

**Omega Course:  
Practical Church Planter Training**

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# ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

This curriculum has been prepared by *The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting* in cooperation with Project 250 of Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries. *The Alliance* is a partnership of churches and mission agencies committed to mobilizing believers to saturate each country in Central/Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union with evangelical churches. Saturation Church Planting is a strategy that seeks to establish local churches in every town, village and neighborhood so that those who accept Christ will have a local fellowship in which to grow in Christ and be equipped for ministry. *The Alliance* is built on the premise that joining forces will increase effectiveness, reduce duplication, and demonstrate unity within the body of Christ.

## WHAT WE BELIEVE:

- The local church is God's primary tool for evangelism and discipleship.
- Partnership with churches and mission organizations is crucial for the multiplication of local churches and the development of saturation church planting movements.
- Training leaders is essential to church planting and church growth.
- The Lausanne Covenant is the statement of faith for *The Alliance*.

## WHAT WE DO:

### Church Planter Training and Mentoring

*The Alliance* provides skill-based training in seminar fashion with practical ministry assignments geared towards starting reproducing churches.

### Information Gathering

Accurate information leads to good decisions in the church planting task. *The Alliance* can help with training and consultation for your information gathering needs in the areas of church planting and church growth.

### Prayer Movement Consulting

A church planting movement starts with vision, which is discovered and refined through seeking God's heart in prayer. *The Alliance* can help you better understand the role of prayer movements in the church planting task, and how you can facilitate a prayer movement in your region.

### Vision Casting

What does God want for your country? He wants churches everywhere! *The Alliance* can help foster a vision for new churches with conceptual seminars on the principles of saturation church planting.

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# Introduction to Evangelism

## GOD SO LOVES THE WORLD

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the nature, need, motive and place of evangelism in the SCP strategy.

### ☞ Main Points

- Evangelism is a process, and not just an event.
- Skills and experience in evangelism can be developed.
- The process of evangelism is not complete until a more mature believer has begun to disciple the new Christian and help him or her to grow in the faith.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should :

- Recognize the urgent need of the lost and be increasingly motivated out of unconditional love to evangelize them.

### ☞ Appendix

1A The Bridge

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Have participants read selected verses aloud in Section II. Take same time to review prayer triplets. Encourage participants to organize their own prayer triplet before the next training seminar.

## INTRODUCTION

Evangelism is important work for all believers. For those involved in church planting, evangelism is no less important. In fact, planting a church without evangelism is impossible. We can find hope for the process in Matthew 4:19, where Jesus challenged the disciples to follow Him with the words, "Come, follow me . . . and I will make you fishers of men." Jesus wanted these experienced fishermen to use their lives to build His Church. As we follow Christ, observe His law and obey Him, He also desires to make us fishers of men, able to attract and win people to Himself. Only the Lord is able to make us effective fishermen for souls.

There are many ways to catch fish. We use large boats, complicated machines and huge nets to catch them by the thousands. We cast smaller nets to catch several. And we use barbed hooks with bait or attractive lures to catch them one at a time. We do not catch fish with every toss or cast, but we can be learning with each experience. We have to go where the fish are and choose an appropriate method in order to catch them.

In the same way, there are a multitude of methods to bring men, women, youth and children to Christ. There is, of course, only one true Gospel. As we preach this Gospel, God's Holy Spirit convicts the world of guilt regarding sin, and righteousness and judgment (Jn 16:8) and brings people to life-changing faith. Our task is to combine effective methods and strategies to win people to Christ and incorporate them into the church. We will be considering some of these methods and strategies in this lesson.

## I. The Nature Of Evangelism

Evangelism means "telling the good news." The "good news" that Jesus Christ has made salvation possible and available as a free gift is the best news ever to strike the human ear and heart.

Evangelism involves assisting those outside of faith in Christ to move toward faith in Him. However, evangelism is not the end of the process. True evangelism is like the first leg of a relay race. Once people are won to Christ they must be “handed over” to a discipler who will help them nurture their new lives in Christ. The race is not complete until believing fellowships are planted and the body of Christ multiplies through further evangelism and discipleship. Dropping the baton after the evangelism stage is not acceptable.

## A. The Process

This process of evangelism is one important way that the Lord involves Christians, in cooperation with the work of the Holy Spirit, to build the kingdom of God—the Church of Jesus Christ. While the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men is invisible, the Christian’s efforts in evangelism are both public and private.

Evangelism begins in private, with prayer. This includes both individual prayer and also “Prayer Triplets” (see Prayer Appendix 3A “Prayer Triplets”). A prayer triplet consists of three Christian believers meeting regularly to pray for three unsaved friends or relatives. The group meets to pray for these people until they become believers or until circumstances prohibit them from continuing to pray together. Encourage others to pray as you are engaged in the work of evangelism, following Paul’s example in Ephesians 6:19-20 and Colossians 4:2-6. When we pray, we ask God to:

- Prepare the hearts of those to whom He wants us to speak
- Lead us to those who are prepared
- Help us present the Gospel in a clear and meaningful way
- Preserve the planted message

Publicly, we capitalize on divine encounters to share our faith as we go about the ordinary activities of our lives. We initiate genuine relationships with people in our communities. We spend time with people so they can observe our lives and we can see theirs. We build bridges of trust to individuals and families, expanding the testimony and influence of Christ. Evangelism often includes specific activities designed to win a hearing for the Gospel. It could be through simple acts of kindness or sharing a tract, or it could be as complex as organizing a regional outreach effort using the *Jesus* film or a gifted evangelist.

## B. The Message

In a letter to the newly established church at Rome, the apostle Paul wrote these words:

*“I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile” (Ro 1:16)*

What is the Gospel message— the “good news”— that we share? Paul makes a clear and simple presentation of the Gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7. In this passage, he breaks the content of the Gospel into two parallel parts— repentance and trust. Theologians are able to write countless volumes on the content of the Gospel. However the essence of the “good news” is summed up in this text.

The parts of the Gospel are clearly seen if we print the verses as shown below:

**Christ died for our sins** [*according to the scriptures*]

- that he was buried

**that He was raised on the third day** [*according to the scriptures*]

- that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve . . .

In this form it is easy to see the two main points— the death and resurrection of Christ. Both were accomplished “according to the scriptures” and each has a supporting proof. The proof of His death was His burial, and the proof of His resurrection was His appearances to the believers. Look closely at each of the main points.

## 1. Repent – (because He died)

There is a lot packed into this statement. First of all, we must acknowledge that we are sinners before a Holy God. If there was anything we could do to save ourselves there would have been no reason for Christ to die. But there is absolutely nothing we can do to gain favor with God. There is no such thing as a righteous person (Ro 3:10, 20). We must cast ourselves on His mercy. We need grace, and not justice (Eph 2:8,9).

The death of Christ also means that His death was sufficient to save us. This would not be possible if He were not the Son of God— the God-Man— God in the flesh. God could not die until Jesus took human flesh on Himself. But a mere man cannot die for everyone. He can only die for his own sins. Therefore only Jesus, as God Incarnate, could satisfy the wrath of God against sin and offer salvation to us by grace.

The first part of the Gospel includes an admission of our utter unworthiness and of the deity and sufficiency of Christ. No one is genuinely saved until they acknowledge the supremacy of Christ and repent.

## 2. Trust Christ – (because He rose)

The second part of the Gospel involves trust. It is necessary to repent, but that alone is not enough to save us. Many “Christians” believe Christ died for sin, but they think they need to do some kind of work to merit His salvation. This was the heresy that Paul confronted in Galatians. Some taught that we must both believe and also keep the law in order to be saved. Paul condemned that idea in the strongest possible terms (Gal 1:8-9; 2:15-16; 3:3,11). Christ’s sacrifice was sufficient to save us. We need not and cannot add anything through our own effort.

The fact that Christ arose from the dead means His promise is true. He has gone to prepare a place for us and will come again to take us home with Him (Jn 14:2-3). Our salvation is settled when we trust Him. We can indeed serve Him with our good works as a way of thanking Him and worshipping Him. But these actions are part of our *sanctification* and not of our *salvation*.

### C. The Medium

The most powerful presentation of the Gospel message is the one we authenticate with our lives. The way we live brings life to the words being spoken. Our integrity, compassion and transparency are essential tools used by the Lord to make us “salt and light” right where we live. A simple poem challenges us:

*You are writing a Gospel, a chapter a day,  
by the deeds that you do and the words that you say.  
Men read what you write, distorted or true.  
What is the Gospel according to you?*

## II. The Need For Evangelism

### A. People Are Spiritually Lost and Forever Separated from God without Jesus Christ

Not only is every person separated from God spiritually, but also each person is absolutely unable to redeem himself. Because of sin the Holy God is inaccessible to him. Whether an individual is aware of his condition or not he is desperate and doomed apart from receiving the solution offered by Jesus Christ, and no one else. Please see appendix 1A “The Bridge” for a simple way to explain how Christ bridges the gap between God and us.

◆ Romans 1:18ff

◆ John 14:6

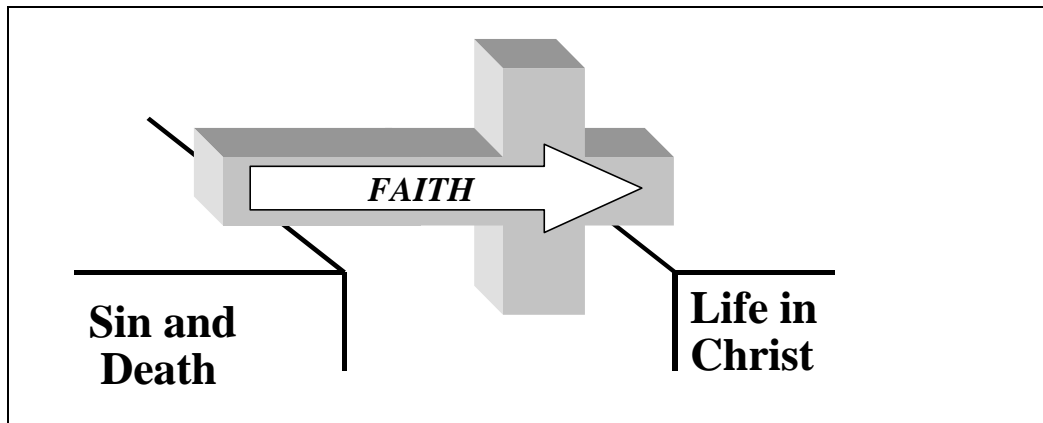
◆ Romans 6:23

◆ Romans 3:9-20,23

◆ Ezekiel 3:16-21

◆ Ephesians 2:1-3

Figure 1.1 The Process of Evangelism



### B. We Are God's Method of Reaching the World

Since the time of Christ, followers have been charged with the responsibility to represent the Lord and His kingdom in the world. The apostles were the first to receive the charge. They understood that they were to be witnesses — that they were to be spokesmen and ambassadors of Christ. These roles imply a faithful presentation of the truth as we understand it and a faithful representation of the God who has won us and sent us out.

Paul understood this responsibility as a debt or obligation that he owed to the Lord and to the lost. While it is true that a person may be saved through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit only, this is highly unusual. In fact, even when Christ Himself spoke to Paul on the Damascus road, He sent Ananias to complete the evangelism process in Paul's life. God desires to use men and women who know Him as the means to reach the lost.

- ◆ 2 Corinthians 5:16-21
- ◆ Acts 1:8
- ◆ Mark 16:15
- ◆ Matthew 28:18-20
- ◆ Romans 1:14-17
- ◆ 2 Timothy 4:5b

### C. Many are Eager to Hear and Understand the Solution to Their Dilemma

French Philosopher Blaise Pascal noted that there is within man a God-shaped vacuum, which only God can adequately fill. Through the ages, people have sought resolution for their spiritual dilemma. The list below is just a sample of the many in the New Testament who would openly discuss their condition in the hope of resolving their problems. There are others like them who will listen to the Gospel if we will go to them and make it plain.

- ◆ Nicodemus—John 3
- ◆ The man born blind—John 9
- ◆ The woman at the well—John 4
- ◆ Jerusalem crowd—Acts 2
- ◆ Zacchaeus—Luke 19
- ◆ Ethiopian eunuch—Acts 8

### D. The Gospel Has The Power to Change

#### 1. The Gospel changes spiritual realities.

The Gospel moves people from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God, from darkness to light, from death to life. No longer enemies of Christ and slaves to sin, we (and those who come to faith through our testimony) have become a part of the household of God (Col 1:10-14).

#### 2. The Gospel changes the whole world.

The Gospel is changing lives— in huge cosmopolitan areas, in obscure mountain villages, in steaming tropical jungles, among troubled youth, within struggling families, among hard-

working businessmen and concerned political leaders. Throughout every continent, the Gospel is having an impact. Families, communities and nations around the world are being changed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

### **3. The Gospel changes society.**

As people come to Christ and yield themselves to the indwelling Holy Spirit, the community of those who love Christ can exert a moral influence for good felt across the face of your nation.

### **4. The Gospel changes individuals.**

All who have placed their faith in Christ upon hearing the Gospel message have a testimony of how God's grace has profoundly changed them personally, making each one a new creation in Christ. Individuals and families are profoundly affected.

### **5. The Gospel changes life now.**

Christ's life-giving Gospel has delivered us. We have been saved from the penalty of sin! Moreover, we will be saved from the presence of sin. However, right now we are being saved from the power of sin. The Gospel makes a difference today (1Co 15:55-56; Ro 5:8-10).

### **6. The Gospel changes our future.**

Through those who come to faith because of the work of the Gospel in us, we can affect not only our generation but succeeding ones as well. We can become the foundation of spiritual generations in and outside our own families.

### **7. The Gospel changes our eternity.**

The change brought by the Gospel affects not only our temporal life, but our eternal destiny as well. We, as Christ's bride, the Church, are an eternal testimony to the spiritual realm of God's mercy and grace (Eph 3:10, 11).

## **III. The Motive Of Evangelism**

### **A. It Is Possible to Evangelize Out of a Sense of Duty or Obligation to God or Others**

Paul wrote in Romans 1:14 that he was a debtor to those who had not heard the Gospel message. He sensed an obligation to share that which he possessed, the Gospel, with others. Men of God have often referred to themselves as His servants, implying that their activity was at least partially motivated in response to the authority of God, their master.

In Colossians 1:28, the apostle Paul speaks of the goal of his Gospel ministry, ". . . so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ." Often that which motivates God's servants to evangelism is the long-range goal of seeing God's purposes in the world accomplished. That hope and satisfaction itself can powerfully stir us as we serve the Gospel.

### **B. It Is Possible to Evangelize Out of Fear of God and His Judgment**

Perhaps from time to time the feelings of love for God and man are not there, and a sense of duty does not motivate us. Sometimes the fact that we are accountable to God and will one day answer to Him for our service stirs feelings of fear in us. Even that fear can motivate us to service. God warned Ezekiel in strong language to take His message to the people or bear the consequences (Eze 3:16-21). Jonah evangelized only after being terrorized by a whale (Jn 2).

### **C. It Is Even Possible to Evangelize for Totally Inappropriate Reasons**

In one of Paul's letters to a young church, he noted that some had proclaimed the Gospel "out of envy and rivalry" (Php 1:15). He went on to say that it did not matter! That the Gospel of Christ was being proclaimed is what was important to Paul. He rejoiced that the right thing was happening in spite of wrong motives! (Php 1:15-18)

#### D. We Should Evangelize Out of Love for Christ and The Lost

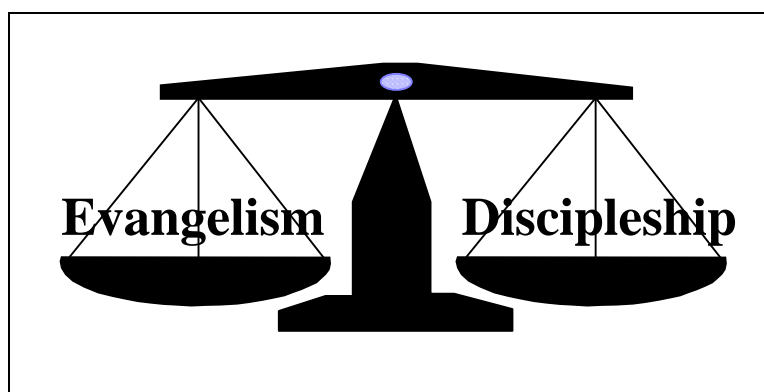
The maturing believer increasingly finds himself growing in his love for Christ and, in turn, for those whom Christ loves— the Church and the lost. Paul spoke of Christ's love "compelling" him to persuade men (2Co 5:14).

It seems from reading 1 John that what motivated and stirred the apostle John to proclaim the Gospel was a desire to include increasing numbers of people in the fellowship of the Church.

### IV. The Place Of Evangelism In An SCP Strategy

The strategy of saturation church planting is largely dependent upon focused evangelistic effort. Saturation evangelism goes hand-in-hand with saturation church planting. The initial and foundational work of evangelism— winning people to faith in Christ— must be succeeded by the ongoing work of nurturing and equipping new converts and disciples. But in that subsequent work, we dare not neglect the critical place of intentional, continuing evangelistic work, building bridges to the lost and moving them toward faith. There is a balance that must be maintained between telling the Good News and assisting those who have come to faith. To neglect either jeopardizes the work of God in which we are involved.

Figure 1.2 Keeping the Balance



We certainly need to help those whom God has given us to disciple, but we must never be satisfied with the number of those who have come to faith. We must not forget the task of evangelism. We must be committed to and diligent in our responsibility to reach the lost with the Gospel. Without people continually being won to faith (thinking of the church planting cycle), there is no further establishing, no further developing of leaders, and no hope for on-going multiplication of churches. Evangelism must take the first place in saturation church planting. Equipping and mobilizing all believers to do the work of evangelism will be a primary ingredient in any SCP strategy.

#### QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Do you believe that God could use you to reach others for Him?
- What is the most important thing that has ever happened to you personally?
- If that is true, what, then, is the most important thing you can do in life to make a positive impact on the many people you know?
- What is "the work of an evangelist"? (2Ti 4:2)
- What most motivates you to share the Gospel?
- Can you think of ten people in your web of relationships who need a personal relationship with Christ?
- What plans do you have for increasing your evangelistic efforts?

## **ACTION PLAN**

With two other believers, form a prayer triplet to meet and pray regularly for the salvation of those whom God has placed on your heart (See Prayer Appendix 3A: Prayer Triplets).

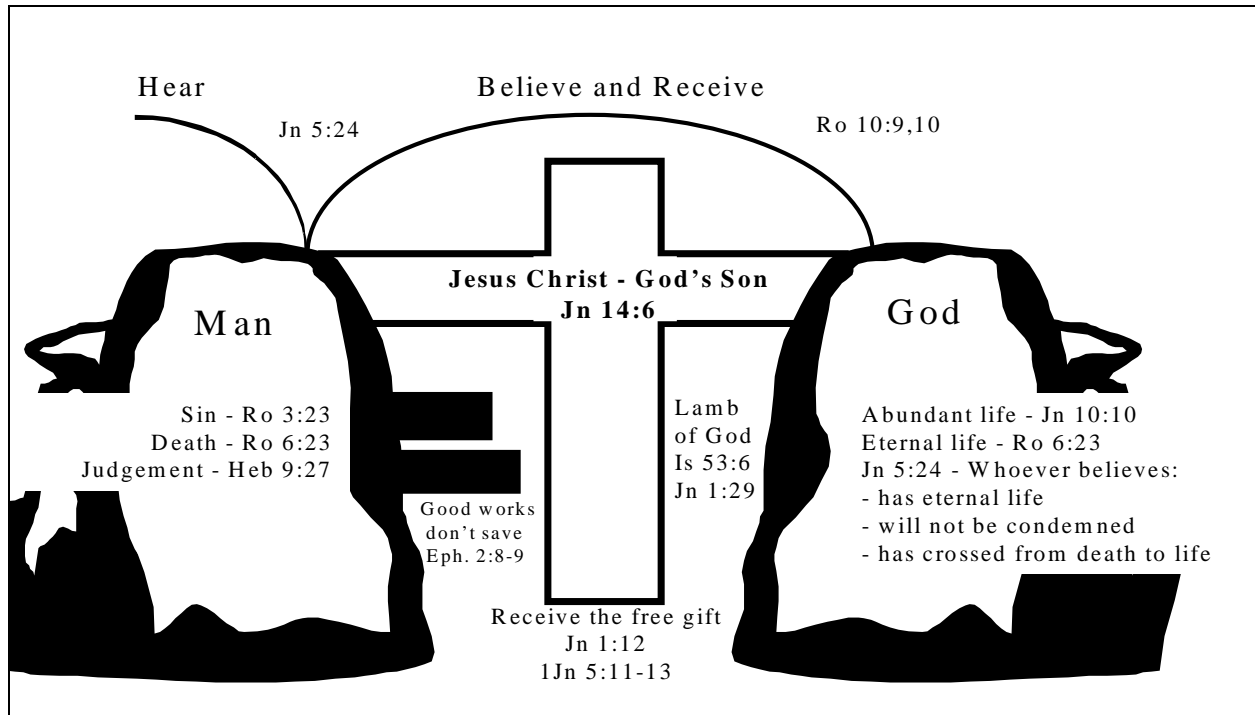
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EVANGELISM  
APPENDIX

1A

# The Bridge



The Bridge diagram can be an effective evangelism method. You might find it helpful to gradually make a rough sketch of this on a blank sheet of paper while you share the Good News (with related Bible verses) with unsaved friends. A verbal and written presentation is often more powerful than using either medium alone.

# Developing Your Personal Testimony

## THIS IS WHAT GOD DID FOR ME!

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain the value and preparation of a personal testimony.

### ☞ Main Points

- A personal testimony is an effective and non-threatening way to witness to the lost.
- A personal testimony will be more effective if it is carefully prepared to include the most important information.
- A personal testimony tells what God has done in your life— it is not a sermon!

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the potential spiritual impact of a personal testimony.
- Develop a three - five minute personal testimony to share with others.

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This is a two-hour lesson. The first hour should introduce the participants to what a personal testimony is and help them write their personal testimony. The second hour should be used to practice sharing their personal testimony (point V. in the outline). Although the lesson is written all together, you may want to leave a few days between the two hours to give the participants a chance to learn their testimony well before sharing it in class.

Be sure that the testimonies are not longer than 5 minutes. Consider using a stopwatch to ensure that this is not violated. It takes great discipline to keep a testimony short, but there will be situations where you will only have time to share a short testimony. It might be more effective to divide the group into two or three groups for sharing of testimonies.

## I. The Nature Of A Testimony

### A. We are Called to be Witness

In Acts 1:8, Jesus promises His disciples that they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them and that they will be His witnesses. But what is a witness? In a legal courtroom, a witness is one who is called upon to tell others what he has observed. He tells the truth about a critical event, as he has perceived it. A witness is not expected to know every detail or have various perspectives on truth. He is expected to tell what he remembers accurately and honestly. The content that a witness communicates is his testimony.

### B. We are Called to Give Testimony

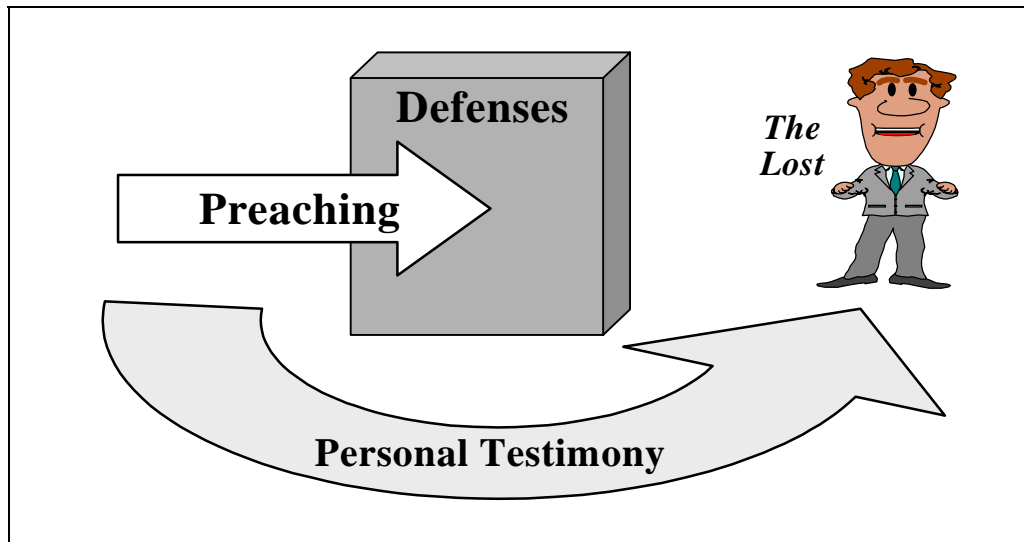
Each of us who has placed our faith in Christ also has a testimony to share. What has been your experience with Christ? Our testimonies are as individual as fingerprints and snowflakes. Our testimonies provide valuable insight to others about the way God works among men. This is vital information unbelievers need to make an informed decision about Christ. Our testimonies also provide encouragement to those who love God. As we tell of Christ's work in our lives, others are stimulated to greater faith and obedience.

## II. The Value Of A Testimony

### A. Overcoming resistance to the Gospel

People listen selectively. The people you want to win to faith may resist a theological discussion about salvation. But they will easily and readily hear your personal story of how you came to faith in Christ. People like to listen to interesting stories. Whether they admit it or not, they want you to give them a good reason to believe. Your testimony, shared honestly, briefly and creatively, can be used by the Spirit to open up their eyes and minds to see spiritual truth in a fresh way.

Figure 2.1 Overcoming Defenses With Personal Testimony



### B. Overcoming Satan in spiritual warfare

When we are sharing our faith with others, we are engaged alongside God in spiritual warfare, assaulting the kingdom of the devil. In Revelation 12:10-12, we read the following:

*"... Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them!"*

Note the means by which the accuser of our brethren, Satan, was overcome ... "the blood of the Lamb" and "the word of their testimony." The finished work of Christ and our relationship to Christ are two things God uses to defeat the evil one. Your testimony of faith in Christ and faithfulness to Christ is an important tool God uses to build his church. Even if we have to experience hardship, suffering or ultimately death for our faith, we win and Satan loses! So tell people what God has done in your life!

## III. Examples Of Testimonies

Scripture is filled with accounts of people giving their personal testimony. Read the following as examples of personal testimonies and see what you can learn from them. Use the methods you are learning in the lessons on inductive Bible Studies

### A. The woman at the well (Jn 4:28-29)

- What did she say?
- To whom did she witness?
- Why did she choose this particular form of testimony?

**B. The man born blind (Jn 9:13-34)**

- To whom did he witness?
- What did he say?
- What was the occasion for the testimony?
- How was the testimony received?
- How did he deal with opposition?

**C. Paul's conversion (Ac 9, 22, and 26)**

In these passages, note how Paul emphasizes different aspects of the same experience to impact different audiences.

- Chapter 9 is Luke's account of Saul's conversion.
- Chapter 22 is Luke's record of Paul's interrupted testimony before the Jerusalem Jews.
- Chapter 26:2-23 is Luke's record of Paul's testimony before King Agrippa.

**D. Paul's testimony about events in Jerusalem (Ac 24:10-21)**

## IV. The Preparation Of A Testimony

Please take the remainder of this session to prepare a 3-5 minute version of your personal testimony. Ask God to help you recall your conversion clearly. Make some notes about key ideas or verses you want to be sure to include. It is best if you can isolate one particular thing that moved you to faith in Christ— something that others, non-Christians, could relate to. In your testimony, share in these three broad categories:

**Figure 2.2 My Testimony**

***My Testimony***

*My life before . . .*

*How I trusted Christ . . .*

*My life now . . .*

**A. What was your life like before you met Christ?**

This will point to areas of need that you believed Christ would meet in your life. It provides a sense of common ground between you and the person you want to win to faith. Why did you need Christ? Try to isolate the prominent issue that led to your repentance.

**B. How did you come to Christ?**

What actually happened? Where were you? When did you trust Christ? What did you do? What Scripture did the Holy Spirit use in your life? Did someone help you in this process? Make this as

basic as possible; assume that the hearer is a God-seeker and your experience will be used as a plausible scenario that he could relate to.

### **C. How has knowing Christ changed your life?**

What impact has your faith had on your life? In what practical ways was your life changed? Were there changes that surprised you? Were your expectations met? Do not only talk in the past tense-- tell what the Gospel is doing in your life today. Do not necessarily avoid talking about difficulties-- non-Christians need to know that Christians have problems because they, the non-Christians certainly have problems. Listeners need to know that Christ is a solid anchor in the storms and that the Christian life provides power for life.

## **V. The Sharing Of A Personal Testimony**

Now that you have prepared your personal testimony, take some time to share it with the other trainees. Each participant needs a chance to share his or her testimony. Take five minutes to hear each testimony and no more than 5 minutes to give feedback. As testimonies are shared, use the following points to consider the effectiveness of each.

### **A. Complete**

Does the testimony tell the whole story? Does it include the three parts?

- Life before Christ: What can the non-Christian relate to?
- Circumstances at the point of conversion: How is it like the non-Christian's situation?
- Life since finding Christ: How is your life different than the non-Christian?

### **B. Clear**

Will the testimony be easy for a non-believer to understand, or is it filled with religious language that might confuse non-believers? Does it sound like a sermon or is it a helpful recommendation to a friend?

### **C. Gospel**

Are all necessary points of the Gospel message touched upon in the testimony? While it is impossible to go into detail concerning all of this in a short testimony, all or some of the following points should be properly treated.

#### **1. The Bad News**

- We are sinners, and the penalty is death
- God is holy, and we cannot please Him
- Jesus— the Son of God— died in our place

#### **2. The Good News**

- We are saved by faith— not by our works
- We are born again into God's family as His children
- We have the assurance of eternal life

### **D. Concise**

These testimonies should be not longer than five minutes. Is there any unnecessary detail in the testimony? We do not need to tell the whole story now-- evangelism is a process.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- Where are some places and what are some of the times in your day or week during which you could share your testimony?

- What topics of general conversation might readily provide “openers” for the casual introduction of your testimony? Do you travel on public transportation?
- Do you take breaks or eat a meal at work? Ask the Lord to arrange “divine appointments” for you to be able to share your testimony.

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Share your testimony with at least three other Christians who will see if you are clear in your presentation.
- Be prepared to share your testimony again during the next training session or during this seminar.
- Prayerfully make a plan that will result in sharing your testimony with two non-Christian friends or existing contacts within the next two weeks. Ask God to prepare “divine appointments” for you to share your testimony (perhaps without advance warning) within the next four weeks.

# Evangelism and Church Planting

## RUNNING THE WHOLE RACE

### Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to demonstrate that evangelism should be done in a relational way in order to help the new believer naturally continue on into a discipling relationship.

### Main Points

- Evangelism is only the first leg of the Christian race—discipleship is the second.
- Natural webs of relationships and "gatekeepers" facilitate effective, relational evangelism.
- New Christians are perhaps the most valuable evangelists.

### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand why relational evangelism facilitates assimilation of new converts into the church.

### Appendix

4A Evaluating Evangelism Strategies

### Suggestions to Trainers

Appendix 4A can be used as a discussion tool during this lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

It is impossible to plant a church without evangelism, but evangelism alone is not enough. Church planters need to use an appropriate evangelistic method that will lead to the establishment of growing churches—not just the salvation of individuals.

When we consider the vast amount of tools and methods available for evangelism and try to determine which to use, we must remind ourselves of our goal. As church planters, our goal is not just to expose people to the Gospel, nor is it even simply to help them to make a decision for Christ. Our goal is to make disciples who will come together to worship and grow with God's people.

## I. The Need For A New Approach

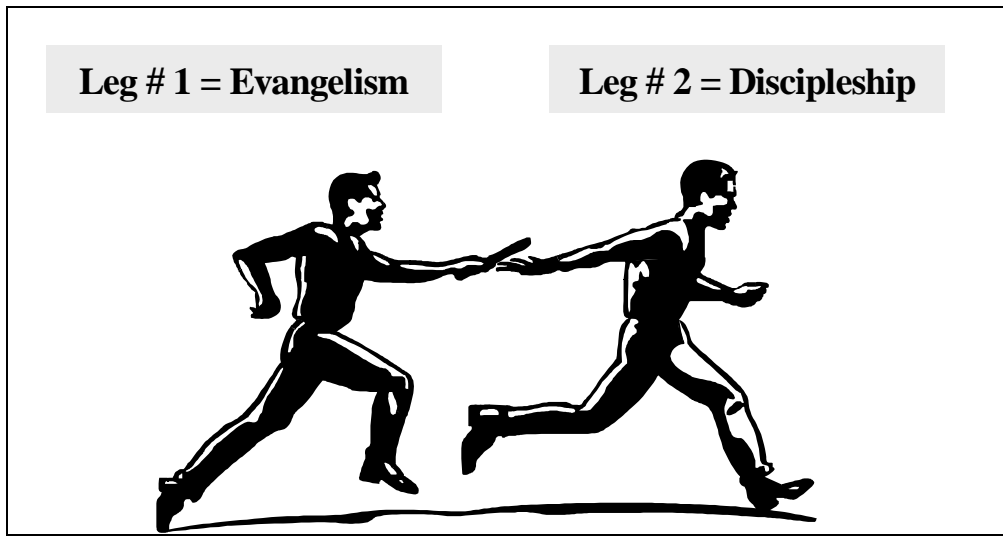
Many of the popular evangelism programs today are quite unlike the evangelism of the early church. The emphasis today is often on intense, structured, one-on-one situations. Many programs are strong in establishing the content of the Gospel and the mechanics of sharing it, but they do not emphasize the relational dynamics of coming to Christ, and thus are not geared toward assimilating people into a local church. The result is that people are often won to Christ and never assimilated into the church. One very large ministry in the CIS researched the results of evangelistic efforts and found that "5-10% remain in church after evangelism. 90 - 95% leave because they find no help and answers to their needs." Obviously, this is not desirable. Our mandate is not to make converts, but *disciples*, and disciples join in fellowship with the Body (Mt 28:19; Heb 10:25).

The church planter needs to use a method of evangelism that assimilates people into the church. He needs strategies that naturally lead to follow-up, and lead naturally to discipleship and growth in the church.

## II. The Relay Race

There are many kinds of individual races, but the relay race is a team effort. The important characteristic of a relay race is that the first runner must successfully pass the baton on to the second runner in order to complete his task. If the first runner completes his section of the course in record time, but does not hand the baton to the next runner, he has failed. The process of evangelism may be compared to the first leg of a relay race, and discipleship may be compared to the second leg. After the evangelist has led a person to trust in Christ (evangelism), he must be disciplined and helped to grow to maturity in Christ (discipled).

**Figure 4.1 Passing the Baton**



Both legs of race must be completed in order for the unbeliever to be saved and also assimilated into the local church. The first leg involves understanding the basic content (theological truths) of the Gospel that lead to a relationship with God. The second leg is more sociological or relational. Maturity is best gained through relationships with other members of the family of God. Unfortunately, well-meaning Christians often rush to present the content of the Gospel without taking time to develop a relationship with the lost person to whom they are witnessing. When the lost person repents, he has no significant relationship that will naturally carry him into a discipleship relationship, and therefore the process of making disciples is hindered.

**Figure 4.2 Two Legs of the Relay Race**

<i>First Leg</i>	<i>Second Leg</i>
Evangelism	Discipleship
Relationship to God	Relationship to the Body
Salvation	Sanctification
New Birth	Growth to Maturity

Most evangelistic tools take only the first leg into consideration. The Gospel is presented in such a way that it will be understood and received. Praise God for these evangelistic tools. However, as church planters, we must take both of these legs into consideration. Somehow, those we witness to must hear the Gospel and see how it impacts people.

We will have a head start into the second leg of the race if the lost see relationships among believers that communicate love, joy, etc. People should look at our lives and know that we are different. When non-believers begin to say, "I've never sensed love like this before," then evangelism is taking place the way in which it was intended (Jn 13:35).

It should not surprise us to learn that the agency which found only 5 - 10% of its fruit remaining in church also came to this conclusion: "In our opinion, the most successful answer to the follow-up is a structure of home groups in the church." Cell group ministry is a great place to focus on both legs of the race. The content of the Gospel can be made clear with opportunity for questions and feedback. In addition, cell groups are small and intimate, with opportunity for healthy relationships to grow and be seen.

### III. Principles For Evangelism

The following concepts are good general evangelistic principles by any standards. They are listed here because they are of particular benefit to the church planting process. As we have said above, many people will make a personal decision for Christ but will not continue on in a discipling relationship. The church planter must be able to help the lost complete the entire race so they will be saved and become active participants in the Body of Christ.

#### A Use Natural Webs

Every person has a network of friends, relatives, co-workers, and others whom they know well and with whom they have regular contact. These natural relationships provide for the free flow of ideas (whereas discussions between strangers may be filled with misunderstandings and resistance). Often conversions "travel" through these networks, because the Gospel, like electricity, follows the path of least resistance.

Jesus was aware of these natural networks and had the ability to reach not just individuals, but networks as well. In Matthew 9:9-10 Jesus called Matthew and was soon at Matthew's house with the whole network of tax collectors gathered. After Jesus met Andrew the fisherman, there suddenly was a whole group of fishermen following Jesus (Jn 1:40-41). Jesus sat at the well with the Samaritan woman and afterward, she brought her entire village to see Jesus (Jn 4:28-30). When Jesus shared the Gospel with one person he often asked that person to share the Good News with those in his or her network (Lk 8:38-39). The book of Acts as well is filled with stories of whole families (Ac 11:14; 16:31) and whole villages (Ac 9:35) coming to Christ because of one person's conversion.

Most people do their best witnessing with those they know well. Some Christians, eager to evangelize, want to go "door-to-door" to people they do not know when they have not shared the Gospel with their family, best friends or associates. However, the "natural web" principle should be kept in mind. When people from the same network make a decision to follow Christ, it is more likely that they will continue on into the discipleship leg of the race.

#### B. Have New Believers Witness Immediately

What kind of people do you consider to be the most effective evangelists? Perhaps some will answer "pastors" or "theologians." There are no wrong answers here. Anyone can be effective as an evangelist when they are following the leading of the Holy Spirit. But we often fail to realize that **new believers are in some ways the most effective evangelists.** Why? Below two reasons are listed.

##### 1. Their faith is "fresh."

Newfound faith is contagious. Even without deep theological understanding, the new convert will enthusiastically give evidence of the change that has taken place in the most dramatic way. Others can see the change right after his conversion better than they can over the course of his growth as a Christian.

##### 2. New believers still have non-Christian friends who can see the change.

The Gospel travels through relationships. It has been said that once the average believer has been a Christian for two years or more, all his or her closest friends will also be Christians. Remember, evangelism is much more difficult between strangers. John 4:29 provides a good

example of a brand new believer who is a very effective witness. When the sinful Samaritan woman met Christ, she had a very simple but profound testimony "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" This woman could not answer difficult theological questions, but she knew what had happened to her. And who could argue with her? She told of what happened to her. That was all that she needed to know to draw others to Christ. The men of the city rushed out to meet Jesus. How effective would her witness have been if she had waited a year to start to tell her story?

A new believer is a powerful witness. As a church planter you may want to develop a plan so that each new convert will be able to witness to his family and friends. When it is not possible to use the plan ask new converts to go with you to visit their family and friends and begin to develop a relationship and share Christ with them as well.

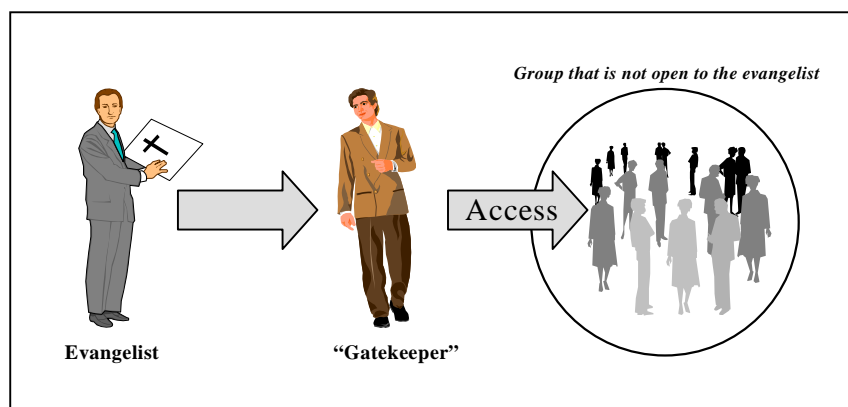
### C. Go For "Gatekeepers"

Every group of people includes a few who are more influential than others. When change takes place in a group, they are normally the ones who initiate the change or at least allow it to take place. When these "influencers" are won to Christ, others will likely follow. Sometimes we call people with this kind of influence "gatekeepers" because of their influence on the group and because they are the ones who allow you to have access to the rest of the group.

Who is a gatekeeper? A person who

- Has a good reputation among his peers
- Is open to a friendship with you.
- Is open to the Lord.

**Figure 4.3 Gatekeepers**



Paul, the great church planter, understood this reality. He specifically expected to win influential people. Understanding the great influence kings have (Pr 16:15; 19:12), he boldly targeted them! (Ac 9:15). He proclaimed the Gospel before Governor Felix, Festus and King Agrippa (Ac 23-26).

**Paul's normal church planting strategy was to teach in the synagogue and then in the home of a "gatekeeper."** For example, at Philippi the gatekeeper was Lydia (Ac 16:11-15), at Thessalonica it was Jason (Ac 17:1-9), and at Corinth it was Titus Justus (Ac 18:7). When Paul led someone to Christ others often followed.

*Other examples of "gatekeepers"*

- **The Philippian Jailer:** "Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God - he and his whole family" (Ac 16:32-34).

- **Crispus:** "Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized" (Ac 18:8).
- **Stephanas:** "You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they had devoted themselves to the service of the saints. I urge you brothers, to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work..." (1Co 16:15-16).
- Though not quite as clear, see also: (2Ti 1:16, 4:19), **Nympha** (Col 4:15), **Cornelius** (Ac 10:7, 24), **Aquila and Priscilla** (1Co 16:19, Ro 16:3-5), **Gaius** (1Co 1:14; Ro 16:23).

In most cultures "gatekeepers" are male heads of households. If they come to Christ, it is likely that their family will follow. In any case, "gatekeepers" once won will bring others with them.

Sometimes "gatekeepers" will be like *big fish*. The big fish are normally in deep water, far from the shore. It may take more effort to go after these big fish, and they can be very resistant. They may fight the Gospel the whole way, but catching these big fish can be worth the effort!

#### D. Consider Cultural Barriers.

People rarely cross cultural barriers to attend church. People may make a personal decision for Christ but be hesitant to attend church - to cross the second bridge - because of cultural or social barriers. People are social beings who, for whatever reason, tend to congregate with those like themselves.

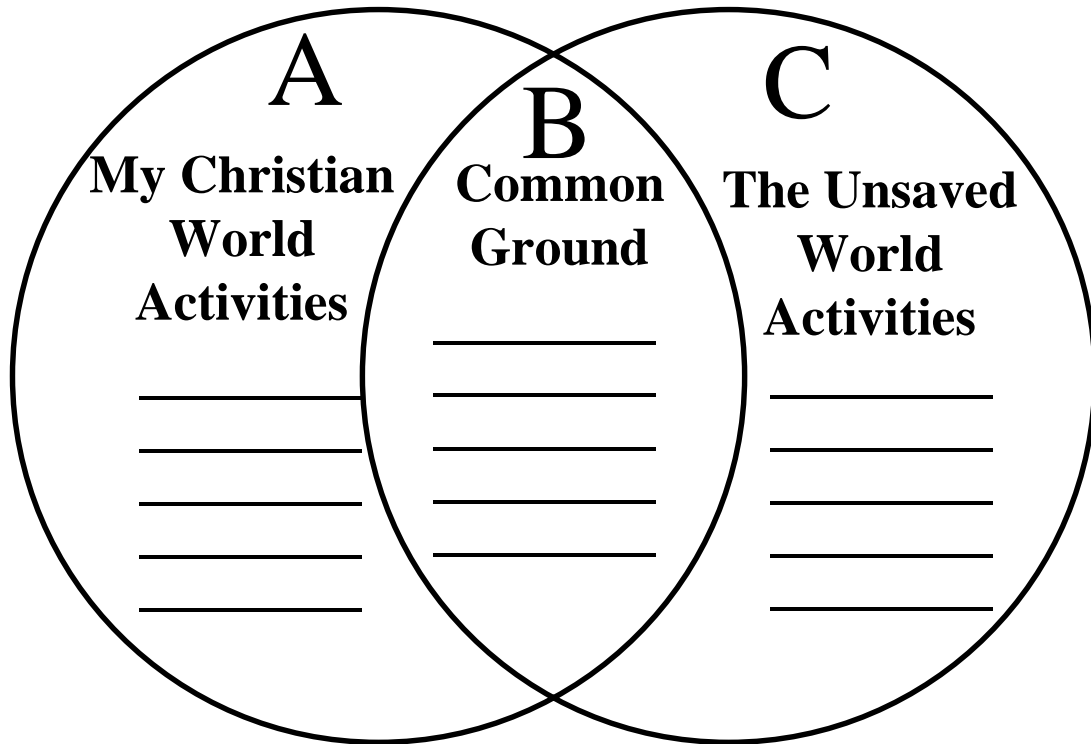
New converts are more likely to be integrated into the church if by doing so, they will not have to change cultures too much. Consider ways to set up your church so that it will reflect the social and cultural uniqueness of the people you are trying to win, without compromising theological truth. Paul clearly used this strategy: "*To the Jews, I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law....To the weak, I became weak, to win the weak*" (1Co 9:20-23). Paul was willing to adjust *his* culture in order to decrease the barriers between himself and *unbelievers*. Often, we do the opposite. When we require the lost to "become like us" we hinder the development of good discipling relationships with them. We become stumbling blocks in their paths rather than helping them run the race victoriously.

#### E. Look For 'Common Ground'

Sometimes a "common ground" approach is just what is needed to develop relationships and win people to Christ. By "common ground", we mean those activities that are common to both believers and non-believers alike. Common ground can be used as a means to develop relationships and communicate the Gospel.

Take several minutes to write down several common ground activities related to your Christian life. List these activities in the spaces provided below the letter "A" in the "Common Ground" diagram. Next, list the typical activities in the average day that are unacceptable to you as a Christian but are common to the unsaved in the group you are targeting. Write these answers in the circle labeled "C." Lastly, in section "B," list the activities that you are engaged in that are acceptable to you and would be acceptable activities for the unsaved people around you.

Figure 4.4 Common Ground



### QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Think about two people you know who have made a decision to follow Christ, but who do not attend church. Why haven't they gotten involved in a body of believers? List the reasons as specifically as possible.
- Describe someone who would qualify as a "gatekeeper" in your target group. How can you reach him/her?
- What culturally appropriate forms might help attract people to your church?
- In what ways can you use the common ground you have identified as a means to communicate the Gospel?

### ACTION PLAN

Take several minutes to read the Evangelism Strategies described in Evangelism Appendix 4A. Evaluate these strategies based on the evangelistic principles in this lesson. Will these strategies successfully lead to new churches? How can each of these strategies be modified to ensure a healthy church plant?

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# Evaluating Evangelism Strategies

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Take several minutes to read the following evangelistic strategies. Evaluate these strategies based on the evangelistic principles in this lesson. After reading each strategy, circle a number from 1 (low) to 5 (high) that you think best describes how it fulfills the criteria listed in the boxes. Will these strategies successfully lead to new churches? How can each of these strategies be modified to ensure a healthy church plant?

## I. EVANGELISM STRATEGY 1 - EVANGELISTIC BIBLE STUDIES

Sasha and Tanya live in a city of 100,000 with no evangelical church. With a desire to plant a church, they start an evangelistic Bible study in their home. After one year, 15 people are faithfully attending and as far as they can tell 9 of them are believers. They realize that with 15 people the group is getting too big to feel intimate, so they start another group that meets on another night in the home of another couple. Sasha hopes that when they have enough people in these groups, they will rent a hall and begin to worship each Sunday as a church.

<b>Amount of personal contact:</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Meets felt needs of the lost:</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Uses natural relationship webs:</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Focuses on the receptive:</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Focuses on the "gatekeepers:</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Provides for follow-up discipleship:</b>	1	2	3	4	5

## II. EVANGELISM STRATEGY 2 - EVANGELISTIC CRUSADE

Alexander has big plans to plant a church in a large city. Alexander is a recent graduate of a Bible college. While in Bible college Alexander made contact with an aggressive American mission group who has offered to guide him in the project. Together, Alexander and the Americans plan to launch things in June when 20 American college students will come to assist in evangelism. The plan is for the week with the Americans to be very busy. A hall will be rented and a crusade with music, testimonies, and a Gospel presentation will be held every evening. During the day the Americans will pair up with Russians and interpreters to cover the city, handing out fliers and going door to door to advertise the evening crusades. Alexander expects that as a result of this week of evangelism enough people will be saved to open his church immediately.

<b>Amount of personal contact:</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Meets felt needs of the lost:</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Uses natural relationship webs:</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Focuses on the receptive:</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Focuses on the "gatekeepers:</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Provides for follow-up discipleship:</b>	1	2	3	4	5

### III. EVANGELISM STRATEGY 3 - CHRISTIAN BOOK TABLE

Andre and Luba have been Christians for a long time. With a desire to start a new church that will reach a new group of people they develop the following strategy. Noticing how many people in their region like to read, they collect as many Christian books as they can find and begin a book table with only Christian books in a nearby market area. Every day Andre and Luba set up their table with Christian books for sale at modest prices. Some free Gospel tracts are offered to anyone who stops to browse. They also have some Bible study worksheets which people take home and work on. It is set up so that people discuss the worksheets with Andre or Luba upon the completion of each one and before the next one is received. These worksheets are evangelistic and Andre and Luba pray that people will find Christ as a result of these lessons and they will eventually start a church.

<b>Amount of personal contact:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Meets felt needs of the lost:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Uses natural relationship webs:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Focuses on the receptive:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Focuses on the "gatekeepers:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Provides for follow-up discipleship:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

### IV. EVANGELISM STRATEGY 4 - CHRISTIAN VIDEOS

Vladimir is trying to plant a church in the capital city. In order to evangelize, Vladimir uses Christian videos. He invites people in his neighborhood and at the factory where he works to see these videos. Now, a group of young curious non-believers gather in his apartment every Tuesday evening. The meetings normally last an hour and a half. For 30 to 45 minutes the participants view a video followed by a discussion led by Vladimir using a discussion guide that goes with the video. By using this method, Vladimir hopes that enough people will come to Christ that he will be able to start a church.

<b>Amount of personal contact:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Meets felt needs of the lost:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Uses natural relationship webs:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Focuses on the receptive:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Focuses on the "gatekeepers:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Provides for follow-up discipleship:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

# Barriers to Effective Evangelism

## BRIDGES INSTEAD OF BARRIERS

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to discuss common personal and spiritual barriers to evangelism and how to overcome them.

### ☞ Main Points

- External barriers to evangelism may be cultural, linguistic, religious, or spiritual.
- Internal barriers to evangelism include tradition, prejudice, fear or personal values.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should

- Implement a plan to overcome external and internal barriers to evangelism.

### ☞ Appendices

5A A Church in Every People: Plain Talk about A Difficult Subject

5B Answering Common Objectives: Use Scripture as Your Authority

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Allow people time to break into small groups to discuss the questions for consideration, review and application.

Rather than just reviewing the lesson notes, consider taking time to look at Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4 as an example of overcoming barriers in communicating the Gospel. If this is not done as part of the lesson itself, it can be assigned as an action plan to be done between manuals.

Ask trainees to read and be prepared to discuss the article in Appendix 5A before the session.

## I. The Problem Of Barriers And The Need For Bridges

For several decades, most believers living in this region were legally denied the privilege of openly sharing their faith in their communities. Churches encouraged religious ghettos—almost religious fortresses—to develop around them, and a sense of alienation, isolation, and distrust of those in the "secular" world was pervasive. Often the only legal place to share Christ was in the church building. These decades left an enduring mark on the mindset and traditions of those who love Christ. Barriers have been erected. These barriers must be identified and torn down.

Often, for example, the Church has misunderstood the place of the unsaved in the spiritual conflict. Knowing that the Devil could use the unsaved to corrupt believers, believers were warned to disassociate from their unsaved friends and neighbors. However, the lost are not the enemy. They are the hostages in a spiritual war. They are the targets of our spiritual efforts. They are just like we were without Christ—spiritually blind, spiritually dead, and spiritually bankrupt. They are not an enemy to be defeated. Rather, they are hostages to be liberated. They are doomed unless intentional, heroic efforts are undertaken by the church to bring them to faith.

In order to accomplish this task of liberation and reclamation, believers must build bridges to the non-Christian world around us. Often our Christian counter-cultures are so foreign and strange that the

unbelievers will not make an effort to join with us. If they are to be reached, we must reach out to them by building bridges of sincerity, mercy, compassion, truth, and love.

Let us understand this. We *will* be misunderstood. We will suffer for our efforts. We will become tired physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We must renew our resources by living balanced lives. But effort must be made to reach this generation and each generation with the Gospel. It is our task, our mandate, and our particular challenge. The next generation of believers cannot reach ours and we will not be here to reach theirs. It is time to tear down the barriers.

## II. Understanding The Barriers That Hinder Evangelism

The well-known American missiologist Ralph Winter has made some important observations about evangelism. Using Acts 1:8 as a foundation, he proposes that Jesus' words in the Great Commission not only give us reason to divide the world geographically (my city, my region, my country, and the world) but also to divide the world with regard to cultural groupings of people. In the passage Jesus refers to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the world. Naturally for the disciples, it would be easiest for them to do evangelism in Jerusalem and Judea, where everyone spoke the same language and grew up in the same culture. For Peter or John, to preach and teach in Samaria would be more difficult. Not only were there some cultural differences, but there were huge prejudices having to do with the laws of worship that would have to be overcome. Finally, for a missionary or evangelist to go "to the ends of the earth" would require a great amount of preparation (language learning, etc.). This we understand easily. However, Ralph Winter also points out that if we look at the world from the point of view of cultural differences, *then "the ends of the earth" are not always hundreds of miles away, but in fact, may be in your very town or city.* There are whole groups of people in your city who live in a different culture or subculture. In fact, often Christians become so immersed in the lives of their congregations that they become a subculture and are no longer able to understand or relate to their own childhood friends, family members or neighbors.

Special kinds of ministry and evangelism may be needed in order to cross cultural barriers and effectively share the Gospel. Notice how Jesus spoke to the woman at the well in John 4. Also, notice the differences in preaching style and content which Paul used when speaking to Jews (Ac 9:20-22) as compared to when he was preaching to non-Jews (Ac 17:16-31). Both Jesus and Paul had to overcome cultural barriers in order to minister effectively to these people.

Take some time to read the article "*A Church in Every People: Plain Talk About A Difficult Subject*" by Donald McGavran (Appendix 5A). As you read, consider the extent to which McGavran is convinced that culture differences will hinder evangelism. Consider the context in which you are working. Determine in your own mind how well you know the culture of the people among whom you are trying to plant a church.

The most effective evangelism takes place when there are very few "barriers" to tear down. Evangelism is most effective when you are speaking with someone who is like you, who thinks like you, who likes to do the same things you do, who can relate to your joys, who can understand your troubles, and so forth.

But there are many cultures and subcultures of people in which there are few or no believers. These people need to hear the Gospel. We must be prepared to make extra effort to overcome the "barriers" that exist. Consider the barriers listed in the remainder of the lesson in light of your current area of ministry. Remember that even different age groups, occupations, and intellectual abilities can be the basis for the creation of a subculture. Regardless of the situation, we must overcome these barriers so that the Gospel can clearly be heard.

### III. External Barriers To Effective Evangelism

#### A. Cultural Barriers

Christian workers from other countries, continents, or even other regions of one large country often must learn to understand and adapt to cultural differences in order to minimize the gap between themselves and those they would reach with the Gospel. Paul wrote "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some" (1Co 9:22). He was willing to put aside cultural distinctives that he might have preferred for the higher purpose of winning others to Christ. However, the cultural problem is not merely a missionary problem.

In each culture, the Church has established traditions that may have been noble and effective when they were originally implemented, but which over time have become archaic and cumbersome. These church cultural traditions may be evident in our music, our dress, and our architecture, to name just a few. If we are serious about reaching the lost with the Gospel, these traditions need to be re-examined and re-considered.



#### B. Linguistic Barriers

For those coming from a second culture, the most obvious barrier to effective presentation of the Gospel is an inability to speak the language. However, communication can also be a problem between Christians and non-Christians who speak the same language. A very peculiar vocabulary is often used in our fellowships. Many times we aren't even aware of it.

I recall an evangelistic outreach among Yugoslav peoples. When leaving one another, it was common practice in the church to say, "Gospod s tobom", which has the sense of "Go with the Lord." I used the phrase with a man who had been faithfully attending our meetings. His response was "No, I'm going with Milan!" He had no idea of my message or its intent. He knew the words, but they were empty, and both of us were a bit confused and embarrassed.

Our special greetings and spiritual vocabulary can trouble the uninitiated unbelievers among us. We need to find fresh ways of declaring that which is most important—the message that God loves lost humanity and has come to redeem men, women, and children.



#### C. Religious Barriers

We approach people of differing backgrounds. They may be nominally Catholic, Orthodox, agnostic or atheistic. They may have gotten involved with a cult or sect of some kind. They may place a whole different meaning on the words and practices we have come to take for granted. Words like "salvation," "faith," and "belief" may require explanations so that people can understand their meaning. It may be profitable for us to ask those we are communicating with to clarify their own understanding of the terms we are using with them.

Our practices, gestures, and even our posture may intimidate others as well. Some find it difficult to discuss spiritual things in a home. Some find it difficult to believe that a former storefront building can serve God's purposes for a small congregation. They may expect awesome buildings with icons and other artistic expressions of religious faith. They may be troubled by the simplicity of our forms of worship and our familiarity with God. It is our task to win the unsaved. We must find ways to build bridges to them.



#### D. Some Barriers Are Spiritual in Nature

This final barrier is qualitatively different from those previously mentioned. This critical barrier to effective evangelism is the one that separates those who are spiritually alive from the spiritually

dead. Only the Spirit of God can give life through the Gospel we bear. Only He can regenerate and redeem the lost. Ultimately, the weapons of prayer, God's Word, and our own testimonies are those that the Lord will use to defeat Satan and release the captives. We must recognize opposition we face as coming ultimately from Satan and stand against him for the sake of the Lord, and His church and the lost we long to win.

EXTERNAL BARRIERS			
Cultural	Linguistic	Religious	Spiritual

## IV. Internal Barriers To Effective Evangelism

### A. The Barrier of Our Own Traditions

"It's never been done that way before." Perhaps it is time to do things in a new way, not because our old ways are wrong, but because they may no longer be effective. The old forms may no longer accomplish their intended function. The problem of wineskins, old and new, is one that must be addressed. We will not change our essential Gospel, we must not compromise our integrity, but we may change the way the Gospel is packaged to attract greater interest and to win a hearing.

Traditions	
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### B. The Barrier of Our Own Prejudices

There are groups of people in each culture that are dismissed as insignificant or unworthy of consideration. Christians, too, must overcome prejudice. Our prejudices may be ethnic in nature (remember the Samaritan woman), or moral, or criminal (remember Zacchaeus). They may be special from birth or due to accident (remember the man born blind). We may spend our time and efforts with attractive and wealthy people and ignore the needy who would be more responsive to the Gospel of Christ. Recall the rebuke of Paul to the Corinthians (1Co 1:18-31) and the stern words of James (Jas 2:1-13). Ask the Lord to cleanse your hearts and to open your hearts and eyes to all who need the Savior.

Traditions	Prejudices	
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### C. The Barrier of Our Own Fears

The ministry of evangelism is a ministry of faith. It requires courage to risk ourselves and our reputations for the sake of those who may not respond to our Gospel. We may feel inadequate for ministry, thinking that we don't know enough or are not skilled enough. Training can help, but ultimately, we must each choose to follow the Lord in faith and obedience to accomplish the task He has given us. He has given us the weapons of His Spirit, prayer and the Scriptures. More than that, He has promised His own presence with us. Even the Apostle Paul, who wrote, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," (Php 4:13) also wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:7 that our powerful Gospel message comes packaged in "jars of clay." It is obvious that the power is not in us but from God. Our faithfulness in the face of fear brings glory to God and people into His kingdom.

Traditions	Prejudices	Fears	
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### D. The Barrier of Our Own Conflicting Values

We all have limitations in terms of our resources—energy, time, money, ability and gifts. We must each determine before God how to invest these resources as individuals and congregations to accomplish all that He calls us to do. But it must be increasingly clear that if new people are not coming into our fellowships through intentional outreach, church growth is not and will not take place. Each of us must determine prayerfully and in full accordance with our understanding of the Scriptures the place of purposeful evangelism in our lives, schedules and budgets. There will

never be enough resources to accomplish all that we wish, so we must decisively choose to win the lost.

INTERNAL BARRIERS			
Traditions	Prejudices	Fears	Values

## V. A Strategy To Overcome The Barriers

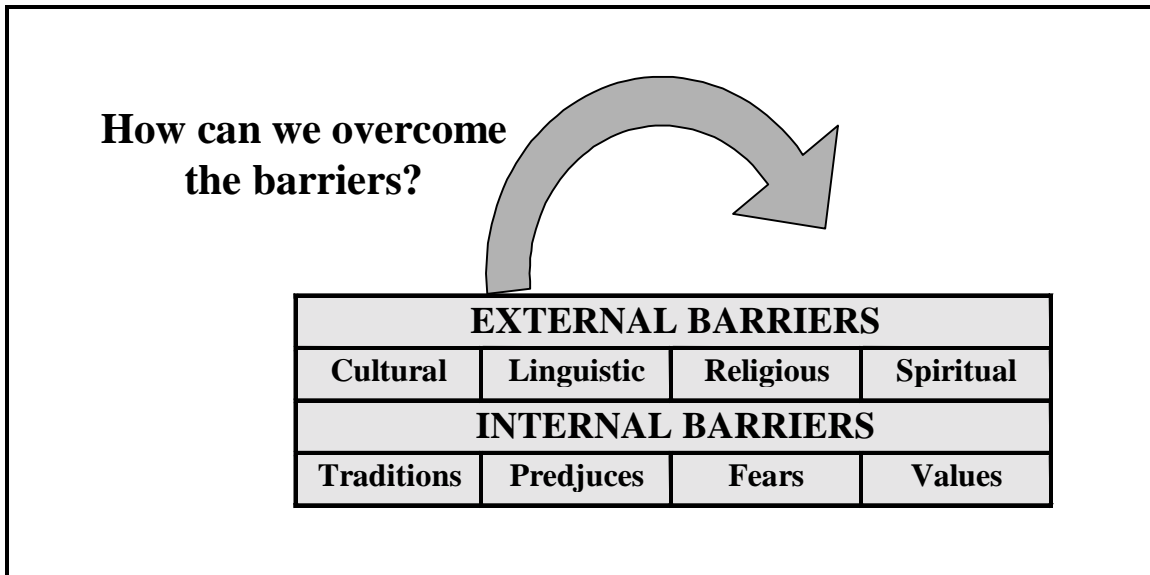
To overcome these external and internal barriers intentional effort will be required. The external barriers will require significant consideration and creativity to overcome. With regard to cultural and religious barriers, we will have to invest time in learning to recognize and understand the diverse backgrounds of our audiences. We must use this understanding as we learn to overcome linguistic barriers in order to communicate effectively with unbelievers. With regard to spiritual barriers, we must focus on prayer, asking the Spirit of God to unlock the hearts of those we would win for Christ. In some cases we will find ourselves "swimming against our own strong denominational currents" for the sake of the Gospel. Prayer and a bold stance may be required to correct long-standing barriers.

Internal barriers must also be confronted. In Romans 12:2, we read that we are not to be conformed to this world but we are to be transformed by the renewal of our minds. If we are to see our world changed, we must see our churches changed. If we would see our churches changed, we must see our hearts changed. If we would see our hearts changed, we must transform our minds by immersing ourselves in the cleansing Word of God.

The Spirit of God will use the Word of God to illumine our minds so that we may see things God's way. He will rebuke the values and prejudices that are not pleasing to Him. He will give us courage to make the changes necessary to accomplish His purposes in regard to evangelism. He will give us faith to overcome our fears as we focus on obedience to His written Word.

In Appendixes 5A and 5B, you will find Scriptures especially selected to aid in this process of preparing our hearts and minds to effectively reach people with Christ's Gospel.

**Figure 5.1 Overcoming the Barriers**



### QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What can we do to reduce the frustration and confusion unbelievers feel when they visit our fellowships or our homes?
- What kinds of things make you feel uncomfortable or uneasy in unfamiliar situations?

- What barriers have you personally experienced as you considered reaching out with the Gospel? Have you overcome them? If yes, in what way have you overcome them?
- What groups are historically the victims of prejudice in your culture? What would the Lord have you do to address this prejudice?
- What practical changes could you make in coming weeks to overcome barriers and increase your intentional evangelism?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Do an inductive Bible study of John, chapter 4. Identify the barriers that Jesus overcame to reveal Himself to the woman at the well.
- Read the article in Appendix 5A, "*A Church in Every People: Plain Talk About A Difficult Subject*", by Donald McGavran. Write a one-page response to the article. Do you agree/disagree with Donald McGavran? How does this article affect your thinking concerning evangelism and church planting strategies? Be prepared to discuss your response with your trainer or mentor.

# "A Church In Every People: Plain Talk About A Difficult Subject"

BY DONALD A. MCGAVRAN

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## INTRODUCTION BY RALPH D. WINTER

*In many ways this is the most remarkable "letter" written by the most remarkable mission strategist of the Twentieth Century. It is extremely doubtful that any other person in history has tramped more places, inquired about the hard facts of the real growth of the Christian movement in more out of the way places-and thought it through more profoundly-than Donald A. McGavran. A third generation missionary to India, that is only where he began, although even in his nineties he touched base again in that vast sub-continent that was so dear to his heart.*

*But that is only where he did most of his work. His burning, wide-ranging concerns took him everywhere else and relentless, inevitably pushed his thinking into global prominence. This particular, brief document is about like a cautioning letter to the younger people who are coming after him, warning them against oversimplification. In this brief epistle, then, almost off the cuff, he throws out seven principles which embody more solid understanding of the essential factors in Christian mission than most missionaries could accumulate in a lifetime.*

### Donald McGavran's letter:

In the last eighteen years of the twentieth century, the goal of Christian mission should be to preach the Gospel and, by God's grace, to plant in every unchurched segment of mankind-what shall we say-"a church" or "a cluster of growing churches"? By the phrase, "segment of mankind" I mean an urbanization, development, caste, tribe, valley, plain, or minority population. I shall explain that the steadily maintained long-range goal should never be the first, but should always be second. The goal is not one small sealed-off conglomerate congregation in every people. Rather, the long-range goal (to be held consistently in view in the years or decades when it is not yet achieved) should be a cluster of growing congregations in every segment.

### THE ONE-BY-ONE METHOD

As we consider the phrase above, we should remember that it is usually easy to start one single congregation in a new unchurched people group. The missionary arrives. He and his family worship on Sunday. They are the first members of the congregation, He learns the language and preaches the Gospel. He lives like a Christian. He tells people about Christ and helps them in their troubles. He sells tracts or Gospels, or gives them away. Across the years, a few individual converts are won from that. Sometimes they come for very sound and spiritual reasons; sometimes from mixed motives. But here and there a woman, a man, a boy, a girl do decide to follow Jesus. A few employees of the mission become Christian. These may be masons hired to erect the buildings, helpers in the home, rescued persons or orphans. The history of mission in Africa is replete with churches started by buying slaves, freeing them and employing such of them as could not return to their kindred. Such as chose to could accept the Lord. A hundred and fifty years ago this was a common way of starting a church. With the outlawing of slavery, of course, it ceased to be used.

One single congregation arising in the way just described is almost always a conglomerate church-made up of members of several different segments of society. Some old, some young, orphans, rescued persons, helpers and ardent seekers. All seekers are carefully screened to make sure they really intend to receive Christ. In due time a church building is erected and, lo, "a church in that people." It is a conglomerate church. It is sealed off from all the people groups of that region. No segment of the population says, "That group of worshipers is us." They are quite right. It is not. It is ethnically quite a different social unit.

This very common way of beginning the process of evangelization is a slow way to disciple the peoples of the earth-note the plural, "the peoples of the earth." Let us observe closely what really happens as this congregation is gathered. Each convert, as he becomes a Christian, is seen by kin as one who leaves "us" and joins "them." He leaves "our gods" to worship "their gods." Consequently, his own relatives force him out. Sometimes he is severely ostracized, thrown out of the house and home; his wife is threatened. Hundreds of converts have been poisoned or killed. Sometimes, the ostracism is mild and consists merely in severe disapproval. His peoples consider him a traitor. A church which results from this process looks to the peoples of the region like an assemblage of traitors. It is a conglomerate congregation. It is made up of individuals who, one by one, have come out of several different societies, castes or tribes.

Now if anyone, in becoming a Christian, is forced out of, or comes out of a highly-structured segment of society, the Christian cause wins the individual but loses the family. The family, his people, his neighbors of that tribe are fiercely angry at him or her. They are the very men and women to whom he cannot talk. "You are not of us," they say to him. "You have abandoned us, you like them more than you like us. You now worship their gods not our gods." As a result, conglomerate congregations, made up of converts won in this fashion, grow very slowly. Indeed, one might truly affirm that, where congregations grow in this fashion, the conversion of the ethnic units (people groups) from which they come is made doubly difficult. "The Christians misled one of our people," the rest of the group will say. "We're going to make quite sure that they do not mislead any more of us."

One by one, is relatively easy to accomplish. Perhaps 90 out of 100 missionaries who intend church planting get only conglomerate congregations. I want to emphasize that. Perhaps 90 out of every 100 missionaries who intend church planting get only conglomerate congregations. Such missionaries preach the Gospel, tell of Jesus, sell tracts and Gospels and evangelize in many other ways. They welcome inquirers, but whom do they get? They get a man here, a woman there, a boy here, a girl there, who for various reasons are willing to become Christians and patiently to endure the mild or severe disapproval of their people.

If we understand how churches grow and do not grow on new ground, in untouched and unreached peoples, we must note that the process I have just described seems unreal to most missionaries. "What," they will exclaim, "could be a better way of entry into all the unreached peoples of that region than to win a few individuals from among them? Instead of resulting in the sealed-off church you describe, the process really gives us points of entry into every society from which a convert has come. That seems to us to be the real situation."

Those who reason in this fashion have known church growth in a largely Christian land, where men and women who follow Christ are not ostracized, are not regarded as traitors, but rather as those who have done the right thing. In that kind of society every convert usually can become a channel through which the Christian Faith flows to his relatives and friends. On that point there can be no debate. It was the point I emphasized when I titled my book, *The Bridges of God*.

But in tightly-structured societies, where Christianity is looked on as an invading religion, and individuals are excluded for serious fault, there to win converts from several different segments of society, far from building bridges to each of these, erects barriers difficult to cross.

## **THE PEOPLE-MOVEMENT APPROACH**

### **Seven Principles**

Now let us contrast the other way in which God is disciplining the peoples of Planet Earth. My account is not theory but a sober recital of easily observable facts. As you look around the world you see that, while most missionaries succeed in planting only conglomerate churches by the "one by one out of the social group" method, here and there clusters of growing churches arise by the people-movement method. They arise by tribe-wise or caste-wise movements to Christ. This is in many ways a better system. In order to use it effectively, missionaries should operate on seven principles.

### **The First Principle**

First, they should be clear about the goal. The goal is not one single conglomerate church in a city or a region. They may get only that, but that must never be their goal. That must be a cluster of growing, indigenous congregations, every member of which remains in close contact with his kindred. This cluster grows best if it is in one people, one caste, one tribe, one segment of society.

For example, If you were evangelizing the taxi drivers of Taipei, then your goal would be to win not some taxi drivers, some university professors, some farmers and some fisherman, but to establish churches made up largely of taxi drivers, their wives and children and mechanics. As you win converts of that particular community, the congregation has a natural, built-in social cohesion. Everybody feels at home. Yes, the goal must be clear.

### **The Second Principle**

The second principle is that the national leader, or the missionary and his helpers, should concentrate on one people. If you are going to establish a cluster of growing congregations amongst, let us say, the Nair people of Kerala, which is the southwest tip of India, then you would need to place most of your missionaries and their helpers so that they can work among the Nairs. They should proclaim the Gospel to Nairs and say quite openly to them, "We are hoping that, within your caste, there soon will be thousands of followers of Jesus Christ, who will remain solidly in the Nair community." They will, of course, not worship the old gods; but then plenty of Nairs don't worship their old gods-plenty of Nairs are communist, and ridicule their old gods.

Nairs whom God calls, who choose to believe in Christ, are going to love their neighbors more than they did before, and walk in the light. They will be saved and beautiful people. They will remain Nairs while, at the same time they have become Christians. To repeat, concentrate on one people group. If you have three missionaries, don't have one evangelizing this group, another that, and a third 200 miles away evangelizing still another. That is a sure way to guarantee that any church started will be small, non-growing, one-by-one churches. The social dynamics of those sections of society will work solidly against the eruption of any great growing people movement to Christ.

### **The Third Principle**

The third principle is to encourage converts to remain thoroughly one with their own people in most matters. They should continue to eat what their people eat. They should not say, "My people are vegetarians but, now that I have become a Christian, I am going to eat meat." After they become Christians they should be more rigidly vegetarian than they were before. In the matter of clothing, they should continue to look precisely like their kinfolk. In the matter of marriage, most people are endogamous, they insist that "our people marry only our people." They look with great disfavor on our marrying other people. And yet when Christians come in one-by-one, they cannot marry their own people. None of them have become Christian. When only a few of a given people become Christians, when it comes time for them or their children to marry, they have to take husbands or wives from other segments of the population. So their own kin look at them and say, "Yes, become a Christian and mongrelize your children. You have left us and have joined them."

All converts should be encouraged to bear cheerfully the exclusion, the oppression, and the persecution that they are likely to encounter from their people. When anyone becomes a follower of a new way of life, he is likely to meet with some disfavor from his loved ones. Maybe it's mild; maybe it's severe. He should bear such disfavor patiently. He should say on all occasions:

"I am a better son than I was before; I am a better father than I was before; I am a better husband than I was before; and I love you more than I used to do. You can hate me, but I will not hate you. You can exclude me, but I will include you. You can force me out of our ancestral house; but I will live on its verandah. Or I will get a house just across the street. I am still one of you, I am more one of you than I ever was before."

Encourage converts to remain thoroughly one with their people in most matters. Please note that word "most." They cannot remain one with their people in idolatry, or drunkenness or obvious sin. If they belong to a segment of society that earns its living stealing, they must "steal no more." But, in most matters (how they talk, how they dress, how they eat, where they go, what kind of houses they live in), they can look very much like their people, and ought to make very effort to do so.

### **The Fourth Principle**

The fourth principle is to try to get group decisions for Christ. If only one person decides to follow Jesus, do not baptize him immediately. Say to him, "You and I will work together to lead another five or ten or, God willing, fifty of your people to accept Jesus Christ as Savior so that when you are

baptized, you are baptized with them." Ostracism is very effective against one lone person. But ostracism is weak indeed when exercised against a group of a dozen. And when exercised against two hundred it has practically no force at all.

### **The Fifth Principle**

The fifth principle is this: Aim for scores of groups of people to become Christians in an even-flowing stream across the years. One of the common mistakes made by missionaries, eastern as well as western, all around the world is that when a few become Christians—perhaps 100, 200 or even 1,000—the missionaries spend all their time teaching them. They want to make them good Christians, and they say to themselves, "If these people become good Christians, then the Gospel will spread." So for years they concentrate on a few congregations. By the time, ten or twenty years later, that they begin evangelizing outside that group, the rest of the people no longer want to become Christian. That has happened again and again. This principle requires that, from the very beginning, the missionary keeps on reaching out to new groups. "But," you say, "is not this a sure way to get poor Christians who don't know the Bible? If we follow that principle we shall soon have a lot of 'raw' Christians. Soon we shall have a community of perhaps five thousand people who are very sketchily Christian."

Yes, that is certainly a danger. At this point, we must lean heavily upon the New Testament, remembering the brief weeks or months of instruction Paul gave to his new churches. We must trust the Holy Spirit, and believe that God has called those people out of darkness into His wonderful light. As between two evils, giving them too little Christian teaching and allowing them to become a sealed-off community that cannot reach its own people, the latter is much the greater danger. We must not allow new converts to become sealed off. We must continue to make sure that a constant stream of new converts comes into the ever-growing cluster of congregations.

### **The Sixth Principle**

Now the sixth point is this: The converts, five or five thousand, ought to say or at least feel:

"We Christians are the advance guard of our people, of our segment of society. We are showing our relatives and neighbors a better way of life. The way we are pioneering is good for us who have become Christians and will be very good for you thousands who have yet to believe. Please look on us not as traitors in any sense. We are better sons, brothers, and wives, better tribesmen and caste fellows, better members of our labor union, than we ever were before. We are showing ways in which, while remaining thoroughly of our own segment of society, we all can have a better life. Please look on us as the pioneers of our own people entering a wonderful Promised Land."

### **The Seventh Principle**

The last principle I stress is this: Constantly emphasize brotherhood. In Christ there is no Jew, no Greek, no bond, no free, no Barbarian, no Scythian. We are all one in Christ Jesus, but, at the same time, let us remember that Paul did not attack all imperfect social institutions. For example, he did not do away with slavery. Paul said to the slave, "Be a better slave," He said to the slave owner, "Be a better master."

Paul also said in that famous passage emphasizing unity, "There is no male or female." Nevertheless Christians, in their boarding schools and orphanages, continue to sleep boys and girls in separate dormitories!! In Christ, there is no sex distinctions. Boys and girls are equally precious in God's sight. Men from this tribe, and men from that are equally precious in God's sight. We are all equally sinners saved by grace. These things are true but, at the same time, there are certain social niceties which Christians at this time may observe.

As we continue to stress brotherhood, let us be sure that the most effective way to achieve brotherhood is to lead ever increasing numbers of men and women from every ethnos, every tribe, every segment of society into an obedient relationship to Christ. As we multiply Christians in every segment of society, the possibility of genuine brotherhood, justice, goodness and righteousness will be enormously increased. Indeed, the best way to get justice, possibly the only way to get justice, is to have very large numbers in every segment of society become committed Christians.

## CONCLUSION

As we work for Christward movements in every people, let us not make the mistake of believing that "one-by-one out of the society into the church" is a bad way. One precious soul willing to endure severe ostracism in order to become a follower of Jesus-one precious soul coming all by himself-is a way that God has blessed and is blessing to the salvation of mankind. But it is a slow way. And it is a way which frequently seals off the convert's own people from any further hearing of the Gospel.

Sometimes one-by-one is the only possible method. When it is, let us praise God for it, and live with its limitations. Let us urge all those wonderful Christians who come bearing persecution and oppression, to pray for their own dear ones and to work constantly that more of their own people may believe and be saved.

One-by-one is one way that God is blessing to the increase of His Church. The people movement is another way. The great advances of the Church on new ground out of non-Christian religions have always come by people movements, never one-by-one. It is equally true that one-by-one-out-of-the-people is a very common beginning way. In the book, *Bridges of God*, which God used to launch the Church Growth Movement, I have used a simile, I say there that missions start proclaiming Christ on a desert-like plain. There life is hard, the number of Christians remains small. A large missionary presence is required. But, here and there, the missionaries or the converts find ways to break out of that arid plain and proceed up into the verdant mountains. There large numbers of people live, there real churches can be founded; there the Church grows strong; that is people-movement land.

I commend that simile to you. Let us accept what God gives. If it is one-by-one, let us accept that and lead those who believe in Jesus to trust in Him completely. But let us always pray that, after that beginning, we may proceed to higher ground, to more verdant pasture, to more fertile lands where great groups of men and women, all of the same segment of society, become Christians and thus open the way for Christward movements in each people on earth. Our goal should be Christward movements within each segment. There the dynamics of social cohesion will advance the Gospel and lead multitudes out of darkness into His wonderful life. Let us be sure that we do it by the most effective methods

# Answering Common Objections

## USE SCRIPTURE AS YOUR AUTHORITY

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The people we meet come from lots of different backgrounds. The sincere questions they ask do have answers. You can help them to discover the answers in the Scriptures by growing in your own familiarity with what the Bible says about these often-asked questions.

**"If God is so powerful and loving, why does He allow all the evil in the world? Why doesn't He stop it?"**

The Bible says that God created the world perfect, and evil is the result of Satan's and man's disobedience and rebellion against Him. Sin, not God, causes evil and suffering. In fact, God has done everything necessary to overcome the problem of evil by sending Jesus Christ to suffer and die for our sins. But God respects our freedom of choice. We may choose to receive Christ and the new life He offers or to continue our rebellious way that produces evil.

*Memorize Romans 1:28*

**"Aren't Christians presumptuous to claim that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven? What about sincere followers of other faiths?"**

The issue is not one of sincerity, but of truth. Teachings opposed to each other cannot both be right. No amount of sincerity can cause an untruth to become true. A person can be sincerely wrong. Neither is a Christian's opinion important. What is important is what Jesus Christ claimed.

*Memorize John 14:6*

**"What about those who've never heard of Christ? Will they be condemned to hell?"**

Jesus made it clear that no one would get to heaven except through Him. But Romans 2:12-15 says that no one will be condemned for the mere lack of knowledge about Him. He will be judged according to what he knew and did in regard to right and wrong. The fact is that no one in the world has perfectly kept his own moral standards, to say nothing of God's standards, of which he may or may not be aware.

*Memorize Romans 1:19,20*

**"Isn't the Bible just a collection of religious myths written by men? Isn't it full of errors?"**

Those who study the Bible know these accusations are false and flimsy, indicating a lack of personal investigation of the Scriptures. The writers of the Bible claim divine inspiration in receiving revelations from God and direction by the Holy Spirit in recording events that were significant to God's message to men. Dozens of predictions, made hundreds of years in advance, have been fulfilled in minute detail. Other prophecies await fulfillment. Such predictions could originate only with God.

*Memorize 2 Peter 1:16*

**"If Jesus Christ is really the answer, why are so many Christians hypocrites? Why don't they practice what they preach?"**

Not everyone who claims to be a Christian is one. Only those who have personally received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are born again. Every group or organization has some insincere members. We don't throw away all the change in our pockets just because one coin happens to be counterfeit. Even a true Christian does not claim to be perfect. He recognizes his need of constant help from Christ. If the doubter is looking for perfection he will find it only in Christ. If he is looking for reality he will find it in thousands of sincere Christians who are walking with Christ.

***Memorize Romans 14:12***

**"Why do so many educated people reject the claims of Christ? Doesn't this prove that belief in Christ is incompatible with higher learning?"**

Faith in Jesus Christ and education are not incompatible. Many of the greatest scientists, past and present, were and are sincere believers in Jesus Christ. The issue Christ presents is moral, not intellectual. Therefore, the educated person rejects the Gospel for the same reason the uneducated man does. A common reason is unwillingness to submit to Christ's authority.

***Memorize 1 Corinthians 1:21***

**SOURCE:**

Navigators. *Personal Evangelism Scripture Memory Course*, Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, n.d.



# The Process Of Conversion

## HELPING PEOPLE MOVE TOWARD FAITH IN CHRIST

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### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to discuss conversion as a process which we should anticipate and in which we cooperate.

### ☞ Main Points

- We must begin to share Christ not where we are most comfortable, but where our audience is most comfortable.
- There is only one Gospel, but we may use many methods to share it.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Be familiar with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.
- Be familiar with the process of a person's movement toward faith in and commitment to Christ.
- Become familiar with four phases of evangelism and begin to identify people to whom we are ministering within these phases.
- Understand that we must begin to share Christ, not where we are most comfortable, but where our audience is most comfortable, in moving people toward faith.

### ☞ Appendices

6A Profile Of Persons You Wish To Evangelize

6B Three Principles For Strategic Evangelism

6C Examining Jesus' Approach To Individuals

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This is a two-hour lesson. Before you begin your instruction, have trainees review some of the lessons they learned in their study of the parables of the soils, Matthew 13:3-9,18-23.

This lesson refers to concepts presented in Cell Group lesson 4, "Cell Group Evangelism." If the trainees have not yet gone through this lesson, it is recommended that the trainer review the first section of this lesson, "Two Types of Unbelievers", prior to teaching this lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

In our study of the sower in Matthew 13, we saw that the condition of the ground on which the Good Seed fell determined the outcome of the harvest. The seed which brought forth a good harvest was sown on good ground. Specifically, Jesus said, "The one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it" (v.23). Before beginning our evangelism we need to carefully examine the kind of ground on which the seed is to be sown. That is, we need to look carefully at the people we want to evangelize to try to determine what we can do to help them clearly understand the Gospel. (Notice in the parable that the people had hard hearts because they did not understand the message.) In this session we want to look at some tools for assessing peoples' needs and evaluating their attitude toward God as a first step in helping them understand and receive the Good News

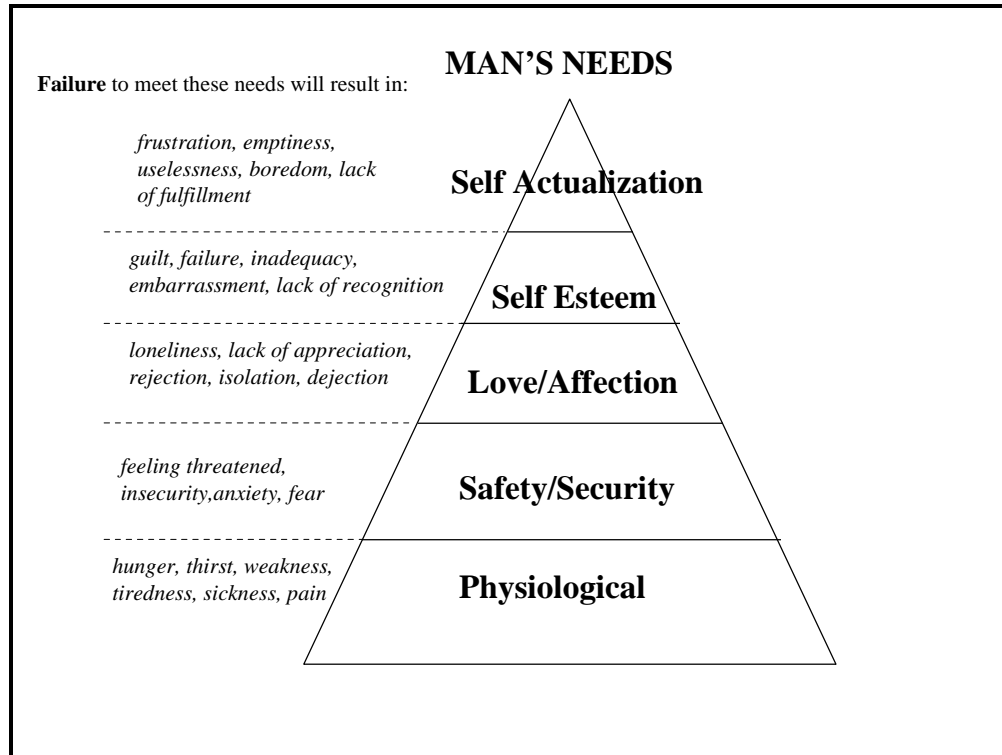
You may ask, "Why do we need to know *all* of people's needs when we already know that their *main* need is for God's saving grace?" The answer is simple. It helps us "meet them where they are." When we

understand people's most basic needs, we are better able to show God's love for them by helping to meet these needs.

## I. Assessing People's Needs

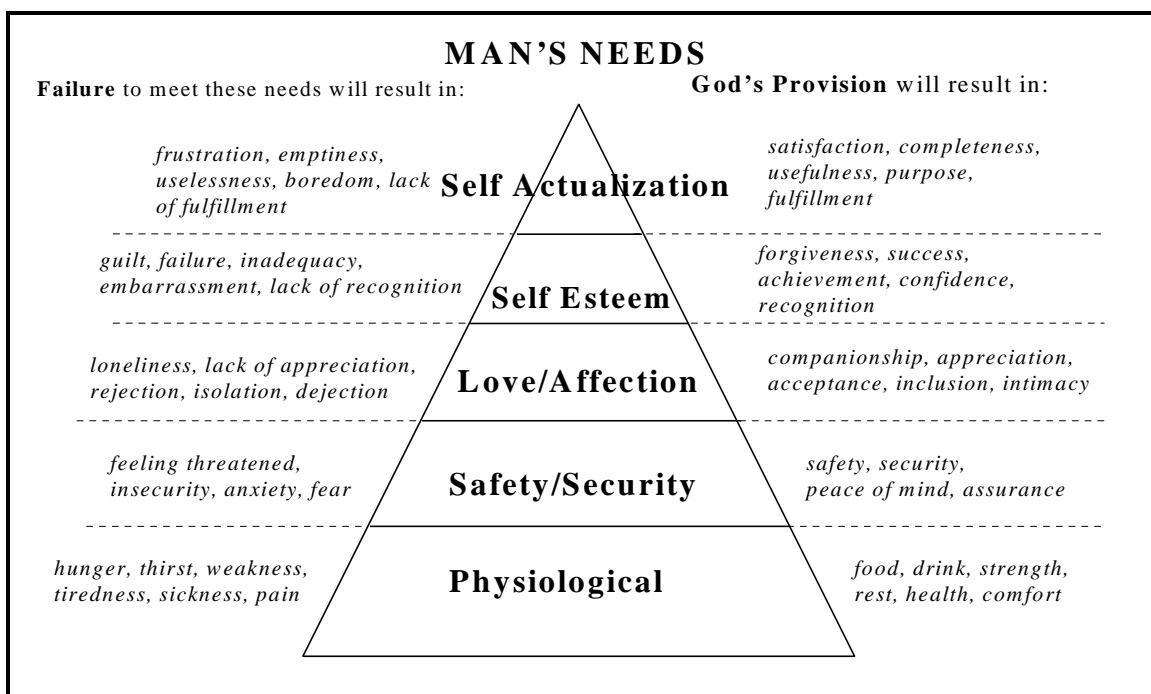
Psychologist Abraham Maslow developed an indicator of needs common to all mankind. His conclusion was that a person will not be motivated to attain a higher level of need until lower level needs have been met. For example, if a person is hungry, his primary concern will be for getting food, not for gaining recognition, which is a higher need. Figure 6.1 is a summary of Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Need, which shows the various needs along with the problems resulting from failure to meet those needs.

**Figure 6.1 Man's Needs: Adapted From Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Need**



After carefully considering man's needs and the results from failing to meet those needs (Figure 6.1), look at Figure 6.2 and see the ways in which God has made provision for all of man's needs.

**Figure 6.2 God's Provision For Man's Needs**



Jesus Christ is the answer to everyone's needs. But the way he provides for those needs to be met is through His Body, the CHURCH. If we do not understand a person's need, we will not know how to help meet that need. Where on this chart would you place the people whom you are evangelizing?

## II. Evaluating Where People Are In Their Understanding Of The Gospel

Understanding a person's needs is only the first step. In order for our evangelism to be effective, we must also know where the person is in his understanding of God: is he an atheist who does not even believe there is a god? Is he searching for God? Is he angry at God, etc.?

Cell Group lesson 4, "Cell Group Evangelism", discusses two types of unbelievers: "Type A" and "Type B." Type A unbelievers are interested to some degree in God, the Bible, and are open to God's direction for their lives. Type B unbelievers are those who are not interested in the Bible, who will not go to church, perhaps don't even believe in God, and may be openly opposed or even hostile to the Gospel message.

Figure 6.3 shows some steps that people take in their movement toward God. Study this figure carefully. Some Type B unbelievers may not even be on this chart yet, while others would only be at one of the levels in the "cultivation" step. Type A unbelievers, however, could be at any one of the levels in the steps prior to "harvesting."

This chart can be very useful to help you determine a person's spiritual condition, whether they are a Type A or Type B unbeliever. Think about the people that you are praying about, spending time with, and witnessing to. Where would you put them on this chart?

**Figure 6.3. Steps Toward Faith**

RESPONSE STEPS	
<b>CULTIVATION</b>	-12 GOING HIS OR HER OWN WAY -11 AWARENESS OF THE PRESENCE OF THE MESSENGER -10 POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE MESSENGER -9 AWARENESS OF DIFFERENCE IN THE MESSENGER'S LIFE -8 INITIAL AWARENESS OF THE BIBLE'S RELEVANCE FOR LIFE
<b>SOWING</b>	-7 POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BIBLE -6 AWARENESS OF THE BASICS OF THE GOSPEL -5 UNDERSTANDS THE GOSPEL'S MEANING AND IMPLICATIONS -4 POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE GOSPEL
<b>HARVESTING</b>	-3 RECOGNITION OF PERSONAL NEED -2 DECISION TO ACT -1 REPENTANCE AND FAITH 0 NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST!
<b>GATHERING</b>	+1 FAITH CONFIRMATION AND GROUNDING +2 ASSIMILATION INTO A CARING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY +3 GROWING! MATURING IN CHRIST-LIKENESS +4 GOING! MOBILIZATION TO BE "LIVING PROOF" TO OTHERS

As you become familiar with this diagram, ask yourself the following questions:

- Where do the people I'm working with fit into this diagram?
- At what stage can existing materials and tools for evangelism best be used?
- At which stages is there a critical lack of materials for use with the people with whom I'm working?

### III. Understanding Four Phases Of Activity Related To Winning People To Christ

We saw in the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13 that Jesus used the figure of the sower to illustrate truth about the harvest, particularly about the sowing and harvesting stage. Although Jesus here did not specifically address the other activities involved in the whole process, the idea of farming is used frequently throughout Scripture (Mt 9:37; Lk 10:2; Jn 4:35; 1Co 3:5-9; Gal 6:9;). As

we think about all that is involved in seeing a person come to Christ, it might be helpful to divided the evangelism task into four phases as shown in Figure 6.4.

**Figure 6.4 Four Phases Of Activity Related To Winning People To Christ**

Activity	Cultivating	Sowing	Harvesting	Gathering
<b>Explanation</b>	Speaks to the heart through caring relationships	Speaks to the mind through reasoning and communication	Speaks to the will, requesting a faith response in conversion	Speaks to the whole man concerning personal growth in Christ
<b>Emphasis</b>	Presence of the messenger	Proclamation of the Gospel truth	Persuasion to a decision	Participation and incorporation into a local fellowship
<b>Biblical Examples</b>	John 3 & John 4	John 4 and Acts 8	John 4 and Acts 16	Acts 2:40-47 and Acts 8
<b>Steps toward faith</b>	-12 to -8	-7 to -4	-3 to 0	+1 to +4

## IV. Determining Evangelistic Strategy

Following is an illustration of how you might determine your evangelistic strategy based on the information you learned above. The Worksheet in Appendix 6A is a helpful guide which you can use to develop profiles of the people you which to evangelize.

### A. Basic Needs

Maria is a young woman from a divorced family. An only child, she was rejected by her father. Her mother was so busy providing for the family that she had little time to spend with her. She and her mother lived in a city far from her extended family. Now as an adult she feels unloved. You assess her need to be for love/affection. (See Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Figure 6.1).

### B. Receptivity To The Gospel

In her steps toward faith (See Figure 6.3), Maria is at -12. Maria has had no religious upbringing, no contact with Christians. She does have a vague idea that the Church claims to be relevant to her, although she knows nothing about the claims of Jesus Christ.

### C. Evaluation Of Your Evangelistic Strategy

Maria is not yet ready for the sowing of the seed. For you to give her a tract or a Bible would probably not be effective. What she needs is to be shown the love of Christ in a warm, accepting atmosphere, the cultivation stage in the chart in figure 6.4. You decide to invite her to a small group where there is a lot of caring for each other . Then you might include her in an evangelistic Bible study.

As you determine your strategy for reaching those people God has already placed on your heart, you might also begin to pray about reaching people who, if reached with the Gospel, would be strategic in reaching your target area with the Gospel (See Appendix 6B).

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

Do you tend to approach each person using the same evangelistic method or tool? How can you increase your versatility?

### **ACTION PLAN**

- Work through Worksheet in Appendix 6C to aid your understanding from Scripture that people have differing needs and must be approached in different ways. This worksheet looks at different instances in the New Testament where Jesus was revealing Himself to different kinds of people.
- Using Worksheet in Appendix 6A as a guide, work with the other two people in your prayer triplet. List the names of each of the people you are praying for, assess where they are in the scale of needs, evaluate where they are in moving toward Christ (Steps Toward Faith). Determine what you should do to effectively reach them with the Gospel.
- Study Appendix 6B, Three Principles For Strategic Evangelism. Who are the influential "Gatekeepers" in your target area? What can you do to reach these people with the Gospel?

# Profile of Persons You Wish To Evangelize

## WORKSHEET

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The important information that we learned in the case study about Mary can be summarized with the help of the table below. Look closely at this example, and then use the blank samples on the next page to determine the needs and responsiveness of those for whom you are praying with your "Prayer Triplet" partners.

NAME	BASIC NEEDS (DESCRIBE) (FIGURE 6.1)	RESPONSIVENESS TO FAITH IN CHRIST (FIGURE 6.4)
<i>Mary</i>	<i>Love/Affection</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an only child</li> <li>- from a divorced family</li> <li>- rejected by father</li> <li>- mother too busy to show her affection</li> </ul>	-12  <i>Mary is going about her own way. Living in an Orthodox country, she knows that the traditional church exists but has no idea it has anything to say to her. She has never personally had contact with Christians and has no idea about the claims of Christ.</i>

**EVALUATION:** *At the "cultivation" stage. Needs a caring relationship before the sowing can be effective.*

**SAMPLE PROFILE SHEET TO USE FOR ACTION PLAN ASSIGNMENT**

NAME	BASIC NEEDS (DESCRIBE) (FIGURE 6.1)	RESPONSIVENESS TO FAITH IN CHRIST (FIGURE 6.4)

**EVALUATION:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

NAME	BASIC NEEDS (DESCRIBE) (FIGURE 6.1)	RESPONSIVENESS TO FAITH IN CHRIST (FIGURE 6.4)

**EVALUATION:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

# Three Principles for Strategic Evangelism

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Following are three strategic principles that will help us in reaching those with varying receptivity to the Gospel.

## I. STRATEGIC SOWING

Every church planter must deal with the question of priorities in ministry. Among these questions is the issue of where to concentrate our evangelistic efforts. Do we focus on those who appear receptive, or on those who are resistant. Although these groups may seem mutually exclusive, the apostles seemed to try to give balanced attention to both kinds of people.

### A. Those with greater understanding of truth may move toward Christ more quickly.

As you read through the book of Acts, ask yourself questions like: Where did the apostle Paul go when he entered a city? Whom did he first approach? Why did he go to these people first Paul's normal pattern was clearly to go to the Jews first. Why did Paul most often begin with the Jews?

I believe that Paul was convinced that these people had been prepared to receive the Gospel and could be brought into the church and mobilized for ministry at the earliest possible moment. The Jews already know the Old Testament, and knew many things about God. We must understand that Paul wanted to reach the greatest number with the Gospel message as soon as possible. The apostle understood that some are more responsive than others, more ready to hear and receive spiritual truth. The fact that he was not always received warmly by them doesn't mean that his strategy was incorrect. However, when the Jews in a particular city rejected the message and the Gentiles proved more receptive, Paul went to the Gentiles. We see this pattern of Jew-Gentile repeated consistently in most of the cities he visited.

Let's not forget that we are aiming at saturation church planting. The more people we can involve in this task, the better. And once people are no longer a harvest field, they become part of the harvest force. Share the good news with all who will hear, but target people who can quickly become part of God's ministry team.

### B. Those with greater influence, "the gate-keepers", may move toward Christ slowly, but their long-term impact for the Gospel may be greater.

The best example is Paul himself. He had all the credentials to make a great impact for God. He had all the zeal. But it took time for him to realize--finally only through a direct encounter with the living Christ--that he needed to turn to Christ. Paul himself then desired to go to Rome and testify before Caesar--the most influential person in the world--even if it meant going as a prisoner in chains (Acts 25:11; 27:24). If God has given you a heart to reach an influential person in your community, persevere in that relationship. "Water it" liberally. You have something that person needs! Pray! Ask God to open doors of opportunity and then seek them out. Remember that Saul, the church's persecutor, became Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

## II. STRATEGIC LIVING - MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE; NOT WHERE WE ARE COMFORTABLE

### A. Individual Consideration John 3, 4, 9

As the Lord conversed with three specific individuals in these chapters, we find that he helped each discover his need in differing ways. With the well-taught Pharisee, Jesus helped him understand

that he didn't understand the spiritual realm at all. With the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus made her feel comfortable and reawakened her spiritual thirst for God. With the man born blind, Jesus met a physical need, creating a hunger for a personal relationship. One principle we can clearly see in these interactions is that Jesus didn't treat people as merely "souls with ears." He saw real people with real needs and offered a genuine relationship.

**B. Incarnational Evangelism 1 Corinthians 9:19-23**

The wise fisherman observes the fish he wants to catch, learning the types of food he eats and the times he feeds, where and how deep he swims. He selects a lure or bait that is most similar to the fish's natural habitat and uses it to attract the fish. A wise fisherman doesn't put Hungarian goulash on the hook just because he likes it! As evangelists, we must understand the way the unbeliever thinks, learn the things he values, and bridge the gap between his needs as he understands them and his spiritual needs as the Spirit and the Word of God reveal them.

**III. STRATEGIC UNDERSTANDING - SATISFIED PEOPLE DON'T GENERALLY SEEK CHANGE**

**A. 1 Corinthians 1:18-31**

Those who are satisfied that they already know all the answers are difficult to win to Christ. This group includes the intellectuals, the wealthy, and those with worldly status. It is a fact that it often takes a personal crisis of some sort to cause them to listen to the message of the Gospel. We need to be aware of the opportunity for evangelism that such crises present. We also need to build a rapport with these people so that we know when they are facing troubles, and so that we will be able to respond with hope in a timely fashion.

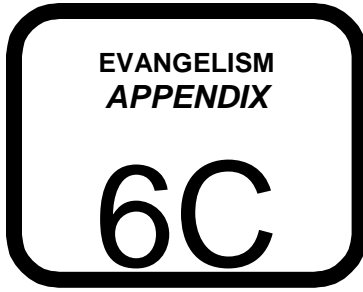
**B. Matthew 9:12**

The wise fisherman goes fishing when the fish are hungry, not when they've just fed. As evangelists, our task is to help people discover needs that need to be met and to create a sense of hunger for Christ. We must recognize that those who most easily recognize their needs will be most ready to consider Christ's solution, if they truly desire a solution. If people aren't hungry for the Gospel, ask God's Spirit to create that hunger in them.

**Summary**

Remember that successful evangelism involves...

- taking the initiative, in the power and love of the Holy Spirit, to help a person move one step closer in the process of mini-decisions for Christ,
- being there to encourage and guide them in knowing how to make that decision,
- praying for them to come to the place of full repentance and faith in Christ and to experience the salvation in Christ by faith alone, and
- bringing them fully into the fellowship and ministry of the local church.



# Examining Jesus' Approach To Individuals

## COMPARISON WORKSHEET

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The Gospels are full of interesting conversations between Jesus and other individuals. We want to examine a few of them to see some differences and similarities in Jesus' approach. Work through each Scripture passage listed in the table and answer the questions.

Scripture:	John 3: 1-21	John 4:5-26	John 9:5-7,35-39	Mark 10:17-22
With whom is Jesus speaking?				
What do we know of this person from the passage?				
How does the conversation begin?				
At what verse does the direction of the conversation change?				
What does Jesus require?				
What does Christ offer?				
How does the individual respond?				



# Relational Evangelism

"GREATER LOVE HAS NO MAN..."

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## ☞ Lesson Purpose

To underscore the need for and strategic importance of building friendships with unbelievers

## ☞ Main Points

- Jesus actively sought to develop friendships with sinners in order to win them.
- God's desire is for Christians to *go* and seek the lost rather than *meet together* and invite the lost to come to us.
- There are costs and benefits to befriending unbelievers.
- The Gospel is communicated best when we have a relationship with the unbeliever.

## ☞ Desired Outcomes

When they have mastered the content of this lesson, participants will...

- Determine to befriend non-Christians for the sake of the kingdom of God.

## ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This final lesson on evangelism is designed to maximize the emotional impact of key Scriptures regarding our relationship to the lost. It is important that people have time to grapple with the Luke 15 passage and its contemporary value for them personally. Let them consider it in silence for a time and arrive at their own answers to the questions posed in section I B.

Your passion to reach the lost must be evident, personal and practical. Include examples of how someone reached you or how you have brought someone to faith through friendship.

## INTRODUCTION

WARNING! This lesson could change your life. If you understand and apply its message, your ministry could become immeasurably richer, fuller and more satisfying. It is also true that if you are applying the teaching of this lesson, you may be misunderstood by Christian friends who think you will be contaminated by the world. But remember, Jesus Himself was called a "friend of sinners" (Mat 11:19). It will be worth the risk to be like Him.

To see a saturation church planting movement established in your country, meaningful saturation evangelism must occur. Strategic priority must be given to reaching people ... individuals with faces and problems. Relationships build faith, faith builds fellowships, and fellowships reach nations!

Proceed with caution, but proceed in faith.

## I. Befriending Non-Christians

### A. Three Parables: One Lesson - Luke 15

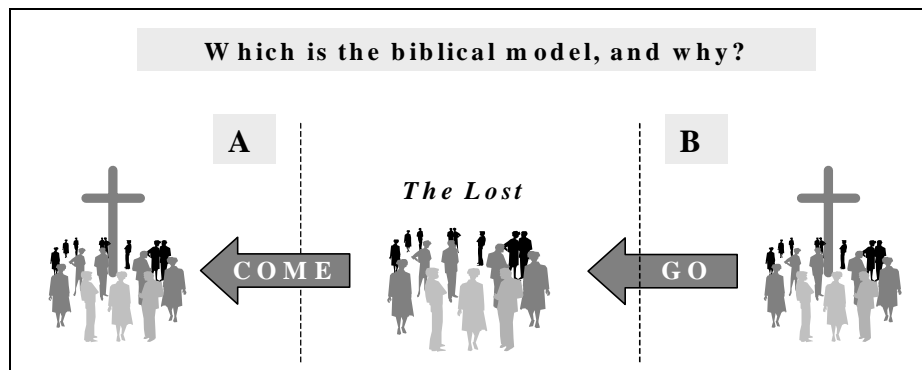
The Pharisees were upset that Jesus spent time with sinners. They felt that a righteous person could not and should not associate with sinners. This would contaminate the righteous person. Their logic seems reasonable, but it was wrong. In response to this issue, Jesus told the stories of the lost things that are recorded in Luke 15. The point of

all three stories is the same. When a coin or other possession is lost, we seek it and rejoice when we find it. But God values lost people even more than these things. So should we.

**B. What lessons can we learn from the parable?**

- Who did Jesus address in this parable according to verses 1 and 2?
- What causes the most rejoicing in heaven according to verses 9 and 10?
- Which is more important to God—a group of ninety believers faithfully worshipping Him—or the repentance of one sinner (v. 9,10)?
- Was the complaint of the older brother justified (v. 29-30)? Did it match the heart of the father?
- Which concerned Jesus more: the approval of the religious or the salvation of the lost?
- Can you perceive yourself in the parable of the lost son? Which character are you most like? Which character do you want to be?
- What is the prevalent attitude in our churches toward outreach to the lost? Do our churches resemble the Father or older brother more? Are you willing to take a different stand, if necessary, to befriend and reach the lost?
- What types of efforts will be necessary to reach people where you live?

**Figure 8.1 Seeking vs. Inviting**



**C. What about the other verses in the Bible?**

Luke 15 clearly teaches that our priority should be to go out and seek the lost. Jesus clearly spent time “eating and drinking” with sinners in order to win them. How do we harmonize these facts with the verses such as:

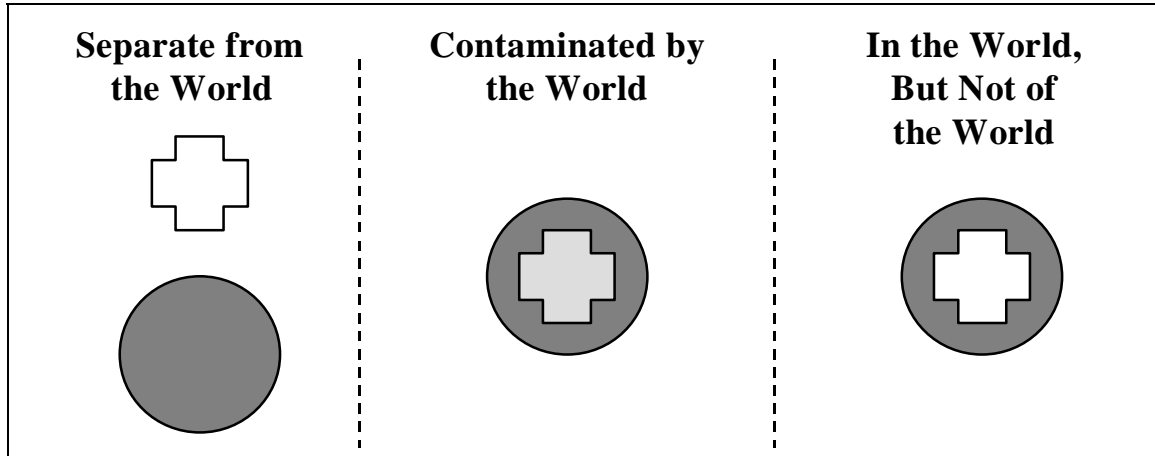
- 2Co 6:14 No fellowship between light and darkness.
- 1Jn 2:15 Don't love the world.
- 1Co 15:33 Bad company corrupts good morals.

It is indeed true that too close a relationship with an unsaved person can lead us astray. Our closest friends should be believers. For example, Jesus’ closest friends were the twelve apostles, Mary and Martha, Lazarus, and other disciples. At the same time, though, Jesus also reached out to establish relationships with sinners. He went to their homes and to the places where they were. “Loving the lost” is not the same thing as loving the world. And preaching “Repent!” is not the same thing as a relationship. Paul clearly told the Corinthians that he did not intend them to avoid sinners (1Co 5:9-11). According to Paul, it is wrong to associate with an immoral *believer*, but not with an immoral *unbeliever*. This is a shocking statement, but nevertheless, it is true.

Certainly we need great wisdom to discern how close our relationships with unbelievers may be. However, the Pharisees erred on the side of excessive caution, and many

churches and believers today seem to follow their example—rather than the example of Christ. We must have relationships with unbelievers that are close enough to cause them to trust us to explain the Gospel to them. The solution is not to withdraw from believers—but rather to be careful to keep our own righteousness as we “eat and drink” with them.

**Figure 8.2 Three Views on Friendships With Unbelievers**



## II. Following Christ In Friendship

Jesus didn't just tell stories. He backed up these parables by offering sincere friendship to needy people. The Scriptures comment on the nature of Jesus' friendship.

### A. Romans 5:6-8

“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

### B. John 15:13

“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”

### C. Mark 10:45

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

What is the thrust of these three passages of Scripture? What proofs of friendship did Christ offer? How can we convincingly demonstrate friendship and love to those outside the Body of Christ?

## III. Counting The Cost

### A. The Cost of Befriending Non-Christians

- It will cost you time.
- It could cost you your reputation “friend of sinners” (Lk 7:34).
- It could cost you emotional anguish and pain.
- It will cost you inconvenience.

## **B. The Benefits of Befriending Non-Christians**

- You gain a friend—one with a different perspective.
- You gain an opening to the Gospel, not only for your new friend, but for his circle of friends, and potentially theirs as well.
- You gain an advocate among unbelievers for your faith.
- You gain the hope of new brothers or sisters in Christ, future co-workers in the task of reaching your community and nation.

## **IV. Life Experiences Concerning Friendship Evangelism**

*Spend the remainder of the lesson time sharing illustrations and personal examples about the importance of friendships in evangelism from your own lives.*

### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- How could I begin to establish communication with non-Christian acquaintances in my community?
- How could I initiate relationships with non-Christians in my community?
- Am I willing to count the cost to step out and reach others who are currently beyond my reach with the Gospel?
- What happens to a church planting movement if fervent, on-going evangelism breaks down?
- Jim Elliot, a missionary martyr to the Auca Indians of Ecuador, once wrote, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." Was he right? How do his words relate the task of winning others to Christ?

### **ACTION PLAN**

- Pray for divine encounters with non-Christians. What are ways in which you can initiate relationships with non-Christians in your community? Ask for boldness to walk through the doors He opens. Pray for insight to see them.
- Will I count the cost and demonstrate faith to befriend 5 non-Christians in my community this month to eventually win them to Christ?
- Seize the day! Be a friend and win those friends to Christ! Incorporate them into your Bible studies, fellowship and ministry outreach. Make them a part of the team!

### **SOURCES**

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- Pippert, Rebecca Manley. *Out of the Salt Shaker & Into the World: Evangelism As a Way of Life*. Madison, WI: InterVarsity Press, 1999.