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ABSTRACT

THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A  
COMMUNITY-BASED EVANGELISM MODEL IN  
THE WORD OF LIFE SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTIST CHURCH IN  
MEMPHIS, TN

by

Fred Batten, Jr.

Adviser: Trevor O'Reggio

## ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMMUNITY-BASED EVANGELISM MODEL AT THE WORD OF LIFE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN MEMPHIS, TN

Name of researcher: Fred Batten, Jr.

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Trevor O'Reggio, DMin, PhD

Date completed: June 2015

### Problem

Studies (Arn, 1988) reported that over 80% of churches in America are in a period of stagnation or decline relative to growth. Despite the mega-church trend in America, most churches will not add one person to the membership rolls in a given year (Sylvia, 2004). A safe conclusion is that attendance is also on a downward trend. Research (Burrill, 2007) suggests that from historical bases the Seventh-day Adventist church does a good job in the area of evangelism. In 2006 the statistical report of the world Adventist church highlighted that over 3,000 people joined the church through baptism on a daily bases (Bediako, 2010). The average attendance in the Adventist church in America is

approximately 50 people each week. The annual baptisms at Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church in Memphis, TN are around six with the attendance around 85 people. The specific problem is the low evangelism that impacts the low growth in baptisms and attendance at Word of Life.

### Method

The purpose of this project was to, (a) examine the reasons or barriers for low growth; (b) establish biblical and spirit of prophecy foundations for relational strategies to reach the community; (c) develop and implement an evangelism model that activates the members of Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church in a blessing approach of evangelism, increase baptism and attendance.

In order to arrive at the development and implementation of the project, I made several steps of progression. I examined the church's history of evangelism and outreach. I collected data relative to church attendance and baptisms. I ordered an independent assessment of the church and examined the results. I administered and examined the Styles Questionnaire to 75 members of the church. I developed the model and training seminar pertaining to evangelism.

### Results

The church did increase its outreach into the community of Frayser. This increase revealed more outreach ministry activities in and for the community as well. Eight people joined the church through baptism as a result of the *iBlessMemphis* model of friendship evangelism.

## Conclusion

This research document represents the development and implementation of the *iBlessMemphis* evangelistic model at the Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church. This model successfully utilized the small group, friendship, community outreach and proclamation approaches in evangelism by increasing the church baptisms, attendance and community presence. Other churches can adapt and use this model or approach for positive outcomes.

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A  
COMMUNITY-BASED EVANGELISM MODEL IN  
THE WORD OF LIFE SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTIST CHURCH IN  
MEMPHIS, TN

A Project Document  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by  
Fred Batten, Jr.

June 2015

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

When I was about seven years old, I began reading the Bible. I also became fascinated with the Black preaching at Brandon Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. On Sunday afternoons, it was time for “real” church. My brother, my younger sister and I “started” our own church. My brother imitated the deacon. My sister sang and I would preach. We sang, prayed and preached to the flowers and hedges.

In July of 1974, my mother’s hairdresser invited our family to an old-fashioned tent meeting. At the end of the meeting Pastor Patrick Vincent baptized my mother and I into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

My earlier interest in Bible reading and preaching continued. Later, my love for reading the Bible upgraded to a love for Bible study. At sixteen, I preached my first sermon at Oaklands Park Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In my senior year of high school, I refused several basketball scholarships to play at the collegiate level. I graduated high school in 1983. I served my local church in various capacities including elder. I was speaker/director of a radio broadcast for ten years. I got married in 1985. Then I went back to college and graduated from Middle Tennessee State University in 1996.

It was in 1996 that I surrendered to the voice of God calling me to organized ministry – “the work.” During my pastor’s appeal, I heard a voice say, “surrender your life to me, now.” So I did just that. I announced to the church that I was going to pursue fulltime ministry. I graduated from Vanderbilt Divinity School with a Masters in Theological Studies degree. Afterwards, I serve as Bible Instructor in three evangelistic meetings where I was instrumental in baptizing over 20 people. In January of 2000 Elder Joseph McCoy, President of South Central Conference in conjunction with the Executive Committee extended me a call to serve the Yazoo City/Rolling Fork/Belzoni district in Mississippi.

Reflecting on each pastorate, the same situation occurred. I saw a small number engaged in giving Bible studies and witnessing. While at each church, I tried to get the people to do Bible studies, but they had other interests. Since 2000 I have reflected on ways to involve church members in evangelism. This marks my motivation to create a viable evangelism program in my present ministry context at the Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist church in Memphis, TN that mobilizes members to reach the community for Christ.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Studies (Arn, 1988) reported that over 80% of churches in America are in a period of stagnation or decline relative to growth. According to V. Tymes Word of Life Church Clerk (personal communication, November 7, 2013), on average, Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church baptized over six people annually between the years of 2000-2009.

The membership, during the same decade, has fluctuated between 281 and 302. Church attendance during the same ten-year interval has averaged between 85 and 95.

The evangelistic emphasis of Word of Life continues to focus on public proclamation events encouraged and funded at least in part by the South Central Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (SCC) and guest evangelists sponsored by SCC or invited by Word of Life. This dependence prevents members from personal involvement in evangelism. Although the membership growth remained stagnant during the same period, the traditional hall meetings and church campaign approaches have not been abandoned for more effective outreach and cost effective methods such as small group studies and friendship evangelism. The project addresses specific problems of low community outreach, low evangelism participation which may impact opportunities to increase baptisms and attendance at Word of Life.

### **Purpose of the Project**

The task of this project is to develop and implement the *iBlessMemphis* community evangelistic model at the Word of Life Church a Seventh-day Adventist congregation in Memphis, TN. The project addresses specific problems of low community outreach, low evangelism participation which may impact opportunities to increase baptisms and attendance. The evaluation of the project will determine if and how the programs contribute to increased community involvement, attendance, and baptisms.



## **Justification for Ministry Project**

For the last decade, annual baptisms and numerical growth rates at Word of Life have been declining, while the monetary cost of traditional public evangelism campaigns has increased dramatically. Evangelistic growth and connections between the church and community have plateau or declined during the same period. The evaluation of the project will determine if and how the programs contribute to increased community involvement, attendance and baptisms

According to the church historian, Word of Life got its start as an organization through the old fashion tent revival in 1987. Talking about the “good old days” brings a burst of energy to the older members who helped work in the evangelistic meeting and those baptized in that meeting. During the 2000-2009 decade the church participated in one evangelistic meeting. However, upon my arrival, I understood from the SCC and local church leaders that the Word of Life wanted a pastor with evangelistic emphasis. My predecessor had come out of retirement to maintain things for about six months until SCC administration assigned a new pastor. This period lasted for over ten years. Needless to say the retired pastor did not have the energy or the desire to engage the church in the proclamation evangelism. Evangelism of this type includes weeks of praying, planting the seed, by active Bible studies before the event and members inviting people to come to the meetings and make a decision to join the church as a result.

Based on the author’s interviews many of the members seem to have a special affinity to this form of evangelism even though the cost of this particular type of evangelism appears to be on the rise. Not only does it take financial resources to reach

people with the Gospel message of salvation, according to Rainer, “it takes 85 church members in America a year to reach one person for Jesus Christ” (2004, para. 19). The church leaders and members of Word of Life, while putting energy into maintaining the institutional side of the church community, will also need to engage in mission-focused outreach ministries to the community. Some say that healthy churches need balanced in-reach and outreach ministries (Drake, 2013). I envision that the Word of Life congregation and the immediate Frayser area will both benefit from evangelism approaches that connect the two communities together with the love of God.

### **Expectations From Ministry Project**

Working with the members of the church to raise the evangelistic passion, this evangelism plan will advance the spiritual and numerical growth of the Word of Life Church. This project will transform the church growth vision and strategies of the Word of Life Church membership, its facilities and other resources as keys of effective enlargement of God’s Kingdom. This project will highlight the primacy of knowing and understanding the process of evangelism. It will also help to put new Christians unto the path to becoming mature disciples for Christ. I envision that the development of a comprehensive approach to evangelism will necessitate variant strategies from the church’s leadership team to connect the church with the community, to mobilize members and increase the membership through relevant evangelistic ministries. This project will help in the development the author’s leadership and equipping skills as a pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist church.

## **Limitations of the Project**

Due to the scope of the project, three delimitations were necessary. First, the established bounds of the project are the Frayser and Raleigh neighborhoods in particular and greater Memphis in general, because it represents a reasonable walk or drive time to the Word of Life church for most attendees. Second, the Word of Life congregation and its community comprises the participatory scope of this project because the church leadership and members will be the major players in the development and implementation of the evangelism strategy into the community of Frayser. Third, the project includes the SCC in Nashville, TN because Word of Life from time to time requests and receives funds to do evangelism. Word of Life is a part of the SCC. The anticipation is for increased baptisms and attendance, however, the ultimate impact of increasing spiritual and numerical growth of the church may not materialize within the stated time frame. This project needs future research.

Finally, Word of Life will become a healthy and growing church as a result of the implemented evangelism strategy that connects the church with community. It is too early to determine whether the church will fully embrace and adopt a level of evangelism and discipleship that reaches and connects with the community.

## **Definition of Terms**

*Assimilation* is the process of bringing people into the full life of the organization. Warren describes assimilation in this manner, “Assimilation is the task of moving people from an awareness of your church to attendance at your church to active membership in your church” (1995, p. 309).

*Attractional* is what a church does to get perspective attendees to come to its main worship service or another function that takes place in or on the church's campus (Roxburgh & Borden, 2009, p. 18). Attractional is simply inviting the unchurched, the lost, and others to come to the church to hear singing, seminars, and sermons with the hope that they will return and or hear the gospel.

*Missional* in the context of the church is when the people of God take the Gospel of God to the various people groups of the world. It is the church being contextually relevant without compromising the Gospel message. That is to say the church must take on a missionary like spirit in its local neighborhood as well as in neighborhoods abroad. Keller suggests that the church needs to "appreciate and challenge the culture to be in accord with God's truth" (Keller, 2012, p. 88).

*Postmodernism* like modernity is a worldview. It is a way of thinking about and viewing the systems and rules of society. Modernity is the opinion that humans by using logic, the scientific method and rationalism are able to understanding the absolute and universal truths which exist in the world. As reported by Sahlin postmodern thought dismisses the idea of moral "absolutes and is suspicious of dogmatic claims to knowledge" (personal communication, 2011). A significant factor for the postmodern generation in regards to truth claims is personal experience. Truth then is relative to the present age bracket known as postmodern.

### **Description of the Ministry Project**

Upon my arrival, I joined the existing efforts of outreach and witnessing that included door-to-door Bible study enrollment and a toy giveaway at Christmas. In

addition, we organized an assessment of the Frayser area. This was a two-part process. We performed a windshield survey and discussed our results. The church also invested in a professional assessment conducted by Monte Sahlin. He shared the results of this survey with the church board.

Sahlin noted in the assessment that Word of Life needs to be intentional about “community involvement, rich spirituality, positive atmosphere in the congregation and activities for the unchurched on Sabbaths” (personal communication, 2011) if growth is desired. The top five church sponsored programs that the Frayser community requests, according to Sahlin’s report are:

- 69% Bible study & prayer group
- 29% Youth activities
- 27% Family activities & outings
- 23% Doctrinal classes
- 22% Family counseling (personal communication, August 9, 2011)

To meet these programmatic desires and the need for health related concerns Word of Life will need more volunteers to become personally involved with community evangelism and outreach.

Kinnaman, president of Barna Group asserts “that evangelism is on the decline among key demographics, especially among Busters and Boomers who make up nearly two out of three active Christians today” (2013). Research by the Barna group also reveals that the church has lost its urgency for sharing the gospel with others. Stetzer contends that “churches have worked hard to get to a place where congregational customers are happy” forgetting that the church is “called to equip co-laborers” to work to bless others with the gospel (2013, para. 7).

This evangelistic strategy will find its core principles rooted with Scriptures (Gen 12:1-3; Luke 10:1-9; Matt 28:18-20). The model will follow the acrostic *iBless* – intercessory prayer, being a friend, listening, entry events, and service projects, and sharing ones faith. I will preach a six-part sermon series and develop a six-session seminar which will teach the members how to become active in outreach one step at a time. I will use the Evangelism Styles Questionnaire tool developed by Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg (Appendix A). This questionnaire helps the individual Christian identify one’s areas or approaches to sharing the gospel that matches one’s personality. This understanding makes the task of evangelization somewhat easier. Sharing the gospel with others becomes a joyful task because we will be able to “naturally communicate our faith to others in a ways that fit our God-given personalities” (Mittelberg, Strobel, & Hybels, 2007, p. 64).

Word of Life will then organize its community evangelism strategies around the six approaches to evangelism outlined in the questionnaire. The six approaches or styles are direct, intellectual, testimonial, interpersonal, invitational and serving. We will seek to be a blessing to the community while sharing the love of God.

The membership will also raise its community involvement by adopting Westside Elementary School, by hosting block parties, and by doing service projects in the area. The church will conduct small group Bible classes (Community Bible College) while intercessory prayer will saturate all ministries. Members will use invitation cards to invite guest to our worship services and annual church calendar events. In the midst of connecting and befriending the community, Word of Life will culminate its year of community-focused outreach with an evangelistic reaping meeting. The aim and purpose

of this meeting will focus on helping our new friends embrace Jesus as Savior and Lord.

We will seek to connect them with a blessing community of believers – Word of Life

Seventh-day Adventist Church.

## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND SPIRIT OF PROPHECY FOUNDATIONS FOR EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH

To implement an evangelism and church growth model in their local and extended communities, church leaders and members of the Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church will need to understand and embrace their duty to God's missionary calling. This chapter includes an examination of the biblical and theological foundations of evangelism and church growth. This chapter will also explore the prophetic counsel of Ellen White, co-founder of the Adventist denomination, regarding evangelism and church growth. Included will be a conversation relative to God's desire for the human recipients of God's abundant blessing to share the gospel with others living in the world. God's call upon humankind is to be a benefit to others (Mark 16:15).

God, at Creation, supplied humanity with all the necessities of life. God blessed the human race with a perfect environment in which to live. God even added the benefit of rest at the end of the Creation week to promote the prosperity and good will of His creation. Tragedy struck paradise. Humans failed at honoring God with obedience. The Bible captures this narrative in the following manner:



So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. (Gen 3:6-7, English Standard Version)

This fall of humanity initiated the first enactment of evangelism upon the earth.

The author of the book of Genesis chronicled the way in which God reached out to Adam and Eve who have tried to cover their shame with a temporary swathe of fig leaves (Gen 3:7). In Genesis 3:21, however, God made them garments to cover their nakedness.

### **God Calls a People**

After the fall, God immediately put into motion His plan to redeem fallen humanity. This plan to rescue fallen humanity was not an afterthought. The Omniscient God designed and arranged for this contingency “before the foundation of the world” (Rev 13:8). Humanity saw the first glimpse of hope in God’s “first gospel” declaration to humans when God spoke these words, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Gen 3:15).

God called upon Adam in his garden home. This call is distinctively different. In Genesis 3:9 God asks Adam, “Where are you?” I view this as God pursuing His created people who had sinned. This was only the beginning of God’s reconciliatory efforts in behalf of humans. Thirakoune (2013) amplified this reoccurring biblical theme as he reported James Harrison saying, “The invitation to ‘come,’ ‘come all,’ and ‘come back to me’ is a motif that runs throughout the Scriptures” (p. 22). This call was a missionary call.

When an individual makes a telephone call to another person, there is an inherent expectation by the one making the call. The caller anticipates an action by the one called. God's call is always with a purpose. God does not call without a particular purpose or intention. "When God calls His people into existence, He gives them a mission. There were no Old Testament people of God without a mission; there is no election without a commission. God's call presupposes a call for action" (Moskala, 2008, pp. 40-60).

God continued to call his people into relationship. God, in the Old and New Testaments, acted as an "evangelist" of the highest order. Although the word evangelism nor evangelist do not appear in the Old Testament, "one will discover," as argued by Dennis Wingate, "the embryonic foundation...for personal evangelism within the context of the Old Covenant" (2013, pp. 17-18). Such exchanges played themselves out as God summons Abraham and Israel to carry God's message to the various people groups around them. I will briefly deal with the divine call on Abraham and Israel for the express purpose of carrying God's message of love, mercy and salvation to the world.

### Abraham

Let us first look at the call of Abraham in the Old Testament. Many think that the missionary call got its start in the New Testament after the resurrected Jesus employed the disciples to:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matt 28:19-20)

Genesis 1-3 depicted the fall of humanity. In Genesis 4-11 the author of the book highlighted Noah's ark as a precursor to what the old Negro spiritual labeled the church - "Ole Ship of Zion." God's missionary call, however, to a significant Old Testament figure, outside of Adam, with a universal mission started with Abram in Genesis 12:1-3.

Abraham received a call to leave his family and his homeland to go to land promised to him by God. Incorporated in this call to Abraham is God's five-point plan of encouragement and promise. Kaiser in outlined the plan given by God to Moses in Genesis 12:2-3 in which God said:

- I will make you a great nation,
- I will bless you and
- I will make your name great...
- I will bless those blessing you
- Those who curse you I will curse. (2000, p. 18).

It is worth noting that God did not give the promised blessings to inflate Abraham's socio-economic status. The first three blessings (Gen 12:2) carry a proactive assumption whereby God made Abraham to be a blessing to others. The second set of blessings carry a protective promise, a proactive blessing and a universal benefit to "all the families of the earth" (Gen 12:3). Thus, the blessings of God travel beyond Abraham's tent. "The Great Commission of the Old Testament" (Moskala, 2008, para. 2) is a universal blessing. In the same way, the New Testament church must take the blessed good news of Jesus to all the family groups of the world.

### Israel

Secondly, Moskala argues that Israel's mission was "two-fold" (Moskala, 2008). That is to say, that Israel's mandate would be first to its children. Israel taught its children

the ways of God (Duet 6:4-9). “One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts. They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works” (Ps 145:4–5). Next, Israel’s missionary call was universal in its reach scope (2008). Salvation needed to go to other nations (Isa 66:19; Pss 67:2; 96:3).

Then God delineates Israel’s mission as a triadic description. God portrays Israel as a “peculiar treasure,” a “kingdom of priests” and a “holy nation” (Exod 19:5-6). As put by Kaiser, the people were God’s “special possessions” (Kaiser, 2008) and were held in high regard by God. God chose Israel not because they were the greatest nation, but because God loved them (Deut 7:6). Next, Israel was to be priests before God which meant that as a nation they were to function as missionaries carrying the truth and being “a light for the Gentiles” (Isa 49:6). From this Old Testament priestly motif, the New Testament church procures the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers (1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6). While this priesthood removes a believer’s need to confess sins to another human, Damsteegt suggests that there are missionary responsibilities to it.

The New Testament calls God’s people a royal priesthood and a holy nation. The new believers represent their Lord Jesus Christ and function as priests by delivering the gospel message to all the world. This new priesthood is to lead people to the heavenly High Priest through the gospel. (Damstgeet, n.d.)

Thirdly, Israel was to be a holy nation set apart unto God. Moskala suggests that this lifestyle would perhaps resemble the following:

God called Israel to an ethical distinctiveness (Lev 11:44–45; 18:3; 18–19; Deut 14:1–3; Mic 6:6–8). They were to be committed to a holy life, because only in this way could they live to the glory of God and His name, attract people to Him, be a light to the nations, and the nations could see their wisdom. (Deut 4:6; Isa 58:8; 60:1–3; 62:1–2; Ezek 36:23). [Moskala, 2008, p. 48]

## **Spirit of Prophecy on Evangelism**

The Bible provides a sufficient foundational underpinning and mandate for evangelism and outreach (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Matt 25:35-40). There is also a great amount of prophetic counsel given by Ellen White to the Seventh-day Adventist church regarding the importance of and need for churches and congregants to be participants in the science of evangelism - reaching people for Christ. In doing this the church needs an example or a pattern of evangelism.

The declaration is that “every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary” (White, 1940, p. 195). The disciple needs instruction on how to be a good missionary. Observing Jesus one sees the greatest evangelist to ever walk the earth (White, 1915). Jesus did not stay within the confines of the temple. Jesus practiced incarnational ministry. He met the people on their ground. White says that “he attended the great yearly festivals of the nation” (p. 45) and he also accepted invitations from the wealthy and the poor to which he shared the appropriate spiritual truth with humility and grace. From observing Jesus’ ministry of socialization, White outlines a method of evangelism and outreach of which she claims will bring success. The method is as follows:

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them,

"Follow Me."

There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit. (White, 1942, pp. 143-144)

In addition, White urges church leaders to turn their places of worship into training centers to educate their members in evangelistic work.

Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. Its members should be taught how to give Bible readings... how best to help the poor and to care for the sick, how to work for the unconverted. There should not only be teaching but actual work under experienced instructors. (White, 1942, p. 149)

The prophet to the Adventist church's ideal functionality of the mission for God's people parallels that of Jesus found in the gospel narrative according to Matthew 25:35-45. There Jesus challenges Christians to feed the hunger, clothe the naked and visit the sick and imprisoned. White conveys the following:

The followers of Christ are to labor as He did. We are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and comfort the suffering and afflicted. We are to minister to the despairing, and inspire hope in the hopeless... The love of Christ, manifested in unselfish ministry, will be more effective in reforming the evildoer than will the sword or the court of justice. These are necessary to strike terror to the lawbreaker, but the loving missionary can do more than this. Often the heart will harden under reproof; but it will melt under the love of Christ. (White, 1940, pp. 350-351)

White states, "the church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of man. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world" (White, 1911, p. 9). The gospel is the good news about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:3-4). Jesus declares that the gospel needs preaching (Mark 13:10; Matt 24:14). To carry out this God ordained mission there needs "to be a corps of organized, well-disciplined workers" (White, 2013, p. 82). Because "surveys show that ninety-eight percent of Christians never lead another person to Christ" (Tolson & Kreider, 2012, p. 228) the mobilization of parishioners is critical to the success of gospel commission. Congregations with a missionary mindsets will be a blessing for "diffusing blessings to

their fellow men” (White, 1977, p. 79). A living church will embrace God’s mission and will take gospel news and preach it to “all the world for a witness unto all nations” (Matt 24:14).

The counsel from White continues along the lines of personal ministry to others. White calls for believers to go “house-to-house” (White, 1948, p. 84) and to seek their “friends, relatives, and acquaintances” (White, 1952, p. 64) to share God’s love and the Good News of salvation. In one place she also gives practical evangelism strategies that are to be motivated by love. These strategies are:

- Speak to your neighbors
- Do good to them
- Sympathize with them
- Pray with them
- Study the Bible with them (White, 1952).

White believes that the work of evangelism calls for the collaboration between clergy and laity out of which comes improved old methods and new approaches to reach the lost (1970).

In urban areas White envisioned permanent ministries that she called “centers of influence” (1948, p. 115). White encourages churches planted in large cities to use this ministry-centered strategy to operate vegetarian restaurants, hold health lectures, conduct small group Bible studies, and small-scale evangelistic meetings (1948). It is in using a variety of strategies that more church members become involved and more people potentially reached with the gospel.

## God Calls the Church

### Ecclesia – Called out Ones

The church gets its name from the Greek word *ekklesia* which means the “called out ones.” The term *ekklesia* enjoined a more common use before adopted and borrowed by the authors of the New Testament as noted by Smith (1901) a noted 20<sup>th</sup> century Bible scholar.

*Ecclesia* (ekklesia) the Greek word for church originally meant an assembly called out by the magistrate, or by legitimate authority. It was in this last sense that the word was adapted and applied by the writers of the New Testament to the Christian congregation.

The church is called to be salt, light, family of God and the body in a dark, unsavory and dysfunctional world (Matt 5:13-16; Eph 3:15; 1 Cor 12:27).

### Ecclesia – Called to Worship

In ancient Greek society, officials would call out certain persons to carry out important business and these chosen ones would be their ecclesia. In the same way, the Creator God calls the Christian believer to carry out the mission of the church. The Holy Spirit calls believers from the darkness of sin into the light of God to show to others God’s goodness through relevant worship (1 Pet 2:9). Humanity’s quest since the fall has been, according to Munroe, is to get back into the presence of God (2000). It is in God’s presence that we can truly worship. This reality of worshiping the Creator God impacts and informs the entire being of the believer. It is this worship that shapes the thinking, understanding and witnessing and outreach of the believer.



Humanity, especially the Christian exists to worship God. The Psalmist and John, the apostle, proclaim the command to worship God in the following manner:

Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. (Ps 29:2)

True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. (John 4:23-24)

You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created. (Rev 4:11)

True worship first adores and obeys God for who God is. Worship acknowledges and glorifies God for God's mighty acts – creation and redemption. Humankind is prompted to “call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples. Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works” (Ps 105:1-2). The church assembles to worship God and to gain strength from each other (Heb 10:25). When gathered in assembly Altizer contends that the believer honors God in the assembly by offering sacrifices of “thanks and praise (Heb 13:15)...act[s] of giving (Phil 4:18)...the sacrifice of Self (Rom 12:1-2), while the fourth is the sacrifice of service (Phil 2:17),” (as cited in “Why We Must Gather,” 2009). Jesus told the woman that location does not relegate true worship. Worship is a function of knowing God and honoring God with mind and heart (John 4:21-24). Worship and evangelism are not separate entities. The point is that “our worship isn't complete unless we also love our neighbor” (Wheeler & Whaley, 2012, p. 112).

Secondly, true Christian believers will also seek the good of others (Acts 10:38). This means that individual believers and churches reach out to their communities with the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. The practical nature of the gospel was lived out by Dorcas

whose life was “full of good works” (Acts 9:36) to her community. True worship leads to witness. Witness will lead to worship. The results will see “all the nations...come and worship before” (Ps 86:9) the Lord.

### Ecclesia – Called to Fellowship

God designates the church to be a place of participation. That is to say the church exists to create genuine community. This community or *koinonia* is an expression that subsists in the believer’s relationship with Jesus (1 John 1:3). Then it extends to other believers. Genuine community characterizes the members of the group who give love and grace to one another. The Scriptures provides us with textual insights into true fellowship in the apostle Paul’s statements.

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” and “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. (Eph 4:32 & Col 3:16)

Paul also states in Ephesians 5:9 that we are to “have no fellowship with darkness.” What does Paul mean by this? Does Paul suggest that as members of the Christian Church we are not to participate nor become intimate with the ideologies, and philosophies of the world? I would acknowledge that God desires the church to be “unspotted from the world” (Jas 1:27). However, in order to reprove the darkness of the world the church must get close enough to season the world with the salt of God’s grace (Col 4:6). Salt must come in contact with food to season it. The church, in the same way, needs connect with the world in order to influence the world for good. So, the church must have fellowship – contact with the world, with the community to make a difference for Christ.

Luke addresses the idea of *koinonia* in Acts chapter 2. The Holy Spirit poured out his power on Christ's disciples. Peter preached a persuasive sermon under the influence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:14-39). Many people believed Peter's message and the Holy Ghost convicted them of their need for Jesus. The disciples baptized three thousand on that day (Acts 2:41). Luke records that the people with their new found faith in Jesus formed special bonds. They gathered together for worship-prayers, doctrinal instructions and fellowship – *koinonia* – (Acts 2:42). As a result of this kind of fellowship the Lord added to the church on a daily bases (Acts 2:47). The church grew numerically and spiritually.

It is clear that the church exists as a community – a fellowship. The fellowship must not exist merely unto itself for selfish “navel-gazing” (Burrill, 1997, p. 82). Jesus commands the church to exist in community and seek to bring others into its fellowship (p. 83). The church that follows Jesus will fellowship and make friends with those not connected to their God or the church. Jesus was a friend to all even those marginalized and ostracized by society (Luke 7:34; John 15:15). The church of today will, like Jesus, “eat with...sinners” (Mark 2:16). This will require reaching others by experiencing life with and among the ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. When believers gather for worship and fellowship, they help strengthen and encourage each other to live before God and live for God in the world. To impact this changing world churches and leaders will need to “become all things to all people” (1 Cor 9:20-23) without compromising God's message or mission.

## Ecclesia – Called to Receive the Word

The hymn writer, Priscilla J. Owens wrote, “Give me the Bible, star of gladness gleaming, to cheer the wanderer lone and tempest tossed” History suggests that the Bible “remains one of the bestselling books in the world -- more people have read it than any other text” (Alfano, 2006). While the Bible continues to be the most read book, many look upon it as literature not as the inspired word of God. Some regard the Bible as a story of human invention. I agree that the Bible contains literature and that it is a story full of characters that dawn the script of good versus evil. Moreover the Bible is God’s word revealed to humanity. The Bible is Holy Scripture “given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim 3:16-17). When received by humankind, this truth sets the believer free (John 8:32).

The Word of Life congregation believes that Bible Study is important. It is necessary and important that we build upon the relationship that God initiated with us. Humanity was created in God’s imagine. Humankind chose to disrupt the Creator and creature relationship by choosing to disobey God’s command. As stated by White, humanity’s sin broke the union or fractured the relationship between God and human beings (1891).

I believe that it is a true theological fact that human beings cannot salvage or save themselves. John tells us that because of love God sent Jesus into the world as heaven’s salvation gift (John 3:16). Luke also states that Jesus “came to seek and save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). The Bible is our textbook which gives instruction on how to

build upon, enhance and grow our relations with God, with one another and the community around us (Rom 12:11; Heb 12:14).

### Ecclesia – Called to Serve Humanity

The word *serve* can mean to dish up as in giving portions of food. Serve can also mean to wait on customer at a business establishment. Serve can mean to provide ministry to others who need help which may or may not include the giving of food or other goods and services.

Jesus started his earthly ministry by declaring the purpose and scope of his service. On a Sabbath day worship gathering in a synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus reading from the book of Isaiah announces that he is the long awaited Messiah. He points out His multifaceted ministry as the Anointed One. According to Luke 4:18, Jesus would provide release from spiritual servitude, physical captivity and societal oppression by proclaiming the Gospel to all and especially to the poor. Clarke (1997) suggests that this text gives reference to the Year of Jubilee where, according to Leviticus 25:9 all men, women and bondservants were released debts and obligations. Paul reminds the church to “serve one another” (Gal 5:13). This means that the church community should look out for the welfare of each other. The church is God’s servant called to serve the needs of the hurting and distressed among believers and unbelievers.

Jesus demonstrates true ministry by reaching out to the Samaritans, women and lepers all who represent marginalized populations in the world. Matthew 25 speaks of a special commendation given to those found serving the needs of others in their community.

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me. (Matt 25:34-40)

In order to achieve spiritual and social change the church will need to be a blessing to the underserved and marginalized. The church may need to make adjustments in its methodologies if real impact is to be made.

#### Ecclesia – Called to Proclaim the Gospel

After his resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples and gave them a great challenge to communicate the gospel to all ethnic groups (Matt 28:18-20). The disciples of Jesus were up against great odds. The leader of a new and unpopular religion was dead. The unbelieving multitudes were against this new group and their teaching. Jesus, the risen Savior, encouraged his disciples by promising them power of the Holy Spirit to take the gospel near and far (Acts 1:9). It is against this backdrop that a new and emerging religion and church seeks to declare the good news of God's salvation and love to the world.

This good news is an "everlasting gospel" (Rev 14:6). The gospel, as Jesus points out, must be presented to the world for a witness then time as we know it will come to an end (Matt 24:14). The Bible also teaches that at the end of earth's history God will make all things new (Rev 21:1). God destroys Satan and his followers. Christians will live in union and harmony with God for eternity (1 Thess 4:17).

Before this becomes a reality the gospel must go to the world. How can this be accomplished? Who will carry the love of God to a fallen world? Jesus calls all who claim to be a Christian whether they are professional clergy, compensated workers or volunteers to share the good news (Mark 16:15). White, in agreement with Scripture, places the responsibility of sharing the gospel on the disciples (Matt 28:18-20) of Jesus Christ who carry the gospel “forth to regions beyond” (1990) their locales.

Goheen, in his critique of David Bosch reports: “The calling of the disciples is a call to follow Jesus and a being set aside for missionary activities. Calling, discipleship, and mission belong together” (2005, p. 7).

### **Mission-Minded Members**

The purpose for which an organization exists is its mission. The mission of the organization identifies how the general direction of the organization will go. The Christian Church has a mission and a purpose for being. The church exists to display God’s ability to restore fallen and sinful human beings to a new relationship with God.

The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places," the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10. (White, 1911 p. 9)

Keller agrees with White in that mission of the church is to make disciples who live God honoring lives in the face of this world’s culture (as cited in Stetzer, 2011).

While the mission of the institutional church is to preach the Word and produce disciples, the church must disciple Christians in such a way that they live justly and integrate their faith with their work. So the church doesn't directly change culture, but

it disciples and supports people who do. Another balance has to do with society's cultural institutions. Rather than taking them over, or avoiding them as a corrupting influence, or treating them with indifference---Christians are to be a faithful presence within them. (Stetzer, 2011).

Conversely, others believe that the mission of the church is in creating social change and empowerment.

Christian churches must work for justice and peace in their neighborhoods through service even as they call individuals to conversion and the new birth. We must work for the eternal and common good and show our neighbors we love them sacrificially whether they believe as we do or not. (Stetzer, 2011)

God has reserved the communication of this gospel message for the church to give to the world. The church needs to pattern its methods of ministry and evangelism after the manner in which Jesus worked for humanity's salvation. Jesus' work spanned at least three approaches. According to Matthew, Jesus preached, taught and healed the people (Matt 4:23). The way that Jesus' ministry approach manifested itself was contingent upon the person that Jesus ministered to, environmental factors and the scope of the need.

Jesus often saw the personal need of the individual and ministered to that person. Nicodemus came to Jesus at night to escape the scrutiny of his colleagues in ministry. Jesus taught Nicodemus the steps of conversion. This was an illustration of one on one ministry of Jesus (John 3:1-6). Jesus preached to the crowd that gathered on the side of a mountain (Matt 5 -7). Jesus met the felt needs of the community when he mingled with them and when he feed the multitude (Mark 6:30-44). The world needs to see this kind of ministry model lived out by God's called-out ones. Young (2007), the radio host of the John Young Show that airs on WNIV in Atlanta, GA, said, the "church is the life of Jesus on display by His people."



The Longview Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church in Memphis, TN, started the Word of Life congregation as a church plant. The stories of several current members who were directly involved with the tent ministry are consistent. They reported that all enjoyed the tent evangelism, led by Evangelist Dennis Ross. The event was a good example of persuasive preaching and meeting practical needs of food, clothing and marriage of those in attendance. They were relevant in the delivery of the gospel. The preaching and teaching of the gospel helped many people who attended the evangelistic meeting. At least two couples, instead of continuing to co-habitate, got married after their baptisms as reported by C. Shephard (personal communication, December 14, 2011). Being a relevant church means making a case for Christianity over the prevailing culture (Wallace, 2012).

According to Lloyd-Jones, "when the Church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it. It is then that the world is made to listen to her message, though it may hate it at first" (Jones, 2009, para 3). Moreover, the church may need to change its approach or vehicle in which it delivers the message. The message, however, must remain constant.

Growing churches is God's desire. Small, medium and large churches should grow. Churches need to grow in two general categories. Congregations need to grow qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative growth is measuring spiritual maturity. Many articulate the idea that spirituality cannot be measured, which is an interpersonal matter. How does one measure the maturation of someone's prayer life and development biblical comprehension? Hoyt challenges the church leader to "identify some specific characteristics or behavior that indicates spiritual maturity" (2007, p. 98). The number of

people in a prayer group could be an example. Quantitative growth is easier to account. It can be measured by counting the people being added to the church (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 6:1, 7).

When the church proclaims and lives the everlasting gospel (Rev 14:6); people from all ethnicities will come to the church. The New Testament church increased through the preaching teaching and helping the community in practical ways. An example of practical witness is seen in the life Dorcas (Acts 9:36-42). The citizens of Joppa received, respected and loved Dorcas. She demonstrated the essence of the gospel by making coats for the needy in her town. While the story does not indicate any number of people being added to the church by her verbal witness, one gets the sense that her living planted and watered the seed and Peter reaped the harvest (Acts 9:42). True mission-minded churches will reflect both spiritual maturity and numerical growth.

### **Healthy Churches Grow Disciples**

A disciple is a follower of another's life and teachings. A disciple of Jesus Christ is one who adopts and embraces the teachings and principles of Jesus. A true disciple of Jesus is one whose mind and way of thinking has been radically changed from carnality to alignment with the spiritual principles taught and lived out by Jesus (Rom 12:1-2). This change will result in heart-felt obedience to the revealed will of God (Rom 6:17). True disciples of Jesus will align their lifestyle walk with that of Jesus (1 John 2:6).

Kidder reports the following:

Christian discipleship is the process by which followers of Jesus grow in knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit equips them to overcome the pressures and trails of the present life and become more and more like Christ in love, vision, mission and character. (2014, p.18, para.1)

Leading a life of discipleship requires the active pursuit of teaching others the ways and tenets of Jesus (Matt 28:18-20). McGauran, the Father of the Church Growth Movement, calls this “finding and folding” (1980, p. 5).

### **Growing Churches Connect With Their Community**

Growing churches find ways to expand their congregations qualitatively and quantitatively connecting the church with and in the community. The great commission does not allow the church to be isolated from the world. In fact Jesus’ word in Mark 16:15 speaks to the active challenge given to the New Testament church. The words “go into...the world” are to be followed by the action of proclaiming the gospel to others.

However, the church cannot settle for one method or form of evangelism and outreach. Proclamation evangelism can reach some people. Still others will not come to hear the preaching of the gospel. True evangelism reaches people where they live with all their needs. Meeting needs anchored in the gospel of Jesus equals evangelism (Pierson, 2006). True success in church growth is a blend between the preaching of the gospel and ministering to the social, economic and physical needs of human beings.

Jesus provides us with another nice example of seeking the right balance between preaching and outreach ministry. In Matthew, Jesus pursued the triadic approach to ministry by going throughout Galilee “teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people” (Matt 4:23). Jesus met the needs of the community by socializing, sympathizing, serving and saving.

Jesus connects with the community and people of first century Palestine by feeding the hungry in Matthew 14. Jesus tries to get away from the throng to rest and refresh himself. But the crowd follows Jesus. They listened to his teachings all day without taking time to eat. Matthew mentions the lack of food when he records the disciples of Jesus as saying, “this is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals” (Matt 14:15). Instead of sending the crowd away to find food, Jesus takes a small lunch that belonged to a little boy. Jesus blesses, breaks and gives the bread and fish to the disciples to give to the people. Signifying that as disciples Jesus expects us to participate in the work of reaching people.

This gospel narrative provides a case study that the Christian church can learn from. Jesus helps us to see the benefits of conducting a needs assessment. He then frames his ministry activity that meets the physical as well as the spiritual needs of the community. It is this kind of ministry that will be a great blessing to the crowd and to the church. The crowd will receive its blessing and the believers who shared God’s love will also be blessed for “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). The church is to be an agent of transformation for society. The church under the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit transforms the world by love not by force or technique.

### **Growing Churches Have Equipping Pastors**

The church does not exist unto itself. The church is God’s ordained agency to communicate the gospel to the world. This task is important. The task is also a very large one. No one person or one church can accomplish this mission. A mission of this

magnitude needs organization and systems and people to make it happen. More importantly the church needs the Holy Spirit to ultimately achieve world evangelization.

Jesus, after His resurrection, charged His followers to “go you into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Paul states that the church met Jesus’ challenge of spreading the gospel to the populace of the first century (Col 1:23). It seems unfathomable with limited modes of travel and communication that conveying the gospel to all people could happen during the time of the first century Christian church. Biblical scholar, A. T. Robertson, qualifies the issue of spreading the gospel. He argues that the gospel went throughout the Roman Empire (1960).

The early church did not confine or restrict the preaching of the message to only paid disciple-makers. Those giving the gospel presentation to unbelievers included deacons and women as well as elders (Acts 8:26-39; Rom 16:1-2). This church valued the priesthood of all believers. The separation of clergy and laity came into play under Catholicism. The following reference is an excerpt from *Schaff's History of the Church*, (1999).

During the third century it became customary to apply the term "priest" directly and exclusively to the Christian ministers, especially the bishops. In the same manner the whole ministry and it alone, was called "clergy", with a double reference to its presidency and its peculiar relation to God. It was distinguished by this name from the Christian people or "laity."

This divide has created a hierarchical structure that has pushed the church into an institutional model. Now the paid clergy and volunteers are blaming the other the church’s failed mission. The pastor’s goal is to encourage “all God's people to discover, develop and exercise their gifts....Instead of monopolizing all [ministries]” (Braun, 2009).

## **Summary**

The church is called to worship God and to bless others with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

These actions are a part of the biblical record. As the called of God we are charged to gather for worship, edify one another, befriend others and engage in evangelism (1 Thess 5:11; Luke 10:1-9 & Matt 28:18-20). I will seek to lead Word of Life into acknowledging God call to be a blessing to others (Gen 12:1-3).

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Churches in North America are having a difficult time in attendance and evangelism. Since the 1960s church attendance has suffered a down turn. Research report that 22% of Americans attend church services (Olson & Beckworth, 2011). Evangelism is an esteemed value in the church, but few church members practice it (Mittleburg, 2002). Researchers in the Adventist church report that the church's retention rate is one in three from 1963 – 2013 (Oliver, 2013). In this chapter we will look at three areas: (a) North American cultural barriers to evangelism, (b) developing a culture of evangelism in the local church, (c) evangelistic strategies to bridge church with community.

Churches exist within the culture of the country, territory or place where its members live. A definition of culture exists in the following account:

Culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. (Samovar & Porter, 1994)

The dominant people group in the culture normally sets the major beliefs and values. Historically, American culture followed this pattern. Lewis argues that America

has people living in subdominant groups in which “the economic, political, emotional, and psychological benefits [are] weighted toward the dominant society” (Bradley, 2012, p. 126).

### **Evangelism in Early Church Culture**

The early church received the command of Jesus to make disciples (Matt 28:18-20). The accomplishment of Great Commission did not happen within a vacuum. The first century Christians lived, worked and preached the gospel within the context of their culture. The early Christian church that grew out of Judaism was a subculture of the larger dominant Greco-Roman culture. In order to engage the task of global evangelization, they had to overcome some barriers.

After Jesus’ ascension, Luke relates that 120 believers gathered in an upper room (Acts 1:15). The task before them was daunting. They waited there as Jesus commanded. Jesus said that they would be his witnesses in places nearby and ultimately to the “remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). They faced at least the five barriers to taking the gospel to the world. The five barriers were linguistic, logistic, financial, philosophical and structural as related in a lecture by P. Vincent (personal communication, August 31, 2013).

The early church overcame the linguistic concerns with divine help. Luke puts forward that Jews from the Diaspora gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost. The Holy Spirit fell on the disciples and they began to speak about God and the salvation worked out for humanity in the person of Jesus. The Diaspora Jews and others heard the gospel message in their language. When they returned to the



cities and towns where they lived, they told others what they experienced in Jerusalem on Pentecost (Acts 2). This event coupled with the fact that Greek was the, *lingua franca*, the common language helped to solve the linguistic barrier. Second, the Roman construction of roads made travel and transportation of commerce easier. Paved roads and sea travel assisted the apostles to carry the gospel to known regions of the world. Third, the early church financed the gospel by contribution made by all converts (Acts 4:34-37: Acts 5:1-2). Fourth, the apostles overcame philosophical barrier by engaging in the Grecian debate school in various cities (Acts 19:9). Middleton articulates, “philosophical schools of learning were a recognized institution and were utilized on more than one occasion to notable effect by the Early Church” (Middleton, 2007). Fifth, research (Spencer, 2008) points to Acts 1:8 as the outline for the early church’s mission. Spencer identifies the following three structural strategies: a) receiving Jesus’ final directives, b) embracing the critical power of the Holy Spirit in order to engage and accomplish the task, and c) receiving the clear trajectory and destination of the mission (p. 215).

The early believers lived and worked within a pagan society. The citizens of the Greco-Roman culture worship many gods. There society was pluralistic not unlike our culture of today. Green (2004) believes that the internal culture of this new religion helped propel the believers to preach and live the gospel as a witness before other culture groups. The first century church possessed a culture of evangelism where proclaiming and living the gospel message was “the prerogative and duty of every Church member” (p. 380). Green adds:

What is more, this infectious enthusiasm on the part of such diverse people of differing ages, backgrounds, sex and cultures was backed up by the quality of their lives. Their love, their joy, their changed habits and progressively transformed characters gave great weight to what they had to say. (p. 381)

The willingness of early Christians to die for their faith caused the pagans to marvel and for some to join Christianity (Green, 2004).

To this end, churches of today need to have a culture that embraces evangelism as God's mission, reaches its culture with the gospel and empowered by the Holy Spirit overcomes cultural barriers which may prevent the completion of the Great Commission.

### **Evangelism in Cultural Contexts**

The world has changed and continues to undergo change with increasing speed. The church in America, however, has not kept pace with the shifts in its cultural context. While many churches sit in modes of modernity, research suggests that "language has changed, music has changed, and worldview has changed" (Stetzer & Putman, 2006, p. 8). This poses very challenging circumstances for future growth and ministry of the church (Gibbs, 2005).

### **Word of Life Memphis Context**

Word of Life church is a predominantly African American congregation located in the Frayser community of northwest Memphis, TN. Frayser is also approximately six miles from downtown Memphis. According to the data estimated in 2011, which includes the 38127 and 38128 zip codes as the ministry context of Word of Life, the population of Frayser is 92,606. The racial makeup of this designated area is 77.6 % African American,

16.5 % White, 4.2 % Hispanic/Latino and 1.7 % Asian as stated by Sahlin in his report (personal communication, August, 11, 2011). Sahlin also reports that 46 % of the residents in Frayser as multiethnic diversity with income slightly lower than the national average, but education is significantly lower than the national average; 19 % described as struggling households in that half of the adult population dropped out of high school (2011).

Once a growing blue-collar neighborhood in the 1950s and 1960s, Frayser lost its industrial jobs and took a downward turn in 1970s and 1980s. Frayser is now challenged with high crime, gang violence, high poverty, failing schools and transient renter populace (Buntin, 2014, para 32). The state run Achievement School District now manages nine Shelby County School district (formerly Memphis City Schools) schools in Frayser that are low performing. The new school district seeks to move the bottom 5% of schools in Tennessee to the top 25% in five years (Achievement School District, 2012).

Word of Life, which is a predominantly African American (90 %) congregation with 52% of its membership over 40 years of age, enters this ministry environment of Frayser that has 28% Generation X (born 1965-1980) and 32% Millennial or Generation Y (born 1980-1984) to proclaim and provide practical evidences of the gospel of Jesus Christ per Sahlin's report (personal communication, August 11, 2011). Outreach toward a younger population may be helpful growth opportunities for the Word of Life church.

#### African American Context

Historically, the black church played an important role in the life of the black community. The Christian religion, originally allowed by slave owners to the slaves in

subjection, helped the enslaved blacks to cope with and survive the inhumanity of their plight. The evangelization efforts of white Baptists and Methodists among slaves allowed blacks, especially black men, to function in leadership roles otherwise denied to them in the slave culture during the 1800s. Along with the black church came the rise of other black owned institutions in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The church, however, became “the social, cultural, and spiritual center of its community” (Arnold, 2012, p. 1).

Having lasted the depravity of slavery, the belittling of Jim Crow and the disenfranchisement of segregation, the black church continues to play a role in the African American community. Although African Americans represent the strongest religious affiliation amongst all racial and ethnic groups in the United States, the Pew Forum 2007 survey reports that people of black ethnicity were most likely to be part of an organized, formal religion, with 85 % preferring to be Christians. Arnold, however, argues “the black church is at a crossroads” (Arnold, 2012, p. 11).

Research (Ellis, Jr., 2013) suggests that the dominant culture in the United States failed to meet the core concerns of the African American subculture. These concerns relate to “dignity, identity and significance” (para. 6). The church can provide upliftment and self-respect to Blacks with the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ (Luke 4:18). Jesus identified with the poor and oppressed communities. His connection with such provides a level of importance to those struggling to be seen. The Black church is poised to meet the core concerns of the African American subculture when it employs evangelism strategies to reach the cognitive and intuitive knowledge of the churched and unchurched (para. 13).

The church of today is living in a post-Christian, “leafless and fruitless” culture that continues to use methods and strategies of the era of Christendom. Marked by rational, propositional and doctrinal evangelistic preaching, Christendom falls short in reaching the various people groups of today. The church will need to relinquish old methods and utilize new methods in a new era. Stetzer presents the following claim about Christendom and its weakened grip on the psyche of Western culture:

“Christendom,” that realm or time when Christianity was the assumed religion of the West, has come to an end. No longer is Christianity the “chaplain” to the broader culture. Until the last several years in the history of the United States, Christianity was thought to be the ‘American religion’ even though it was not embraced by everyone or practiced with devotion that committed Christians would like. It was once perceived as part of America’s ethos. (2006, p. 19)

It may be time for the church to make the necessary course corrections to achieve its purpose and mission of blessing the world with the good news of the gospel. “The church,” as stated by Gibbs and Bolger, “is a modern institution in a post-modern world....The church must embody the gospel within the culture of post-modernity for the Western church to survive the twenty-first century” (2005, p. 17).

### **Post-modern Context**

With the cumulative results of the “seismic shifts in culture” (Harnish, 2004, p. 15) from Christendom to post-modernity, it seems as if the church has misjudged the world quest for and rate of change. Aubrey Malphurs a long time church consultant writes “essentially, what was a church, supposedly Christian culture has become an unchurched, post-Christian culture. People in our culture are not antichurch; they simply view the church as irrelevant to their lives” (as cited in Earley & Wheeler, 2010, p. 183).

The post-modernists seek freedom from the moral absolutes of Christendom and the rationalistic summarizations of the modernity. This post-Christian society looks for meaning and stability in dismantling the standard faith stories of modernity (Gibbs & Bolger, 2005) while rewriting its own story. Olson speaks to this notion in the following:

The Post-Modern world is characterized by uncertainty. Chaos theory and quarks are two scientific paradigms of postmodern uncertainty. There is skepticism and cynicism about over-certainty. Communal life replaces individualism. History and tradition rise in value... Story is king. There is spiritual curiosity, but not necessarily Christian in orientation. (Olson, 2009)

The argument is set forth that “the church must be awakened to the contemporary cultural atmosphere” (Drummond, 2002, p. 14) and must reevaluate the manner in which it communicates the gospel to post-moderns. Teaching religion without love leads to drudgery. Teaching true religion by forging relationships and truth seems to be a better combination. Such an awakening will compel the church to tell the story of God’s mission and establish within the church a “missionary character, which will go forth to gather a people unto God from all parts of the world; a church [that] is a soul-saving company” (Drummond, 2002, p. 35).

Today, society has its own Bible and its own narrative. To be exact the post-Christian culture possesses and tells its own inspirational narratives in the form of movie scripts and musical rhythms and lyrics (McDonald, 2013). Reaching individuals in a pluralistic and changing culture requires different methods. Costella rebuts this claim. He states that “Paul did not call unbelieving young people...together under the guise of a ‘pizza party’...only to discover” (Costella, 2011) that they gathered under false pretenses. For Costella the church needs to give a straightforward approach of evangelism and presenting the gospel. No frills needed.

The Bible, in Revelation 14:6, makes it is clear that the church's calling is to reach all nations in the world with the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ. How is this to be done? McDonald advises the church to get to know the cultural language so that the church can speak to the culture as Paul did in reasoning with the Athenians on Mars Hill in Acts 17. He also remarks, "Trying to explicate the gospel in religious language will always end in failure" (2013).

Tim Keller believes that the church is best able to reach different people groups with intentional contextualization. Keller recommends:

giving people the *Bible answers*, which they may not at all want to hear, to questions about life that people are in their particular time and place are asking, in language and forms they can comprehend, and through appeals and arguments with force they can feel, even if they reject them. (2012, p. 89)

Answering life's questions with biblical solution in ways that people can hear and comprehend may be more productive than going to them with pre-packaged scripts laden with church language.

Leonard Sweet agrees with McDonald and Keller in that the gospel must speak to the culture. Sweet defines contextualization as "inculturation" which "is the process of a deep sympathetic adaptation to and appropriation of the local culture in which the church... does not compromise its faith" (Sweet, 2008, pp. 99-100). Enculturation is a sociological terms that describes "the process whereby an existent, prevailing culture influences an individual or community to imbibe its accepted norms and values so the individual or community is pressured to find acceptance within the society of that culture" (Hastings, 2012, p. 38). It is important to note that this type of contextualization goes too far.

Enculturation takes contextualization too far so that people hear neither the message nor the messenger.

Jesus models this non-compromising contextual approach to evangelism and discipleship by pitching his tent alongside humanity's tent (John 1:14 & Phil 2:5-8). Robert Linthicum asserts, "When Jesus sought to win humanity to God, he became one of us, lived among us, voluntarily took upon himself our limitations" (Lathrop, 2010, p. 83). Cowin puts it this way, "If the church wants to be relevant; if it wants to succeed in its mission, it must give attention to contextualization. It must learn to understand, communicate, and demonstrate the gospel in a way that is contextual to its community" (Cowin, 2007, para 7).

The cultural shifts within our society present and pose great challenges to the Western Church. Perhaps, the church could benefit from rethinking how it's going to overcome these barriers to growth and completion of the Great Commission given by Jesus (Mark 16:15). The argument made by Frost and Hirsch is worth some consideration. Their position echoes Albert Einstein's philosophy on change and at the same time challenges the church to understand "the kind of thinking that will solve the world's [church's] problems will be of a different order to the thinking that created the problem in the first place" (Frost & Hirsch, 2001, p. 7).

## **American Culture Challenges to Church Growth**

### **Barriers to Evangelism**

The cultural factors that may restrict church growth in North America have need of analysis. The challenges that bar numerical growth in the American church require



investigation. These barriers that impede and impact numerical growth in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in America, particularly the Word of Life church, warrant examination.

Barriers that hinder or slow the growth of the church come primarily from two areas. Some reasons are environmental - that is to say they come from outside the church. Other barriers to growth come from within the church. The major outside force that has impacted the church in North America is the prevailing culture. Culture is the way of life for a particular people group. Johnson suggests that a fundamental cultural shift took place in America between 1960 and 1980. The shift was so deep that in effect it changed the way the culture views organized religion – Christianity (2006).

The term secularization explains this cultural phenomenon. Secularization happens when the people of the culture drift away from Christian values and viewpoints (Mittelberg, 2001). Recent study by the Barna Group reveals that 37% of America's adult population qualifies as secular. Secularization amongst The younger generation is growing at an increasing rate compared to the adult population ("How Post-Christian," 2013). Upward mobility and multiple religious offerings tend to diminish the Black church and the African American community (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). As succeeding African American millennials become more educated and economically affluent, their need for the traditional black church, its rules and reluctance to change increases their absenteeism ("6 Reasons," 2014).

One of the subsections of secularization is privatization (Johnson, 2006). Privatization is another aspect of secularization. This phenomenon of personal priority

and individualism impacts every facet of American culture. Privatization's reach extends from medical records, to the ballot boxes, to how people think about religion.

The increasing advances of and access to technology contributed to society's "passive involvement" (Southern & Norton, 2001, p. 118). The more technology we have the less time we seem to have for human contact. The church is not exempt from the privatization of society. Many are not attending the traditional worship services. Instead, they are going to church via their personal computers, iPads or mobile devices. Scores of the younger population are embracing this fast moving phenomenon while others in the church are reluctant to bring these secular tools into the sacred space of the church.

Privatization may make it increasingly more difficult to reach people with the gospel. The church, however, must not throw out or disregard relevant tools of technology in order to maintain its sacred community of modernity. Historically, the church has used emerging technology of the given period. This is in the church's use of the "papyrus, printing press, piano, organ, lighting, microphones, guitars, drums, and video projectors" (Chuang, 2010).

"Faith" when seen as a "private matter and has no need of institutional grounding" (Johnson, 2006, p. 58) can be a barrier to evangelism and church growth. Personal faith does not mean that a believer only speaks about faith matters in private or congregational worship settings. A believer in Christ may be a private individual but Christians are a part of a larger community—the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27). True faith is an essential and igniting force in the life of the believer (Heb 11:6; Jas 2:26). Jesus commissioned Christians to make disciples in this world (Matt 28:18-20). While God uses one-on-one situations (Speidel, 2007) to witness and spread the gospel, the early church saw believers

coupled together. Luke gives us Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1, 50; Acts 14:1) as well as Paul and Silas (Acts 16:16-40); Barnabas and Mark (Acts 15:39). Therefore, Christians cannot afford to sit in isolation while “more than 200 million nonchurched people” (Wheeler & Earley, 2010, p. 29) in America remain without knowledge of the saving gospel of Jesus.

### Self-inflicted Barriers

Barrs in his lecture at Covenant Theological Seminary puts forward the idea that the Christian church in the twenty-first century is not able to keep up with population growth in part due to self-imposed or self-inflicted barriers. Barrs believes that non-Christians see the church as “aggressive lobby groups” who push their views upon them. Barrs outlines the major growth restrictive barriers as fear, condemnation, retreat and personal separation (2010).

The church, as said by Barrs, is afraid that the music, money and movies of the prevailing culture will destroy the church. So the church reacts in fear. This leads to an outright condemnation of the culture. This criticism resonates when prominent Christian believers and ministry leaders viciously attack those who disagree with the worldview driven by moral absolutes. The next step is what Barrs calls “cultural retreat.” This is when believers in Jesus create their own society or subculture by creating separate institutions that provide havens from the outside world. Finally, Barrs suggests that the impact of the various corporate barricades affects the individual believer as well. The church and people who are called to reach the lost will congregate in houses of worship

and live in their “cocoon” while separating themselves from others and having “nothing to do with” sinners (2010).

McIntosh and Arn identify at least five barriers that prevent evangelistic growth from occurring in churches. For them church growth stagnates because the pastor does not prioritize outreach, the member serve themselves, the church is irrelevant to the community’s needs, the church is using the wrong methods to reach its community, and the church neglects to put an assimilation plan in place ( 2013). Pastors and members need to look in the mirror to see if they are contributing to the low growth and or evangelism in the church.

Kidder adds another barrier to healthy evangelism and church growth. His research among the fastest growing Adventist church in America revealed a solid correlation between the development of new leaders and the church’s ability to do evangelism and retain new members (2011). When a church does not recruit new leaders, new ideas and strategies remain distant from the congregation and potential growth stagnates.

The call of the church is not to stand aloof from the world. The church and the individual believers are to be salt and light to this culture. This will happen when Christianity removes the barriers and becomes incarnational (John 1:14), more community focused (Mark 16:15) and missional (John 20:21).

### **Developing a Culture of Evangelism in the Local Church**

The phrase, “Evangelism is the lifeblood of the church,” is very familiar. “Evangelism is the preaching and teaching of the gospel with the aim to persuade”

(Stiles, 2014). The Episcopal Church believes that evangelism is “the presentation of Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in such ways that persons may be led to believe in him as Saviour, and follow Him as Lord with the fellowship of His Church” (Walker, 2007). For many in the Adventist church evangelism equals public recruiting meetings conducted by professional clergy (DuBose, 2013).

Some suggest that the church is hope of the world. Yet, the church in North America has fallen upon difficult times when statistical data reveals “80% of all churches in America are either plateaued or are declining” (Malphurs, 2004, pp. 11-12). Sylvia contends that not one of all the churches will add one new person within the next year (2004). Additionally, Grossman, a *USA Today* reporter writing in a 2008 LifeWay Research survey, asserts, “most of the unchurched (86%) say they believe they can have a ‘good relationship with God without belonging to a church’” (Grossman, 2008). McRaney note “95 to 97 percent of American Christians do not share their faith with others” (2003, p. 5). Barna concludes that if we rely on the church in its present condition “the world has no hope” (2005, p. 36).

Conversely, the church in America is not on its way out, states Stezter. He contends that the church in America is not about to die. Stezter believes that the church is simply clarifying the make-up of the church (2013). He further maintains that a more accurate picture of the church’s plight would appear if pollsters would “separate those who profess Christianity into three categories: cultural, congregational and convictional” (2013). Cultural Christians claim the religion on the basis of family history. Congregational Christians attend a “home church.” The convictional Christian is one who lives and shares the faith.

The church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs to return to its God ordained role of being dispensers of God's grace—the good news. The church must return to being a sent witness for Jesus (John 20:21; Acts 1:8). Reclaiming the missionary fervor is a necessity. God's mission must again become priority for the Christian church in America, in Memphis, TN and Word of Life.

Reestablishing a posture of evangelism, according to Stiles, is a “grass-roots, not a top-down” venture where “the members are sent out from the church to do evangelism, the church does not do evangelism” (2013). While there will always be internal concerns for the church, McNeal maintains, “the key is to put more weight, energy, and resources into being external” (2010). This will require the re-education, re-mobilization, and re-application of the church to a biblical mandate incarnational evangelism which emphasizes missional intentionality by being a blessing to others and doing life with them (McNeal, 2009).

Culture helps to identify a country or a company. Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield opened their ice cream store in 1978. The company became known as Ben & Jerry's. The company, as described in the fall edition of Stanford Social Innovation Review, began with three core values; fair “to its employees, easy on the environment, and kind to its cows” (Page & Katz, 2012, para. 2). The culture of a church is very important. Lewis and Cordeiro would argue that a church's culture “gives color and flavor to everything [a] church is and does” (2005, p. 3).

Communities know churches in their area by what the churches emphasize and do. Some churches attract people to them by providing Easter pageantry and Christmas productions. Others provide ministries of compassion without co-mingling the gospel

(Sider & Unruh, 2001). However, a greater measure in reaching the community for Jesus is to create a culture within a church whereby its members are motivated and trained to share the gospel (Mark 16:15) and be a witness (Acts 1:8). A church gets its cultural identity from the intersection of three things, “God’s kingdom agenda, who you are and your unique setting” (Lewis & Cordeiro, 2005, p. 20).

In order to develop an evangelistic culture in your church, there are several things one is required to do. First, the church will be clear that God wants it to grow both qualitatively and quantitatively (Matt 28: 18-19). Second, the church will desire to grow and believe that it can grow. Third, the church is required to pray to the Lord of the harvest (Luke 10:2), for themselves and the lost (1 Tim 2:1-4), and for the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). The next thing to increase the evangelistic temperature or culture within the church is for the pastor to model, promote and train the members in the process of evangelism (Searcy, 2006). Leaders model and infuse the culture. As noted in a lecture by J. Wilson, “People do what they see you do” (personal communication, May 9, 2011).

The fifth step is for members go and connect with people in the community. The church connects with others by listening to them, doing life with them and loving them (Luke 10:5-7). Connection is made by being friendly, making friends on purpose and sharing the gospel message in love. Hadaway (2011) reports the need for all congregants to help in evangelism and recruitment:

Growth requires intentionality, but it also requires action and the involvement of leaders, members and active participants. Recruitment success results not just from official programs and events, but also from the behavior of members who promote the congregation and invite others to attend and join. (p. 14)

Sixth, the church's evangelistic temperature is raised, as maintained by Kevin Harney, by taking a particular ministry that is already working among the members and vector it one degree out towards the community. If a church has a good internal grief ministry it may be a blessing to the community (2012). Seventh, conduct reaping activities to bring in the harvest of souls whom the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the labors of the church has moved to faith in Jesus. Finally, the nurtured and assimilated new recruits go out to share the share the gospel with others.

### **Community Outreach as a Bridge to Church Growth**

Pierson articulates the idea that the local church is fundamentally the "basic evangelism unit" (2006, p. 14) on the earth. Bill Hybels of Willow Creek Community Church agrees with Pierson. Hybels believes the local church is the "hope of the world." Pierson sees the church as the true dispenser of God's grace when the members are involved in the lives of those who are in need. A church that is operating at its best would employ several methods of evangelism and outreach not limited to but including the following: a.) committed to following the teachings and tenants of Jesus, b.) have a willingness to help those in need and, c.) have a willingness to fill the need individually or corporately. Pierson calls this the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) approach to evangelism (p. 15).

The church that desires to grow will "decide for itself appropriate ways to engage the culture" (Johnson, 2005, p. 17). This type of church does not depend upon nor wait for denominationally designed ministries. This kind of church reaches out to its community with the gospel in practical measures. This church is a missional church—a



missionary oriented church. Being a missional congregation reduces the “dichotomization between ministry, mission and evangelization” (Johnson, p. 18). Churches that carry gospel to the world become bridges by living among the people and serving them. This happens by intentionally living life in natural rhythm not by adding evangelism things (Kalinowski, 2013).

Research (Hoyt, 2007) suggests that people “considered themselves regular church attendees if they [were] there 50 percent of the time” (p. 30). More recent reports suggest that “less than 25 percent of Americans go to church two-three times or more each month” (Shook, 2012, para. 5). This trend seems to support the idea that Americans are less likely to seek the church for spiritual help. Today’s church will need to adopt a more missional mindset and ministry model. Johnson agrees with this notion by quoting David Bosch:

Kingdom people seek first the kingdom of God and its justice; church people... put the church work above concerns of justice, mercy and truth. Church people think about how to get people into the church. Kingdom people think about how to get the church into the world. Church people worry that the world might change the church; kingdom people work to see the church change the world. (Johnson, p. 25)

There are some who believe that the church needs to be pure and unsullied from the unholy atmosphere of the world. Some read the Bible text, “come out from among them and be separate” (2 Cor 6:17, NASB), and the idea that the church should “be in the world but not of the world” to support their claim. Separate does not mean that the church isolates itself from the people. It means that the Christian believer has a separate and different lifestyle (Petty, 2008).

Remaining aloof from the culture only creates a congregation who maintains the status quo (Robinson, 2003). Since the mission field has shifted to the front door of the

Western Church and is no longer restricted to foreign territories in underdeveloped countries, the church will need to move from a “board culture to a ministry culture” (Robinson, p. 74) in order to obey Jesus’ command (Matt 28:18-20) and to emulate his ministry to the people (Matt 22:37-39). This “requires involvement not isolation” (Earley & Wheeler, 2010, p. 47) from parishioners in building bridges of word--the Great Commission and bridges of deed--the Great Commandment.

Archbishop Rowan Williams is believed to state, “It is not the church of God that has a mission. It is God of the mission that has a church” (as cited in Roxburgh & Borden, 2009, p. 20). In order for churches to join God’s mission and truly connect with the community, the church will need to adopt a new mindset. Swanson identifies ten shifts that will help a church to transform its community. To be effective and relevant the church must shift from:

1. Building walls to building bridges
2. Measuring attendance to measuring impact
3. Encouraging saints to attend the service to equipping for works of service
4. “Serve us” to service—from inward to outward focus
5. Duplication of ministries to partnering with existing ministries
6. Fellowship to functional unity
7. Condemning the city to blessing the city and praying for it
8. Being a minister in a congregation to being a minister in a parish
9. Anecdote and speculation to valid information
10. Teacher to learner (Swanson, n.d.)

Evangelism, as part of discipleship, is a process which takes multiple touches – “thirty links”- (Hunter, 2003, p. 35) of the human and divine chain to lead one to faith in Jesus Christ and become assimilated Christians into the body of Christ – the local church. Hunter alludes to the fact that converts call to mind being influenced by preachers, teachers, receiving loving acts from Christians, reflecting on the sunrise, the setting of the sun and unexplainable providence of God all played a part in helping them choose to be a Christian (Hunter, 2000, pp. 5-6). Hunter assents to James Engel’s scale for spiritual decision-making process (Appendix B). This scale proposes two things: a) that every person has made a decision for Christ or in need of making that decision, b) that every Christian witness can potential help an unsaved person draw closer to becoming a follower of Jesus.

The process of reaching the lost with the Gospel should, as historian Thomas Cahill argues, reach “the powerless” and “the powerful” (cited in Hunter, 2000, p. 45). This will happen when pastors and laity refuse to keep and clean their own aquarium only but embrace Jesus’ promise found in Mark 4:19 to make his followers “fishers of men” (p. 42). The mission of God happens when the triad of members, church officers and clerics rally together to live and preach the gospel (White, 1948). The life and existence of the church depends upon the church being evangelistic in nature (White, 1905).

The “goal of evangelism is to help people enter into a personal a relationship with Jesus Christ” (Speidel, 2007, p. 9). Eighty percent of church members feel that they should share their faith. Sixty-one percent do not share the gospel (Carter, 2012). The American church is inactive in evangelism. It possesses “an impotent faith that ignores

the Great Commission” (Wheeler & Whaley, 2011, p. 8) while being super expressive during worship.

God is a missionary God. God is an incarnational God revealed in the life and ministry of Christ Jesus (Gelder & Zscheile, 2011). Jesus immersed himself in the fabric of first century life in Palestine. He worshiped with those of Jewish ethnicity (Luke 4:16). He attended social events – the marriage in Cana (John 2: 1-11). Jesus also associated with the persons of less honorable reputations (Mark 2:15-17). The church should follow Jesus and build bridges and remove walls.

A missional church is involved in “making new disciples” and “loving God and others” (Carson, 2007, p. 3). Mission-minded churches are “sent” (John 21:20). It is important for the members to gather for worship, instruction and fellowship in the place of assembly. The church’s missional component “is not simply an occasional activity or program”, but it “defines the church’s core identity” (Gelder & Zscheile, 2011, p. 153). The missional church will engage all members in simple yet specific “concrete acts” (p. 149) of kindness and deliberate acts of faith sharing to the unchurched and marginalized.

### **Summary**

In order for the church in America, including the Adventist church, to grow and thrive, it will need to overcome its fear of the prevailing culture, connect with the people in relevant ways, and be mission driven. While nurturing and developing disciples within the church through prayer, teaching, preaching, the 21<sup>st</sup> century church can reverse the predominately “come and see”- attractional evangelistic approach to a both “come and see” and “go and tell” ministry model. Based on the current literature, I will seek to

utilize servant and friendship evangelism, prayer, small groups and reaping events as a part of an overall evangelism strategy.

The validity of “attraction evangelism” is such that “it’s not found in the Gospels or Epistles. Jesus, Paul the early church leaders all had a Go-To-Them mentality” (Frost & Hirsch, 2001, p. 19). I agree with Warren when he demonstrates that Jesus outlines the “come and see” as well as the “go and tell” models of evangelism and outreach in the parable of the banquet in the Luke’s Gospel (Warren, 1995, p. 235). Jesus said, “Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled” (Luke 14:23). This approach emulates Jesus’ outreach model found in the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). Such a church will be a blessing to others by understanding evangelism “in terms of worship, discipleship, prayer...fellowship and ministry” (Falwell, 2008, p. 120) and friendship. This kind of church will be a blessing to the city (Jer 29:7).

## CHAPTER 4

### DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING EVANGELISM MODEL

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this project was to, (a) examine the reasons or barriers for low grow; (b) establish outreach strategies to reach the community; (c) develop and implement an evangelism model that activates the members of Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church in a blessing approach of evangelism which would increase baptisms and attendance. In this chapter I will compare traditional public evangelism model utilized at Word of Life with the community-based model. This comparison will show that the community-based model is superior in engaging the members, retaining more new members and creating a better discipleship model.

#### **Survey of Evangelism at Word of Life**

Evangelism 1987- 2010

#### **Beginning to Grow**

The Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church of Memphis, TN, officially started in 1987 as a result of an evangelistic push initiated by Joseph Jones who was the

pastor of the Longview Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church in Memphis, TN in the mid-1980s. In December 1986, Jones encouraged all five congregations to come together and work in the Frayser community. Jones along with the other Adventist clergy trained almost 60 volunteers to go door-to-door, give Bible studies, and share their faith, as stated by M. Gregory (personal communication, February 2, 2010), in preparation for the big evangelistic tent coming to town. For about six months in 1987 these 60 volunteers from all five Adventist churches worked in the Frayser community in the northwest territory of Shelby County.

Dennis Ross the evangelist for the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist conducted an evangelistic meeting under a tent in the summer of 1987. Ross baptized 63 persons at the conclusion of the meeting. Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church organized on September 12, 1987. This burgeoning congregation met briefly in the Ed Rice Community Center on N. 2907 Watkins Street. The congregation found a permanent facility located at 1615 Roosevelt Avenue. Under the pastoral leadership of Donald Gwin (1987-1990) and Alonzo Wagner (1991-1998), the church remained there and provided ministry to the community. Dennis Ross returned in 1993 and conducted another proclamation or public evangelistic meeting in hopes of increasing the membership at Word of Life. In 1994, Wagner moved the church to its current address, 1215 Floyd Avenue. With more space, the opportunity to do more ministries was clearly on the heart of the pastoral leadership team. Word of Life continued to embrace evangelism. In 1997 SCC promoted a conference wide personal evangelism initiative. Several members from Word of Life took part in the personal evangelism training.

## **Stable Growth**

In 1998, South Central Conference (SCC) president and executive committee asked Jackson Doggette, Sr. to come out of retirement and as stated by C. Shepherd to “hold together” (personal communication, February 2, 2010) the now distressed congregation going through financial and member retention challenges. The financial challenges began after the purchase of the 1215 Floyd Avenue property in 1994. Doggette’s wisdom, personality and pastoral experience helped to stabilize the church.

While individual members from Word of Life may have continued to reach out evangelistically, it would be three years before the church would engage in a proclamation or public evangelistic meeting.

In 2000 and 2002 Walter Pearson and the Breath of Life Ministries an Adventist sponsored media evangelistic ministry targeted to the urban community, conducted citywide proclamation meetings. Word of Life received six and 15 baptisms in the respective years as per the Church Clerk’s report (personal communication, February 21, 2012). The trend of citywide evangelistic meetings hit a pause in 2003 and 2004. In 2003 Word of Life invited Evangelist Randolph Stafford who preached at the church and baptized 17 persons. In 2004 Word of Life participated in Net 2004 via satellite in the church’s sanctuary. The records are not clear regarding baptisms from this meeting, however, the Church Clerk reports (personal communication, February 21, 2012) nine baptisms for that year. Word of Life did not participate in or host any public evangelistic meetings for the remainder of Doggette’s pastoral tenure.

After 11 years of maintaining and stabilizing the ministry at Word of Life, Pastor Doggette returned to full retirement in 2009. The SCC leadership team in consultation



with Word of Life congregation assigned a pastor with outreach and evangelistic emphasis with the goal of increasing baptisms and finances. I began to serve as pastor of Word of Life on August 29, 2009.

### **Evangelism Renewal**

Upon arrival I conducted a windshield survey by driving through the neighborhoods of Frayser and notating my observations. I did this in November and December 2009. First, Frayser is a mostly African American neighborhood in the Northwest corner of Memphis. The cost of the average house in the area is almost \$74,000 (“Frayser neighborhood,” 2011). The windshield survey revealed a number of for sale and for rent signs at several residential locations. Several apartment complexes dotted the area. Further observation revealed three elementary schools, one middle school and one parochial school within a 2-mile radius from the church.

Once a growing blue-collar neighborhood in the 1950s and 1960s, Frayser lost its industrial jobs and took a downward turn in 1970s and 1980s. Frayser is now challenged with high crime, gang violence, high poverty, failing schools and transient renter populace (Buntin, 2014, para. 32). It is into this ministry environment that Word of Life which is predominantly African American congregation with 52% of its membership aged 40+ enters to proclaim and provide practical evidences of the gospel of Jesus Christ as noted by M. Sahlin (personal communication, August 9, 2011).

In the spring of 2010, the church developed a community survey (Appendix C). Volunteers from the Word of Life church conducted the survey at the Kroger grocery store located in the Northgate Shopping center on Thomas Street in the Frayser

community. The survey yielded that more than 85% of the people stated that belonging to a church is “most important.” Approximately 80% reported that the “most important” concerns were grief recovery and stress management. Monte Sahlin conducted a more detailed demographic study in 2011. Sahlin is an ordained minister in the Seventh-day Adventist Church with over twenty years in research and development at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists levels within the denomination. Sahlin’s report designated the 38127 (Frayser) and 38128 (Raleigh) zip codes as Word of Life’s ministry area for this project. Sahlin (personal communication, August 9, 2011) reports that the Adventist-to-population ratio revealed the following:

Table 1

*Adventist-to-population Ratio*

		New				
Frayser	USA	Guinea	Zambia	Jamaica	Belize	Antigua
1:822	1:305	1:25	1:22	1:14	1:10	1:8

One can conclude that there are many people in the area who need the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ (Rev 14:6) as understood by Seventh-day Adventist Christians.

Analysis of Evangelism at Word of Life 2011-2013

Numeric growth through proclamation or public evangelism has always been a hallmark of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Burrill reports that the Adventist movement got its start through public evangelism (2007). Recently, it has been reported

“Seventh-day Adventism [is] growing by 2.5% in North America, a rapid clip for this part of the world, where Southern Baptists and mainline denominations, as well as other church groups are declining” (MacDonald, 2011). While the Adventist Church’s growth in North America is at 2.5%, the Church experienced a loss of 1 in 3 Adventists in churches around the world over the last 50-year period (Oliver, 2013). From 2000-2009, the annual average number of baptisms in the Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church is 6.5, as reported by the Word of Life Church Clerk (personal communication, August 11, 2013). During the same ten-year period, the approximate church attendance at the 11 o’clock worship gathering on Saturday morning averaged 85 members of 289.

In 2011, the Southern Union of Seventh-day Adventist chose Memphis, TN along with Tampa, FL as the target cities to receive special funding for evangelistic programs over a five year period. This was done in hopes of strengthening the Adventist print in these particular metropolitan areas. Denominational leaders’ hope of church growth is fueled by Jesus’ command relating to the Great Commission and the desire to prepare people for the second coming of Jesus. This growth within the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, as stated by Mills in his dissertation, is measured by “church membership, baptisms/professions of faith, tithe, local giving, and the number of laity involved in ministry” (2009, p. 72). Dana Edmond (2009-Present) the President of the South Central Conference of Seventh-day Adventist met with the pastors of South Central Conference (SCC) to share his vision for long-term growth in the greater Memphis, TN area.

## **Developing a Community Evangelism Model**

### **Initial Development 2011**

Before the proclamation meetings of 2012 and 2013, Word of Life tried a different approach to evangelism in 2011. It is important for churches who want success to utilize more than one method of reaching those who are without Christ (Finley, 2014). Because the church has strong Bible teachers and a regular study group that met on Friday nights, we began discussing ways to expand the study group to use it as a small group evangelism outreach opportunity. Also the top three outreach programs that the community desires from the church are Bible study and prayer groups, youth activities and family oriented activities as stated by Sahlin (personal communication, August 9, 2011).

The members completed the evangelism styles questionnaire. Hybels and Mittelberg (Mittelberg et al., 2007, pp. 72-94) point to six styles of evangelism found in the Bible. The styles are identified as direct or confrontational (Acts 2), intellectual (Acts 17), testimonial (John 9), relational (Luke 5), invitational (John 4), and serving (Acts 9). These styles point to a particular manner in which an individual may share the gospel or conduct a religious conversation. This instrument seeks to help church members to identify and use their God-given personalities in sharing the gospel with others. A member does not have to be someone else in order to be a witness for Jesus (Mittelberg et al., p. 62).

In the confrontational approach the believer is direct with the unbeliever. The call to repentance and baptism is more forceful. The person using the invitational will invite

and bring people where they can hear the gospel. The intellectual style builds a case for the gospel by using reasons. A person with the testimonial style shares what God has done in that person's life. The relational style builds friendship with others and looks for opportunities to share the faith. The serving style enjoys helping others. It is important to know that everyone will have a primary style that fits them, however, they will need to be flexible enough to use the others approaches because every situation is different.

The styles questionnaire (Mittelberg et al., 2007) revealed that the top three styles the Word of Life congregation were the testimonial, relational or interpersonal and serving. With the strong Bible teachers in the congregation and the questionnaire results, we decided to use small group Bible studies as an evangelistic tool. White argues for small group activities. She states that churches ought to “preach less and educate more by holding Bible readings and by praying with families and little companies” (1885). Another writer maintains “small groups can be effective evangelistic tools when they seek to bring in non-Christians with hope and expectation that God saves sinners” (Turner, 2012). Conversely, Jones critiques the American small group movement as one that sits in a circle and consoles one another and fails to make disciples (Jones, 2011).

Notwithstanding Jones' critique, I believe that Jesus ministered in small groups (Matt 10:2-4) and the apostles did the same (Acts 2:42-47). Also this statement from Ellen White speaks directly to the potential success of an evangelistic small group:

The formation of small companies as a basis for Christian effort is a plan that has been presented before me by One who cannot err. If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members, but for unbelievers also. (White, 1946, p. 115)

We called this small group outreach the Community Bible College (CBC).

The CBC was an intentional friendship evangelism endeavor. Friendship evangelism is the art befriending “an unsaved person with the hope of one day having the opportunity to share the gospel with him or her” (Milano, n.d.). Another scholar suggests that “unstructured, informal, conversational approach to sharing faith in the context of everyday life” (Sahlin, 2010) constitutes friendship evangelism. Others oppose this method of outreach believing that it is manipulative to befriend someone just to share religion (Gibbs & Bolger, 2005). Some fear that the believer may take too long before sharing Jesus with the unsaved friend (Wax, n.d.). Understanding that evangelism is a process helps one see the advantage of friendship evangelism.

#### Initial Implementation 2011

The church formed six core groups of volunteers. The core groups consisted of the lead teachers, assistant teachers, and the host house person. There were five host houses and one site at the church. A fourth volunteer from the church was available, if needed, to help the host with refreshments. The goal was to have eight to 10 people in attendance with the majority attending from the community and not from the Adventist church. The curriculum used was the New Beginnings DVD produced by *It Is Written* television ministry in conjunction with the *Amazing Facts* study guides. The core groups received two weeks of training sessions (Appendix D). McCallum suggests a “full year-long course of in-depth theological and practical ministry training” (n.d.). Since our small group leaders had similar training a little over a year earlier and helped facilitate the Friday night Bible study, the team felt that our training would be sufficient.

The CBC would last for six weeks, meeting once a week. The original plan was for two 6-week sessions, one in the spring and the other in the fall. We ultimately did eight weeks in the fall 2011 followed by a one week reaping meeting. The five host house leaders scheduled their meetings on different days of the week. The church site maintained its Friday night schedule. All week-day sites began at 6:30 pm to give people time to arrive. The flow of the CBC meetings included prayer, an ice breaker, and 20-30 minute DVD presentation, discussion about the DVD, handout of *Amazing Facts* lesson, prayer time, and refreshments. The meetings would run 1 hour and 15 minute to no longer than 1 hour and 30 minutes. The cost to host the six sites, material, and advertising was less than \$2,500.

The CBC meetings began in September 2011. The core groups invited their family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers. I was co-leader at one location. I visited and observed three other CBC sites. The attendance varied between the sites. At the end of the CBC and reaping meeting we baptized eight people on November 5, 2011.

In addition to the Community Bible College, Word of Life wanted to be more visible in the community in 2011. The church added to the annual Good Stuff Give Away, its Christmas toy ministry, the Back to School Block Party and Basketball Extravaganza, a community fun night, and the adoption of Westside Elementary School in Frayser.

Modernity's methods of propositional preaching or traditional public evangelism are less likely to sway or convince the secular mind of today's post-modern society to accept Christianity. Norman believes, "for the most part, they are no longer influenced by traditional forms of evangelism and methods of outreach" (2008). The addition of these

outreach endeavors, such as the block party and basketball events, helps get more church members involved in outreach, meet felt needs and meet the people where they are. The ability of the church to shift from a fortress mentality and mingle with the people as “the salt of the earth” (Matt 5:13) may open opportunities to hear the story of others and share the salvation story of Jesus.

### **Word of Life Evangelism Model on Pause 2012-2013**

#### 2012 Evangelism

The year of 2012 began with Word of Life’s board prayerfully discussing ideas relative to evangelism. The discussion included small group Bible studies, health seminars, Revelation seminars, and traditional proclamation or preaching evangelism. An important part of the discussion was finances. Word of Life received an evangelism appropriation of \$25,000 from SCC in 2012. It was proposed and voted that the church conduct a three-week evangelistic meeting at the church, invite a guest evangelist and hire Bible instructors. The total cost for this meeting was \$35,000 of which the church raised the additional \$10,000.

Word of Life began preparations for the meeting in February 2012 with training sessions about door-to-door witnessing, tract distribution, giving Bible studies and being nice. Although door-to-door witnessing receives negative reports, it still works among the poor and working middle class who are more likely to be conservative than liberal (Stetzer, 2007). The church took on four Bible Instructors – one minister and three college students from Oakwood University. The evangelistic meeting lasted three weeks in July 2012. The baptism count was 41 people.



## 2013 Evangelism

In the summer of 2013, Word of Life and the Bethany Seventh-day Adventist Churches conducted a joint evangelistic campaign at the request of SCC evangelist, Alfred Miller who would be the speaker. Miller brought his team of Bible instructors. The churches were responsible for the transportation, lodging and feeding the workers who came to help the churches do soul winning. The SCC's evangelism appropriation of \$10,000 to Word of Life offset the church's contribution. Dependence upon denominational appropriations for evangelism could lead to a barrier to promoting and sustaining church growth.

Approximately forty members attended the training sessions. More than 50% of those trained committed to bringing their friends to the evangelistic meeting. The others said that they did not have any new friends to invite. Lack of new friends or the courage to make new friends and acquaintances for the gospel's sake could be a barrier to church growth.

First, the pastors chose the Hollywood Community center for the evangelistic meeting because it was an equal distance between the two churches. Second, each church received four Bible instructors from the SCC evangelistic office who worked in the neighborhood near the community center and in the area of both churches. Because most of the Word of Life members were working or unable to go door-to door, the congregation relied heavily on the conference Bible working team to go into the neighborhoods on a consistent basis.

Third, although the members supported the two-week meeting by faithfully fulfilling their duties as ushers, security and singers, the bulk of the visitors who attended

the campaign were the contacts of and brought by the hired Bible instructors. The Bible instructors spent time with the Bible students during the six-week before the meeting started. The workers assisted the students with food and transportation to the doctor's office among other felt needs. At the end of the meeting, the developing friendships helped the Bible students make the decision for baptism. Thirty-seven of the 38 people baptized at Word of Life resulted from of the friendships formed between the Bible Instructors and the recruits.

Within hours after the baptism and the "right hand of fellowship" the Bible Instructors and the evangelist left and returned to their homes. Some of the newly baptized felt that their new friend and connection to the church had left. In some sense, we dipped them and then dropped them (Finley & Finley, 2002). The unfortunate reality was that the new members did not know any of the church members except a couple of persons who worked alongside the SCC team in a limited fashion. The task of assimilating the new members into mature disciples would begin with two groups of people at arm's length away from each other. This type of disconnect between church member and new recruit can be a barrier to sustaining numerical growth produced by public evangelism.

Retaining or keeping the newly baptized folks turned out to be a difficult task. We arranged spiritual friends to visit and encourage them. The spiritual friends agreed to befriend the new members by one personal visit and one telephone call per week for three months. Four months after the conclusion of the meeting a board member asked, "What's happened to all the new members? Do we have a visitation plan to keep them from leaving? Pastor, are you visiting them?" This question, despite the spiritual friends' safe

guard that we put in place, caused deep reflection for me regarding evangelism and church growth. It also caused questions concerning the church's commitment to "reaching" and "keeping" new people gathered into the church. A lack of commitment to the discipleship of new members could be a barrier to church growth.

### **Convert or Bless**

In an analysis of the mass or public evangelism and the CBC, I found similarities and differences. The commonalities between the two methods are prayer, Bible study, invitation, friendship, decisions, and kindness. The differences would include teaching instead of preaching, venue – house instead of church, food, financial investment, and relationships. While relations do form during public evangelism meetings, the home atmosphere may make it easier for a friend to encourage a friend to decide for Jesus.

Just as our nation's culture has changed dramatically in the last 30 years, so has the way in which people come to Christ... The weekend church service is no longer the primary mechanism for salvation decisions; only one out of every ten believers who makes a decision to follow Christ does so in a church setting or service. On the other hand, personal relationships have become even more important in evangelism, with a majority of salvation decisions coming in direct response to an invitation given by a family member or friend. (Barna, 2004)

In the 2007 before coming to Memphis, TN, I had begun to think more deeply regarding the way I learned and did evangelism as a member of the Adventist church. As I examined my motives for doing evangelism in these ways, it became apparent that the underlining motive was to convert people to Adventism. The Bible reveals that the church's task is not to convert others. The church's primary call is to make disciples by lifting up Jesus the Savior of all men (John 12:32; John 3:14-16; 1 Pet 2:24; Gal 3:13)

before a world lost in sin. The church exists to bless others with the blessings of God.

White comments that God uses Christians to share the gospel in the following manner:

Through men His blessings are to be conveyed to the world. Through them His glory is to shine forth into the darkness of sin. In loving ministry they are to meet the sinful and the needy, and lead them to the cross. (White, 1911, p 330)

As one presents Jesus before the lost, it is the Holy Spirit's job to convict and convert the sinner (John 16:13) to make a change and become a Christian believer. As Christians we bless others because God has blessed us with abundant grace and mercy (Gen 12:1-3).

Research by Mark Russell suggests that one's motives towards evangelism may have an effect on the desired results. Russell's reporting on the approaches by missionary businesses persons in Thailand disclosed the four characteristics of high achieving businesses and low achieving businesses.

The four characteristics of the high performers were (1) blessing orientation, (2) openness regarding purpose and identity, (3) partnership with local churches and ministries, and (4) high cultural adaptation. This model contrasted with the low performers who had four different characteristics: (1) converting orientation, (2) covert purpose and identity, (3) independent operations, preferring not to partner with others, and (4) low cultural adaptation. (Russell, 2008, p. 247)

Russell also states that the low performing business possessed an evangelization mindset and saw the business as a tool. Their businesses did not do well and their converts were fewer compared to the other businesses that saw themselves as "blessers." The missionaries with a blessing orientation saw their businesses grow and converts exceed that of the "converter" (Russell, 2008, p. 248).

This reality caused this writer to reorder his thinking as far as evangelism is concerned. Instead of doing evangelism to convert others into believing how I believe.

The new motive is to bless them with the Gospel of Jesus Christ – the gospel in word and deed. While in agreement with the fundamental beliefs of the church, I believe that the Adventist church needs to make the distinction between preaching the gospel and doctrinal teachings in an evangelistic context. White (1915) challenges all Adventist ministers to preach “every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation...in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary” (p. 315). Preachers, pastors and evangelists are to preach Bible doctrines in light of the cross. It is the light from the cross, Jesus, which illuminates the doctrinal truth.

### ***iBlessMemphis* Model of Evangelism**

The development of a new strategy of outreach and evangelism came together over a three-year period, 2011- 2013. In 2011 I led the church to embrace the small group friendship evangelism along with more community outreach activities. While continuing the community outreach in 2012 and 2013, Word of Life chose to suspend the CBC approach and engage in the evangelistic initiatives encouraged by the denominational leaders. In doing so the church relied on the soul winning skills of the evangelistic teams in the meetings during those two years. As a result of the proclamation meetings of 2012 and 2013, baptisms and book membership rose and church attendance spiked. Word of Life’s hiring others to “do evangelism” instead of making disciples as Jesus commanded (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15) could be another barrier to growing a church.

Public or proclamation evangelism is still important in the Word of Life church. It, however, cannot stand alone. I agree with Burrill’s argument that the Adventist church tends to make public evangelism “the only evangelism that the church does” (Burrill,

2007, p. 9). Members who feel that they do not have the gift of evangelist or fear the rejection of personal evangelism need to know that Jesus promises to always be with the gospel ambassador (Matt 28:20; 2 Cor 5:20).

In November 2013 after the In His Word Seminar meeting with SCC evangelist, Word of Life church pivoted back towards the use of friendship and relational evangelism without totally excluding other modes of reaching the lost. That is to say the congregation will combine missional activities - service projects and attractional approaches – inviting others to church service and other non-threatening, church sponsored events. After some reflection I sensed weariness in the congregation regarding evangelism and assimilating new members. In view of this reality and consultation with the elders, I modified the re-launch of a new evangelism model until March 2014.

A city-wide evangelistic meeting led by Roger Hernandez from the Southern Union and supported by the area pastors caused I to move the announcement of the strategy known as *iBlessMemphis* until May 17, 2014. While waiting for that time, I continued to talk with the elders and other key leaders about the new strategy, the upcoming six-part sermon series and the corresponding seminar.

The delays caused me some discouragement. On Sabbath, May 17, 2014, I presented the logo for *iBlessMemphis* and started a new sermon series with the first message on intercessory prayer. Sabbath, May, 24, 2014 the sermon topic was befriending others. The next sermon was on loving others and the importance of showing love in evangelism. The series of sermons resumed after two weeks in Huntsville, AL. The next sermon was about servant evangelism as the topic. The final sermon in the series was on July 19, 2014. I preached about sharing one's faith. At the end of the series

I made an appeal to the church to see evangelism as the process of being a blessing to others. Many stood and came forward desiring to be a blessing to others. An additional invitation was given to attend the *iBlessMemphis* seminar which took place on August 16, 23, and 30, at 5 pm. Approximately 15 – 20 persons attended the two-hour sessions. The goal of the seminars was to help the participants to share their salvation story, be sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and love others with servant evangelism.

The *iBlessMemphis* evangelism model is grounded in the fact that God is a missionary God (Gen 3:8), that God blesses humanity to be a blessing to others (Gen 12:1-3) and that Jesus sends his disciples to prepare others for the blessings of his presence (Luke 10:1-9). The *iBless* motif communicates the following:

*I – Intercessory prayer*

*B – Befriending others*

*L – Look, Listen and Love*

*E – Enter*

*S – Serve*

*S – Share*

*iBlessMemphis* seeks to mobilize the individual church member in witnessing the gospel and sending the church out to impact the community. The *iBless* is an acrostic which stands for six pillars of this evangelistic model found in Luke 10:1-9. I preached a six-part series of sermons concerning the need for sharing the gospel, praying for others and helping the community in practical ways. I also developed and presented a seminar outlining the *iBless* motif.

First, *intercessory prayer* is so critical to anyone moved of God. When Jesus instructed the 70 disciples to go into the places that he would go, the first thing the disciples were to do upon entering a home was to speak peace to it (Luke 10:5). Speaking peace was not only a greeting it was a prayer as well. Torrey makes a case for the priority of prayer in any move of God:

The most important human factor in effective evangelism is prayer. Every great awakening in the history of the Church from the time of the Apostles until today has been the result of prayer. There have been great awakenings without much preaching, and there have been great awakenings with absolutely no organization, but there has never been a true awakening without much prayer. (2008, p. 289)

Word of Life has elevated the prayer band leader to prayer ministries coordinator who has a seat on the church board. The designation of a prayer room near the sanctuary was significant. The church also began a prayer line for members to call for special prayer. The church also started an early Morning Prayer session on Sabbath mornings before any service starts. Church board and business meetings begin with seasons of prayer.

Second, *befriending* or being a friend to others in the community is important to growing the church (Long, 2003). Having the label of a friendly church can be a good thing. It can mean that church members are friends with each other. But it does not necessary mean that the church members are making new friends in the community where the unchurched live. In Luke 10:6, Jesus encourages the seventy to befriend the people with a message of hope. Word of Life members were encouraged to make new friends with people in their normal routes and outside their comfort zone and get to know their neighbors and coworkers better. Third, Luke 10:2, 7 we find the incentive to *look*, to *listen* and to *love* others. As the disciples entered a city they were to assess the situation.



Listen to the people to determine the level of their receptivity and then love them. Some scholars suggests that the church look, listen, and love the folks in their “ministry area of no more than twenty miles” (McIntosh & Arn, 2013, p. 253) from their facility. The Westside Elementary School is about two miles from the church. The church demonstrates love by meeting the felt needs of the families that are connected to the school. Word of Life blesses the school by providing uniforms and school supplies for the students and teachers, hosting a winter game night in February, delivering Thanksgiving food baskets to several families with students that attend Westside Elementary. By taking the blessing to the people, the church is able to fulfill Jesus’ command to feed the hungry and clothe the naked (Matt 25:35-36). While this is done as a way to bless others, helping others may open opportunities to verbally share Jesus to those who may need spiritual blessings as well.

Next, Jesus, in Luke 10:5, 7-8, instructs his gospel workers to *enter* into the homes of people and eat or fellowship with them. The disciples were to find those who were receptive and develop a rapport with them. We are encouraging members to eat with their friends and neighbors and be sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit for the time to share ones faith. One member said that she has been eating with co-workers once a month and reports that God has given her opportunities to listen to them hear their concerns and feel their pain. She has also been able to share her faith and invite her co-workers to church. Jesus sets the example by associating with those who were called sinners (Matt 9:9-11; Mark 2:13-17). Some say that building relationships with others is the primary way to win people to Christ. It is clear that deepening ones relationship with

God will result in a desire to relate to and share Jesus with the unsaved (Mills, 2009, p. 42).

“An entry event is a high-visibility activity or event, sponsored by the church, designed to be of interest to both churched and unchurched in the community” (McIntosh & Arn, 2013, p. 20). The Word of Life congregation has sought to introduce entry events whereby the unchurched can visit the church. Since 2011, Word of Life has increased its generosity quotient by blessing Frayser residents with its annual Good Stuff Give Away, Back to School Block Party at the church. At these two events, the church gives gifts, health information and blood pressure checks. The church also collaborates with Westside Elementary and Westside Achievement Middle schools to conduct the Basketball Extravaganza a family fun night for the community in the fall. The church also sponsors a four-day summer camp that highlights healthy lifestyle choices for youth ages 10 to 18. At each event we seek to gather contact information for future events and follow up.

Fifth, the disciples *serve* the people by healing them (Luke 10:9a). This type of healing serves the felt needs of the community through servant evangelism. “Servant evangelism is sharing the love and message of Jesus Christ through practical acts of service and kindness” (Troy, 2004). Word of Life’s servant evangelism events in 2013 included Faith in Action (Mayor’s Clean up Initiative). The members and youth removed debris from streets, painted the parking lot of Westside Elementary School, and provided a monthly Nursing Home ministry. The church added Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program in partnership with the United Way in 2013. Sixty-nine families from

the community, according to Word of Life's VITA director, came to the church to receive this free service.

Finally, Luke 10:9b speaks to *sharing* one's faith by the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Jesus instructed the 70 disciples to tell the Gentiles that the reign of God's love and grace was in the world. The call of Christ to his church mandates that the administration of healing and the verbalization of the gospel message to the inhabitants of the earth. There is agreement that the church works to relieve social ills in the culture and reconcile humanity to God through evangelization (Bledsoe, n.d., p. 2). This understanding grips the heart of believers when the Bible is read with a "missional hermeneutic" that reveals "the identity of God, of God's action in the world and God's saving purpose for all creation" (Wright, 2006, p. 61-62). This plays out in the lives of the members of Word of Life as *iBlessMemphis* helps us to share our faith story and to be blessing to others.

### **Pastor as Equipper**

Just as the church has a mandate to share the gospel among all people groups of the world, the charge of the pastor is to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim 4:5). This charge is two-fold. First, for Paul the teaching gift administered by the Holy Spirit accompanies the gift of pasturing or shepherding (Eph 4:11). This involves maturing the believers in discipleship. Second, the pastor helps the member connect to the church by service (Eph 4:12).

Word of Life from my perspective is a loving church. Although it started from an evangelistic preaching meeting that involved reaching out to the community, the present

membership is growing more open to creative ways of outreach and evangelism. This project enlisted my leadership, patience, and teaching skills. The test of leadership came when the opposition arose to more community outreach that may or may not yield immediate visitor attendance or baptisms. After moving too quickly on change that would make the worship experience more evangelistic, I recalibrated my approach and shared again the need for evangelistic change at Word of Life. Learning to give more information and instruction for change has been a valuable lesson learned. Learning different teaching methods helped me to reach and equip the members for evangelism and personal discipleship.

In developing the *iBlessMemphis* strategy for evangelism I brought together the proclamation approach, video technology, small group Bible study, relational outreach and felt needs outreach which may help to cultivate future evangelism opportunities. The utilization of these elements helped to foster an evangelistic emphasis in the church. Developing a culture of evangelism is critical for church to grow. In 2010 a core group of 10 to 12 members of Word of Life did door- to-door evangelism. In 2012 and 2013 the persons engaged in door-to-door increased to approximately 20. An additional six to eight people participated in the other outreach events such as the block party, VITA, and summer camp as noted by C. Shephard, the Personal Ministries Secretary (personal communications, December 1, 2014). In order to develop evangelism strategies, the suggestion is that a church will need to connect with the unchurched, talk about the gospel in terms unique to your environment, give the members tools to use, provide training and cast vision concerning evangelism (Mancini, 2009).

## Summary

During 2011-2013, I observed several things that may have contributed to the need for a new evangelistic strategy at Word of Life. I believe that the *iBlessMemphis* project was a success in that baptisms increased by eight. By observation and dialogue, three of the eight new members attend on regular bases and are involved in the ministry of the church. The following concerns from the public evangelistic meetings are: the lack of members sharing their faith, members did not bring people to the meetings, members having few to no friends outside the church, retention, and attendance. The concerns from the *iBlessMemphis* include: transitioning those who attended outreach events to church attendance, providing child appropriate lessons and teachers for CBC, a service project for the CBC small group and a better follow-up system. I will address these concerns in chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 5

### OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION

#### **Introduction**

The development of a community evangelism model aimed at reaching the residents of Memphis, TN, especially those who live in Frayser, the ministry area of Word of Life, was primarily based on (a) the biblical and theological foundations for the call of the church in communicating the gospel to the world (b) an analysis of the literature on the reasons or barriers to evangelism in the American church and Adventist church, (c) a survey of the evangelism, baptisms, church attendance at Word of Life, and the establishment and design of the evangelism model and seminar, and (d) the results of the Evangelism Styles Questionnaire relative to evangelism, the results from the proclamation and small group evangelism comparison and the outreach data. The previous chapters of this project manuscript discussed the first three items. I will now discuss item number four.

The measurements of this project are four-fold. First, the evaluation will compare the evangelistic approaches of Word of Life during the 2011 with the ones conducted during the 2012-2013 period. Second, did the participants in evangelism and outreach

increase as a result of the *iBlessMemphis* program? Third, did baptism and attendance increase after the evangelism and outreach activities? Fourth, how did the Evangelism Styles Questionnaire impact the evangelism approach for Word of Life?

### **Developing an Evangelism Model at Word of Life**

While the Bible does not mention the word evangelism, the New Testament uses the Greek word *euaggelistēs* which means evangelist or bringer of good news three times in the Bible (Acts 21:8; Eph 4:11 & 2 Tim 4:5). Burrill (2007) defines evangelism as the process of planting, cultivating relationships, and gathering the souls to Jesus that transforms people into mature church members preparing to meet Jesus at His return (p. 10). Although evangelism seems to be a difficult word in many North American churches, numerical church growth does not happen without it. Snyder (as cited in McIntosh & Arn, 2013, p. 13) states, “The church that fails to evangelize is both biblically unfaithful and strategically shortsighted.”

Evangelism, when it is a priority in the church, results when at least these three things are present; (a) six out of ten leaders expressing a love for the lost and engaging in the Great Commission, (b) one in five of the regular members conveying a desire to see the lost saved (McIntosh & Arn, 2013), and (c) pastoral promotion of and personal involvement in the evangelistic process (Sahlin, 2003). Another study suggests that the pastor can promote and practice evangelism by daily sharing the gospel, staying close to the lost, maintaining a circle of unchurch friends and praying for the salvation of the lost (Wilkins, 2005). In the same way, the congregational leader needs to lead the members to embrace the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) and become “fishers of men” Mark 4:19.

A study (Wagner, 1984) indicates that because evangelism brings people into the church, evangelism becomes a counting matter. Numerical growth happens in three ways – biological, transfer, and conversion. Biological growth occurs when the children of members become members through baptism. Transfer growth happens when Christians from another group, fellowship or church joins another congregation. Conversion growth is when one congregation reaches unchurched people who become Christians and members of that church.

### Public Evangelism Years

Research (Burrill, 2007) suggests that from historical bases the Seventh-day Adventist church does a good job in the area of evangelism. In 2006 the statistical report of the world Adventist church highlighted that over 3,000 persons joined the church through baptism on a daily bases (Bediako, 2010). The annual growth rate, baptisms, at Word of Life for the 2000-2009 decade rests at slightly over six people. Although the church participated in two city-wide proclamation evangelistic events in 2000 and 2002, Breath of Life Ministries, the denomination’s evangelistic television broadcast targeting urban demographics, conducted the meetings. Baptisms resulted. It is not clear if attendance increased or not.

Adventists have a storied and productive history in the area of public evangelism. Burrill (2007) outlines this history as one that saw Adventists reach “an 18.6 percent growth rate per year” (p. 51) in the 1870s the highest in the church’s history to one that saw the church assign pastoral districts and a growth rate that “plummeted in North America” (p. 55). Adventists also used various approaches of public evangelism from



the six-month campaign, the six-week campaign, and the three-week campaign to seminars and mass media.

Evangelism is a process and it may take many forms. That is to say that there is not one form of evangelism that fits every situation. Jesus employed variety in his evangelism and outreach. In John 4 Jesus used a simple request for water to bridge a temporal conversation into a spiritual journey. In Luke 19: 1-10 Jesus saw that Zacchaeus' need of a friend and pursued to befriend him. Jesus also practiced public, proclamation or mass evangelism (Luke 6:17-19 & Matt 5 -7). Jesus even met their felt needs by feeding the hungry (Matt 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15). However, there are elements of evangelism that are common to all approaches. Prayer, opportunity and the gospel are examples of the common ground of evangelism.

Public evangelism has its place in the church's strategy to reach the unsaved with the gospel message of Jesus. Public or proclamation evangelism needs to be part of an overall strategy of sowing, cultivating and reaping the harvest.

Research (Schwarz, 2000; McIntosh, 2003) while acknowledging the church's need to do evangelism, concedes that there are barriers or reasons that may prevent churches from growing. The reasons for low, stagnant or no growth in a church can be numerous. They are primarily external or internal factors. Studies outline the top barriers or reasons for low growth in American churches as:

1. Members do not lead people to Christ. Barna (2005) states, "the typical church member will die without leading a single person to a lifesaving knowledge of and relationship with Jesus Christ" (p. 32). At Word of Life, outside of the paid Bible instructors and a couple of volunteer Bible instructors, very few persons have

led another to salvation in Christ and church membership through baptism during my tenure as pastor.

2. Members do not invite people to church. A LifeWay Research study (2008) reports, “67 percent of Americans say a personal invitation from a family member would be very or somewhat effective in getting them to visit a church. A personal invitation from a friend or neighbor would effectively reach 63 percent” (Roach, 2009, para 2). At Word of Life the members are encouraged to invite their friends, relative, acquaintances, neighbors and coworkers to church and special events. Several members, however, shared that their family and friend pool remains stagnate and they do not feel good about asking the same friends and family members to attend functions at or sponsored by Word of Life.

3. Members relied on paid workers to do the work of evangelism. When the paid evangelist and or workers leave town, the members’ lack of connection with the newly baptized is hard to overcome. During the proclamation or public evangelistic meetings in 2012 and 2013, the majority of the members at Word of Life seemed to allow the paid workers to come in, do the work and be the witness that Jesus called the church to be. Studies (McIntosh & Arn, 2013) recommend a deliberate plan to diffuse this attitude and infuse an “evangelistic consciousness” in the church by training at least 10% of members each year for several years. This would likely increase the members’ activism in sharing their faith in Jesus.

4. Members’ willingness or commitment to help assimilate and disciple the new believers were very challenging. The seemingly lack of commitment to help assimilate and disciple new persons surfaced during the public evangelism meeting of 2012 and

2013 in which Word of Life participated. Frayser, the ministry area for Word of Life, has a high poverty rate and many residents lack dependable transportation or do not have any transportation at all. There were liability concerns raised about transporting people to the evangelistic meetings and to the church for worship services. These concerns led the church to purchase car seats for infants and children, purchase a bus that belonged to the church to transport the new members who were single parents, elderly or without transportation to church. The church provided professional training on operating and driving the church's transportation vehicle.

5. A lack of a more structured follow-up system left new believers outside the family circle. Although we put follow-up program, Spiritual Friends, in place to help befriend and disciple the new members, the church seemed to lack enough commitment and zeal to embrace the new members of the Word of Life family. We lacked accountability from the older members to the new member needing a friend.

6. More leaders and members trained in evangelism and witnessing. More leaders of the church trained the greater the likelihood that they can influence their circle of friends inside the church to get involved. Having the right leaders in the right places can help the church to grow from a biblical perspective (McIntosh, 2003). Kidder (2011) reports that the training and development of new leaders is critical if churches want their book membership and attendance to increase at the same time. Word of Life will need to recruit new leaders with fresh ideas for evangelism and discipleship in order to experience healthy growth.

7. Public evangelism can produce decisions and baptisms but these things do not

always develop into regular attending and assimilated disciples. The Seventh-day Adventist church started with the excitement and urgency of the public meeting – tent evangelism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Burrill, 2007). Word of Life got its beginning from public evangelism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Times and cultural surroundings change, and methods of doing evangelism may change. The command to go, baptize and make disciples (Matt 28:18-20) has not. The goal of a decision for Christ is more than baptism and church attendance. The goal is a mature disciple of Christ (Eph 4:12-16).

Before beginning this project I observed, by physical count, that less than 10% of Word of Life attending members participated in door-to-door evangelism. The number slightly increased to 15% of those regularly attending before starting an evangelistic or public meeting. I attributed this to more members being a part of handbill distribution a couple of weeks before the meeting started. This information was different from Sahlin's report which stated that 32% of the members had spiritual conversation with coworkers almost on a daily bases and 27% did so at least once a week (personal communication, August 9, 2011). This could mean that the church needs more training in personal evangelism or that a variety of methods need to be a part of the evangelism offering at Word of Life.

#### Administering the Styles Questionnaire

Several members, after an informal church business gathering, voiced that they felt inadequate, ill equipped to give Bible studies or to do door-to-door evangelism. These sentiments are consistent with a survey reported by Jeffery Johnson and Patricia

Duckworth (2009). The relevant question that they highlighted is “Why don’t Christians share Christ?” The answers were as follows:

- 33.5 percent are afraid of being rejected, embarrassed.
- 21.7 percent are afraid of not having the answers.
- 19.2 percent rarely think about the need.
- 17.3 percent don’t know what to say.
- 8.3 percent haven’t found a way to share that fits a personal style. (p. 6)

For this reason, I sought for ways of adding more evangelistic and outreach offerings at Word of Life. In order to do so, I pursued a few basic steps. In my research I came across the Evangelism Styles Questionnaire used by Mittelberg and Hybels (Mittelberg et al., 2007). I shared the essence of the idea with my team of elders. They thought the information was helpful. I then shared the styles at a couple of our Wednesday night services. The 12 to 15 persons who come on regular bases responded favorably.

I, then, administered the evangelism styles questionnaire on two separate Sabbaths at Word of Life after the 11 o’clock worship. After completing the questionnaire the participants placed their surveys in envelopes. Two church ushers collected the questionnaires after which I received the sealed envelope with 76 questionnaires. Once we completed the gathering process, the data examination took place.

The questionnaire identifies six approaches to evangelism that a member may possess or learn how to utilize in befriending others, conducting religious conversations and sharing the gospel. This instrument helps church members to identify and use their God-given personalities in carrying out the Great Commission. Research (Mittelberg et al., 2007) identifies the biblical approaches or styles as direct or confrontational (Acts 2),

intellectual (Acts 17), testimonial (John 9), relational (Luke 5), invitational (John 4), and serving (Acts 9). The collected data helped members to confirm or discover areas of outreach and evangelism whereby they could get involved and feel more comfortable. Before sharing the types of outreach and evangelism the church chose aided by the questionnaire results, we will look at what the data revealed.

The results from the styles questionnaire helped to guide the church's pursuit of evangelistic outreach. The styles questionnaire (Mittelberg et al., 2007) discovered that the leading three styles for the congregation were the serving, testimonial, and relational. At Word of Life, the serving (32%) evangelistic style ranked number one. These individuals like to be behind the scenes but their selfless service speaks volumes. When connected with verbally sharing one's faith, it goes a long way in showing God's love to those bound by circumstances such as poverty, unemployment and the like. Persons with the testimonial style (23%) are good at communicating; storytelling and have the capacity to listen to others so as to involve them in the overall conveyance of both people's faith journey. Relational style (18%) persons exhibit good people skills. They make friends easily and tend to care more about meeting others' needs than accomplishments and current events. The remaining three styles ranked in the following manner; invitational (14%), confrontational/direct (9%) and intellectual 4%. It was a surprise to notice the low percentage of the intellectual evangelism style seeing that Word of life has several people that operate in the area of apologetics and providing Bible answers.

Table 2

*Evangelism Styles*

Source	Percent of Members
Serving	32
Testimonial	23
Relational	18
Invitational	14
Confrontational/Direct	9
Intellectual	4

Armed with this information we developed a small group outreach based on the friendship evangelism idea. The name of this approach was Community Bible College.

The goals of the Community Bible College were:

1. To increase the participants in evangelistic activities. The number participating in evangelism increased from the 10% who went door-to-door in 2010 to 21.8% participation in the Community Bible College which consisted of six small groups with up to four members of the church attending.

2. To conduct a reaping meeting. At the end of eight weeks of small group meeting where prayer, befriending, Bible study, fellowship, and eating took place, the church held a one-week reaping meeting.

3. To increase baptisms. At the end of the reaping meeting eight people joined

the Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church through baptism. Compared to the two subsequent proclamation meetings in which the baptism count was 41 in 2012 and 38 in 2013, it may seem that the church was not successful by baptizing only eight. We reached our goal of increased baptisms. Success did happen. Another important success from this small group approach was the cost. For the 79 persons baptized from the two proclamation meetings, the cost to Word of Life was \$35,000. The average cost per recruited person was \$443.04. Comparatively, the average cost per baptized person for the Community Bible College was \$312.50 (\$2,500 /8 persons).

4. To increase church attendance. The church did see an increase in attendance from the eight people baptized as a result of the Community Bible College.

Table 3

*Public Evangelism vs. Community Bible College*

Source	Member Workers	Paid Workers	Cost	Baptisms	Cost/Baptism
Community Bible College	24	0	\$2,500	8	\$312.50
Public Evangelism	6*	5	\$35,000	79	\$443.04

\* Volunteer Bible Instructors

Attendance

Researchers (Chaves, Anderson & Byassee, 2009) in the National Congregational Study (NCS) report that the average church in America counts approximately 75 people in the weekly worship service. While size maybe an important factor for many



organizations, most churches in America “remain small” (p. 3). Comparatively, in the Faith Community Today (FACT) 48% of Adventist churches in America are small with an average weekend worship attendance of 50 or less (Dudley, 2011). This information regarding the average church attendance may suggest that numerical growth is possible and or needed in these churches.

A church hopes that its participation in the evangelism process will result in an increase in membership through baptism and an influx in church attendance. For Hadaway (2011) church attendance is one of the significant barometers for church growth. Hoyt (2007) claims that church attendance can help leaders identify positive or negative trends; attendance is not the best indicator of success. Attendance is a better measurement of a church’s ability to “influence” its community (p. 22). A church with 200 members can potentially provide greater influence in a city than a church with 75 members.

The Word of Life Church Clerk reported that the average church attendance was between 85 and 95 (personal communication, 2013) from 2000-2009. During this period an accurate attendance count was not available. I requested the ushers to provide a weekly attendance count during the main worship service beginning in 2011. While the count did not happen every week, the average attendance for Word of Life in the most recent years fluctuated between 120 and 145. On special days, Family and Friends Day, the attendance rose to over 200 in 2012 and 2013.

While attendance gauges the level of outward focus of the church (Hoyt, 2007), a more precise examination needs to take place in order to distinguish between visiting Adventists and those not affiliated with the Adventist church. The Memphis metropolitan

area has 11 Seventh-day Adventist congregations – six African American, three Caucasian and two Latino. I noticed that a great number of the members in the churches are related or friends. When Church A has a special program, the members of Church A invite their friends whose membership is at Church B to attend or participate on the special program. This reality can inflate a church's guest list.

Faith Communities Today 2010 Study for the North American Division (Dudley, 2011) discovered that almost 9% of Adventist churches “rarely or never have any visitors” (p. 8). The same study reports that 25% of the congregations surveyed fail to follow-up on the visitors who come to their church. Churches that have a follow-up system and utilize it tend to grow (p. 8). Lack of visitors in Adventist churches may suggest that more members need to be involved in evangelism, outreach, and inviting the unchurched to church.

Attendance study (Rainer, 2013) suggests that the top reason for the decline in church attendance in America is that fewer members are attending. The reasons why members begin to miss church more often than normal can be among the following:

1. Member or member's family is sick
2. Member attended funeral of a relative, friend or co-worker.
3. Member visited another church in the area.
4. Member was out of town.
5. Member had to go to work.

After the baptisms from the evangelistic meetings, Word of Life hoped to see an increase in attendance. Attendance spiked for a few months after the baptism and then receded. After conducting personal interviews on pastoral visits to several new members,

I found that the reasons for their lack of church attendance were; a) no transportation, b) telephone – house or cell – disconnected, c) moved to another part of town, d) found a job and had to work on Saturday, and f) not use to going to church every week.

As I reflected on these concerns, it is obvious that the church cannot remedy the telephone and relocation issues. We can seek to do better at teaching new members about the blessings of regular Sabbath worship (Luke 4:16, Heb 10:25) and observance (Exod 20:8-11). We will also promote and encourage the membership of the importance of regular church attendance for a congregation that wants to grow and reach its community for Christ.

#### iBlessMemphis

*iBlessMemphis* (Luke 10:1-9) is the model of evangelism that seeks to help all members of the congregation to answer God's missionary call. It also encourages the corporate body of the church to be more missional by being present in and a servant to the community. The Community Bible College served as the congregational evangelistic sector for *iBlessMemphis* with the small group, friendship evangelism and reaping meeting. The full measure of the model did not materialize all at the same time during this project. This was due to the fact that Word of Life cooperated and collaborated with denominational leaders from South Central and the Southern Union Conferences of Seventh-day Adventists and my colleagues in the Memphis area to conduct proclamation evangelism events in 2012 and 2013. The church did, however, continue to carry out of the elements of *iBlessMemphis* through the Community Bible College and other outreach events.

The Frayser community is mostly African American, but it is not monolithic. The diversity within the community's dominant ethnic group requires more than one ministry approach. The members of the Word of Life church are multidimensional. The church requires variety of music in worship and diversity of ministries offered within the congregation. The *iBlessMemphis* model requires the church to connect with the Frayser residents with an array of outreach ministries. I will communicate the essential elements of the blessing model of evangelism with a corresponding outreach component in the following:

1. *Intercessory prayer.* Since 2011 the church begins the year with a Jericho March. The members gather early on the first Sabbath of the New Year and walk around the church property seven times while praying silently. Then, we enter the sanctuary, blow the trumpet, shout, and sing a song of victory. Word of Life has elevated the prayer ministry. Prayer is central. The designation of a prayer room near the sanctuary was significant. The church started an early Morning Prayer session each Sabbath morning where eight to 12 prayer warriors intercede for the members' requests and for the salvation of men, women, boys and girls. We want God to bless us so that we can bless others with God's love (Gen 12:1-3 & Luke 10:5).

2. *Befriending others.* We encourage our member to be nice and friendly to their neighbors, co-workers, and to others that they meet in their regular routine of life while praying for an opportunity to develop that relationship and share Jesus (Luke 10:6). Members receive a prayer card to share with people in their circle of influence and with the persons that the Holy Spirit impresses.

3. *Listening and loving others.* In Luke 10:2, 7 we find the incentive to look, to listen and to love others. As the disciples entered a city they were to assess the situation. Each member receives encouragement to look for the need in the lives of their neighbors and fill it. If the need is too big for them they bring it to the church's attention. Some scholars suggests that the church look, listen and love the folks in their "ministry area of no more than twenty miles" (McIntosh & Arn, 2013, p. 253) from their facility. Word of Life saw the need of students at Westside Elementary School in Frayser. Since 2011, the church provided the school with 40 school uniforms, school supplies for the students. Since 2012, Word of Life provided Thanksgiving food baskets to 15 needy families each year.

4. *Entering the world of others.* In Luke 10:5, 7, 8, we find instruction to enter into the homes of people, eat or fellowship with them and develop a rapport with them. We are encouraging members to eat with their friends and neighbors and be sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit for the time to share ones faith. Only a couple of people reported on their experience with this approach. Going forward we will need re-examine how to improve in this area. Congregationally, the church provides outreach events whereby the church enters the world of the community. Word of Life reaches out with its annual Good Stuff Give Away, Back to School Block Party at the church. A three-year average attendance at these events was 60 and 120 persons respectively. The church collaborated with Westside Elementary and Westside Achievement Middle schools to conduct the Basketball Extravaganza, a family fun night for the community at Westside Achievement Middle school's gymnasium. The average attendance over the last three years is 120 persons from the community. While the attendance for these outreach events

has been noticeable, we have not seen any appreciable increase in church attendance from the outreach. However, our presence in the community is on the rise. We will continue to work on ways to make the invitation to attend the worship service at Word of Life more appealing.

5. *Serving others.* The church brings healing by serving the felt needs (Luke 10:9a). This can happen through servant evangelism. “Servant evangelism is sharing the love and message of Jesus Christ through practical acts of service and kindness” (Troy, 2004). Word of Life’s servant evangelism events in 2013 included a monthly Nursing Home ministry, Faith in Action (Mayor’s Clean up Initiative) where the members and youth removed debris from streets, painted the parking lot of Westside Elementary School. The church added Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program in partnership the United Way in 2012. For the last two tax seasons, Word of Life’s VITA team served over 120 families. Finally, the Word of Life church sponsored the B.E. S.M.A.R.T. summer camp. The hosts for this free four-day, youth camp were former WNBA athlete, Grace Daley and Ann Burnett. Participants learned a variety of basketball training techniques, fun play activities, and nutritional education using the B.E. S.M.A.R.T. acronym. Each summer the four-day camp attendance was about 120 young people.

B.- Believe in God

E. - Eat whole foods and drink water

S.- Sunshine and Air

M.- Moderation

A.- Action (Exercise)

R. - Rest

T. - Tell others

The camp time was Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. One major challenge that we faced was the availability of church members to help with the camp and following up on the campers and their families. Meeting the campers' parents was difficult because many of the youth walked to the gymnasium or their parents work during the day and were not available during the evenings. Going forward, we will find non-threatening ways to connect with the families in the Frayser community.

Table 4

*Community Outreach*

Source	2011 Attendance	2012 Attendance	2013 Attendance	Average Member Participation
Good Stuff Giveaway	53	55	64	12
Block Party	130	110	N/A	18
BBall Extravaganza	80	125	162	16
VITA	N/A	58	69	10
BESMART Camp	95	128	138	6

6. *Sharing your faith story with others.* In Luke 10:9b Jesus instructs us to speak about the Kingdom of God. The call of Christ to his church mandates that the administration of healing and the verbalization of the gospel message connect with all ethnic and cultural groups in the earth. Whereas the church saw an increase in the number of members participating in types of outreach relative to their evangelism style, the

church was not able to track any baptisms from personal evangelism except for the 8 baptized from the Community Bible College evangelism. I conducted the *iBlessMemphis* seminar (Appendix E) to give confidence to more faith sharing.



## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Summary**

The motivation for this project resulted from my experience in evangelism within the Adventist church, especially my experience and observation at the Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church in Memphis, TN. Like most churches that I served as pastor, the members of Word of Life seemed to place more energy and resources in ministries that catered to themselves. Church members seem to give less commitment to the Great commission found in Matthew 28:18-20 which commands the church to go out and share the gospel. In addition, Jesus in Matthew 24:14 challenged the church to preach the gospel to all people.

Historically, Word of Life participated in traditional proclamation evangelism in the form of tent revival, hall or church meetings. During the period of 2000-2009 the congregation experienced a period of low growth. The church baptized approximately six people per year during this same period. I believe that the poverty, crime, low educational achievement, low family wellness can be limited when the church goes into the community to share the blessings of God's gospel in word and deed. I commenced with

this project in order to develop a community evangelistic model that would increase community presence, the baptisms and attendance at Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church.

With the help of the members of Word of Life, especially, the elders, Bible study team and the Young Adult Ministry team, I anticipated increasing the need for the church to be more involved in the community and provide outreach ministries to reach the urban citizens in the neighborhoods of Frayser. I hoped that the church's increased involvement with the community would be the beginning of a relational evangelism that would eventually encourage the community to attend the church.

The purpose of this project was to, (a) examine the reasons or barriers for low grow; (b) establish biblical and spirit of prophecy foundations for relational strategies to reach the community; (c) develop and implement an evangelism model that activates the members of Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church in a blessing approach of evangelism, increase baptism and attendance.

In chapter one of the project, I outlined, the parameters and problems associated with the evangelism posture of the Word of Life church. I also established purpose of this project, the limitations that bound the project, and identified my expectations for this project. The task of this project was to develop and implement community evangelistic model that would increase member involvement, baptisms and attendance at the Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church in Memphis, TN.

In chapter 2, I explored the some important biblical factors that enjoin God's missionary or evangelistic influence in Genesis 3 upon the church and individual Christian believer. I explored God's evangelistic posture from the perspective that, God

calls people out of darkness to his light, God calls the church to be mission-minded, God calls the church to go and make healthy disciples, and God calls upon pastors to help equip members to answer God's call on their lives in being missionaries in the world.

In chapter 3, I put forward an overview of the contributions from various literary sources on the subject of evangelism in the American church and barriers to the growth of churches in America. Some important conclusions drawn that contributed to the decrease in evangelism fervor and growth were shifts in cultural ideology, self-inflicted barriers set up by the church, lack of leadership. I also explored the elements needed to connect the church with the community in order to provide relevant outreach and evangelism.

In chapter 4, I gave analysis to the profiles of the Word of Life congregation and the Frayser community of Memphis, TN where the church is located. This analysis gave rise to the comparison of proclamation and relational evangelism approaches. This led to the development of the *iBlessMemphis* strategy of personal and corporate evangelism in the Word of Life church.

In chapter 5, I examined the Evangelism Styles Questionnaire used in light of the experience of helping members be more engaged in outreach and evangelism. I also examined the survey results from members who attended the *iBlessMemphis Seminar* developed in response to this project.

In this chapter I will address the vital findings. I will summarize the results of my study, present an outline of my conclusions, and propose recommendations for this study and implications for ministry.

## **Results and Conclusions**

The main task of this project was to explore the evangelistic history of Word of Life, to explore any barriers for low involvement in evangelism and to assess whether other approaches besides proclamation or public meetings would add to the baptism numbers and attendance, and to develop a model of outreach and evangelism at the Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church in Memphis, TN. The findings and results of this research project put forward some interesting observations.

1. I conducted object research concerning evangelism at Word of Life.
2. I developed a biblically based community outreach model for evangelism at Word of Life.
3. I implemented and evaluated this model.
4. More members became involved in outreach and evangelism from the promotion of this model.
5. Members worked in the area of their personality and giftedness.
6. More community presence and outreach resulted from the promotion of this model.
7. More community folks attended, on multiple occasions, the outreach activities held at the church.
8. More community folks attended, on multiple occasions, the outreach events held away from the church.
9. Baptisms and attendance increased from proclamation evangelism.
10. Attendance from the proclamation evangelism decreased in a short period after baptism.

11. Baptisms, while fewer from the developed model, yielded greater attendance ratio.

The students who took part in the Community Bible College small group evangelistic approach learned more about the Bible in the eight weeks of meetings than they had in “many years of going to a church” or “trying to read the Bible on their own” (Personal Communication, 2011). Church members who participated invited people from their circle of influence. They stepped out of their comfort zone and invited co-workers and neighbors. Friends invited friends. Relationships formed and developed within the context of intercessory prayer, befriending others, listen to and loving them, eating with them and sharing faith with them.

Eight people joined the church through baptism as a result of the *iBlessMemphis* model of friendship evangelism. While I appreciate the fact that people were added to the church and continue to attend, I believe that more parishioners need to be involved in the great missionary call of evangelism that God has placed upon the individual believer and the corporate body of the church (Matt 28:18-20). I also believe that the church and its members need to demonstrate more urgency and intentionality in the area of evangelism. This intentionality and urgency needs to be in the form of multiple strategies. People make spiritual and religious changes at different times along their life’s journey. The church needs to be equipped and ready to meet their felt needs with relevant and practical ministries. The church needs to demonstrate evangelism urgency because at some point the Bible teaches that time will end (Matt 24:14). Time is short (Rev 12:12). Since the doors of God’s longsuffering and mercy remain open (2 Pet 3:9), the church

should be sharing the gospel message to win the lost with attractional and missional ministries.

I believe that my research points out that the Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist church depends on the denominational initiated evangelism. The fact is that the church saw many people baptized and become members through the proclamation or public evangelism approach when paid guest evangelists and Bible Instructors did the work. However, the retention rate from the public meetings was below the retention from the evangelism employed by the *iBlessMemphis* friendship evangelism approach that utilized the small group Bible study strategy.

My research data shows that the church did increase its outreach into the community of Frayser. This increase revealed more outreach ministry activities in and for the community within the last few years than in the period 2000-2009. It also increased the number of members involved in evangelistic opportunities. While only a few attendees from these events attended the church's main worship service, many attended the events held at the church and the events held in community venues.

This research project sought to develop an evangelistic model in the Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist church which would encourage more member participation and reduce the church's dependence on the denominational hierarchy for resources and strategies that may not be appropriate or suited for its local situation. I believe that the project succeeded and the church rejoices with those who joined the church. Yet, I also believe that the church will need to be more intentional in developing ongoing strategies to reach, bless, baptize and retain those who reside in the immediate community around the church facility. I believe that Word of Life is ready to make such decisions within its

operations to make a difference that will impact the church and the community with the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ.

The *iBlessMemphis* model of evangelism proved that the time, effort and cooperation among pastoral leadership and members was worth it. The participation of the Outreach Team, fueled by the Young Adult Ministry group, provided evidence that a church can raise the bar in its community involvement, rub shoulders with the unchurched and not compromise the message of the Bible.

### **Recommendations**

This project was the culmination of years of reflection regarding the way that the local Adventist church does evangelism where the individual member is concerned. My interest in evangelism and witnessing increased as my years as a member of the church continued. Through the years, I have used several methods of evangelistic outreach which included Bible studies, tract distribution, and preaching. The model of evangelism developed and utilized in this project also used a multi-pronged approach. Overall I am somewhat satisfied with the project's results to help enlarge the church's roll and attendance. However, further reflection revealed a number of things that I would incorporate, do differently and recommend to others who desire to implement this project in the future. The things that I would incorporate:

1. I would have engaged the entire church in a more prolonged and participatory prayer action plan regarding evangelism.
2. I would have administered the Evangelism Styles Survey sooner in the process.

3. I would have taught more on where friendship or relational evangelism into the development of or process of evangelism.

4. I would find ways of incorporating more youth into the overall evangelism and outreach scheme.

5. I would have surveyed those baptized through the small group evangelism to find out what were factors led to their decision to join the church.

6. I would have survey those baptized from the proclamation evangelism to find out the reasons why they joined the church.

7. I would have offered more leadership training for those who conducted and taught in the small group Bible studies.

8. I would have been more intentional about follow up with guest who attended outreach events and worship services.

9. While I believe that proclamation evangelism such as multiple week hall or church meetings can still produce increased baptism, I would not conduct consecutive meetings that rely on hired workers who are not a part of the local church conducting the evangelism.

10. I believe *iBless* model is sustainable if elements of relationship building and truth are present. Although the *iBless* model operated at full capacity for one year at Word of Life and produced many contacts and eight baptisms one year is not sufficient. Given more time I believe that the *iBless* model will produces more noticeable results.



### Things That I Have Observed

1. Many members seemed satisfied with low baptisms and attendance below 100.
2. Frequent promotion of the need and biblical mandate to engage in the Great Commission yielded an increase in the amount of people sharing their faith or participation in outreach events.
3. The change from a maintenance culture to a culture of outreach and evangelism took prayer, patience and persistence.
4. Baptisms can happen from decisions, but real growth takes through discipleship.
5. A church needs a follow-up and assimilation plan as a part of its overall evangelism plan.

### Things That I Would Recommend:

1. I would recommend anyone attempting to do this project to have a consistent personal and corporate prayer life.
2. That the church identifies one or two competent and coachable leaders to oversee and coordinate the different areas or components of the project.
3. I would recommend that the small group Bible study group find a service project that the group could do. This would ensure that the group reach out to others and deepen the relationships within the group.
4. Make sure that the church is committed to the process of evangelism and that participants are willing to commit at least 12 months to the project.

5. Ensure the members that “being a blessing” in the evangelistic outreach may not yield immediate baptisms but it provides another element of connection and cultivating the sown seed.

### **Personal Reflections**

Working on the development and implementation of this evangelistic model in the Word of Life church has been a positive educational experience for me. The process helped in several ways. I have grown as Christian, pastor, and husband. As a Christian my understanding of the gospel commission increased. My desire to bless others with this gospel increased as well. My pastoral appreciation for the evangelism process and the elements that are need for sustained growth rose. I have a greater appreciation for the discipline and hard word that it takes to complete a doctoral degree. I am appreciative to have had the privilege of engaging in academic research.

This project caused personal reflection on my motives in doing evangelism. This project caused my focus to change from converting others to blessing them with gospel and helping them to “belong” before needing to “believe.” This approach will be helpful as I continue to serve and minister to a post-modern culture. I believe that this project will be helpful to the evangelistic activities of Word of Life. However, the true impact of this model of evangelism will only be realized in the kingdom of God.



## APPENDIX A

### Evangelism Styles Questionnaire:

#### Scoring Totals:

3 - Very much | 2 - Somewhat | 1 - Very Little | 0 - Not at all

- \_\_\_ 1. In conversations, I like to approach topics directly, without much small talk or beating around the bush.
- \_\_\_ 2. I have a hard time getting out of bookstores or libraries without getting a bunch of books that will help me better understand issues being debated in society.
- \_\_\_ 3. I often tell stories about my personal experiences in order to illustrate a point I am trying to make.
- \_\_\_ 4. I am a "people person" who places a high value on friendship.
- \_\_\_ 5. I enjoy including or adding new people to activities I am involved in.
- \_\_\_ 6. I see needs in people's lives that others often overlook.
- \_\_\_ 7. I do not shy away from putting a person on the spot when it seems necessary.
- \_\_\_ 8. I tend to be analytical.
- \_\_\_ 9. I often identify with others by using phrases like "I used to think that too" or "I once felt the way you do."
- \_\_\_ 10. Other people have commented about my ability for developing new friendships.
- \_\_\_ 11. To be honest, even if I knew the answers, I am more comfortable having someone "better qualified" explain Christianity to my friends.
- \_\_\_ 12. I find fulfillment in helping others often in behind-the-scenes ways.
- \_\_\_ 13. I do not have a problem confronting my friends with the truth even if it risks hurting the relationship.
- \_\_\_ 14. In conversations, I naturally focus on the questions that are holding up a person's spiritual progress.
- \_\_\_ 15. When I tell people of how I came to Christ, I have found that they have been interested in hearing it.
- \_\_\_ 16. I would rather delve into personal life issues than abstract theological ideas.
- \_\_\_ 17. If I knew of a high quality outreach event that my friends would enjoy, I would make a big effort to bring them.
- \_\_\_ 18. I prefer to show love through my actions more than my words.
- \_\_\_ 19. I believe that real love often means telling someone the truth, even when it hurts.
- \_\_\_ 20. I enjoy discussions and debates on difficult questions.
- \_\_\_ 21. I intentionally share my mistakes with others when it will help them relate to the solutions I have found.
- \_\_\_ 22. I prefer getting involved in discussions concerning a person's life before dealing with the details of their beliefs.
- \_\_\_ 23. I tend to watch for spiritually strategic events to bring people to (such as Christian concerts, outreach events, seeker services).
- \_\_\_ 24. When people are spiritually closed, I have found that my quiet demonstrations of Christian love sometimes make them more receptive.
- \_\_\_ 25. A motto that would fit me is: "Make a difference or a mess, but do something."
- \_\_\_ 26. I often get frustrated with people when they use weak

arguments or poor logic.

\_\_\_ 27. People seem interested in hearing stories about things that have happened in my life.

\_\_\_ 28. I enjoy long talks with friends.

\_\_\_ 29. I am always looking for a match between the needs and interests of my friends and the various events, books, etc., that they would enjoy or benefit from.

\_\_\_ 30. I feel more comfortable physically assisting a person in the name of Christ than getting involved religious discussions.

\_\_\_ 31. I sometimes get in trouble for lacking gentleness and sensitivity in the way I interact with others.

\_\_\_ 32. I like to get at the underlying reasons for opinions that people hold.

\_\_\_ 33. I am still amazed at how God brought me to faith in Him and I am motivated to tell people about it.

\_\_\_ 34. People generally consider me to be an interactive, sensitive, and caring kind of person.

\_\_\_ 35. A highlight of my week would be to take a guest with me to an appropriate church event.

\_\_\_ 36. I tend to be more practical and action-oriented than philosophical and idea-oriented.

	<b>Confrontational</b>	<b>Intellectual</b>	<b>Testimonial</b>	<b>Interpersonal</b>	<b>Invitational</b>	<b>Serving</b>	
	#1 _____	#2 _____	#3 _____	#4 _____	#5 _____	#6 _____	
	#7 _____	#8 _____	#9 _____	#10 _____	#11 _____	#12 _____	
	#13 _____		#14 _____	#15 _____	#16 _____		#17 _____
#18 _____	#19 _____	#20 _____	#21 _____	#22 _____	#23 _____	#24 _____	
	#25 _____	#26 _____	#27 _____	#28 _____	#29 _____		#30 _____
	#31 _____	#32 _____	#33 _____	#34 _____	#35 _____	#36 _____	

## **Six Styles of Evangelism**

There are many ways to share the Good News of the Gospel.  
Find the one that suits you best.

Do you have to be like Billy Graham to be an evangelist? Do you have to speak with a North Carolina accent and wave a floppy Bible about?

No one style fits everyone's personality—or every situation.

*Becoming a Contagious Christian* highlights six different evangelism styles to help you witness with confidence and power.

### **Confrontational**

Unfortunately, many stereotypes have developed from the abuses of this style. We do like to be grabbed by the collar and asked, "Are you saved?" Yet, this style is strongly evident throughout Scripture. Peter uses it in Acts 2, when he addresses the crowd after Pentecost. "What must we do to be saved?" many asked, after Peter confronts and challenges them. "Repent and be baptized," demands Peter.

### **Intellectual**

This style is logical, rational and loves to deal with questions and ideas. "What do you think?" is often the opening question. In Acts 17, Paul uses this style with the Athenians, at the center of the intellectual civilization, as he debates with these learned men of Greece.

### **Testimonial**

This style is perhaps the most familiar to us. In John 9 the blind man who was healed by Jesus refuses to argue with the authorities as to whether Jesus is a good man or bad. "All I know is this," he says. "I was blind, and now I can see." We too, have personal experiences of Jesus to share like this blind man.

### **Interpersonal /Relational**

This style is probably the easiest for us to use. Levi, in Luke 5, was a hated pariah, a tax-collector, yet he followed Jesus. His evangelism style was to throw a great bean-feast and invite his tax-collector buddies to come and meet Jesus. He used his relationships to bring others to Christ.

### **Invitational**

Many feel comfortable with this style. In John 4, the Samaritan woman

runs back to town and invites her friends o "come and see" Jesus. Who does not like to be invited to meet someone?

**Serving:**

Dorcas is described in Acts 9 as filling her days with acts of kindness and charity. Often this style melts the hearts of unbelievers because it demonstrates love over a long period of time.

No one style fits everyone' personality—or every situation. If you force everyone into one mold, you drive them away from evangelism. If you force unbelievers into one approach, you may drive them away from Christ.

## **APPENDIX B**



**The Spiritual Decision-Making Process** *(What's Gone Wrong With The Harvest, James Engle)*

GOD'S ROLE	CHRISTIAN'S ROLE		NON-CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSE
General Revelation		- 8	Awareness of Supreme Being but No Effective Knowledge of Gospel
Conviction ↓	Proclamation ↓	- 7	Initial Awareness of Gospel
		- 6	Awareness of Fundamentals of Gospel
		- 5	Grasp of Implications of Gospel
		- 4	Positive Attitude Toward Gospel
		- 3	Personal Problem Recognition
		- 2	DECISION TO ACT
	Persuasion	- 1	Repentance and Faith in God
<b>REGENERATION</b>			<b>NEW CREATURE</b>
Sanctification ↓	Follow-Up	+ 1	Post-Decision Evaluation
	Cultivation ↓	+ 2	Incorporation into Church Body
		+ 3	Conceptual and Behavioral Growth
		+ 4	Communion with God
		+ 5	Stewardship
		•	Reproduction
		•	Internally (spiritual gifts, etc.)
		•	Externally (witness, social action, etc.)

## APPENDIX C

### Frayser Community Survey

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am with the Word of Life church. We would like to provide services for people who live in our community. Would you please take a few minutes to tell me what you think is needed in the Frayser community in exchange for an opportunity to win a \$25 gift card.

Do you live in Frayser? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If no, what are your ties to Frayser? \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being most important and 1 being least important, please give me your opinion.

	Least				Most
How important are adult education services, like GED prep classes, in Frayser?	1	2	3	4	5
How about job seeking skills, like interviewing and resume writing?	1	2	3	4	5
How important do you think parenting skills classes would be to the community?	1	2	3	4	5
how to handle conflict	1	2	3	4	5
stress management	1	2	3	4	5
grief recovery	1	2	3	4	5
In your opinion, how important is the issue of violence in Frayser?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you feel that there is adequate mental health service in Frayser?	1	2	3	4	5
physical health	1	2	3	4	5
What is the best way to let people know about community service programs?					
flyers	1	2	3	4	5
posters	1	2	3	4	5
word of Mouth	1	2	3	4	5
radio	1	2	3	4	5
How important do you think it is to belong to a church?	1	2	3	4	5

May I ask your age range: are you between 18-29 \_\_\_ 30-49 \_\_\_ 50-64 \_\_\_ 65 and over \_\_\_?

Do you have children under 18 years of age in your home? \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no

Thank you for your time, your survey will be entered into the drawing. Provide your preferred method of contact in case you're a winner?

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

Gender: M \_\_\_ F \_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Race: A-A \_\_\_ White \_\_\_ Hispanic \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_

**\*Your personal information will not be shared or given to any other agency, entity or group.**

## APPENDIX D

### Word of Life Evangelism

#### Prayer & Community Bible College Training

##### **BECAUSE...**

**WORD OF LIFE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH** IS COMMITTED TO ENLARGING THE KINGDOM OF GOD BY LOVING PEOPLE, MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS, AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD AND OTHERS...

##### **WHEREAS...**

**WORD OF LIFE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH** BELIEVES AND PRACTICES THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER...

##### **WHEREAS...**

**WORD OF LIFE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH** BELIEVES THAT PRAYER CAN GO WHERE WE CANNOT GO AND THAT PRAYER CHANGES THINGS...

##### **WHEREAS...**

When we find voice and time to pray, God will find time and voice to answer. –  
(*My Life Today*, 16.)

##### **WHEREAS...**

**Memphis in general and Frayser in particular is encumbered with many soci-economic, systemic problems and relational needs...**

##### **THEREFORE...**

**WORD OF LIFE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH** will engage, connect and reach our community for Jesus by praying for and with them.

**HOPE  
SPRINGS  
ETERNAL**

## Prayer Gems from the Scriptures

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. Luke 18:1

Where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them. Matthew 18:20

These I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations. Isaiah 56:7

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. 2 Chronicles 7:14

I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and *from house to house*, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 20:20, 21



## Powerful Prayer Quotes

“God hears prayer, God heeds prayer, God answers prayer, and God delivers by prayer. These words cannot be spoken too often. Prayer breaks all bars, dissolves all chains, opens all prisons, and widens all straits by which God’s saints have been held.” *E. M. Bounds*

“Prayer is the slender nerve that moves the muscles of omnipotence.” *Charles Spurgeon*

“Prayer depends chiefly, almost entirely, on who we think we are praying to.” *Andrew Murray*

“We do not value as we should the power and efficacy of prayer....Prayer is a heaven-ordained means of success. Appeals, petitions, entreaties, between man and man, move men and act a part in controlling the affairs of nations. But prayer moves heaven.” E. G. White

“Jesus came in personal contact with men. He did not stand aloof and apart from those who needed His help. . . . We must come close to the hearts of those who need our ministry. We must open the Bible to the understanding, present the claims of God's law, read the promises to the hesitating, urge the backward, arouse the careless, and strengthen the weak.” E. G. White

## **Do's and Don'ts**

Do smile while talking on the phone

Don't play loud music or TV in the background

Do know person's name and point of contact with the WOL (i.e. Easter Program)

Don't argue or appear defensive

Don't give a Bible Study over the phone

Do believe that the Lord will bless your efforts

## **Seven for Heaven**

The idea of Seven for Heaven is to write the names of seven people (5 provided by Evangelism Refocused Telephone Prayer Team Coordinator and 2 that you provide) who you want to see saved in God's Kingdom then pray for them daily for 40 days using the BLESS Prayer. Always keep seven names on your list.

Seven for Heaven Prayer List

"Make intercession for everyone - this pleases God...who wants all people to be saved."  
1 Timothy 2:1-4

Over the next 40 days pray blessings upon seven individuals to come to the Kingdom.

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# **BELEVE IN THE POWER OF PRAYER**

## II. The BLESS Prayer

B ody - health, protection, strength

L abor - work, income, financial security

E motional - joy, peace, hope, no anxiety

S ocial - love, marriage, family, friends

S piritual - salvation, faith, grace

### III. Praying That...

That God will draw them

*"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them." John 6:44*

That their eyes be opened

*"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel." 2 Corinthians 4:4*

That they turn away from sin

*"God... commands all people everywhere to repent." Acts 17:30*

That they receive Christ

*"All who receiveth him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12*

That they live for Christ

*"Those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again." 2 Corinthians 5:1*

### IV. Prayer, Care, Share Ministry

After you have prayed, go on to care and share.

Prayer releases God's power and grace into people's lives. (James 5:16)

Caring communicates God's love and opens hearts. (1Cor. 13:8, Col. 4:5)

Sharing the gospel brings people to saving faith. (Romans 1:17)



7



## Telephone Prayer Script

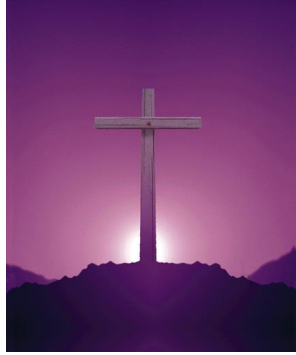
Hello, may I speak to \_\_\_\_\_. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am calling on behalf of the Word of Life Church. First, we want to thank you for visiting with us. We hope that you were blessed. We are beginning a Community Prayer Connection where we pray for and with our friends and neighbors. Ms/Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ we believe much prayer, much power. Do you have any prayer concerns, today? - Pause – Ms/Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ with your permission I would like to pray with now and call you next week to see how God is blessing. Would that be okay? – Let’s pray. (End by repeating The Blessing found in Numbers 6:24-26)

### Number 6:24-26

24 The Lord bless you and keep you;

25 The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you;

26 The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.



## **SIDEWALK SABBATH**

### **Door 2 Door Prayer Training**

I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and *from house to house*, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 20:20, 21

Of equal importance with special public efforts is house-to-house work in the homes of the people. In large cities there are certain classes that cannot be reached by public meetings. These must be searched out as the shepherd searches for his lost sheep. *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 111

Christ prefaced the giving of His message by deeds of love and benevolence. Let these workers go from house to house, helping where help is needed, and, as opportunity offers, telling the story of the cross. Christ is to be their text. They need not dwell upon doctrinal subjects; let them speak of the work and sacrifice of Christ. Let them hold up His righteousness, in their lives revealing His purity. *Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 228

Among the members of our churches there should be more house-to-house labor, in giving Bible readings and distributing literature. *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 127

### **First Visit**

Smile!

Identify yourself. Introduce your partner.

Politely acknowledge the person who answers the door. If a child answers the door, ask for parent (mother, then father).

Acknowledge others on the porch or in the yard.

Briefly express why you are in the area. Ask for prayer requests. Pray short prayer.

Leave WOL Prayer Card.

Dress causal, but neat. No blue jeans, spaghetti strap tops.

### **Subsequent Visits**

Be pleasant.

Ask – how's the family doing?

Ask – about job situation?

Inquire about how God has answered their prayer.

Be prepared to share how God has blessed you in a similar situation.

Solicit prayer concerns.

Have prayer.

Leave prayer tract or literature on salvation.

Third visit leave information on God's promises.

Fourth visit leave information on obeying God.

Be a friend, not just a prayer courier.

Tell them that you will return next week.



### Door 2 Door Prayer Survey Script

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is my friend \_\_\_\_\_ . We attend the Word of Life Church. We know that times are hard and life can be rough. We are coming to our community/neighbors to see how we can pray with you. Do you believe in prayer? Do you believe that God answers prayer? How can we pray with you today? – Pause – Ms/Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ with your permission I/we will pray with now and come back next/2 week(s) to see how God is blessing. Would that be okay? – Let's pray. (Use person's name in your prayer.)



## Community Bible College

### Leadership & Host House Training

#### **Enlarging the Kingdom of God by...building and strengthening relationships....**

Let little companies meet together to study the Scriptures. You will lose nothing by this, but will gain much. Angels of God will be in your gathering, and as you feed upon the Bread of Life, you will receive spiritual sinew and muscle. You will be feeding, as it were, upon the leaves of the tree of life. By this means only can you maintain your integrity.--TDG 11. {PaM 274.1}

We are laborers together with God. Spiritual workers are needed not only to labor in the pulpit but to do personal work among the people. Too much time is devoted to the churches in preaching. This is not attended with the best results. The work of the Lord's ambassadors is to organize companies of workers to hunt for the souls who need help. Hours are spent in preaching that might better be devoted to house-to house labor. In the spirit of Christ, with a heart all aglow with His love, seek to win the hearts of those in the families you visit. Give faithful admonitions and instruction from the Word of God. MR 12 240

Have you ever gone on a long family road trip? Do you remember the games that were played in the car? Well, we are going on a trip and we want to take several things with us. But first we need to know a few things before we begin our Community Bible College journey.

1. It's not about us. It's about Jesus and our community.
2. We are the Lord's helpers in bringing in the harvest of souls.
3. You don't have to be a "super scholar" to be successful.
4. God holds the Holy Spirit responsible for the results as long as we stay with His game plan.

#### Core Group

The core group consists of lead teacher, assistant teacher and host. These persons should pray together, choose the host house and choose a consistent meeting time

### The leader's role

1. To provide a safe atmosphere for truth's presentation and discussion.
2. To promote loving relationships with the people.
3. To provide loving assistance to those who are respond to the Holy Spirit.

### Host's role

1. Provide a warm and inviting meeting room.
2. Place the chairs so that everyone can see everyone else and the DVD presentation.
3. Provide a light and nutritious vegetarian snack for refreshments (fruit, crackers, and juice).
4. Play soft and appropriate music as people arrive and leave.
5. Minimize the amount of distractions. (TV, telephone, doorbell...).
6. Provide adequate parking.

### Invitation

1. Get excited about the Community Bible College
2. Give personal invitation.
3. Go to family, friends and co-workers. (Ask them to do you a favor.)
4. Core group needs to collectively invite 35 – 40 persons. Ten will come (*Home Cell Group Explosion*)
5. Start inviting and securing commitments **as soon as** your core group has set the time and place.

Preach less and educate more by holding Bible readings, and by praying with families and little companies.--RH Dec. 8, 1885

By personal labor reach the people where they are. Become acquainted with them. This work cannot be done by proxy. Money loaned or given cannot accomplish it. Sermons from the pulpit cannot do it. Teaching the Scriptures in **families**,--this is the work of an evangelist, and this work is to be united with preaching. If it is omitted, the preaching will be, to a great extent, a failure. Evangelism 440

## **Community Bible College**

### **Curriculum**

Host House Outline of Study

Salvation, Second Coming, Law and Grace, Sabbath, Change of the Sabbath, Healthful Living, Tithing, State of the Dead, Judgment

Reaping Meeting Outline of Study

Review Salvation – Second Coming – Righteousness by Faith, Christian Standards, True Church, Spirit of Prophecy, Christ our High Priest, Mark of the Beast, New Earth and Baptism

### **Class Outline**

Class duration – 1 hour and 15 minutes minimum to 1 hour and 30 minutes maximum

Mix and Mingle (10 minutes)

Kickoff Questions and Introduction found in leader's guide (5 minutes)

1<sup>st</sup> night introduce group covenant (copy from leader's guide pages 110-111)

DVD (20-30 minutes)

Group Closure found in leader's guide (2-3 minutes)

Closing Prayer – follow suggested prayer items after each lesson. Use the Blessing (page 27) to end each session.

How to handle talkative students

1. Lay the ground rules for group discussion at the beginning of session
2. Go around the room and encourage everyone who wants to speak
3. Ask the talker, in private to remember the rule and let others speak
4. If the problem continues, speak firmly to the talker outside of the meeting on a different day.
5. Read pages 31-34 in the leader's guide book



**APPENDIX E**



**I will bless you...and you will be a blessing.**

**Genesis 12:2 GW**

**Developing and Implementing an Evangelistic Model in the  
Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church**

**Session 1**

**Fred Batten, Jr., Facilitator**

**August 16, 2014**

## Season of Intercession

I believe that God answers prayer. Prayer has a way of changing things. Prayer is the key in the hand of faith that unlock heaven's treasure chest of blessings. Prayer is vital to the growth and maturation of the church and the individual Christian. Praying for others and their salvation is also very important. It's time for a greater growth, deeper generosity and stronger faith. Now is the time for the harvest a greater season of intercessory prayer.

The most important human factor in effective evangelism is PRAYER. Every great awakening in the history of the Church from the time of the Apostles until today has been the result of prayer. There have been great awakenings without much preaching, and there have been great awakenings with absolutely no organization, but there has never been a true awakening without much prayer. R. A. Torrey

**Intercessory prayer is prayer for others....One study Bible defines intercession as "holy, believing, persevering prayer whereby someone pleads with God on behalf of another or others who desperately need God's intervention."**

### I. Why should we pray?

Because it is \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 18:1)

Because the Bible \_\_\_\_\_ it. (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Because it is sinful to neglect it. (1 Samuel 12:23)

Because the \_\_\_\_\_ church did it. (Colossians 1:9)

Because Jesus set the example. (Hebrews 5:7)

### II. Intercessors

**An intercessor is a person who by calling or by nature chooses to be a mediator on behalf of those who cannot intervene for themselves. Intercessors make requests, urge, plead, beg, counsel, discuss, risk, sacrifice, and make war on issues relating to the weaker ones, and thus they have an impact on the final outcomes for those they serve.**<http://www.thequickenword.com/rhema/Characteristics.html>

God is looking for intercessors. Isaiah 59:16

### III. Characteristics of an intercessor

1. Walk in unselfishness
2. Walk in obedience to God (2 John 1:6 NIV)
3. Lives \_\_\_\_\_ not mean (Exodus 19:22; 28:36)
4. Walk in submission to the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ up in the Word (Psalms 119:18)
6. Jesus is our best example of an intercessor (1 Timothy 2:5; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25)

#### IV. Church is called to intercession

1. Isaiah 62:1 (insert WOL for Zion)
2. Jeremiah 29:7 - Bless the City
3. Isaiah 62:6 – Stand on the wall
4. Ezekiel 23:30 – Stand in the Gap

There are souls who have lost their courage; speak to them, pray for them. There are those who need the bread of life. Read to them from the Word of God. There is a soul sickness no balm can reach, no medicine heal. Pray for these, and bring them to Jesus Christ. And in all your work Christ will be present to make impressions upon human hearts.—([Welfare Ministry, 71.](#))

Begin to pray for souls; come near to Christ, close to His bleeding side.—([Testimonies for the Church 1:513.](#))

#### *Story of Intercession*

There is a famous case of intercession of one man for another from the Revolutionary War that is helpful. During that war there lived in Pennsylvania a pastor by the name of Peter Miller. Although Miller was greatly loved by everyone in the community, there was one man who lived near the church who hated him and had earned an unenviable reputation for his abuse of the minister. This man was not only a hater of the church, but it also turned out that he was a traitor to his country, and was convicted of treason and sentenced to death. The trial was conducted in Philadelphia, and no sooner did Miller hear of it than he set out on foot to visit General Washington and interceded for the man's life. But Washington told him, "I'm sorry that I cannot grant your request for your

friend.” “Friend!” Miller cried. “Why, that man is the worst enemy I have in the world!” “What?” the general exclaimed in surprise. “Have you walked sixty miles to save the life of an enemy? That, in my judgment, puts the matter in a different light. I will grant him a pardon for your sake.” The pardon was made out and signed by General Washington, and Miller proceeded at once on foot to a place fifteen miles distant where the execution was scheduled to take place that afternoon. He arrived just as the man was being carried to the scaffold, and when he saw Miller hurrying toward the place, remarked, “There is old Peter Miller. He has walked all the way from Ephrata to have his revenge gratified today by seeing me hung.” But scarcely had he spoken the words when Miller pushed his way through to the condemned man and handed him the pardon that saved his life. <http://packinghouserelands.org/devotional/?p=3708>

The iBLESS Prayer

B ody - health, protection, strength

L abor - work, income, financial security

E motional - joy, peace, hope, no anxiety

S ocial - love, marriage, family, friends

S piritual - salvation, faith, grace

Praying That...

That God will draw them

*"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them." John 6:44*

That their eyes be opened

*"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel." 2 Corinthians 4:4*

That they turn away from sin

*"God... commands all people everywhere to repent." Acts 17:30*

That they receive Christ

*"All who receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12*

That they live for Christ

*"Those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again." 2 Corinthians 5:1*



Where	Intercessory Prayer	Leader
In the Church	Early Morning; Worship Experience; Prayer cards; FRANC;	V. Flynn
In the Community	Prayer Walking; Prayer cards	D. Nelson
In my Cottage (home)	Prayer line; FRANC <b>641-715-3200; 936671</b>	Elders



**I will bless you...and you will be a blessing.**

**Genesis 12:2 GW**

**Developing and Implementing an Evangelistic Model in the**

**Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church**

**Session 2**

**Fred Batten, Jr., Facilitator**

**August 16, 2014**

# DISCOVER *JUST WALK ACROSS THE ROOM* SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



Week of \_\_\_\_\_ - *The Single Greatest Gift*

Before you meet:

\*Pray for your group.

\*Recommended: Individually read the Introduction and chapters one and two from *Just Walk Across the Room*.

Opening: Have one person read aloud Philippians 2:5-8 and then open the meeting with a prayer.

**Play the video opener** for session one (two minutes).

Icebreaker:

Think of a favorite area of interest, hobby, or recreational activity. Who would you like to spend a day with in order to soak up their knowledge or expertise in this area? Why?

**Play the video teaching segment** for session one (15 minutes).

Group Strides, part A:

1. What part of Brian's story impacted you the most? Why?
2. As you think back on your own journey toward God, who is the main person who "took a walk" for you? How did they reach out to you?
3. What part of that experience was most affirming or encouraging to you?
4. What does Luke 19:10 say about Jesus' mission in coming to earth?
5. Jesus was crystal clear about how he was going to invest his days while he was on earth. How might this have freed him up from the fears and insecurities we typically face regarding evangelism?
6. Regarding evangelism, have any of these ever been true for you?
  - a) I feel like I have to master a massive amount of apologetics information.
  - b) I think I have to have a different personality than God gave me.
  - c) I truly believe that evangelism is a formidable challenge I could never rise to.
7. In the video Bill stated that "the single highest value in evangelistic endeavor is to be attuned to, and cooperative with, the promptings of the Holy Spirit." How might this reality relax you as you prepare to take a few steps toward people living apart from God?

**Play the video summary** for session one (two minutes).

Group Strides, part B:

8. Who are the one or two people who have come to mind who you might walk across the room to?
9. What's one thing you might say or do this week to take the first step toward one of those people?

**Close in prayer:**

Pray for one another that God might open a door that you'll be able to walk through, and that you will sense His promptings.

1. \_\_\_\_\_



# DISCOVER JUST WALK ACROSS THE ROOM

## SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



Week of \_\_\_\_\_ - The Power of Story

Before you meet:

\*Pray for your group and your "Brians."

\*Recommended: Individually read chapters six, seven, and eight from *Just Walk Across the Room*.

**Play the video opener** (two minutes).

Icebreaker:

Think of a *brief* story regarding something that has significantly impacted your walk with Christ. What is the story, and what has been the impact on your spiritual journey? (Two people share).

**Play the video teaching segment** (15 minutes).

Group Strides, part A:

1. In this week's video you witnessed the telling of some really bad stories.

- o The **long-winded** story that went on and on.
- o The **fuzzy** story that never got to the point.
- o The **religionese** story that was full of religious jargon.
- o The **superiority** story with pious, proud language.

Which one bothered you the most and why?

2. What were a few things you noticed that the "good" stories had in common?

Your Story: Take a few minutes for you each individually to write answers to questions #3-5 below.

3. What type of person were you before you met Christ? On the lines below write several adjectives that come to mind. (If you came to Christ at a young age, describe what you were like prior to developing a more mature relationship with Christ.)

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

4. From the adjectives you listed, what is the one word that best summarizes your state before Christ?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Now describe the circumstances that caused you to submit your life to Jesus Christ. What stage of life were you in? What triggered you desire to make this decision? What was most significant about this decision?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Continued on next page...

# DISCOVER

## SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



Continued from previous...

6. Complete the sentence below, note the primary difference that Christ has made in your life. *Since inviting Christ into my life, I've become* \_\_\_\_\_

7. Tell your story! Have someone keep time as you tell your "before and after" story now. Maybe add one or two thoughts about areas where you are still growing in Christ (nobody has "arrived" and it's important to acknowledge this reality.)

**Play the video segment "God's Redemptive Story"** (seven minutes). Take notes to remember the diagrams.

Group Strides, part B:

Practice reproducing the three diagrams in the space below: *the bridge, Do vs. Done, the morality ladder.*

**Play the video summary** (one minute).

**Close in prayer:**

Prayer points: Thank God for the way He's impacted your lives, for the stories He has given you. Pray that you can use your story to impact others for eternity. Pray for boldness to share this all-important part of yourself with others.

# DISCOVER JUST WALK ACROSS THE ROOM

## SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



Week of \_\_\_\_\_ - *Grander Vision Living*

Before you meet:

\*Pray for your group.

\*Recommended: Individually read chapters nine, ten and eleven from *Just Walk Across the Room*.

**Play the video opener** (two minutes).

Icebreaker:

How can spiritual rituals like the one Bill Hybels describes re-establish a person's agenda and priorities for their day?

**Play the video teaching segment** (15 minutes).

Group Strides, part A:

1. Have you ever thought that being a Christian meant that you had to become a "lifestyle referee" to the world around you? How did it strike you when Bill said Christ-followers are under no obligation to play such a role?
2. What do you think of the "Matthew Party" concept of inviting a few Christians and several seekers to spend time together as shown in the video?
3. What fears or concerns would you have about hosting a Matthew Party?
4. Besides the "highs and lows" exercise, what other methods could be used to invite meaningful conversation at such a party?
5. In such settings, having God's supernatural power at work is crucial. What do you learn in the following verses about Holy Spirit's involvement in a believer's life? John 14:16-21, Acts 1:8, Romans 8:26-27.
7. In the video, Jim Glas talked about the trust he and Bill have developed and how that has allowed Jim to become open to spiritual dialogue. How can you build trust with people who are far from God so when they are ready they will be confident they can turn to you?

**Play the video summary** (two minutes).

Group Strides, part B:

8. If the Holy Spirit's work is crucial in the process of a friend coming to faith in Christ, then prayer for the Spirit's activity is also crucially important. When have you experienced proof of the power of prayer in your life?

**Close in Prayer:**

Thank God for that "mind-blowing thing called grace" that all Christ-followers enjoy. Ask God to prompt you toward prayer each morning, prayers for open doors of opportunity to play a role in someone's movement toward faith. Pray for opportunities to just walk across the room.



**I will bless you...and you will be a blessing.**

**Genesis 12:2 GW**

**Developing and Implementing an Evangelistic Model in the**

**Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church**

**Session 3**

**Fred Batten, Jr., Facilitator**

**August 23, 2014**

## Look, Listen and Love

Look, what do you see?

John 4:35-38



### I. Listen to People

The opposite of listening is \_\_\_\_\_, it's waiting to speak. True or False

People often \_\_\_\_\_ in or cut me \_\_\_\_\_ when I am speaking. True or False

I am a good listener. True or False

Jesus Listened to People Luke 18:35-42

1. What was the blind man's greatest need?
2. Why did he call on Jesus?
3. How did Jesus respond? Was Jesus' response covered in theological jargon, dipped in doctrinally orthodoxy or something else? Explain

4. How are we listening to the stress level in lives of people around us? Look at the Holmes-Rahe Stress Scale. What could you/church do to help?

## II. Listen to Places

Rick Warren suggests 4 ways that we can listen:

1. Geographically – your “fishing pond” or ministry area
2. Demographically – what kinds of people live in your ministry or target area  
(give attention to their age, marital status, income, education and occupation)
3. Culturally - how do they live, what do they value, what are their fears
4. Spiritually – what do they know about Jesus, the Gospel, his teachings and his Church

Monte Sahlin in his book *Mission in Metropolis: The Advent Movement in an Urban World* lists human need prevalent in large cities to include:

“...health, economic, environmental, social, emotional and spiritual.”

First meet the temporal necessities of the needy and relieve their physical wants and sufferings, and you will then find an open avenue to the heart, where you may plant the good seeds of virtue and religion. 4T 227

Group Discussion:

What are your friends, family, co-workers and neighbors saying? What do you hear them saying? Do you feel that Memphis/Frayser is receptive to God’s truth?

## III. Love them...

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Matthew 22:39

You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Matthew 5:43-44 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. John 3:16-17

Ellen White asserts that the church that experiences God will with “simplicity” present “the love of Christ to the lost”. (SD 266)



**Now, what do you see?**



**I will bless you...and you will be a blessing.**

**Genesis 12:2 GW**

**Developing and Implementing an Evangelistic Model in the  
Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church**

**Session 4**

**Fred Batten, Jr., Facilitator**

**August 23, 2014**



## Points of Entry

Luke 10:7-8

**“An Entry Event is a high-visibility activity or event, sponsored by the church, designed to be of interest to both churched and unchurched in the community.”**  
Gary McIntosh

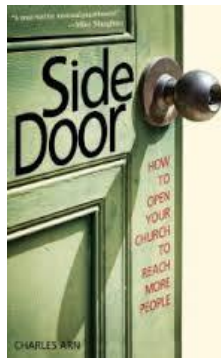
### I. Public Points of Entry

People traditionally enter your church through the weekend worship service.

Match Game (Draw a line to the correct answer)

Entry events	reason for more entry events
rarely invite people	costs can vary
“successful” Entry Events	judged by unchurched attendance
Good Stuff Giveaway	can be fun & meets a felt need
Thoughtful event	example of entry event at WOL
Side-door	1 <sup>st</sup> cousin to entry event

**“A *Side-door* is a church-sponsored program, group, or activity in which a non-member can become comfortably involved on a regular basis.”** Charles Arn



### II. Private Points of Entry

One of the best ways to enter another person’s world is to eat with them.



*“Sharing meals together on a regular basis is one of the most sacred practices we can engage in as believers. Missional hospitality is a tremendous opportunity to extend the kingdom of God. We can literally eat our way into the kingdom of God! If every Christian household regularly invited a stranger or a poor person into their home for a meal once a week, we would literally change the world by eating!”*  
*Alan Hirsch Lance Ford, Right Here Right Now*

### **Matthew 9:9-13**

#### **Discussion Time**

1. What do you think it meant to Matthew that Jesus was willing to come eat with him and his friends?
2. What are the biggest obstacles to you being able to share meals with the people you want to help find their way back to God? What are some ways you can overcome these obstacles?
  - a. I just don't have enough time.
  - b. It's uncomfortable for me.
  - c. I don't want to make them uncomfortable.
  - d. I can't cook and/or don't have the money to eat out.
  - e. I don't even know who I would invite to eat with me.
  - f. Other (please explain)
3. How do we reconcile the texts and quote below?

But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. [1 Corinthians 5:11](#)

And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? Mark 2:16

Jesus while in this world ate with publicans and sinners, and mingled with the common people, not to become low and earthly with them, but in order by precept and example to present to them right principles, to lift them up from their low habits and manners. In all this He set us an example that we should follow in His steps. Ellen White, Southern Work p.10

Matthew Party anyone?



**I will bless you...and you will be a blessing.**

**Genesis 12:2 GW**

**Developing and Implementing an Evangelistic Model in the**

**Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church**

**Session 5**

**Fred Batten, Jr., Facilitator**

**August 30, 2014**

## Serving Others

### I. Serving as Being

"Right here we must see the difference between choosing to serve and choosing to be a servant. When we chose to serve, we are still in charge. We decide whom we will serve and when we will serve. And if we are in charge, we will worry a great deal about anyone stepping on us that is, taking charge over us. But when we choose to be a servant, we give up the right to be in charge." Richard Foster

### II. Serving Biblical Foundation

Mark 10:35-42

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Luke 4:18-19

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Isa. 58:6-7

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Ephesians 4:32

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***The only  
really happy  
people are  
those who  
have learned  
to serve.  
Albert***

### III. Serving Benefits

The value of service to God is measured by the spirit in which it is rendered..." Ellen White

And the effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. This was the purpose of God in giving us a part to act in the plan of redemption. He has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow men. This is the **highest honor**, the **greatest joy** that it is possible for God to bestow upon men. SC 79

The only way to grow in grace is to be disinterestedly doing the very work which Christ has enjoined upon us--to engage, to the extent of our ability, in helping and blessing those who need the help we can give them. Strength comes by exercise; activity is the very condition of life. SC 80

#### IV. Serving as Evangelism

Servant Evangelism is sharing the love and message of Jesus Christ through practical acts of service and kindness. Servant Evangelism is a biblical, fun, simple, and intentional way to make sharing Jesus a lifestyle. John Troy

Servant Evangelism is incarnational.

Servant evangelism is missional.

Servant Evangelism helps to mobilize the people of God.

Servant Evangelism opens hearts to repentance. Romans 2:4

Servant evangelism can be fun.

Servant evangelism sows seeds of kindness.

Servant evangelism praised for presence but criticized for lack of proclamation.

Servant Evangelism can help build unity in the church.

<http://www.churchleaders.com/outreach-missions/outreach-missions-how-tos/139572-servant-evangelism.html>

*Servant evangelism wins the heart before it confronts the mind.*  
*servantevangelism.com*

**Examples** - What opportunities are in your immediate neighborhood?

**School**

After school tutoring  
 Maintenance and Repair  
 Classroom assistants  
 Teacher Appreciation Events  
 Back to School Events

**College**

Pizza Nights  
 Help students moving in our out  
 Special events for college age student  
 Escort Young Women to their dorms

**Nursing Home**

Visitation  
 Worship Services  
 Reading

**Grocery Store**

Bag groceries at a self-serv grocery store  
 Wash windshields of cars in lot  
 Help people take groceries to the care

**Gas Station**

Offer to clean the bathrooms  
 Wash windshields

**Shopping Mall**

Free Christmas Wrap  
 Offer to clean the bathroom for free

**Laundromat**

Establish a laundromat ministry

**Flea-Market**

Prayer booth

***Physical site – What physical resources to you have to work with?*****Gym**

Sports activities for local children  
 Senior Citizens Tea

**Kitchen**

Food preparation

***Skills - What are the skills of the people on your team?*****Accounting**

Income tax assistance  
 Budgeting and finance

**Computers**

Computer Literacy classes  
 Offer community classes in Help students with homework

**Mechanics**

Free car repairs for single moms  
 Free oil changes

**Handymen**

Clean rain gutter for senior citizens  
 Home repair classes

**Nurses**

Free blood pressure checks  
 Health awareness workshops  
 Health Fair

***Weather – What opportunities arise because of the weather in your area?***

Free hot drink or soup when it is cold.  
 Free bottles of cold water

**Season – Does the season of the year create any special opportunities?**

During the fall are you in an area where you can offer to rake leaves for free?

Mother's Day Outreach

Luncheon for homeless or low-income moms

Grandparent's Day you can have a special event at a local nursing home

*Idea list from Rev. Ronda Hastings*

Word of Life Servant Evangelism events: Faith in Action (Mayor's Clean up imitative);



Westside Elementary, Nursing Home, VITA...

Love All; Serve All





**I will bless you...and you will be a blessing.**

**Genesis 12:2 GW**

**Developing and Implementing an Evangelistic Model in the**

**Word of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church**

**Session 6**

**Fred Batten, Jr., Facilitator**

**August 30, 2014**

## Sharing Your Faith

We are called to make disciples (Mathew 28:18-20). Christians are commanded to share the gospel of Jesus with others collectively as a community and as individuals aided by the Holy Spirit. Servant evangelism, acts of kindness, is a part of the process of making disciples. However, sharing the gospel means at some point we must use words.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on Him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about Him? And how can they hear without a preacher? (Rom. 10:13-14, HCSB)

### 1. How do Christians share their faith?

#### 1. Public Evangelism

Thankful for great evangelists – Finney, Graham, Cleveland...

C. Peter Wagner states that mass evangelism yields between 3 to 16 % first time believers who join a local church. (2005)

Three out of four people who make professions at crusades never show up in any church. Dallas Willard

#### 2. Personal Evangelism

Identify the ways Jesus shared with others. See dialogue box

Pray for others	_____ %
_____	40 %
Interactive Conversation	_____ %
_____	27%
Bring to public meeting	_____ %
Send letters or emails	11%
Public preaching	_____ %

[www.barna.org](http://www.barna.org)

Circle 10 ways  
Jesus shared...

Our Saviour went from house to house, healing the sick, comforting the mourners, soothing the afflicted, speaking peace to the disconsolate. He took the little children in His arms and blessed them and spoke words of hope and comfort to the weary mothers. With unflinching tenderness and gentleness, He met every form of human woe and affliction. Not for Himself, but for others did He labor. He was the servant of all. It was His meat and drink to bring hope and strength to all with whom He came in contact. Gospel Workers 188

Circle ways we can  
bless others

Go to your neighbors one by one, and come close to them till their hearts are warmed by your unselfish interest and love. Sympathize with them, pray for them, watch for opportunities to do them good, and as you can, gather a few together and open the word of God to their darkened minds. Keep watching, as he who must render an account

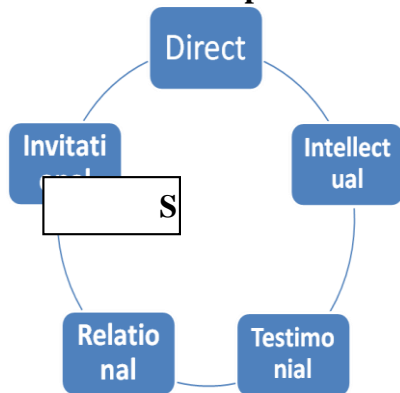


HP ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) + CP ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) + CC  
 ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) =

MI ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) *Bill Hybels' formula for witnessing*

### 3. Community Evangelism

6 Styles of Evangelism are important. God uses all gifts and sanctified personalities to make disciples.



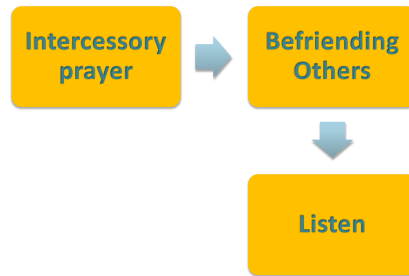
Evangelism is not a solo act. It's a choir singing "6 part" harmony. (Acts 2:42-47; Matthew 5:14)

### II. Together We Do More

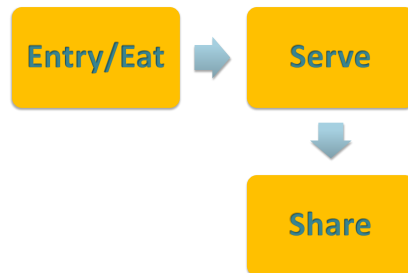
The believer, Bible teacher, evangelist, usher and pastor are on the same team. While we work in our individual roles, evangelism is not individualistic. It is a collective effort and God gives the increase. (1 Cor. 3:6-9)

Video Clips: Heaven; Bridge; Preacher

iBlessMemphis



iBlessMemphis



I, \_\_\_\_\_, will use the iBlessMemphis strategy to touch the unchurched with intercessory prayer, make friends with others, listen to the heart of the community, enter the lives of its neighbors, be the hands and feet of Jesus in service, while sharing the gospel with compassion and love.

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