly emphasizing repentance and faith.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, gospel tracts can be used in conjunction with gospel presentations methods like CWT, EE, SJWF, or FAITH. Believers can use the words from gospel tracts to assist them in sharing Christ. Reid further writes, “Make sure the presentation believers use emphasizes the need of the lost person, as well as the work of Christ, and the biblical response (repentance and faith). A person cannot be saved unless he realizes he is lost and in need of saving.”<sup>21</sup>

The purpose of using gospel tracts is to help Christians communicate the gospel clearly in one-on-one conversation with the lost as well as to help individuals meet the God who created them. However, whether Christians employ gospel tracts or gospel presentations, it is imperative that they try to lead the lost with whom they are engaging to make a decision for Christ. We were obligated to God and to those we engage with the gospel to ask for a decision whenever possible—since gospel tracts and presentations are incomplete without a call to make a decision. In assisting people to make a commitment to Christ, we must remember that we cannot always determine what is happening in their hearts. We must explain the message, pray for them, and trust the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, gospel tracts and presentations can be extremely helpful in personal evangelism.

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<sup>20</sup> Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 197-98.

<sup>21</sup> Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 198.

### **Phase 3: Practicing**

#### **Week 11**

On Sunday, March 11, 2018, during the church service announcements, I informed the congregation that during the next two weeks, all participants in the personal evangelism training would be going out to the mission field, after which time we would resume our normal Friday evening schedule to discuss participants' field reports. I also posted a sign at the gate of the church building to remind all church members about the mission field when they left the church building. The sign read, "You are now entering the mission field." On the mission field, participants teamed up with one another and used the skills learned from the training to share the gospel.

On Friday March 16, 2018, I asked the participants to fill out the personal evangelism field report (appendix 7) and to submit their questions for discussion and evaluation. The reports allowed participants to reflect on their witnessing account and to evaluate their witnessing experiences. This type of self-evaluation gave participants an opportunity to reflect on their personal ability at sharing the gospel with others as well as any barriers that they faced during the field training or might face in the future. The reports provided great insight into the application of the training since it considered how the training session materials influenced participants' actual sharing of their faith. The evaluations also allowed for future training sessions to be tailored to the needs of church members. To aid in the time of evaluation and reflection, the following questions were posed:

1. What was the very first requirement to become a successful witness?
2. How do we know there is a God?
3. What are some obstacles that keep us from inviting people to church?
4. What are some suggestions to help motivate people to share their faith?
5. What are the suggestions for the local church become more evangelistic?
6. What fears do you have for doing personal evangelism?

7. Where are your neighbors to reach?
8. Is the Bible really the Word of God?

These were also some common questions that witnesses were asked more than once when evangelizing the lost in the local community. The discussion with its answers would be of great help to participants who are learning to be fruitful witnesses for the kingdom of God (see appendix 8). At the end of the session, I assigned all participants to do the following: (1) think about who your neighbors are; (2) make a prayer list of friends or persons whom you would consider witnessing to; (3) have prayer points for them; and (4) practice a gospel presentation.

### **Week 12**

On Friday, March 23, 2018, I asked the participants to fill out the personal evangelism field report (appendix 7) and to submit their questions for discussion and evaluation. The purpose of opening questions section was to help the trainees clear out a number of questions. By discussing the needs of the participants, the training addressed key issues that participants were facing during witnessing. As a result, participants became more comfortable with asking questions concerning various witnessing situations. The meeting lasted about 90 minutes and closed with prayer.

## **Phase 4: Post-Training**

### **Week 13**

The post-training session took place on Friday, March 30, 2018, after the Good Friday service and the lunch fellowship meal. Three important items were covered during this session. First, participants agreed to continue the ministry of prayer afterward the training concluded. In the ministry of prayer, each person committed to pray for the other individual's ability to faithfully carry out the Great Commission by seeking to share the gospel with those whom they meet. The prayers focused on the individual who is the witness as well as on God's working in the lives of those receiving the gospel. Also,

participants committed to support one another when praying together. Through such support, participants made a commitment to encourage their fellow partners in the faith in the area of evangelism. This encouragement came through building one another up for the difficult labor that lies ahead and being there for one another when the journey becomes difficult. Participants agreed to be available for one another during this time.

Second, members devoted themselves to challenge one another in creating a lifestyle of evangelism. Upon signing the personal evangelism commitment card (see appendix 9), participants dedicated themselves to attempt to share the gospel a minimum of twice a week. The intent was to create a lifestyle that focused on seeking God's leading through everyday life as God opens door for believers to share the gospel. This challenge allowed members to ask one another if each had faithfully shared the gospel during the prior week. Hence, the commitment card was a way for participants to hold one another accountable concerning the Great Commission as well as to be held accountable themselves. This accountability was not intended to cause stress or a sense of failure or judgment; instead, it served as an avenue of encouragement and support so that participants could grow in their spiritual lives.

Third, participants were reminded to fill out the post-training questionnaire (appendix 5). I reminded them that the results of the questionnaire would help me improve my leadership as a pastor as well as my strategy in personal evangelism. Their comments would be used to guide the future ministries of the church. I repeated my commitment to assist them with whatever concerns they might have as they continue in personal evangelism among their friends and other people in the coming days. The session closed with a prayer in which I specifically asked God to bless participants as they continued to practice presenting the gospel to the lost.

## **Week 14**

The implementation of this project concluded with a celebration worship service on Easter Sunday, April 1, 2018. After the service, the congregation celebrated Easter with visitors and new church members at the potluck fellowship. In addition, the congregation conducted a special program in order to build up a celebrative spirit as they dined together. They took time to recognize those who joined the training. The detailed testimonies of the trainees were very encouraging, so much so that the congregation named the training group the evangelism focus group of the church and even suggested that the group be expanded into multiple groups in a near future. To conclude, I gave closing remarks of appreciation and commendation to all of the participants in the personal evangelism training. I also asked all participants to return the post-training questionnaire (appendix 5) as well as renew their commitment to personal evangelism as represented by the Bible characters that they had learned about. We ended the program with a closing prayer where everyone held hands together in a circular formation.

## **Conclusion**

Although the success of this project could be measured with numerical results alone, there are three additional quantifiable things showing that the training yielded positive outcomes. First, all participants initiated their personal evangelism practices—in the power of the Holy Spirit and trusting God with the results—in a manner that fostered a healthy culture of successful witnessing. Second, this training challenged participants to step out of their comfort zone and be true witnesses, and it helped them become bold and fearless in their efforts to win souls for the Christ. Third, during the training and post-training—at least seventeen people responded to the gospel, were baptized, and were added into the family of God as a result. Even though the personal evangelism training was carried out over a fourteen-week period, it was critical training for the life of CGVBC. It appeared that personal evangelism was as necessary to the church's survival as it was to the salvation of other people's souls.

Also, throughout the course of this project, a few recommendations were suggested that could be implemented in future projects regarding personal evangelism. Chapter 5 discusses in detail possible improvements for future church training and outreach programs. My heart's desire is this experience has a lasting impact on the spiritual lives of the church members and on the church. My prayer is that all church members will together form an evangelism focus group that eagerly complies with the apostle Paul's admonition to Timothy: "And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 2:2-3 ESV).



## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

This chapter provides a detailed evaluation of this project. It addresses the purpose and goals as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the project. This evaluation also includes proposed modifications of the project to address the weaknesses and provides theological and personal reflections regarding the overall project.

#### **Evaluation of the Project's Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to train the members at Central Georgia Vietnamese Baptist Church (CGVBC) to personally evangelize the lost living in the surrounding Vietnamese community. The church members must be intentional in their efforts to achieve this purpose. The implementation of this project was the first step to accomplishing the project's purpose. The completion of the training provided project participants a proven method for personal evangelism. Consequently, the church now has a tool that can be used intentionally and repeatedly to equip other groups of believers to foster a culture of soul-winning in CGVBC as a whole. The project was successfully at equipping church members to live out the Great Commission.

The church-wide survey (see appendix 1) was made available to church members who attended church on Sunday December 31, 2017, and I requested that they fill out, sign, and return the survey to me if they would like to receive training in personal evangelism. Out of the total number of surveys disseminated, 89 percent of the surveys that were completed, signed, and returned to me indicated a willingness to participate in the training. This response is evidence that there is a large number of members at

CGVBC who are interested in initiating personal evangelism. It is also evidence of a church-wide awareness of evangelism and efforts to achieve this purpose.

There are two additional indicators that the purpose of this project was successfully met. First, a comparison of the pre- and post-training questionnaires (see appendix 5) completed by training participants reveals that participants realized an increase in their level of confidence related to personal evangelism. For example, responses to the statement “On a scale of 1 to 7 (7 being the highest) what is your level of confidence in relation to sharing your faith with others” showed an increase from an average of 6.0 on the pre-training questionnaire to an average of 8.9 on post-training questionnaire.

The second indicator that the project’s purpose had been met came from the class discussion during the final training session. Most participants expressed the thought that personally sharing the gospel with someone was very intimidating because they had never been taught how to share. One participant commented that after completing this training, he has become much less intimidated because he realizes how easy it can be now that he has a pattern for how to share. The entire class expressed agreement with his comment. In addition, one participant expressed her frustration that in all her years attending church as a Christian, she had never received any training on how to share the gospel. This fact was especially true now that she is confident that it is such a simple thing to do. Again, other participants expressed that they shared similar feelings. Participants also expressed their unanimous agreement that the church must continue to offer this personal evangelism training on an ongoing basis.

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

At the outset of the project, four goals were created to measure the effectiveness of the project. Each of the goals focused on creating a culture of evangelism within the church and within individual believers.

The first goal was to assess congregation members' understanding and practices of personal evangelism. This goal was measured by administering a church-wide survey to congregation members (see appendix 1). This goal was considered successfully met when at least two-thirds of the church members completed the survey and the data had been analyzed, yielding a clearer picture of the participants' understanding and practices of personal evangelism in the church. As mentioned above, 89 percent of church members completed the survey, and I analyzed the data as indicated (see appendix 2). So, this goal was successfully achieved.

The second goal was to develop a nine-week teaching series on personal evangelism. This goal was measured by an expert panel who used a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, and relevance of the teaching series (see appendix 3). This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criteria met or exceeded the "sufficient" level. All panelists marked all evaluation criteria (at 99.3 percent) as exceeding the "sufficient" level, so this goal was successfully achieved (see appendix 4).

The third goal was to train the participants in personal evangelism using the nine-week teaching series. This goal was measured by administering a pre- and post-series questionnaire to gauge congregation members' understanding and practices of personal evangelism (see appendix 5). This goal was considered successfully met when a positive statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-series questionnaire scores was achieved. This goal was indeed successfully met, for the data analysis indicated an increase up to an 89-percent confidence level (see appendix 6).

The fourth goal was to challenge the participants to proclaim the gospel message in our community with an affable presentation of the gospel as well as to encourage the participants to apply the acquired biblical principles and knowledge in their homes and in the church. This goal was measured as follows: (1) the participants engaged in a four-hour personal evangelism initiative within the neighborhood of

CGVBC (see appendix 7); (2) the participants filled out a covenant commitment card in which the participating families covenant to pray together, worship together in their homes, serve together in a ministry capacity at the church, and reduce their barriers between family, church, and community in personal evangelism (see appendix 9). This goal was considered successfully met when (1) at least 70 percent of the participants completed the personal evangelism field report and (2) at least 90 percent of the participants signed the commitment card. Ninety three percent of the participants completed the personal evangelism field report, and 100 percent of the participants signed the commitment card. Therefore, this goal was successfully accomplished.

### **Strengths of the Project**

Overall, the project participants and I are satisfied with the project because it has initiated a positive spark within the congregation that has caused more church members to want to learn more about personal evangelism—since personal evangelism training had never been done at CGVBC and the people wanted to learn how to defend their faith, reach other cultures, and reach out to their families and friends about the love of Christ. I was asked if I could do a second training again soon for the entire congregation. The peak of the project exposed numerous strengths about personal evangelism and Christians.

The results of the training met the following desired objectives: (1) to increase awareness of personal evangelism, (2) to combine personal accountability among church members with the calling of being a witness, (3) to instruct church members on the necessity of evangelism, (4) to equip church members in the mode of urgent evangelism, and (5) to encourage church members to be obedient to God's command to be his witnesses. The training also revealed other strengths: (1) the participants gained significant knowledge about personal evangelism; (2) they took initiative to carry out the Great Commission through personal evangelism; (3) they participated, with

accountability, in the church's work such that spiritual growth occurred; (4) they continued to do personal evangelism on their own schedule since they now know how to share the gospel; and (5) they expanded the eternal dimension of God's kingdom through their participation in the project.

Concerning the first strength, the questionnaire results demonstrated that significant learning occurred among the participants. A comparison of pre- and post-series questionnaire responses (see appendix 5) indicates numerous advances in biblical and theological knowledge concerning the Great Commission, evangelistic skill, and personal accountability formation. The participants held true to project's aim concerning personal evangelism.

The second strength recognized was the willingness of participants to carry out personal evangelism and outreach. Before the project was implemented, the congregation often viewed evangelism as the responsibility of the pastor, ministers, elders, deacons, or certain Christians. However, this project has taught them that outreach and personal evangelism are every Christian's responsibility. The participants also learned that personal evangelism and social outreach are distinguishable yet inseparable. In addition, as a result of the project, every Christian within the local church is held accountable to and passionate about spreading the gospel as well as witnessing to the world about Christ.

As to the third strength, participants realized significant spiritual growth throughout and as a result of the training. Previously, some church members only came on Sunday mornings but never engaged the church house throughout the week. However, their commitment to the training, their adding to the training discussions, and their sharing their personal evangelism stories with one another created an inviting and unified environment. Those who consistently participated in the training developed lasting bonds with one another.

As to the fourth strength, participants now know how to spread the gospel to the lost, they care more about the lost people in society, and they are now passionate

about personal evangelism. Several participants expressed their passion by expanding their boundary of personal evangelism to long-distance friends and relatives by calling or by e-mailing them weekly during the personal evangelism training. This particular growth encouraged me to work harder at preparing the training lessons each week.

The fifth strength of the project concerned the expansion of the eternal dimension of God's kingdom through participants active participation in the project. This work was not about buying new land for moving, landscaping the church grounds, expanding the fellowship hall, painting the interior of building, or roofing the sanctuary. The project was about training God's people how to do personal evangelism and lead lost souls into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. To this end, there was some successes—at least seventeen people responded to the gospel, were baptized, and entered into the family of God during the training. Also, another five souls accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior during the post-training. Hence, the most incredible aspect of this project was its ability, by God's grace, to shape eternity for the glory of God.

In sum, a change has occurred in the participants' lifestyle because of this training. All participants have gone from being reluctant about personal evangelism to being on fire for spreading the gospel to non-believers. I pray that each participant continues to have boldness and passion to spread the gospel everywhere they go.

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

In addition to the strengths, a few weaknesses were identified as the project progressed. The first weakness is that the training sessions did not initially incorporate a method for sharing the gospel with children. Since the Evangelism Explosion (EE) and Sharing Jesus without Fear (SJWF) methods focus only on adults, they will not work well with children due to their limited ability to understand. After this weakness was

identified, however, I demonstrated how participants could use John 3:16 to share the gospel with children.

The second weakness involved the amount of time needed for each training session. Since these sessions on Friday evening, the participants probably assumed that the trainings would be the same length as the Sunday evening service, which is about a half an hour. Most sessions, however, required more than one-and-a-half hours, especially the sessions that included exercises. Although no one complained or even seemed to notice when we exceeded the stated timeframe, all participants and I felt rushed. I would have sensed more comfort with the timeframe if I had clearly conveyed that each session would last between one-and-a-half to two hours.

The third weakness was the practical application outside the classroom. Although greeting people at public locations provided an opportunity for participants to experience stepping outside their comfort zone, it did not necessarily provide witnessing opportunities. It was hoped that the requirement to complete the personal evangelism field report (see appendix 7) would encourage participants to employ evangelism methods—such as EE, SJWF, or FAITH—outside the classroom; however, that only happened in a limited capacity. A few participants mentioned that they used these methods completely. Other participants indicated they partially used the methods. However, more than half of them actually used the methods entirely. It seems that most of the participants experienced the reported encounters before they finished the personal evangelism training. Now that the training has been completed, I believe the participants will use these available methods along with their favorite gospel tracts in the future. I do not feel that this weakness indicates a failure to equip the participants to share their faith; it simply indicates that the participants were not fully ready to use these methods.

As long as believers use practical techniques and effective tools to share their faith and bring others to Christ, they are carrying out personal evangelism. According to

Timothy Beougher, no particular method is “right,” but “there is a wrong method—to sit back and do nothing!”<sup>1</sup>

### **What I Would Do Differently**

Based on feedback from training evaluation recommendations and my own reflections, I would make the following improvement to this personal evangelism training project:

1. Add a specific emphasis on encouraging and expecting follow up to occur after personal evangelism encounters.
2. Add thirty minutes to each training session to provide more time to cover the material, and more clearly convey the training length expectations to participants.
3. Make more gospel tracts available to participants when deploying them on field for personal evangelism encounters.
4. Provide more assignments where participants team up with partners to do complete field work.
5. Provide a better field reporting system that will enhance the accountability and experience sharing among participants.

### **Theological Reflections**

Before offering any personal reflections, this analysis considers the overall project in light of the theological basis upon which it was built. There are several theological impressions that give proof of the important truths observed during the progress of the project.

First, God is the one who gives the increase (1 Cor 3:6). Evangelism and outreach are spiritual works; thus, only God can move hearts and draw people to himself (John 6:44). As a church seeks to grow, organizing and planning are important, but seeking the Lord through prayer should be the first priority. It is clear that prayer is a main concern in the work of the church. Everything done must be started in prayer. Thus,

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy K. Beougher, *Overcoming Walls to Witnessing* (Wheaton, IL: Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 1993), 20.



before any work begins, the church must be earnest in prayer, asking God for his will to be done. As the personal evangelism training project progressed, I became increasingly convinced that prayer would be key to the success of the project. Sometimes, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that the work of the church is a spiritual work. The project was as successful as it could have been due to a lot of prayers.

Second, I have learned that there are many Scriptures that speak about the works of small groups. The idea of forming small groups in the congregation to carry out personal evangelism and outreach was so practical. I really did not comprehend how many passages in the Bible spoke about the use of small groups. Jesus used small groups in the feeding of the five thousand (Mark 6:39-44) and the sending out of the Twelve to do evangelism and ministry (Matt 10:1-8; Luke 6:12-13). Nehemiah used small groups when rebuilding the wall in Jerusalem (Neh 4:12-17). Moses used small groups in the wilderness at the advice of his father-in-law, Jethro, to better help in judging the people of Israel (Exod 18:18-27). The early church in Acts could be considered a small group that began ministering in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:42-47). Hence, the use of small groups in the Bible helps to better solidify the use of small groups in personal evangelism.

Third, the church is God's instrument to reach lost people in a dying world. The Lord commissioned the church to go and make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:18-20). Thus, the emphasis on personal evangelism and outreach must become a priority of the entire church. Generally, the entire church thinks inwardly rather than outwardly since church members are so focused on their own needs that they forget about the lost and hurting people outside the four walls of the church. I reminded all participants that when they leave the church gate, they are entering the mission field. In the process of thinking about outreach, Christians must keep foremost in their minds the purpose for implementing the project in the first place—so that people may come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

It is my prayer that this project has not been just a training but has led to significant spiritual growth that fosters a lifestyle of evangelism in the church. I hope that the members of CGVBC now have a greater awareness of the lost people living near or far from the church and their responsibility to seek after them.

### **Personal Reflections**

There are at least five lessons that I have learned from the process of training church members to do personal evangelism. First, and most importantly, it is critical to set a goal of training church members to evangelize the lost using accountability relationships that foster a culture of soul-winning. The project used this as directional point to strive for. Ministry without a goal can go in circles without achieving much (Prov 29:18).

Second, proper planning is key to the success of any project. We can rely upon God to do his part, but the pastor and the congregation must also fulfill their labors, as written in 1 Corinthians 3:6. Planning was needed throughout the project. From the sermon series to the congregation to the actual implementation of the project itself, nothing could have taken place without proper planning.

Third, it can be difficult to get volunteers to participate. In a secular world, the threat of losing a salary is to a motivation for participation, but in the church, where most of the laborers are volunteers, it is a different story. However, when people realize that the work they do is important and necessary, they will earnestly take part. During this project, I found, at times, that the level of commitment was enhanced when participants signed the commitment cards with their prayers. This is the lifestyle that I prayed for since all three teams voluntarily committed to continue personal evangelism after training.

Fourth, evangelism needs to be an intentional priority of the members of the church. During the progress of the project, evangelism was considered the first priority among all members of the church. My prayer is that evangelism will remain a priority.

Fifth, the pastor and church leaders must constantly encourage church members to live out the Great Commission. In addition, the pastor can help to mobilize the congregation in evangelism through preaching series. Personal evangelism must be initiated in all ministries, and outreach teams must be formed within the church to carry out the Great Commission. The pastor and church leaders must commit to ongoing training efforts in order to better equip members to advance the work of the Great Commission by the church as a whole.

### **Conclusion**

This project and the DMin program have allowed me to grow spiritually and mentally. I have gained invaluable insight into leading the church to be faithful to the Lord's commandment of fulfilling the Great Commission. I hope that the rest of church members will get this training. Also, my prayer is that all trainees will continue to use the tools that they have gained from participating in this project and will continue to develop a Great Commission culture at CGVBC. This project has put the congregation back on track. We now see the task of evangelism as the number one priority. I believe that the best is yet to come for CGVBC and that we are on the road to becoming a healthy Great Commission church.

APPENDIX 1  
CHURCH-WIDE SURVEY

**Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to evaluate understanding of key biblical and practical issues of personal evangelism. This research is being conducted by Long T. Nguyen for purposes of collecting data for a ministry project at Central Georgia Vietnamese Baptist Church, Warner Robins, Georgia. In this research, you will indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with certain statements. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

**Part 1**

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

1. What is your age?

- Under 20
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70 or above

2. What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

3. How long have you been a Christian?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- More than 25 years

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

- None
- One
- Two
- Three
- More than three

5. How often do you share your personal testimony?

- 2-5 times per week
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Once a year
- Very rarely
- Never
- I do not understand this question

6. How often do you specifically share the gospel message?

- 2-5 times per week
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Once a year
- Very rarely
- Never
- I do not understand this question

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

- None
- 1 individual
- 2 individuals
- 3 individuals
- 4 individuals
- 5 individuals
- More than 5 individuals
- I do not understand this question

8. Please check the primary reason why you do not engage in evangelism:

- Fear of rejection
- Do not want to come across as pushing your religious views on a person
- Fear of hostility
- Worried you are not engaging in evangelism correctly
- Not a priority

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

- 0-1 individual
- 2-5 individuals
- 6-10 individuals
- 10+ individuals

## Part 2

Using the following scale as a guide (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7), please respond truthfully to each statement according to your personal beliefs, practices, and experiences by placing the appropriate number in the blank space preceding the statement. Also, please circle the number of any statement you do not understand.

[7] Strong Agree      [6] Agree      [5] Slight Agree      [4] Undecided  
[3] Slightly Disagree    [2] Disagree    [1] Strong Disagree

- \_\_\_\_ . 1. A good moral person can go to heaven even though they have never professed faith in Jesus.
- \_\_\_\_ . 2. Those who do not have the gift of evangelism are not required to share the gospel.
- \_\_\_\_ . 3. Simply living a Christian life in front of a lost person is sufficient to lead them to the Lord, words are not always necessary.
- \_\_\_\_ . 4. While all Christians have some responsibility for evangelism, the primary responsibility for evangelism lies with pastor and the trained ministerial staff.
- \_\_\_\_ . 5. Hell is a literal place of fire and torment.
- \_\_\_\_ . 6. God's love will not allow Him to send anyone to hell.
- \_\_\_\_ . 7. Simply serving people and meeting their needs is a good way to evangelize, words are not necessary.
- \_\_\_\_ . 8. I do not have any kind of personal evangelism training in the past.
- \_\_\_\_ . 9. Most unchurched people in my life (co-workers, family, friends, etc.) are good people. They will be fine even though they do not receive Christ.
- \_\_\_\_ . 10. I am quite busy! So I would not enroll for personal evangelism training at this time.
- \_\_\_\_ . 11. I think somehow the personal evangelism is not much relevant to any Christian lives.

Thank you for participating in this very important survey. When you arrive for church or Sunday school next Sunday you may place the completed form in the collection basket located in either foyer, or you may give them to your Sunday school teachers.

APPENDIX 2  
CHURCH-WIDE SURVEY (RESULTS)

**Agreement to Participate**

**Part 1**

There was eighty-nine percent of responses. All volunteers filled out the surveys and returned as requested. The answers will allow for statistical analysis and evaluation.

1. What is your age?	Individuals
Under 20	10
20-29	11
30-39	10
40-49	12
50-59	13
60-69	8
70 or above	4

2. What is your sex?	Individuals
Male	33
Female	35

3. How long have you been a Christian?	Individuals
Less than 1 year	7
1-5 years	12
6-10 years	11
11-15 years	14
16-20 years	10
21-25 years	9
More than 25 years	5

4. How many “evangelism training” courses have you attended?	Individuals
None	42
One	16
Two	6
Three	4
More than three	0
5. How often do you share your personal testimony?	Individuals

2-5 times per week	3
Once a week	5
Once a month	1
Once a year	12
Very rarely	1
Never	39
I do not understand this question	7

6. How often do you specifically share the gospel message?	Individuals
2-5 times per week	3
Once a week	5
Once a month	1
Once a year	12
Very rarely	1
Never	39
I do not understand this question	7

7. How many individuals have you personally led to saving faith in Jesus Christ?	Individuals
None	47
1 individual	5
2 individuals	1
3 individuals	0
4 individuals	0
5 individuals	0
More than 5 individuals	0
I do not understand this question	14

8. Please check the primary reason why you do not engage in evangelism:	Individuals
Fear of rejection	19
Do not want to come across as pushing your religious views on a person	11
Fear of hostility	15
Worried you are not engaging in evangelism correctly	23
Not a priority	0

9. How many people do you have in your friendships that are not believers?	Individuals
0-1 individual	10
2-5 individuals	11
6-10 individuals	39
10+ individuals	8



## Part 2

The following table displayed data entry of sixty-eight responding out from attendees responded of seventy-seven surveys handing out. The survey responses reflect the level understanding of participants in general about biblical and practical issues of personal evangelism prior the training. The seventy-seven percent also demonstrate that are great candidates for personal evangelism training.

Possible Responses:

[1] Strong Disagree [2] Disagree [3] Slight Disagree [4] Undecided  
[5] Slightly Agree [6] Agree [7] Strong Agree

11 Statements (68 responses)	Possible Responses						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. A good moral person can go to heaven even though they have never professed faith in Jesus.	5	3	7	20	10	13	10
2. Those who do not have the gift of evangelism are not required to share the gospel.	1	2	12	12	6	5	30
3. Simply living a Christian life in front of a lost person is sufficient to lead them to the Lord, words are not always necessary.	5	8	6	9	3	18	19
4. While all Christians have some responsibility for evangelism, the primary responsibility for evangelism lies with pastor and the trained ministerial staff.	5	2	14	2	28	15	2
5. Hell is a literal place of fire and torment.	11	3	1	18	12	7	16
6. God's love will not allow Him to send anyone to hell.	0	5	6	14	14	19	10
7. Simply serving people and meeting their needs is a good way to evangelize, words are not necessary.	9	0	0	28	19	4	18
8. I do not have any kind of personal evangelism training in the past.	10	0	0	8	0	0	50
9. Most unchurched people in my life (co-workers, family, friends, etc.) are good people. They will be fine even though they do not receive Christ.	10	8	1	3	22	5	19
10. I am quite busy! So I would not enroll for personal evangelism training at this time.	22	0	0	8	5	6	27
11. I think somehow the personal evangelism is not much relevant to any Christian lives.	15	0	0	15	0	7	31
	<b>93</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>232</b>
	12.3 %	4.1 %	6.1 %	18.1 %	15.7 %	13.1 %	30.6 %

APPENDIX 3

CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

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

APPENDIX 4

CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC (RESULTS)

<b>All Seven Lessons Evaluated by Elder 1 (E1) and Elder 2 (E2)</b>				
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>				
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Sum E1 &amp; E2</b>	<b>Ave Max = 28</b>	<b>Score % Ave / Max</b>	<b>Comments</b>
The lesson is clearly relevant to the issue of personal evangelism.	55	27.50	98.21	
The material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on personal evangelism.	56	28.00	100.00	
The material is theologically sound.	56	28.00	100.00	
The thesis of the lesson is clearly stated.	56	28.00	100.00	
The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis.	56	28.00	100.00	
The lesson contains points of practical application.	55	27.50	98.21	
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.	55	27.50	98.21	
Overall, the lesson is clearly presented.	56	28.00	100.00	
	445	27.81	99.33	

## APPENDIX 5

### PRE- AND POST-TRAINING QUESTIONNAIRE

#### **Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to evaluate understanding of key biblical and practical issues of personal evangelism. This research is being conducted by Long T. Nguyen for purposes of collecting data for a ministry project at Central Georgia Vietnamese Baptist Church, Warner Robins, Georgia. In this research, you will indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with certain statements. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

The first part of the questionnaire will focus on attaining demographic information about the group participation in the personal evangelism project. Please provide your birth month and day (NOT year) at the top of this form. The answers will allow for statistical analysis and comparison of the pre and post project questionnaires. Please check the appropriate spaces.

#### **Part 1**

1. Personal Identification Number (PIN) -- (MM/DD, example 01/01): \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your age?

- Under 20
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70 or above

3. What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

4. How long have you been a Christian?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- More than 25 years

5. How often do you share your personal testimony?

- 2-5 times per week
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Once a year
- Very rarely
- Never

6. How often do you specifically share the gospel message?

- 2-5 times per week
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Once a year
- Very rarely
- Never

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

- 0-1 individual
- 2-5 individuals
- 6-10 individuals
- 10+ individuals

## Part 2

Using the following scale, please rate your confidence with the following statements by placing the appropriate number in the blank space preceding the statement:

[1] Strong Disagree   [2] Disagree   [3] Slight Disagree   [4] Undecided  
[5] Slightly Agree   [6] Agree   [7] Strong Agree

- \_\_\_\_ . 1. I think the personal evangelism is much relevant to any Christian lives.
- \_\_\_\_ . 2. The church has a responsibility to teach believers how to share their faith on an individual basis.
- \_\_\_\_ . 3. Personal evangelism is as simple as inviting someone to come to church with you.
- \_\_\_\_ . 4. I can clearly communicate the gospel.
- \_\_\_\_ . 5. I can share my personal testimony.
- \_\_\_\_ . 6. I can defend my faith in God.

- \_\_\_\_. 7. I can defend the truthfulness of the Bible.
- \_\_\_\_. 8. I can defend why I believe that Jesus is the only true way to heaven.
- \_\_\_\_. 9. I know how to lead someone to Christ.
- \_\_\_\_. 10. I am willing to answer questions a person might have about faith.
- \_\_\_\_. 11. I am able to share my faith.
- \_\_\_\_. 12. The Bible mandates me, personally, to share the gospel with the unchurched people in my life.
- \_\_\_\_. 13. God calls me to be His witness.
- \_\_\_\_. 14. I feel that I could lead a person to Christ.
- \_\_\_\_. 15. Every believer is biblically mandated to share the gospel.
- \_\_\_\_. 16. I would invite one of my unchurched friends to our church.
- \_\_\_\_. 17. I am willing to evangelize with visitation team that would be led by an experienced leader.
- \_\_\_\_. 18. I believe personal evangelism is an important part of my church's outreach efforts.
- \_\_\_\_. 19. I would feel comfortable inviting my un-churched friends to my church.
- \_\_\_\_. 20. I feel confident in defining what evangelism is and is not.
- \_\_\_\_. 21. I feel confident in what is to be included in the gospel when presenting it to lost people.
- \_\_\_\_. 22. Evangelism is nothing more than getting a person to make a decision for Christ.
- \_\_\_\_. 23. Any means necessary is fine in getting a person to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior as long as those means do not cause a person to sin.
- \_\_\_\_. 24. It is more important for a person to accept Jesus Christ with having to discuss the issues of repentance or discipleship.
- \_\_\_\_. 25. Evangelism is doing an act of kindness for a lost person.
- \_\_\_\_. 26. Evangelism is inviting a person to a church event.
- \_\_\_\_. 27. Christians should follow biblical models of evangelism instead of what seems to work.
- \_\_\_\_. 28. I am interested in using the principles and methods used by Jesus and the New Testament church.
- \_\_\_\_. 29. If Christians were to follow biblical models of doing evangelism, there would be less people "falling through the cracks."
- \_\_\_\_. 30. Getting a person to say a prayer is doing personal evangelism.
- \_\_\_\_. 31. Getting a person to make a decision is the goal of the Great Commission.
- \_\_\_\_. 32. God wants every follower of Jesus Christ to assume the responsibility and privilege of spreading the gospel and making disciples.
- \_\_\_\_. 33. God is holy and just and must punish sin.
- \_\_\_\_. 34. Accountability is important in the life of a Christian.
- \_\_\_\_. 35. All humans are sinners by nature and by choice.
- \_\_\_\_. 36. The "Great Commission" in the New Testament is a biblical command to go and make disciples of Jesus Christ.
- \_\_\_\_. 37. Regeneration is an act of God in which He imparts new spiritual life.
- \_\_\_\_. 38. Conversion is our willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation.
- \_\_\_\_. 39. Justification is an act of God in which He declares the sinner righteous.

- \_\_\_\_. 40. God offers forgiveness of sin and eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ.
- \_\_\_\_. 41. The gospel message is for all people in the world.
- \_\_\_\_. 42. Sanctification is the progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and more like Christ in our lives.
- \_\_\_\_. 43. People who die without a personal relationship with Jesus are forever damned.
- \_\_\_\_. 44. Accountability may function to strengthen personal evangelistic efforts.
- \_\_\_\_. 45. World missionary activity is rooted in God's call to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament.
- \_\_\_\_. 46. Evangelism is the proclamation of the gospel to unbelievers.
- \_\_\_\_. 47. Perseverance (of the saints) is the belief that all those who are truly "born again" will be kept by God's power until the very end of their lives.

Thank you for participating in this very important survey. When you arrive for church or Sunday school next Sunday you may place the completed form in the collection basket located in either foyer, or you may give them to your Sunday school teachers.

## APPENDIX 6

### PRE- AND POST-PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE (RESULTS)

The answers will allow for statistical analysis and comparison of the pre- and post-project questionnaires.

#### Part 1

1. Personal Identification Number (PIN) with brief profile (15 participants)					
ID MM/DD	Ages	Sex	Years a Christian	Number of Trainings	
				Pre-project	Post-project
T-0101	70+	Male	11-15	Once	Twice
T-0102	60-69	Female	11-15	Once	Twice
T-0103	70+	Female	11-15	Once	Twice
T-0106	40-49	Male	1-5	None	Once
T-0124	50-59	Female	25+	Twice	Triple
T-0126	18-20	Female	1-5	None	Once
T-0323	18-20	Female	6-10	None	Once
T-0331	40-49	Female	1-5	None	Once
T-0509	40-49	Male	1-5	None	Once
T-0608	18-20	Male	1-5	None	Once
T-0905	40-49	Female	6-10	Once	Twice
T-1008	18-20	Female	1-5	None	Once
T-1014	20-29	Male	6-10	Once	Twice
T-1015	40-49	Female	6-10	None	Once
T-1217	18-20	Female	6-10	None	Once

2. What is your age?	Individuals
Under 20	5
20-29	1
30-39	0
40-49	5
50-59	1
60-69	1
70 or above	1



3. What is your sex?	Individuals
Male	5
Female	10

4. How long have you been a Christian?	Individuals
Less than 1 year	0
1-5 years	6
6-10 years	5
11-15 years	3
16-20 years	0
21-25 years	1
More than 25 years	0

5. How often do you share your personal testimony?	Individuals
2-5 times per week	0
Once a week	0
Once a month	1
Once a year	4
Very rarely	9
Never	1

6. How often do you specifically share the gospel message?	Individuals
2-5 times per week	0
Once a week	0
Once a month	1
Once a year	4
Very rarely	9
Never	1

7. How many people do you have in your friendships that are not believers?	Individuals
0-1 individual	0
2-5 individuals	1
6-10 individuals	9
5 10+ individuals	5

## Part 2

The following tables are used for statistical analysis and comparison of the pre and post project questionnaires. The gray-scale shading is used to demonstrate the positive impacts in comparison of the general areas that participants changing minds in personal evangelism after training: Bible knowledge, personal accountability, and evangelistic skills.

**Table A. Biblical Knowledge**

[1] Strong Disagree [2] Disagree [3] Slight Disagree [4] Undecided  
 [5] Slightly Agree [6] Agree [7] Strong Agree

24 Statements (15 participants responses)	Pre-Project Possible Responses							Post-Project Possible Responses						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. I think the personal evangelism is much relevant to any Christian lives.	1	3	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	8
22. Evangelism is nothing more than getting a person to make a decision for Christ.	0	2	7	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	4	5	6
23. Any means necessary is fine in getting a person to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior as long as those means do not cause a person to sin.	5	1	1	6	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	3	6
24. It is more important for a person to accept Jesus Christ with having to discuss the issues of repentance or discipleship.	5	4	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	5
25. Evangelism is doing an act of kindness for a lost person.	1	2	1	7	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	7	4
26. Evangelism is inviting a person to a church event.	2	4	3	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	3	6	5

24 Statements (15 participants responses)	Pre-Project Possible Responses							Post-Project Possible Responses						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. Christians should follow biblical models of evangelism instead of what seems to work.	1	2	7	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	5
28. I am interested in using the principles and methods used by Jesus and the New Testament church.	0	6	3	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	6	4
29. If Christians were to follow biblical models of doing evangelism, there would be less people “falling through the cracks.”	3	1	5	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	5	8
30. Getting a person to say a prayer is doing personal evangelism.	2	3	5	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	7	6
31. Getting a person to make a decision is the goal of the Great Commission.	4	0	1	7	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	7	5
33. God is holy and just and must punish sin.	0	2	5	5	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	7
35. All humans are sinners by nature and by choice.	1	6	0	5	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	11

24 Statements (15 participants responses)	Pre-Project Possible Responses							Post-Project Possible Responses						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. The “Great Commission” in the New Testament is a biblical command to go and make disciples of Jesus Christ.	2	1	7	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	5	7
37. Regeneration is an act of God in which He imparts new spiritual life.	0	1	1	9	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	9
38. Conversion is our willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation.	3	0	4	6	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	9
39. Justification is an act of God in which He declares the sinner righteous.	8	0	3	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	8
40. God offers forgiveness of sin and eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ.	1	0	10	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	10
41. The gospel message is for all people in the world.	2	3	1	7	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	12

24 Statements (15 participants responses)	Pre-Project Possible Responses							Post-Project Possible Responses						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42. Sanctification is the progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and more like Christ in our lives.	0	0	10	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	10
43. People who die without a personal relationship with Jesus are forever damned.	8	1	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	8
45. World missionary activity is rooted in God's call to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament.	4	5	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	7
46. Evangelism is the proclamation of the gospel to unbelievers.	2	5	2	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	5	2	8
47. Perseverance (of the saints) is the belief that all those who are truly "born again" will be kept by God's power until the very end of their lives.	6	3	0	4	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	6	7

24 Statements (15 participants responses)	Pre-Project Possible Responses							Post-Project Possible Responses						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Total Responses	61	55	88	102	27	18	9	0	0	0	2	69	114	175
Percent (24 * 15 =360)	16.9 %	15.3 %	24.4 %	28.4 %	7.5 %	5 %	2.5 %	0	0	0	0.6 %	19.1 %	31.7 %	48.6 %
					15 %							99.4%		

**Table B. Personal Accountability**

[1] Strong Disagree    [2] Disagree    [3] Slight Disagree    [4] Undecided  
 [5] Slightly Agree    [6] Agree    [7] Strong Agree

10 Statements (15 participants responses)	Pre-Project Possible Responses							Post-Project Possible Responses						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. The church has a responsibility to teach believers how to share their faith on an individual basis.	0	7	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	7
3. Personal evangelism is as simple as inviting someone to come to church with you.	3	4	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	6

10 Statements (15 participants responses)	Pre-Project Possible Responses							Post-Project Possible Responses						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I am willing to answer questions a person might have about faith.	4	4	3	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	4	4
15. Every believer is biblically mandated to share the gospel.	0	10	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	10
16. I would invite one of my unchurched friends to our church.	3	7	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	4	8
17. I am willing to evangelize with visitation team that would be led by an experienced leader.	7	4	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	7
18. I believe personal evangelism is an important part of my church's outreach efforts.	6	2	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	8

10 Statements (15 participants responses)	Pre-Project Possible Responses							Post-Project Possible Responses						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. God wants every follower of Jesus Christ to assume the responsibility and privilege of spreading the gospel and making disciples.	0	9	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	9
34. Accountability is important in the life of a Christian.	10	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	10
44. Accountability may function to strengthen personal evangelistic efforts.	4	5	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	4	9
Total Responses	37	54	25	22	5	5	2	0	0	0	1	29	42	78
Percent (10 * 15 = 150)	24.7 %	36 %	16.6 %	14.6 %	3.4 %	3.4 %	1.3 %	0	0	0	0.7 %	19.3 %	28 %	52 %
					8.1 %							99.3 %		



**Table C. Evangelistic Skill**

[1] Strong Disagree [2] Disagree [3] Slight Disagree [4] Undecided  
 [5] Slightly Agree [6] Agree [7] Strong Agree

13 Statements (15 participants responses)	Pre-Project Possible Responses							Post-Project Possible Responses						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I can clearly communicate the gospel.	0	5	3	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	3	7
5. I can share my personal testimony.	3	3	4	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	5
6. I can defend my faith in God.	5	3	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	6
7. I can defend the truthfulness of the Bible.	1	4	4	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	6	6
8. I can defend why I believe that Jesus is the only true way to heaven.	7	0	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	11
9. I know how to lead someone to Christ.	5	5	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	5
11. I am able to share my faith.	7	5	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	7
12. The Bible mandates me, personally, to share the gospel with the unchurched people in my life.	4	3	2	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	7
13. God calls me to be His witness.	2	8	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	10
14. I feel that I could lead a person to Christ.	2	6	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	7
19. I would feel comfortable inviting my unchurched friends to my church.	4	2	3	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	7

13 Statements (15 participants responses)	Pre-Project Possible Responses							Post-Project Possible Responses						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. I feel confident in defining what evangelism is and is not.	4	4	4	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	7	4	4
21. I feel confident in what is to be included in the gospel when presenting it to lost people.	8	2	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	6	4	4
Total Responses	52	50	42	37	5	5	4	0	0	0	1	47	61	86
Percent (13 * 15 = 195)	26.7 %	25.6 %	21.4 %	19 %	2.6 %	2.6 %	2.1 %	0	0	0	0.5 %	24.1 %	31.3 %	44.1 %
					7.3 %							99.5 %		

APPENDIX 7  
PERSONAL EVANGELISM FIELD REPORT

REPORT #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**I. CONTEXT**

a. Person(s) with whom you shared: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

c. Accompanied by: \_\_\_\_\_  Alone

d. This outreach opportunity came as a result of:

An appointment (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

A referral (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

A “way of life” situation (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Talking with individuals “at random”

Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

**II. INTERACTION**

a. What did you learn about this person’s spiritual condition?

b. What key issues or questions surfaced during your conversation?

c. Were there any hindrances to your conversation (television set blaring, children running around, etc.)? How did you address them?

d. Which of the following statements best describes your witnessing encounter with this person?

I gave a complete/thorough presentation of the gospel.

We had a Christ-centered religious discussion, but I did not present the gospel because\_\_\_\_\_.

We did not discuss religion or Christ because \_\_\_\_\_.

e. In your opinion, how clear was your explanation of the gospel message?

*clear as mud* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *crystal clear*

f. If you did present the gospel, how did you transition into it?

g. What evangelistic method learned from the study did you implement while evangelizing?

### III. CONCLUSION

a. Did you specifically ask the person if he/she was willing to receive Christ? If not, why?

b. If you did ask the person to receive Christ, what was his/her response?

c. If the person did not respond positively, what do you think is preventing him/her from receiving Christ?

d. What plans did you make to talk again?

### IV. SELF-EVALUATION

a. What did you do well?

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b. What would you do differently?

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## APPENDIX 8

### PERSONAL EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH REPORT WITH DISCUSSION

The group discussions were held on Friday nights in reference to the answers interested of the participants. Each meeting last 90 minutes as planned, each training member was encouraged to engage in the discussions and to raise issues or questions they had concerning evangelism as well as objections they had personally encountered when sharing the gospel on the fields.

Here are the Q&A sessions that took place over two Friday nights. These were also some common questions that witnesses were asked more than once when evangelizing the lost in the local community. The discussion with question and its answers would be great help to participants who were learning to be the fruitful witnesses for the Kingdom of God.

On a mission, all witnesses often encounter a number of questions related to their beliefs that need answers to. Whether the subject is inquiring or provocative, the witness must find a way to respond appropriately based on what they know and believe. The answer to these questions is our opportunity to evangelize.

1. What was the very first requirement to become a successful witness?

There are several key requirements for being a witness for the Lord, but two requirements are necessary. Firstly, witness must be saved. This condition requires that the witness be one who believes in Jesus as his Savior to experience the salvation. The witness must be in the third step, in the three steps from low to high as follows: Step 1: Sinner (Romans 3:23); step 2: Believer (John 3:16); step 3: Witness (Acts 1:8)

Secondly, witness must have love for the sinner's soul. Another equally important motivation for God's people to go forth to witness is to love the souls of their fellow citizens. There is no love, there can be no sacrifice, this truth is very true in this case. Those who go to witness do not gain any benefits for themselves, but on the contrary, many hardships await. If it weren't for love (loving God and loving people), and not willing to make sacrifices, no one would be able to take a missionary step (Romans 10:15).

2: How do we know there is a God?

When we learn about the universe, we look at the world around us, everywhere we see beauty, order, and a wonderful arrangement. There are no things that appear by nature, but by a special plan to create a place to eat and a place for people and things. When we look at a fully furnished building, or a sophisticated rig, we know someone has sketched out models for this building or rig. The point worth noting is that the person who sketches those models is a completely separate being from the house he designs, the engineer is completely different from the apparatus he invented. They lead a life separate from them and are not governed by the conditions and laws that govern them.

Therefore, we sense that there must be a Creator of this orderly universe. That One is different from the universe and He was not born of anyone or anything in that universe. We call this creator God. It is He who is Self-Existing, the source of all life. He exists independently of the universe, and He is the power of this universe. He is not governed by time, space, natural laws that humans and all things are governed by.

Many people claim to see God, to experience Him. He is a transcendent being that cannot be measured or tested by any means. No one has ever seen a yardstick of love or a kilogram of justice, but if anyone denies them, we must conclude that the person's mind is distorted. Although scientific methods do not measure or experience the Creator, scientific discoveries help us to understand the wonders of God in the creation of this universe.

It is important to note that although there are many signs in the natural world that reveal God, we can never know from the natural world who He is and what He is like. This question was posed centuries ago by a sage named Job: If he had inquired, would he have known God (Job 11:7). The answer is definitely no! If God does not reveal Himself, we are only vaguely conjecturing Him. Just as a bird cannot fly out of space, we cannot enter the infinite to know Him. But conversely, the Infinite can enter the finite. This is what God did, as the Bible says: In ancient times God spoke to our fathers in many ways through the prophets, and at the last day he has spoken to us through his Son. Him (Hebrews 1:1-2).

Throughout history, God has been active in his dealings with mankind. But the fullest manifestation of Himself is His entry into human history through Jesus. He lived among us. His birth, life, death, and resurrection recorded in the Bible are recognized by many people around the world.

Another obvious proof of God's existence is in the life of the believer. Whoever believes in Him, their life is profoundly transformed and eventually the whole social community is changed. Millions of people in the world so far have truly known God, have communicated with Him, and have had their requests answered.

Believing in God is not a theoretical matter, but a practical one. Whether you believe in God or not, it has nothing to do with fear of His existence. God is, and still is, forever. We know God is real when we enter into fellowship with Him, truly giving our lives to Him. The power and blessings shown in our lives will eloquently testify to the existence of the Almighty, the God of mankind.

3. What are some obstacles that keep us from inviting people to Church?

The expressions were like anxiety, shyness, fear, and lack of power of the Word. Few participants indicated that not having a close acquaintance enough was an obstacle to inviting people to church. Other obstacles discussed included time constraints,

lack of commitment, and limited knowledge of potential prospects, discouragement, few results, and few opportunities.

4. What are some suggestions to help motivate people to share their faith?

The best motivator to help people share their faith along with practice and role-playing. Other suggestions given to motivate people to share their faith included prayer, creating awareness, accountability, studying the Bible, getting involved in small groups, and just doing it.

5. What are the suggestions for the local church become more evangelistic?

The reasons varied from members like not inviting new members regularly, being comfortable with the attendants in the worship, and/or having fears of doing personal evangelism, lacking of God's movement, and allowing prospects to come to the church rather than the church going after prospects. Or the participants have no friends who are non-believers

To make church more evangelistic, I suggest them form the personal evangelism focus teams, and I mentioned them to use the address list of new residents in the areas.... obtained from Georgia Baptist Mission Board, of Vietnamese people living in local within 30 miles radius, that helps the focus teams to outreach them.

My suggestions included: finding new prospects, sending cards and letters, being more intentional, strong leadership, specific duties of individual class members, going after church members first, calling members, visiting members, asking them to join the focus teams, pressing personal evangelism training, and upholding more praying. All of the suggestions would make the local church become commission church.

6. What fears do you have for doing personal evangelism?

Few trainees expressed their kinds of fears about personal evangelism including rejection, failing, giving the wrong answer, not having enough information about the prospect being visited, fear of imposing on others, being asked a question that they cannot answer, shyness, lacking boldness, how to approach an individual to share



the faith, not knowing enough Bible, not having enough practice, and people making accusations of being hypocritical. The advice is trusting the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say” (Luke 12:12 ESV).

Other suggestion is that the focus team continues using their gospel presentation along with their favor tracts and Bible (the Life Book, Vietnamese Holy Bible and tracts) available. In case of having no chance to present the gospel, then the witness should invite the lost coming to church---that they have another opportunity to share faith to them at church during fellowship meal.

#### 7. Where are your neighbors to reach?

To seek and find the lost: first is find those who are next to you: your family members, or your relatives in distance. Next are people who are not believers that you have in your friendships; if they live from long distance, then you should call them. Last is outreach people from the address list provided or find these people thru your known friends. And since, the local church located in rural, your teams must travel a bit distance farther to present a gospel to them. Keep doing that until all your neighbors living near or far know Lord Jesus Christ.

#### 8: Is the Bible really the word of God?

There are many reasons why we should believe that the Bible is the word of God. Here are five main reasons: Firstly, the strangeness in the establishment of the Bible: nearly 40 writers, over 1600 years, in different places, have different cultural levels, different classes, such as: farmers, fishermen, kings, poets, doctors, statesmen, philosophers, scholars, ... but all the books still have a wonderful unity and harmony, pointing to the same main theme: Jesus Christ.

Secondly, the Bible is the most widely distributed in the world's books. That proves the absolute and unique value of the Bible. Through the centuries, the Bible has always remained timely and infallible. Many atheists have tried to refute the Bible, trying

to find reasons to prove the Bible is wrong, but they have to give up. Today the Bible has been translated into more than 1,500 languages.

Thirdly, archeology today proves more and more that the events recorded in the Bible are true, not a myth. Relics in stratigraphic layers indicate the correct sequence of creation in Genesis chapter 1.

Fourthly, the most prominent feature of the Bible is the prophecy. No one can see through the curtain of time to see all future events, but God's Bible contains thousands of prophecies that have been, are and will be fulfilled. All prophecies about the birth and life of Jesus have been fulfilled. The upheavals and changes of Israel and the neighboring countries became real fear. In the year 70, Jerusalem was destroyed, the Jews were scattered everywhere, and it was not until 1948 that they returned to establish a nation.

Finally, God's Word also has the ability to regenerate hearts. Each of us can experience the promises made in the Bible in our own lives. The Bible says that God will come into the believer's heart, transforming him or her into a new person whose life is full of meaning, peace, and hope.

APPENDIX 9

PERSONAL EVANGELISM COMMITMENT CARD

I commit to living a Christian life among my family members, in the church, and in the community with the goal of continuing a strong relationship with God, serving Him, and sharing the Gospel.

God, I am making the following commitment to YOU:

Please help me to be a FINISHER.

1. To spend \_\_\_\_\_ minutes in prayer each day with my partner(s) for \_\_\_\_ weeks.
2. To read/meditate \_\_\_\_\_ verse(s) each day with my partner(s) for \_\_\_\_ weeks.
3. To share the Gospel with non-believer(s) twice a week with my partner(s) for \_\_\_\_\_ weeks.
4. My accountability partner(s) is/are \_\_\_\_\_.

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

My Partner Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 10

### SERMON 1: REVIVING THE GREAT COMMISSION

<sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20).

#### I. INTRO

Statistics: Christians...

- 95% never led a person to Christ;
- 80% no consistent witness for the Lord;
- 2% actively involved with evangelistic ministry;
- 28% give toward financing missions or evangelistic ministries.

#### II. BODY

##### 1. The Confidence

Matt. 28:18 – <sup>18</sup>...All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.

Matt.16:18 – <sup>18</sup>And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

##### 2. The Command

Matt. 28:19a – <sup>19</sup>Go therefore...

Luke 24:47-48 – <sup>47</sup>and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things.

##### 3. The Called

Matt. 28:18a, 19 – <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and said to them...<sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 3:15 – <sup>15</sup>but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

#### 4. The Course

Matt. 28:19b – Go ye therefore... and teach all nations.

Acts 1:8 – <sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Matt. 24:14 -- <sup>14</sup>And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

#### 5. The Concern

Matt. 28:19b-20a – <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

Romans 10:13-14 – <sup>13</sup>For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

<sup>14</sup>How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

#### 6. The Comfort

Matt. 28:20b – And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age .

Luke 12:11-12 – <sup>11</sup>And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, <sup>12</sup>for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

Isaiah 55:11 – <sup>11</sup>so shall My word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

### III. CONCLUSION

- Where would we be if a church or individual hadn't sought to do their part in the work of God?
- What are we going to do as individuals and as a church body to reach them?

## APPENDIX 11

### SERMON 2: KEEPING THE MAIN THING THE MAIN THING

<sup>6</sup>So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup>He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. <sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:6-8).

#### I. INTRO

<sup>7</sup>He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority” (Acts 1:7). – We are His “ambassadors” in this world (2 Cor. 5:20).

#### II. BODY

##### 1. Having the Right Message

...and you will be my witnesses... (Acts 1:8b)

- Romans 1:16 – His message
- John 3:16 – We are to share the message of the Gospel
- John 9:25, “once I was blind, but now I see,” and Jesus is the reason!
- John 6:35 – Jesus is the solution (Bread of Life) to the world.
- 2 Timothy 2:2 – I need to share with others what others shared with me.

##### 2. Having the Right Methods

... you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8c).

- The word “witness” was used in Bible times like it is used today.
- God done anything for you through Jesus Christ? Go tell the world.

III: Some great examples of witnessing in the Bible:

Peter – Acts 2:14-41

Philip – Acts 8:26-39

Paul before King Agrippa, Acts 26:1-31

Blind Man before the Sanhedrin, John 9:25

That is all the Lord wants you to do – 1 Peter 3:15!

##### 3. Having the Right Mindset

...be my witnesses... to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

- Most of us will never go to “the end of the earth,” but we can serve in our Jerusalem. Telling a lost and dying world that Jesus saves.

- Revelation 22:17 – Jesus saves all who will come to Him by faith

#### 4. Having the Right Muscle

...But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you

- Luke 24:49 – The Spirit of God would fill them with God's power
- Empowered by the Holy Spirit, John 14:16-18; 1 Cor. 12:13.
- We need God's power, but how to have God's power in your life?

### III. CONCLUSION

- How important is being a witness to you?
- What are you willing to change?
  - to be more effective as a witness?
  - to deal with the power of God may rest upon you?
  - to pay for the touch of God on your life?
- How long has it been since you told someone else about Jesus?
- John 9:4 -- The hour is late and the time to tell the world is now.

## APPENDIX 12

### SERMON 3: CHASING THE CHARIOT TO WITNESS

Acts 8:26-39

#### I. INTRODUCTION

Five ingredients for soul winning and salvation that we can learn thru this passage in personal evangelism. It is urgent.

#### II. BODY

##### 1. Running to Obey a Powerful Spirit (Acts 8:26)

Philip was already having great success preaching Jesus to the Samaritans. (Acts 8:1)

Acts 8:27, Philip rose and went to meet one Very Important Person (VIP) in a desert place. This person was an Ethiopian, an eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship...

What Philip did was to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit as written in Verse 26, <sup>26</sup>Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place.

Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation (Mark 16:15).

##### 2. Running to Meet a Prepared Sinner (Acts 8:27-28)

<sup>7</sup>Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance (Luke 15:7).

##### 3. Running to Become a Prompt Soul-Winner (Acts 8:29-31)

<sup>8</sup>Good and upright is the LORD; therefore He instructs sinners in the way. <sup>9</sup>He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way (Psalm 25:8-9).

Philip obeyed the Lord immediately to be His witness and he ran to be a prompt soul-winner.

##### 4. Running to Bring a Pertinent Scripture (Acts 8:32-35)

The eunuch was reading from Isaiah 53. This Scripture displayed for least couple reasons: Isaiah 53:6 says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to His own way, but the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the Word (Acts 10:44).



#### 5. Running to Tell a Personal Salvation (Acts 8:36-39)

He was so indebted for his salvation that he would do anything to obey God.

Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

### III. CONCLUSION

Chase all the chariots you can find! Go up and down life's highways looking for people who need Jesus. Many will turn you down, but a lot of people are cruising out there with their hearts hungering for God. They're hoping somebody will chase their chariot and bring them the Gospel. Keep running to witness Him to others!

## APPENDIX 13

### SERMON 4: SHARING JESUS CHRIST IN ALL PLACES

Acts 1:1-8

#### I. INTRODUCTION

Acts 1:1-3, 6

Ev-angel-ism –Ev meaning good, and Angel meaning messenger -- good-message-izing.

Gospel -- The Anglo-Saxon godspell, signifies God's spell, or God's Story.

Witness -- Greek word “Martus,” English word martyr, one who witnesses with his or her life.

#### II. BODY

##### 1. Promise of Power (V.4-5)

###### 1a. This power is personal

Old Testament -- Judges 6:34, Judges 14:6, 1 Samuel 10:10, 1 Samuel 16:13

I will place My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My statutes and carefully observe My ordinances (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

I will ask the Father and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever... He remains with you and will be in you (John 14:16-17).

###### 1b. This power is spiritual

When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit... (Acts 4:31).

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds (2 Cor. 10:3-4a).

##### 2. Purpose for the Power (V.8a)

###### 2a. This power is transformational

###### i. Bold

When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and knew that they had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).

###### ii. Passionate

After they called in the apostles and had them flogged, they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus and released them. Then they went out from the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be dishonored on behalf of the name. Every day in the temple complex, and in various homes, they continued teaching and proclaiming the good news that the Messiah is Jesus (Acts 5:40-42).

iii. Effective

So the preaching about God flourished, the number of the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly, and a large group of priests became obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7).

2b. This power is to obey

If you love Me, you will keep my commandments (John 14:15).

And He said to them, Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation (Mark 16:15)

III. Things that hinder evangelism.

Coldness in our love for Jesus

Coldness in our love for our fellow human

3. The power in practice (V.5b, 8c)

3a. Practice with His Love

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he come (1 Cor. 11:26).

God is love (I John 4:16b)

Jesus died on the cross for our sins, and He is the truth, the way, and the life (John 3:16; John 14:6).

Bad theology (Universalism)

Many Christians mindset

3b. Witness with Holy Spirit

III.: William Borden (1887-1913) -- On Dec. 17, 1912, Borden boarded ship for China via Egypt. His missionary career... His note, "*No Reserve! No Retreat! No Regrets!*"

III. CONCLUSION

You have the power to share Christ in all places.

## APPENDIX 14

### GOSPEL PRESENTATION OUTLINES

#### **1. Evangelism Explosion (EE) Gospel Presentation<sup>1</sup>**

Introduction with diagnostic questions: Secular life, their religion, personal and church testimony (1 John 5:13)

#### **Gospel:**

Heaven is free (Romans 6:23); Man is sinner (Romans 3:23); Man cannot save Himself (Matthew 5:48); God is merciful (1 John 4:8b); God is just (Exodus 34:7b); Who He is “the infinite God-Man” (John 1:1,14); What He did “He died on the cross and rose from the dead” (Isaiah 53:6).

#### **Faith:**

A Key to Heaven. What is not: Mere head Knowledge or Mere temporal faith (James 2:19);

What it is: Trust in Jesus Christ alone (Acts 16:31)

#### **Commitment:**

--Asking: does this make sense to you? Would you like to receive the gift of eternal life?

--Receive the living Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Revelation 3:20)

--Repent (Pray for them, and pray with them)

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<sup>1</sup> James D. Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion: Equipping Churches for Friendship, Evangelism, Discipleship, and Healthy Growth*, 4th ed. (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1996), ix.

--Lead that person to Christ by asking, I would like you to read John 6:47

--Welcome to the family of God...

**Follow up:**

Baptism Read and sign “My spiritual Birth Certificate;” Bible (7-day callback); Prayer, Worship, Fellowship, Witness.

**2. FAITH Gospel Presentation<sup>2</sup>**

First, asking the person whose you want to share the gospel: in your personal opinion, what do you understand it takes for a person to get to heaven and have eternal life?

**F is for FORGIVENESS:**

Everyone has sinned and needs God’s forgiveness. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23)

God’s forgiveness is in Jesus only. “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.” Ephesians 1:7

**A is for AVAILABLE:**

God’s forgiveness is available for all. “God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

God’s forgiveness is available but not automatic. “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord!’ will enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 7:21)

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<sup>2</sup> Bobby H. Welch and Doug Williams, *FAITH Evangelism: Facilitator Guide 1* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2007), 10-11.

**I is for IMPOSSIBLE:**

According to the Bible, it is impossible to get to heaven on our own. “By grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

So how can a sinful person have eternal life and enter heaven?

**T is for TURN:** (*Turn means repent*)

If you were going down the road and someone asked you to turn, what would he or she be asking you to do? (*Change direction*)

**H is for HEAVEN:**

Heaven is a place where we will live with God forever. “If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and receive you to Myself, so that where I am you may be also.”

(John 14:3)

Eternal life begins now with Jesus. “I have come that they may have life and have it in abundance.” (John 10:10)

H can also stand for *home*. How can a person have God’s forgiveness, eternal life, and heaven? By trusting Jesus as your Savior and Lord.

**INVITATION:**

Understanding what we have shared by asking the person you share the gospel to: would you like to receive this forgiveness, by trusting in Christ as your personal Savior and Lord? Invitation that led them to accept Lord Jesus with their first prayer

### **3. Share Jesus without Fear (SJWF) Gospel Presentation** (a.k.a. Jay’s Method)<sup>3</sup>

**Step 1:** *Use questions that determine where God is working*

- 1). Do you have any kind of spiritual belief?
- 2). To you, who is Jesus?
- 3). Do you believe there is a heaven and a hell?
- 4). If you died right now, where would you go? If heaven, why?
- 5). If what you believe were not true, would you want to know it?

If the answer to Question 5 is “Yes,” then open your Bible and proceed to Step 2.

If the answer to Question 5 is “No,” do nothing but thank the person for their time.

**Step 2:** Let the Bible speak by asking the person to read the verse aloud (Chain your Bible)

Then ask, “What does this say to you?” Listen to the person and gently guide . . .

- 1). Romans 3:23—All have sinned
- 2). Romans 6:23—The wages of sin is death
- 3). John 3:3—You must be born again
- 4). John 14:6—Jesus is the only way
- 5). Roman 10:9-11—If you confess ... you will be saved
- 6). 2 Corinthians 5:15—No longer live for yourself
- 7). Revelation 3:20—Jesus stands at the door and knocks

Now you are ready to use the closing questions in Step 3.

**Step 3:** Close with key questions

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<sup>3</sup> This training was based on the following resources: (1) William Fay and Ralph Hodge, *Share Jesus without Fear*, rev. ed. (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2008) and (2) William Fay and Ralph Hodge, *Share Jesus without Fear: Personal Evangelism New Testament* (Nashville: Holman Bible, 2007).

- 1). Are you a sinner?
- 2). Do you want forgiveness for your sins?
- 3). Do you believe Jesus died on the cross for you and rose again?
- 4). Are you willing to surrender your life to Christ?
- 5). Are you ready to invite Jesus into your heart and life?

**Step 4:** Salvation Prayer

Heavenly Father, I have sinned against You. I want forgiveness for all my sins. I believe that Jesus died on the cross for me and rose again. Father, I give You my life to do with as You wish. I want Jesus Christ to come into my life and into my heart. This I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.



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## ABSTRACT

### TRAINING THE MEMBERS OF CENTRAL GEORGIA VIETNAMESE BAPTIST CHURCH, WARNER ROBINS, GEORGIA, IN PERSONAL EVANGELISM

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2023  
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The purpose of this project is to train the members of Central Georgia Vietnamese Baptist Church in Warner Robins, Georgia, in personal evangelism. Chapter 1 describes the proposal for training church members to understand, affirm, and become personally involved in the implementation of personal evangelism. Chapter 2 focuses on the theological and biblical basis of personal evangelism, examining individual evangelistic actions in both New and Old Testaments while addressing the authority, priority, necessity, and responsibility of evangelism. Chapter 3 presents theoretical and practical issues encompassing personal evangelism while addressing the matters in religion relating to personal evangelism. Chapter 4 details the implementation of the personal evangelism training, including the models of gospel presentation utilized. Chapter 5 reviews the effectiveness of the project, including theological and personal reflections regarding the overall project.

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