



Discover God's Unique Design for Your
SPIRITUAL GIFT OF EVANGELISM

YOUR GIFT:

EVANGELISM



TEAM MINISTRY™
GIFTED TO SERVE

Discover God's Unique Design for

**YOUR GIFT:
EVANGELISM**

by Dr. Douglas Porter



HOW TO DEVELOP AND USE THE GIFT OF EVANGELISM
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CONTENTS

Foreword	5
Introduction	6
Chapter 1: What Is Evangelism?	8
Chapter 2: Identifying Your Gift of Evangelism	14
Chapter 3: Leading a Person to Christ	19
Chapter 4: Equipping Yourself for Evangelism	26
Chapter 5: Finding and Qualifying Prospects for Evangelism	34
Chapter 6: Visiting Prospects in Their Homes or in the Hospital	39
Chapter 7: Using Literature in Evangelism	45
Chapter 8: Finding Your Place on the Ministry Team	51
Appendix 1: Scripture on Evangelism	57
Appendix 2: A Two-Year Plan to Begin Thinking Like an Evangelist	62

FOREWORD

Outreach is crucial to the church. In fact, through His Great Commission (Matt. 28:19), God mandates that the church reach people for Christ, baptize them into the church, and teach them His commandments. This is the process of evangelism.

To help the church fulfill the Great Commission, God gave *every* Christian the role of witness and *some* Christians the gift of evangelism. Research shows that approximately 10 percent of church members have this gift. They are typically outgoing, comfortable in presenting the Gospel to anyone and pressing for a decision, and are driven to reach the world for Christ.

The evangelist can either be a preacher who stands before a crowd imploring them to be saved or a layperson with a stranger or friend to accept Christ in his living room or on a plane.

If you have the gift of evangelism, this book is a valuable tool that you should not be without. Written with the gifted yet inexperienced lay evangelist in mind, *Developing and Using Your Gift of Evangelism* will help you become the most effective evangelist you can be as you serve the Lord and allow Him to reach others through your gift.

Larry Gilbert, President
Church Growth Institute

INTRODUCTION

Although the word *evangelist* occurs only three times in the New Testament, each time it is found in a context overflowing with meaning.

On his way to Jerusalem, Paul stopped in Caesarea and stayed with “Phillip the evangelist” (Acts 21:8), the only individual so identified in Scripture. When he wrote to the Ephesians about spiritual gifts, he noted, “*and He Himself gave...some evangelists*” (Eph 4:11). In what was probably the apostle’s final epistle, he urged Timothy, “*do the work of an evangelist*” (2 Tim. 4:5). In these brief passing comments, we are introduced to the office, gift, and ministry of the evangelist.

Many church leaders and church-growth experts believe that while about 10 percent of the Christian population is gifted in evangelism, only about one half of one percent of church members are actively engaged in a structured ministry of evangelism in their church. If this is indeed the case, a lot of Christians in churches today are frustrated and will not find personal fulfillment and experience the joy of the Lord in its fullness until they discover, develop, and begin to use their giftedness in evangelism. If this problem is not addressed in the local church, those who could contribute most significantly to the church’s ongoing outreach and growth will instead be the one’s who fester a negative spirit within the church that could kill any limited growth currently being experienced.

This book is written for laypeople to help meet this urgent need in the evangelical church of our day. It was planned with the gifted yet inexperienced lay evangelist in mind. Therefore, **Chapter One** discusses what is involved in the ministry of evangelism so the gifted lay evangelist can fulfill his or her ministry (2 Tim. 4:5).

Chapter Two is intended to help you determine if you are gifted in evangelism, and if so, how you can express your gift in your church. The rest of the book addresses issues that are of primary importance to the lay evangelist committed to developing his or her God-given gift.

To be effective in the ministry of evangelism, you need to know how to lead others to faith in Christ as Savior. There are many effective presentations of the Gospel. **Chapter Three** explains how to present the Gospel in a clear and concise manner.

Chapter Four addresses two spiritual issues that will make you more effective in making disciples. First, you need to do the work of evangelism in the fullness of power available to you. Second, you can become more effective in this ministry through a program of Scripture memory, especially if the verses you memorize can be used to explain the Gospel to those with whom you talk.

Chapters Five through Seven deal with specific ministry skills you will want to develop to become more effective in evangelism. These include how to identify and qualify receptive-responsive prospects (**Chapter Five**), how to visit

people in their homes or in the hospital (**Chapter Six**), and how to use evangelistic literature most effectively (**Chapter Seven**).

Although God gave gifts to His church to enhance its ministry effectiveness, various gift abuses abound in many evangelical churches. **Chapter Eight** addresses this issue by helping you recognize how other gifted individuals can also be involved in the ministry of evangelism and how you can contribute to other aspects of your church's ministry as part of the ministry team.

This book was written to help you begin to develop your gift of evangelism. Obviously, there is much more you can learn about evangelism and incorporate into your ministry than could be contained in a book of this size. Therefore, **Chapter Eight** also recommends how you can get started on a lifelong continuing education program designed to help you become the most effective gifted lay evangelist you can be.

The Lord bless you as you use your gift in ministry to His glory.

Dr. Douglas Porter
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CHAPTER ONE

What Is Evangelism?

What Is Evangelism?

Evangelism is the process of reaching people who are without Christ, making them aware of their sin, presenting the Gospel to them, and leading them to accept Christ as Savior. People who have the gift of evangelism have the Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by leading people who are beyond their own natural sphere of influence to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. (“Sphere of influence” is people with whom we have existing relationships – friends, relatives, neighbors, associates.) While average Christians who do not possess the gift of evangelism find it very awkward and difficult to deal with people outside their own sphere of influence, evangelists can easily work with those outside their sphere of influence. Some evangelists may have the same awkward feeling that non-evangelists have, but because of their gift and because they are assertive, outgoing, and confrontational, they have the motivation to overcome the obstacle. Since the other Christians’ motivation lies in another gift, it is difficult for them to overcome this awkwardness or fear.

The greatest potential for world evangelism comes from people who have the gift of evangelism and understand spiritual gifts and their relationship to other gifts. These lay evangelists have the drive and burden to lead people to Christ and by *understanding* gifts, they will not destroy the ministry potential of the differently gifted people around them in the process of exercising their gift of evangelism.

The Importance of Evangelism

“In the church’s mission of sacrificial service, evangelism is primary. World evangelization requires the whole church to take the whole Gospel to the whole world. The church is at the very center of God’s cosmic purpose and is His appointed means of spreading the Gospel.”¹ These words from *The Lausanne Covenant* express the attitude of the world’s major evangelical church leaders toward the ministry of evangelism at the end of the second millennium.

As a young seminary student, I had the opportunity to hear the late Oswald J. Smith preach on evangelism. Almost two decades later, his words still echo in my memory. “The supreme task of the church is the evangelization of the world.” For Dr. Smith, that was more than a theme for a sermon or chapter in one of his many books. It was one of the fundamental commitments of his life. He evangelized and promoted evangelism in an age when much of the evangelical church was content to dabble in secondary matters. In the process, he worked to change popular attitudes toward world evangelization and became a primary influence in shaping the perspective of many of today’s evangelical leaders. Their

commitment to evangelism is largely the result of his ongoing ministry in this generation.

But not every gifted evangelist has as high profile a ministry as did Dr. Smith. Many serve God faithfully in this ministry in a much less public way. In the nineteenth century, internationally acclaimed Evangelist Dwight L. Moody compared evangelism to saving lives at sea. He compared the high-profile evangelists of his day to the lighthouses that were built in strategic places along the coast. But he also reminded his listeners of the many smaller beacon lights that were lit along the shore. These also were important as they warned ships to avoid running aground on the rocky coast. Using this illustration, Moody then urged his listeners who could never imagine themselves standing before a crowd to preach an evangelistic sermon to “keep the lower lights burning” through their involvement in personal evangelism.

Not every lay evangelist expresses their gift in the same way. Jim may have been one of the most gifted evangelists I ever met, yet he never viewed himself as anything more than a committed layman. He tended to be somewhat confrontational in his style of dealing with people. For many years, he ran an ad in the personal column of *The Toronto Star*. It simply stated, “Get ready! Christ is coming! Call Jim.” About 50 people a week called, and most concluded the conversation by praying to receive Christ as Savior.

But Jim did not just wait for people to call him. He was often seen on the streets of Toronto talking to people about Jesus. As the city became increasingly cosmopolitan, he developed a burden for the immigrants he met who could not speak English. He once told me he had learned to speak over 40 languages. Actually, the only words in his foreign language vocabulary were a common greeting and the statement, “Here is a pamphlet that will tell you about Jesus.” Armed with tracts written in various languages, he felt he could win everybody living in his city for Christ.

Recently, I heard about another gifted evangelist, Trudy, who reluctantly agreed to take over a seniors’ Bible study in a local center when her pastor’s wife was unable to lead it. Not really sure what to do, she brought along her autoharp and encouraged the seniors to sing as she played. Then, using materials originally developed for child evangelism, she explained the Gospel simply in her own informal way.

For several years now, Trudy has been leading four or five meetings a week for senior citizens in her city in much the same way as she began. She does not push people to respond immediately to the Gospel. That’s not her style. Instead, she encourages them to think about the message and talk with her if they want to discuss it further. Over the years, each Bible study group has produced an average of one conversion per month.

At first glance, Jim and Trudy appear so different it is hard to imagine they could have anything in common. But time has demonstrated that both have the gift of evangelism and have learned how to use their gift in unique ministry opportunities. If God has given you the gift of evangelism, you too can have a

personally fulfilling evangelistic ministry like Jim and Trudy. It all begins with understanding the nature of evangelism, where you fit into the process of people coming to Christ, and selecting the means by which *you* can best exercise your gift.

The Nature of Evangelism

The English word “evangelism” is a relatively new term in our evangelical vocabulary. It appeared for the first time in a book title in 1850 when Charles Adams wrote, *Evangelism in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century*. Then in 1888, Arthur T. Pierson wrote, *Evangelistic Work in Principle and Practice*. Since then, the term has been widely used in evangelical literature.

Of course, the practice of evangelism pre-dates the use of the term *evangelism* by many centuries. From its beginnings on the day of Pentecost, the church in whole or part has been faithfully engaged in evangelism. During seasons of evangelical revival when the church widely practiced evangelism, the church grew in both numbers and influence within society. During the darker ages of church history, evangelism was largely ignored by the established church, much to its loss. Still, in every age there have been evangelical groups who remained faithfully involved in evangelism.

Not everybody agrees as to what constitutes evangelism. Some people consider any Christian presence in society as an expression of evangelism. Others define evangelism in terms of the proclamation of the historic Gospel. Still others believe evangelism takes place only as people are converted. When evangelical church leaders attempted to find a consensus definition of evangelism, they came up with the following statement:

To evangelize is to spread the Good News that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord, He now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe. Our Christian presence in the world is indispensable to evangelism, and so is that kind of dialogue whose purpose is to listen sensitively in order to understand.

But evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Savior and Lord, with a view of persuading people to come to Him personally and so be reconciled to God. In issuing the Gospel invitation we have no liberty to conceal the cost of discipleship. Jesus still calls all who would follow Him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and identify themselves with His new community. The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, incorporation into His church, and responsible service in the world.²

At the heart of the Great Commission is the task of making disciples (Matt. 28:19). Therefore, evangelism is communicating the Gospel in the power of the

Holy Spirit to unconverted persons at their point of need, with the intent of effecting conversions. This involves bringing individuals to (1) repent of their sin, (2) put their trust in God through Jesus Christ, (3) accept Him as their Savior, and (4) serve Him as their Lord in the fellowship of His church.

This definition of evangelism recognizes several important aspects of the process. First, evangelism involves the communication of the Gospel. Evangelism is not accomplished apart from sharing the atoning death, subsequent burial, and victorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ and the salvation that is found in Him. Second, evangelism is most effective when done in the power of the Holy Spirit. Doing God's work apart from the power of the Holy Spirit is like using a team of horses to pull an eighteen-wheel diesel transport truck. Third, evangelism is directed toward the unconverted. Much planned evangelism is ineffective because it is directed toward the church rather than the unconverted within the church's sphere of influence. Fourth, evangelism is need-centered and speaks to people at their point of need. Those who are most effective in evangelism are most effective in applying the Gospel to the felt needs of the unconverted. Fifth, the object of evangelism is to effect conversions. People are not evangelized until they are converted. As stated above, conversion involves bringing people to (1) repent of their sin, (2) put their trust in God through Jesus Christ, (3) accept Him as their Savior, and (4) serve Him as their Lord in the fellowship of His church.

How People Come to Christ as Savior

The central objective of evangelism is the conversion of individuals to a personal faith relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Conversion occurs when individuals voluntarily experience a fundamental change in their attitude toward God as they turn from their sin in repentance to Christ in saving faith. Many Christians can vividly remember the exact context in which they made a decision for Christ. Others can remember a time prior to their conversion and know they are now converted, but have difficulty identifying an exact "hour of decision". In both cases, the conversion experience was part of a much larger conversion process.

Some Christians object to viewing conversion as a process, fearing it may lead to the conclusion (1) a person can earn salvation or (2) a person can become a Christian without being converted. Both conclusions are wrong. Salvation is a gift of God and cannot be earned (Eph. 2:8-9). Also, Jesus expressly told Nicodemus, "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

But Jesus also had a keen sense of timing in His own life and the life of those He met. He recognized that people were different and would therefore respond differently in the conversion process (John 2:24-25). That's why Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, a Jewish leader, in questions and riddles. He challenged this would-be disciple to think through all that would be involved in following Him. As a result, Nicodemus did come to faith in Christ and expressed that faith by making

a decision at a time when few others chose to be identified with Christ. He even helped Joseph of Arimathea prepare the body of Jesus for burial. In contrast, when Jesus talked with the woman at the well, He pressed for an immediate decision. When she expressed her faith in Him, she became the key to reaching her city for Christ.

As you become involved in evangelism, you will recognize that different individuals are at different stages in the process that could lead to their conversion. Some may have only a superficial awareness of God. Others may realize that the sin in their life is destroying them and they need something. A few may even understand the essence of the Gospel and be at the point of responding positively to the challenge of repenting and believing. As you become more efficient in understanding where people are in the process, you can help move them along one step at a time.³

Many Ways to Evangelize

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, one of the most successful evangelistic pastors of the nineteenth century, once said, “There is no wrong way to win persons to Christ.” That statement is as true today as it was then. Don’t be confused into believing you must use your gift of evangelism the same way someone else expresses his or her gift. The God who made you the way you are wants you to find a unique expression for the gifts He has given you.

There are many ways to evangelize. Sermons have been preached, strategies developed, and books and articles written to promote specific ways to reach people with the Gospel. Christians talk about Body Evangelism, Bus Evangelism, Campus Evangelism, Child Evangelism, Crusade Evangelism, Discipleship Evangelism, Door-to-Door Evangelism, Evangelism Explosion, Film Evangelism, Front-Door Evangelism, Lifestyle Evangelism, Literature Evangelism, Magnetic Evangelism, Mass Evangelism, Media Evangelism, Music Evangelism, Network Evangelism, *Oikos* Evangelism, Personal Evangelism, Power Evangelism, Proclamation Evangelism, Process Evangelism, Relationship Evangelism, Saturation Evangelism, Side-Door Evangelism, Superaggressive Evangelism, Team Evangelism, Televangelism, Threshold Evangelism, Visitation Evangelism, Web Evangelism, Youth Evangelism, and the list goes on.

As you look over the list in the previous paragraph, you may find one or two approaches to evangelism that excite you. You may also find some approaches that make you feel uncomfortable. If you are serious about developing your gift of evangelism, don’t focus on evangelistic strategies that make you feel uncomfortable. Leave those for others to utilize. Instead, find a way you can evangelize and do it.

While each of the listed evangelistic strategies have been used effectively by some gifted evangelists, the method which will work best for you may not be on the list. It may not even be developed yet. God may be waiting for you to develop a creative new way to reach people. As you become involved in the ministry of

evangelism, be open to new ways to effectively make disciples using your unique God-given giftedness.

FOOTNOTES

¹ *The Lausanne Covenant*, Article 6, *The Church and Evangelism*.

² *The Lausanne Covenant*, Article 4, *The Nature of Evangelism*.

³ This approach to evangelism is discussed more fully in *TEAM Evangelism*, a publication available through Church Growth Institute.

CHAPTER TWO

Identifying Your Gift of Evangelism

How can I know if I am indeed gifted in evangelism? While many Christians can effectively reach their friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors for Christ, comparatively few actually possess the spiritual gift of evangelism. Based on research and the results of thousands of Spiritual Gifts Inventories (distributed by Church Growth Institute), approximately 10 percent of the Christian population is gifted in evangelism.

How can I determine if I am one of the 10 percent? There are at least three ways to determine if you have the gift of evangelism. First, answer a *Spiritual Gifts Inventory Questionnaire* to help you determine probable areas of giftedness. Second, look at your own ministry passion (what you prefer doing) as an indicator of giftedness in that area. Third, compare yourself with a standard profile of a gifted evangelist to note important areas of similarity or difference.

Using the Spiritual Gifts Survey

Your dominant area of giftedness will impact the way you think and feel about things much as other influences such as family or educational background contribute to the person you are. *The TEAM Ministry Spiritual Gifts Inventory* (Your Gifts Spiritual Gifts Survey) has helped many people discover their spiritual gift(s) by matching certain attitudinal statements to probable areas of giftedness. Those gifted in evangelism tend to identify closely with the following statements:¹

1. I have a consuming passion for lost souls.
2. I put great importance on repentance.
3. I believe salvation is the greatest gift of all.
4. Some people think my witnessing tactics are pushy.
5. I have a desire to meet lost people, even when they are total strangers.
6. I would rather witness than do anything else.

7. I have a clear understanding of the Gospel message and can easily relate it to others.
8. I am socially active and get along well with others at all times.
9. I take great joy in seeing men and women come to Christ.
10. I believe reaching people for Christ is the greatest responsibility given to every Christian.
11. When I witness to a lost person I always press for a decision.
12. Others think I am more interested in numbers than people.

Confirming Your Test Results

While the *Team Ministry Spiritual Gifts Inventory (Your Gifts Spiritual Gifts Survey)* has proven an effective tool in helping people identify their dominant spiritual gift, be careful about coming to conclusions too quickly on the basis of a single test. In the Old Testament, a matter could not be legally confirmed without two or three witnesses in agreement. When you evaluate your response to any spiritual gifts survey, apply this Law of Two or Three Witnesses to your test results by asking the following questions:

1. *Is this conclusion consistent with what I know about this gift?* Something in your background or even the way you felt as you completed the inventory may have colored your answers slightly, resulting in a false conclusion.
2. *Do other Christians who know me see evidence of this gift in me?* If you possess this gift, it should be apparent at least in embryonic form to more mature and spiritual Christians who know you.
3. *Is the exercise of this gift effective in ministry?* When you use your spiritual gift, you will experience maximum effectiveness with minimum effort.

Gifts, Passions, and Learned Abilities

Some Christians confuse their spiritual gifts with a passion for ministry and/or learned abilities they have acquired. Normally, God also gives His people a passion to serve Him in some area in which they are uniquely gifted. As Christians begin using their gift in ministry, they find that other abilities they have acquired over the years can be used to open ministry doors or enhance the effectiveness of their gift. Therefore, the challenge of gift stewardship involves determining how to use your gifts and learned abilities in a ministry for which you have a passion. When this balance is achieved, you will realize your maximum effectiveness in ministry and greatest sense of personal fulfillment.

As you look for an opportunity to use your gift in ministry, ask yourself, “If I could serve in any ministry in my church, which would I choose?” This will help you identify your passion for ministry. If you have difficulty deciding between several options, determine what these ministries have in common that make them attractive to you. For example, the Christian who has difficulty choosing between a summer day camp ministry to children or accompanying the youth group on their winter retreat may have a passion for a camping ministry rather than children’s or youth ministry.

Once you have identified your ministry passion, begin investigating opportunities within that ministry that would enable you to use your gift(s). This will probably involve talking with others currently involved in that ministry. In some cases, you may need to do some creative thinking to help others see how your unique giftedness could contribute to the effectiveness of the ministry team. In other situations, God may give you a passion to use your gift in a ministry which is not yet established in your church. Many pastors and church leaders are waiting for people like that to begin much-needed new ministries in the church.

Having determined a role for your gift(s) in the area of your passion, the third step in gift stewardship involves using your learned abilities to enhance your ministry effectiveness. Some of our learned abilities (perhaps most of them) may not readily lend themselves to the ministry we have chosen. Others may only contribute slightly to enhancing your effectiveness. Still others may open significant doors of ministry that may have otherwise remained closed.

Practicing Gift Stewardship

God has uniquely gifted each of us for effective ministry in our church. He is the giver of the gifts, but as the recipients of His gifts we have a stewardship responsibility (1) to discover our gifts, then (2) to demonstrate those gifts in ministry, and finally (3) to develop the potential of our spiritual gifts.

A Profile of the Evangelist²

Gifted lay evangelists have the Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by leading people who are beyond their natural sphere of influence to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. They are aggressive and confrontational in nature and actively seek the lost, in an attempt to lead them to Christ.

Often, because of their strong desire to evangelize, evangelists try to impose their gift on everyone else by expecting them to perform exactly as they do. Evangelists easily find Scripture to support their view, so they end up “beating” people with their Bibles to try to change and coerce them into doing things their way. Evangelists who do not understand the relationships of the different gifts to one another truly believe their way is *the* way. In fact, many evangelism materials written in the past deal with Confrontational Evangelism

and are guilty of gift-imposing – trying to get everyone to perform as if evangelism were God’s gift to them. An understanding of spiritual gifts should eliminate this problem of gift imposing.

Characteristics of the Evangelist

- A. Outgoing and seldom meets a stranger.
- B. Well groomed and neatly dressed.
- C. Usually keeps to himself or herself in personal times.
- D. Feels fulfilled working one-on-one or with groups.
- E. Socially active, gets along well with others.
- F. More lighthearted than depressed.
- G. Expressive in speech and communication
- H. Subjective rather than objective in viewing things.
- I. Tolerant of people and their weaknesses; sympathetic to sinners.
- J. Impulsive at times, not usually self-disciplined; likely to make decisions based on emotions.
- K. Appears peaceable and agreeable.
- L. Displays enthusiasm.
- M. Is talkative and often interrupts people.
- N. Enjoys being center stage and having everybody looking at him or her.

Burdens, Desires, and Strengths of the Evangelist

- A. Has a consuming passion for lost souls.
- B. Believes salvation is the greatest gift of all.
- C. Desires to meet lost people.
- D. Would rather confront the lost with the Gospel than do anything else.
- E. Is forgiving.
- F. Has a clear understanding of the Gospel message.
- G. Usually has a burden to memorize Scripture.
- H. Has great joy in seeing men and women come to Christ.
- I. Demonstrates an air of competence.
- J. Holds the attention of the listener.
- K. Remembers people’s names and faces.
- L. Works hard to become a good listener.

Special Needs and Weaknesses of the Evangelist

- A. Thinks everybody should be an evangelist.
- B. May be satisfied to get a decision just to get one.
- C. May turn people off by pressing for a decision.
- D. Rarely admits that evangelism is a gift. Usually has another definition for evangelist.
- E. Believes strongly in Confrontational Evangelism.
- F. Tends to dominate other people.
- G. Thinks every message must be an attempt to win the lost. This usually causes him/her to be weak on teaching other areas of Scripture.

How the Evangelist Is Misunderstood by Others

- A. Others think he/she is not interested in other church programs.
- B. Others think he/she is pushy.
- C. Others think his/her aggressiveness is for his/her own benefit.
- D. Others think he/she is more interested in numbers than people.
- E.** Others think he/she judges Christians' spirituality by the number of souls they have won.

How Satan Attacks This Gift

- A. Causes pride in the number of converts.
- B. Causes failure to grow and learn.
- C. Causes him/her to see people as numbers rather than people with needs.
- D. Causes discouragement when converts are few or infrequent.
- E. Causes lack of concern for Bible passages that can't be used as "soulwinning texts."

Where to Use This Gift

- A. In visitation programs.
- B. In specific evangelistic efforts, such as fairs, revivals, etc.
- C. In an altar call or invitation to lead new converts to Christ.
- D. In church planting.
- E. In Gospel teams.
- F. In migrant ministry.
- G. In many public preaching ministries.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Attitudinal statements taken from the *Classic Spiritual Gifts Inventory (now YOUR GIFTS Spiritual Gifts Survey)* published and distributed by ChurchGrowth.org.
- ² Gift profile adapted from *TEAM Ministry: A Guide to Spiritual Gifts and Lay Involvement* by Larry Gilbert (Lynchburg, Virginia: Church Growth Institute, 1987), revised in 2015 to *YOUR GIFTS: Discover God's Unique Design for You (individuals and groups) and TEAM MINISTRY: Gifted to Serve (for pastors/church leaders)*.

CHAPTER THREE

Leading a Person to Christ

The greatest sense of personal fulfillment for a person gifted in evangelism occurs at that moment he or she hears another person pray to receive Christ as Savior and knows his or her witness was instrumental in bringing about that decision. There is just something about that feeling that transcends any words we might use in a vain attempt to describe it.

Since the moment of leading people to Christ gives the gifted evangelist his or her greatest sense of personal fulfillment, then one of the first ministry skills he or she should learn is how to lead a person to Christ. Many Christians, including those who are gifted in evangelism, have never experienced leading another person to Christ. Perhaps the most significant cause of this is that they just don't know how to lead someone to Christ. As a result, they are fearful of witnessing, tend not to be soul conscious, and are reluctant to become involved in ministry opportunities that are likely to involve them in evangelism. They fail to use their spiritual gifts because they do not know how to do so.

Many very effective plans for leading a person to Christ have been successfully used in a wide variety of circumstances. As you become more involved in this ministry in the years to come, you will want to learn how to use these different plans to reach different people. In this chapter, we will look at one presentation of the Gospel which I have used on many occasions to lead people to faith in Christ. As you study this plan, consider using it or adapting it into your personal presentation of the Gospel.

Just as a carpenter has more than one hammer in his toolbox, so the gifted evangelist will want to become proficient in using several ways to explain the Gospel. Once you have become proficient in presenting the Gospel by using the plan presented in this chapter, you may wish to study some of the other Gospel presentations listed at the conclusion of this chapter and even prepare your own presentation based on Scripture. This enables you to explain the Gospel to different people in various ways.

What is the benefit of knowing different Gospel presentations? Several years ago, I met a lady who asked how she could be "born again". She explained that her son had written her from another city telling how he had been born again and encouraging her to contact a church in her city to learn how to be born again. As I began to explain how to be saved, she interrupted, "I don't want to be saved. I just want to be born again." So I immediately changed my presentation of the Gospel to one that related to being "born again". Once the Gospel was explained to her in the context of being born again, she received Christ and was saved. This is also a lesson in being

careful of “Christian” terminology. The lost often do not understand our terms, so we must be careful to explain the Gospel in terms they will understand.

Introducing the Gospel

Usually, the opportunity to share the Gospel with another person does not come up unless you do something to introduce it into the conversation. The easiest way to introduce the Gospel into a conversation is the same way people introduce most new topics into a conversation, a question. People ask, “Did you see the game last night?” and the conversation begins to focus on the game. Or they may say, “Did you hear about Bob and Mary?” and suddenly Bob and Mary are the conversation. Or sometimes they ask, “What do you think about the President’s proposed new law?” and the conversation turns to politics.

Many questions can be asked in a nonoffensive way to encourage a conversation about spiritual things. Two questions used by many effective evangelists cause people to focus on heaven and life after death. The first is, “If you were to die tonight, do you know for certain that you would go to heaven?” When a person indicates he or she expects they would go to heaven, a second question is asked. “If you were to die, and God should ask you, ‘Why should I let you into my heaven?’ what would you say?” The answers to these questions quickly reveal if a person has received Christ as personal Savior. They also provide a basis upon which a conversation about Christ and heaven can be continued.

Many people today are not interested so much in going to heaven as they are in having a personal relationship with God. This is one reason why self-help groups are so popular. When talking with this kind of a person, you might want to ask the question, “If it were possible to have a personal relationship with God, would you be interested?”

In our multicultural cities, many people no longer identify themselves generically as Christians. Rather, they are Moslems, Hindus, Jews, or adherents of some other religious faith community. Many of these people view their religious faith as a distant part of their cultural or ethnic background rather than a deeply held conviction. Sometimes, asking a question like, “Have you ever thought about becoming a Christian?” gives them an opportunity to express their own inner hunger for a relationship with God.

Once a question has been used to stimulate interest in the Gospel, explain that the Bible addresses many subjects, but its central theme explains how a person can have a personal relationship with God (or go to heaven, or be saved, etc.). Then ask another question. “Do you have a few moments to let me share four verses from the Bible which summarize this central theme?” Unless people are in a big hurry to get somewhere, they will have time to consider four Bible verses.

The Gospel Presentation

Those who are most effective in evangelism often are in the habit of carrying a pocket New Testament with them wherever they go. Because they use this New Testament in evangelism, the key verses they use are often highlighted or marked, and their New Testament tends to fall open at those places. Also, they have memorized these verses in the translation they use so they can recite the verse as the other person reads it for himself or herself.

Have a plan and know where you are going in presenting the Gospel. When you know where you are going and how you plan to get there, you can assume control of the conversation and keep it on track. If the conversation begins to wander, quickly bring the conversation back by moving on to the next step. As you present the Gospel, emphasize the following four principles drawn from Scripture.

First, explain that all people have a problem the Bible identifies as sin. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Explain that the word translated “sin” in this verse describes the idea of “missing the mark” or “falling short of a goal or objective”. If a group of athletes attempted to run a three-minute mile, most likely all would fail. No one has ever run a three-minute mile. Some might run faster than others, but none would achieve the standard set out before them. In the same way, all of us have failed to achieve God’s standard of holy perfection. Some may be better than others, but none of us is perfect. All of us have a problem with sin. We are human beings born with a sinful nature.

Second, explain that physical and spiritual death is the consequence of sin. “For the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). The Bible always views death as a separation rather than the end of life or existence. Physical death is the separation of the body and the spirit (James 2:26). The “second death” is the eternal separation of a person from God in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:14). Both of these deaths are the result of sin (cf. Gen. 2:17). When people work at their jobs, they expect to be rewarded for their labor in accordance with the mutually agreed terms of employment. In the same way, there will be a payday someday in which all will be paid the wages due for our work at sin.

The third principle is that God offers us the free gift of eternal life with Him “wrapped up” in Jesus. “But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). The Good News of the Gospel is that Jesus has paid the price for our sins (cf. 1 Cor. 15:3-4) and now offers us the free gift of eternal life. To illustrate this principle, explain that if you want something you cannot afford and someone who has the resources buys it for you, that person can wrap the item and give it to you as a gift. If you want it, you can receive it. But to get the gift, you will also have to receive the package in which it is presented. In the same way, there is nothing we can do to secure eternal life with God except receive the free gift. But the gift comes packaged in Jesus, so we must receive the Lord Jesus Christ to get eternal life.

Fourth, explain that you can receive Jesus by faith. Jesus offered Himself to some who rejected Him (John 1:11), “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name” (John 1:12). Each of us must make an additional faith decision in response to the Gospel. When you visit a friend in his or her home and he or she offers you a chair, you would have to decide to accept or reject that offer. If you accept the offer, you would sit in the chair believing the offer was valid and the chair was capable of holding you. In the same way, when God offers us eternal life in Jesus, we can only receive it when we believe God has made a valid offer and Jesus is able to save us.

Inviting a Response

Whenever you have the opportunity to share the Gospel with another person, be certain he or she understands what you are saying as you explain it. Sometimes a person may not understand some aspect of the Gospel but is too embarrassed to ask you to explain it. It may be best for you to ask, in a non-offensive way, if the Gospel has been understood. For example, ask, “Do you have any questions about anything I have failed to explain clearly?” If not, continue presenting the Gospel in order to invite a response to Christ.

You may wish to say, “Let me show you one more verse that explains how you can respond to what I have explained.” Then turn to Revelation 3:20 and read, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” (Rev. 3:20). Explain this verse in the context of that moment to help the other person understand Jesus is making an appeal and waiting for a response. Explain, Jesus is on the outside of your life wanting to come in and help you become all God intends you to be. The only way He can come in is for you to open the door to your life and invite Him in.

When I have been involved in leading others to Christ, it has most often been in their own home. When I come to this verse, I often remind the other person how he or she responded earlier to the ring of the doorbell. He or she had the choice to ignore the ring, tell me to go away, or invite me into his or her home. Then I explain, “You have the same choice to make again now. Jesus has come to the door of your life and is knocking. He is waiting for you to invite Him into your life.”

Knowing the Gospel is important, but a person is not saved until they have personally received Christ as Savior. Therefore, you want to carefully lead the other person to make that decision for Christ. Ask, “Have you ever received Christ and asked Him to come into your life as we have discussed?” Most often the answer will be no. Sometimes you may find someone who made such a decision for Christ years before but never followed up on it. Next ask, “Can you think of any good reason why you would not like to have this personal relationship with Christ?” Once again, the answer will most often be no. If a person does have a reason, take time to discuss it. Sometimes it will be something that can be dealt with quickly, allowing the person to receive

Christ as Savior. If the person raises a problem of a more serious nature, be careful to explain the urgency in making a decision for Christ, but give the person time to work through the issue. You may wish to make an appointment to get together in a couple of days or a week later to discuss the matter again. *Never* force the person to make a “false” decision for Christ. In other words, do not press for a decision just for the sake of getting a decision. You do not want the person to say, “Yes. I am a sinner and accept Christ as Savior,” if they really do not mean it and are saying it just to get you out the door. In that case you would leave them still without Christ and worse off than before, because they have been pressured and offended, closing their doorway to receptivity a little narrower. Always make sure they understand their need for a Savior and the Gospel message and be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

When the Gospel has been presented and it is obvious the other person is ready to receive Christ as Savior, lead him or her to pray and ask Jesus into his or her life. Say something like, “Why don’t we pray together right now so that you can ask Jesus to come into your life. If you want to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, I can lead you in a prayer to help you express this desire to God.” Most non-Christians are not used to praying, so it usually best for you to lead in prayer, pausing after each line so the other person can repeat the line. I have used the following prayer to lead many others to Christ. It will work for you too!

“Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for loving me enough to die for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and save me as you promised to do. I now receive you as my Lord and Savior. Come into my life and take control. Help me to live for you. Amen.”

After leading the other person in the above prayer, ask, “Were you sincere when you prayed that prayer?” Most often the response will be yes. Then ask, “If so, did you receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior?” Again, the common response will be yes. Then ask, “Where is Jesus now?” These questions will help the other person come to realize Jesus now lives in his or her life.

Following up the Decision

You have just used four verses to lead another person to Christ. As a result, someone else has just begun a new life in Christ. Don’t be surprised if you and/or the other person feel a little emotional at this point. But you are not through yet. There are a few more things you need to share with this new Christian before you leave. You want this new Christian to have assurance of his or her salvation based upon the Bible. Say something like, “Let me share one more verse with you that explains what has just happened in your life.”

Some people feel different when they receive Jesus; others do not. How they respond emotionally to a large extent depends upon their unique personality. Feelings come and go and can be influenced by a variety of factors, but nothing can change God or His desire to have a personal

relationship with people. Our relationship with God is based upon what He did for us and our response to the Gospel. There are many verses that can be used to give another person personal assurance of salvation. According to Romans 10:9, if you believe and confess, you will be saved. According to John 5:24, if you hear and believe, you have (present tense) eternal life. According to 1 John 5:12, the way to determine if you have eternal life is to determine if you have received Jesus (the Son) or not.

Next, explain to the other person the importance of being with other Christians as they grow in their Christian life (Heb. 10:24-25). Invite them to attend the next meeting of your church as your guest. When they come, introduce them to others in your church and help them form new relationships with other Christians who have common interests. This helps bond the newcomer to the church.

Remind the person not to be embarrassed about his or her new relationship with God (Rom. 10:11). God wants every Christian to be involved in witnessing (Acts 1:8). Encourage the newcomer to begin telling others about his or her decision. This may involve responding to a public invitation in a church service, arranging to be baptized, and/or talking to his or her friends about Jesus.

Finally, remember God has just used you to help in the spiritual rebirth of another person. Assume some personal responsibility in making sure he or she gets off to a good start in the Christian life. Make yourself available to help in the coming weeks and months as he or she struggles to begin living the Christian life. Introduce this new Christian to others involved in the *TEAM Evangelism* ministry of your church so that they too can help disciple this new member of the family of God and assimilate him or her into the church family.

Other Ways to Explain the Gospel

As noted earlier in this chapter, there are many ways to present the Gospel to an unsaved person. Once you have mastered the approach outlined in this chapter, you may wish to learn others to become more effective in evangelism. Normally, it is best to concentrate on learning one Gospel presentation at a time to avoid confusion. As you begin adding to the evangelistic tools in your toolbox, consider the following widely used Gospel presentations.

The Bridge to Life

The Navigators

P. O. Box 20

Colorado Springs, Colorado 80901

The Four Spiritual Laws

Campus Crusade for Christ International

Arrowhead Springs

San Bernardino, California 92414

Four Things God Wants You to Know
American Tract Society
P. O. Box 402008
Garland, Texas 75040

God's Simple Plan of Salvation
Lifegate
P. O. Box 1771
Martinsville, Indiana 46151

Life's Greatest Discovery
The Reapers
P. O. Box 791901
Dallas, Texas 75379

Steps to Peace with God
Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
P. O. Box 779
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440

The Ancient Chinese Secret
Serve International
120 Interstate North Parkway E.
Suite 404
Atlanta, Georgia 30339-2158

CHAPTER FOUR

Equipping Yourself for Evangelism

Some Christians appear to serve God with greater effectiveness than others. This increased effectiveness cannot be explained by obvious factors such as education, personality, experience or knowledge. Rather, they appear to have a spiritual power that energizes all they do for God.

Prior to His ascension, Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they were endued or clothed with the fullness of power (Luke 24:49). He knew they needed the power of God to achieve their full potential in the ministry of evangelism. He promised, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8). The Acts of the Apostles records repeated accounts of the early church effectively reaching their world for Christ in the fullness of power.

Often zealous Christians attempt to evangelize in their own strength rather than relying on the power of God. While some limited success may be realized this way, evangelizing in the fullness of the power of God results in greater evangelistic effectiveness. While some Christians may be satisfied with limited success in evangelism, those who want to be all God intended them to be will do what is necessary to acquire the fullness of power. When Christians are endued or clothed with this power, they experience maximum results through minimal efforts in their ministry of evangelism.

What Is the Fullness of Power?

The Bible describes the power of God in the context of what that power has accomplished. First is the creative power of God that brought the world into existence (Jer. 10:12). Second, throughout the Old Testament there are references to the military power of God that enabled Israel to triumph over their enemies (cf. Exod. 15:6). Third is the resurrection power of God that raised Jesus from the dead (Phil. 3:10). Fourth is the victorious spiritual power of God that is able to defeat the Devil (Rev. 12:10).

Another way the Bible describes the power of God is through the use of different words. Five different Greek words are used in the New Testament to describe different aspects of the fullness of power. Together they portray a beautiful mosaic of God's power as it strengthens, energizes, liberates, and controls us in effective ministry.

The first of these Greek words is *dunamis* which is often translated "power" (cf. Acts 1:8; Rom. 1:16). Several English words are derived from this Greek word including dynamics, dynamo and dynamite. In each case, the English words capture something of the highly energetic nature of this power

implied by the Greek term. This word is used to describe the intrinsic power which is by nature associated with fire (cf. Heb 11:34). Also, this aspect of God's power is part of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16) and is associated with the presence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

The second Greek word describing the power of God is *energeia*. This is the original root for the English word "energy" and describes operative power in its effective expression (cf. Eph. 3:7; 4:16). It is used of the power of God with specific reference to the Resurrection of Christ (Eph. 1:19; Col. 2:12) and the call and empowering of Paul (Eph. 3:7; Col. 1:29). If *dunamis* reminds us there is power associated with God, *energeia* assures us that power may be operative in our life and ministry.

The Greek word *exousia* is also used to describe God's power. This term refers primarily to liberty to act, although it is often used of delegated or arbitrary authority. When a person receives Christ by faith, God delegates a measure of His power to that new believer in salvation. One result of this work of God is that the believer then has the liberty to identify himself or herself as a member of God's family (John 1:12).

The Greek word *ischus* meaning strength, often in the sense of physical power, also describes power. At the heart of Israel's commitment to God was the responsibility to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy *strength*" (Mark 12:30; cf. Deut. 6:5). God has given each of us a measure of physical strength by which we can serve Him, but He also promises to replace our weakness with His *dunamis* (2 Cor. 12:9-10).

The fifth Greek word describing the power of God is *kratos* which refers to the manifestation of supreme or sovereign power. This word is derived from the root *kra* meaning to perfect or complete. Implied in this word is the idea of governing authority. In this sense, it has come over into such English words as theocracy (government by God) and democracy (government by the people). A related Greek word *enkrateia* implies the idea of governing one's self and is translated "self-control" on the three occasions in which it appears in Scripture (cf. Acts 24:25; Gal. 5:23; 2 Peter 1:6).

Kratos is often translated "dominion" in various doxologies in the New Testament (cf. 1 Peter 4:11; 5:11; Jude 25; Rev. 1:6). This governing power of God is celebrated in heaven (Rev. 5:13), directed toward those who believe (Eph. 1:19), and serves as the context in which Christians are to be strong in the midst of spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10).

Only as these various expressions are blended together do we discover all that is implied in the fullness of power. God wants us to serve Him in our own strength (*ischus*) in those areas in which He has given us delegated authority (*exousia*), but He also wants to supplement that with His intrinsic power (*dunamis*) which can energize us to do what we could not otherwise do (*energeia*) as He manifests Himself in and through us (*kratos*).

Appropriating the Power of God Personally

Each of us lives daily with some power at our disposal. We flip a switch on the wall and electric power is released to light our home. We turn the ignition key and have instant access to enough power to drive our automobile. In the home, school or office, we are subject to the powers that are and may have some power of our own through our office or influence in a particular setting.

When the Bible describes power, two principles are emphasized. First, all “power belongs to God” (Ps. 62:11; cf. Rom. 13:1). Second, “The God of Israel is He who gives strength and power to His people” (Ps. 68:35). There are several ways we can appropriate that power which God is so eager to give us.

God gave a measure of His power to us when he saved us. This is emphasized repeatedly in the Scriptures. We are redeemed by power (Neh. 1:10) and have the power to call ourselves the children of God (John 1:12). Paul reminded the Ephesians they were granted spiritual gifts by God’s power (Eph. 3:7) and claimed that the power of God worked in them (Eph. 3:20). As Christians, we also have access to the power of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 5:4) and the spirit of power which God has given us (2 Tim. 1:7).

The means by which we have access to this incredible power of God relates to the uniting of the believer with God which happens at conversion. Paul used two expressions to describe the union of the believer with God. First, he repeatedly spoke of the believer as being “in Christ.” As Christ is also described by the apostle as the power of God (1 Cor. 1:24), one of the implications of our being in Christ is that we find ourselves in the midst of the power of God.

Paul also emphasized the believer’s identification with Christ experientially through a number of togetherness statements. We are crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20), made alive with Christ (Eph. 2:5), and risen with Christ (Col. 3:1). There are at least fifteen of these statements in Paul’s epistles, each relating to different aspects of the believer’s identification with Christ. One of the implications of these togetherness statements is our access to the same power that raised Christ from the dead. “For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you” (2 Cor. 13:4). Paul learned to recognize his personal weakness as an opportunity for God to manifest His power (2 Cor. 12:9).

Although we have access to the power of God through our relationship with Christ, we can and should also pray for the power of God. When Paul prayed for the Thessalonians, he desired that God would give them power (2 Thess. 1:11). When we pray for spiritual power, there are several principles that should govern how we pray. God gives power to those who recognize their need (Isa. 40:29), therefore we should humbly acknowledge our need in prayer. There is a relationship between power and faith (1 Peter 1:5); therefore, we should pray in faith. There is an element of power closely tied to

the name of Jesus (Acts 4:7-10), therefore we should pray “in Jesus’ name” (John 14:14) which means we should ask for power as it is in keeping with His will and can bring glory to the Lord. When praying for power we may be called upon to persevere and prevail in prayer (Gen. 32:28).

As we pray for spiritual power, God sometimes brings to mind some sin in our life that may hinder our effectiveness in ministry. The two are not totally related. Sin in our life can sap our spiritual power (Exod. 21:8). Jesus promised power to the one who overcame the corruption that had become part of church life in Thyatira (Rev. 2:26). The power that raised Jesus from the dead is related to the spirit of holiness (Rom. 1:4). A personal lifestyle of practical holiness will result in greater spiritual power. God wants each Christian to be clothed with holiness which is “the power of His might” (Eph. 6:10).

There is another dimension of spiritual power that is realized only as we are faithful in preaching the Gospel. Paul identified the power of God in the Gospel (Rom. 1:16), the preaching of the Cross (1 Cor 1:18), and the Word of God itself (Heb. 4:12). When the people heard Jesus teaching the Word of God during His public ministry, they also recognized an intrinsic power in those words (Luke 4:32).

Sometimes we fail to minister in the power of God we possess because we fail to recognize and appreciate its presence. God wants us to celebrate His power already at work in our life. In our worship of God, we should praise Him for His power (Ps. 21:13) and sing of His power at work in our life (Ps. 59:16). Many of the hymns in our hymnbooks are testimonial by nature and can be used by us to celebrate the power of God. As we worship God for who He is and what He is doing in our life, we establish the environment in which God prefers to dwell (Ps. 22:3). This suggests that worshipping God for His power may give us greater access to that power in our life.

Because God’s power working in us is tied to our union and communion with Him, we can increase our spiritual power through communion with Christ. Jesus told His disciples that productivity in Christian service was linked to abiding in Him (John 15:4). David came to a greater understanding and appreciation of the power of God as he waited on God (Ps. 62:1-12). Throughout his life, he recognized God as the source of his strength and power (2 Sam. 22:33). Often, his understanding and appreciation of God’s power increased as he communed with God in the sanctuary (cf. Ps. 20:2; 63:2; 96:6).

The Fullness of the Holy Spirit and Spiritual Power

While there are several avenues by which Christians can experience a degree of the power of God in their life and ministry, there is also a close relationship between the fullness of power and the fullness of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, the prophet Micah testified, “But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord” (Mic. 3:8). Jesus promised His disciples “power

when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” (Acts 1:8). Peter taught that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power (Acts 10:38). Paul attributed both an abounding hope (Rom. 15:13) and miraculous signs and wonders in his ministry (Rom. 15:19) to the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul commanded the Ephesians, “Be filled with the Holy Spirit” (Eph. 5:18). God wants us to continually be filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit. While this command applies to every Christian, it is especially important for those who are gifted in evangelism and desire to use their gift to lead others to Christ. The evidence of the fullness of the Holy Spirit in the Acts was the power of God manifested in bringing people to Himself (cf. Acts 1:8). On some occasions (but not every occasion) the building shook when Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31). Sometimes (but not always) Christians spoke in other languages when they were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-46). But on every occasion, when Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit the Gospel was preached and people were saved.

On the final day of an observance of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus announced, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37-38). Jesus was referring to the fullness of the Holy Spirit when He made that statement (John 7:39). In that statement, He identified the four steps we must take to experience the fullness of power associated with the Holy Spirit.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit begins with a thirst or deep desire to be filled. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus promised, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6). God will not fill a Christian with the Holy Spirit if he or she does not want to be filled.

We must come to Jesus to be filled. Coming to Jesus involves repenting of known sin in our life, then yielding ourselves to His complete control. Sin can hinder our relationship with God (Ps. 66:18), but “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). When we present ourselves completely to God, we “prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:1-2). God’s will for our lives includes our being filled with the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph. 5:17).

We must receive the gift God offers. When we ask God for something He has promised (cf. Luke 11:13), we can be sure of receiving what we request. “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him” (1 John 5:14-15).

The final step in being filled with the Holy Spirit involves believing, taking God at His Word (John 7:39). Paul asked the Galatians, “Receive ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” (Gal. 3:2). The implied

answer in that context is that they received the Holy Spirit by faith. “Without faith it is impossible to please Him (God)” (Heb. 11:6). We please God when we obey His command to be filled and believe His Word in the process.

Becoming More Effective through Scripture Memory

Like the fullness of power, Scripture memory enhances our effectiveness in evangelism. The most effective personal evangelists are often those who have committed many Scriptures to memory and are able to quickly recall them and quote them as they explain the Gospel to others.

As noted earlier, one aspect of the power of God is closely associated with both the Gospel and the Word of God. The gifted evangelist who has committed Scripture to memory and uses it to explain the Gospel will have greater power and be more effective in his or her witness. But spiritual power in evangelism is not the only reason a Christian should habitually memorize verses from the Bible.

Scripture is indispensable to the Christian who desires to grow spiritually (1 Peter 2:2). The psalmist recognized the importance of Scripture memory in gaining victory over sin (Ps. 119:9-11). He also relied on the Scriptures for personal guidance in life (Ps. 119:105). The Scriptures are also associated with answered prayer (John 15:5), the development of Christian character (1 Cor. 3:23), and the growth of our faith (Rom. 10:17). So many practical benefits are directly associated with the Word of God that it is hard to understand why a Christian would not want to be involved in a personal program of Scripture memory.

How to Memorize Scripture

For many people, the idea of Scripture memory is intimidating. They look at the 1189 chapters of the Bible and become overwhelmed with the idea of memorizing anything so large. But taking that approach to Scripture memory is like presenting an unabridged Oxford Dictionary to a child as he or she begins learning the English language. When we learned to speak, we began learning what we needed to know first, and then learned other aspects of our mother tongue when we were better able. Likewise, when we come to Scripture memory, it is best to be selective in the verses we learn. Later we can add other verses to our storehouse of knowledge and become increasingly proficient in our use of Scripture.

Some people believe they are unable to memorize Scripture because they lack certain memory skills. While those who have a “photographic memory” will find it easier to remember what they read, it is also true that anyone who knows his or her own name is also able to memorize the Scriptures. How did you learn the name given you by your parents? People kept repeating and reviewing your name with you until you remembered it and identified with it. How will you memorize verses from the Bible? The same way – repetition and review.

The first step in memorizing a verse is to repeat it. Repeat the verse reference before and after repeating the verse itself. Advocates of Scripture memory suggest you repeat each new verse from five to fifty times – until you know it. Then you need to constantly review the verse until you can recall it without effort. You may wish to purchase a box of blank business cards from a stationary store and write out each new verse on a card as you learn it. Then carry the verse card with you and review it during free moments throughout your day.

Is there a best time to work on Scripture memory? Actually, there are four times during your typical day when you are most likely to find it easiest to memorize Scripture. Under the law, Jewish parents were to instruct their children in the law “(1) when you sit in your house, (2) when you walk by the way, (3) when you lie down, and (4) when you rise up” (Deut. 6:7). These are the four times of the day we have time to think, and God wants us to think about His Word during these times. Carry your verse cards with you throughout the day so you can review them (1) when you relax around the house, (2) as you travel from place to place, (3) when you retire in the evening, and (4) as you wake up each morning.

Is there a best translation to use when memorizing Scripture? Some people think so. I, like many Christians, have a particular translation that I prefer to use in personal study, Scripture memory, and preaching. But Christians can engage in meaningful Scripture memory using a wide variety of English translations of the Bible. Some immigrants who struggle with English as a second language find it easier to memorize from a translation in their mother tongue. In contrast, missionaries sometimes elect to memorize the Bible in the language in which they minister rather than their mother tongue.

Someone has said, “The best Bible is a read Bible!” As you begin memorizing Scripture, use a translation with which you feel most comfortable. The objective of Scripture memory is not simply to memorize a particular Bible translation but to equip yourself with a better grasp of the Word of God for a more effective ministry.

Developing a Personal Plan for Scripture Memory

When you determine to memorize Scripture, you need to establish a personal plan for Scripture memory. You will want to concentrate initially on verses you can use to explain the Gospel to other people. Take a few minutes to review chapter three and list the verses referred to in that Gospel presentation. When you have committed those verses to memory, begin learning the verses used in alternative presentations of the Gospel. This approach will enable you to learn the verses you are most likely to use as you explain the Gospel to others. As you see how much more effective you become in leading others to Christ, you will be motivated to continue memorizing Scripture.

The list you compile from various presentations of the Gospel should be the beginning of a life-long commitment to Scripture memory. When you come across a new Gospel tract or hear an evangelistic sermon, add the key verses used in those contexts to your “to be learned” list. Also, as you attend workshops, seminars, and conferences on soulwinning and evangelism, you will recognize other verses you will want to learn.

There are also other resources available to you. Several ministries have developed their own Scripture memory courses to help people become more effective in witnessing. Some people find it easier to memorize Scripture using one of these courses. Some duplication exists in the verses they use because they are all concerned with helping people become more effective in evangelism and growing spiritually. So if you use one of these resources and come across a verse you already know, consider it an opportunity to review an important verse. You may want to contact one of the following organizations about obtaining their Scripture memorization courses.

The Great Commission Army Scripture Memory Course
Campus Crusade for Christ International
San Bernardino, California 92414

The Navigators Topical Memory System
P. O. Box 20
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80901

Treasure Path to Soulwinning
P. O. Box 2104
Lynchburg, Virginia 24501

Word of Life Fellowship
Schroon Lake, New York 12870

CHAPTER FIVE

Finding and Qualifying Prospects for Evangelism

Effective evangelism has been described as winning the winnable while they are winnable or reaching the reachable while they are reachable. Therefore, finding winnable, reachable prospects for evangelism should be a priority.

The Great Commission calls us to evangelize “every creature” (Mark 16:15), but the fact has long been recognized that some people are more receptive to the Gospel than others. Also, most people are more receptive to the Gospel at certain times of their life than at other times. Saint Augustine called these times “the seasons of the soul”. He recognized that individuals are more open to consider the Gospel during times when their life routine is interrupted.

During major transitions, people are confronted with the failure of their personal support systems to help them cope. This makes them more open to alternative approaches, both good and bad. At these times people are more likely to accept Christ as Savior, but they are also more open to the cults and alternative views of life. That’s why reaching the reachable while they are reachable is so important.

What are these transitional periods of life that introduce new seasons of the soul? Some are very obvious. Personal tragedies such as a death in the family, break-up of a marriage or loss of a job tend to introduce times of personal reflection and make a person more open to the Gospel. Good things can also introduce a new season in someone’s life. Such things as marriage, the birth of a child or graduation from college also mark transitions when people become more winnable.

What is true of individuals is also true of societies. The Communist purge that followed the end of the Vietnam War created millions of refugees in Southeast Asia who became very open to the Gospel. Likewise, more recent democratic reforms in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have resulted in many people coming to Christ as Savior. Christians desiring to effectively use their giftedness in evangelism need to be alerted to changing conditions in the lives of individuals and societies and identify those most open to the Gospel.

What Makes a Prospect a Prospect?

Some Christians object to the practice of identifying prospects for evangelism, arguing that everyone who is not a Christian is a prospect. Others are prepared to narrow that field only slightly and identify any nonchurched person in their community as a prospect. While this commitment to reaching everyone is commendable, it rarely proves practical in evangelism. Those who are most effective in evangelism tend to identify two primary characteristics in a prospect.

First, a prospect is one who is receptive to the evangelist who calls. Some people in your community may have had a bad experience in a church in another city and have a built-in resentment against Baptists, Presbyterians, Pentecostals or whatever the denomination. While they may be a prospect who could be reached by a church of another denomination, it is unlikely you will reach them if you are a member of the denomination in which they had a bad experience. Others may not be receptive to your church because of a popular perception. If your church is perceived as a Yuppie church, blue-collar factory workers in your community may be reluctant to identify with the church.

While it is easy to recognize negative aspects of this factor, there is a positive side impacting your church outreach strategy. Many growing churches first study their community and their church's perception in the community before developing an outreach strategy that targets the most receptive part of their community. Just as a Greek-speaking congregation directs most of their evangelistic outreach to the Greek community in the city, so other churches can and should identify the most receptive subcultures of their community and focus their emphasis.

A second factor that helps us define prospects is their responsiveness to the Gospel. As noted earlier, people in transitions tend to be more responsive to the Gospel than those in more stable situations. That is why growing communities tend to be good places to start new churches while churches in more stable communities tend to plateau. As churches reach out in evangelism, they should target people in transition who tend to be more responsive. This can be done even in the older part of your city.

One pastor enlisted his Sunday school children one summer to help him identify people in transition in his community. He told them moving vans were the key to "eVANGelism". When they saw a moving van, they would notify their parents who would bake a pie. Later that day, the parents would take the pie to their new neighbors and introduce themselves. They would stay just long enough to introduce themselves, leave the pie, and invite their new neighbors over for a neighborhood barbeque about a week later. At the barbeque, the new family would have the opportunity to meet other families from the church and begin forming new friendships. Using this approach, many new evangelism prospects were identified and reached by the church.

The ability to identify prospects is one of the keys to maximizing your effectiveness as a gifted lay evangelist. While all Christians can and should be effectively reaching those in their immediate sphere of influence for Christ, the evangelist is also effective in reaching those outside his or her immediate sphere of influence. Faithful stewardship of this gift suggests an ongoing effort in identifying prospects.

Where Can I Find Prospects for Evangelism?

Once we realize the importance of finding good evangelism prospects, our next question is, "Where can we find these prospects?" There may be good

prospects all around us that we have not yet recognized. Knowing where to look and what to look for will enable us to recognize prospects that are reachable and winnable for Christ.

Some people who are already connected to your church can be reached for Christ. Those who have visited your worship service in recent weeks ought to be viewed as prospects. Other often overlooked prospects are the parents of children involved in various youth and children's ministries in your church. These people have already indicated a degree of receptiveness to the church and may prove responsive to the Gospel.

Every church has a sphere of influence in which prospects abound. The principle of the extended church suggests the average Christian has an existing relationship with seven people who are potential church members. In some cases that number will be higher; in others it will be lower. The point of this principle is not the number but the fact that there are already people loosely connected to your church who could be reached for Christ.

Special outreach events can be utilized to gather prospects for evangelism. Many churches have used *Friend Day* or similar attendance campaigns to encourage church members to invite their friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors to attend church with them. This helps the church identify their potential for growth and identify their most receptive and responsive prospects. Though churches may see several people saved on *Friend Day*, normally those who attend church for the first time on *Friend Day* are reached through follow-up visits in the home. This is where the gifted lay evangelist excels.

Church growth research suggests a person is very likely to return to a church if they are connected by a lay church member within 24 hours of their initial visit. When there is no contact within 48 hours of that initial visit, the visitor almost never returns. We need to win the winnable while they are winnable by quickly following up on any indication of interest in our church.

TEAM Evangelism can be utilized to develop a larger prospect pool for your church outreach ministries. This approach to evangelism enables lay members to identify those in their sphere of influence who are part of the extended church. As individuals develop strategies to influence their friends for Christ, the prospect pool for your church outreach ministry will grow. People who are reached for Christ through this stair-stepping approach to evangelism tend to make deep and meaningful decisions for Christ. In *TEAM Evangelism*, gifted evangelists are involved in harvesting what others have planted and nurtured.

Some churches have conducted a community census to identify prospects that might otherwise have been overlooked. There are two ways to use a survey in evangelism. First, conduct a door-to-door census to identify people and their religious background. The nonchurched who indicate a preference for a church of your denomination should be viewed as prime prospects and followed up first. Then your outreach teams can contact other nonchurched families.

A second survey used in evangelism is the religious attitudes survey. These surveys usually conclude with a question like 'If it were possible to know God personally, would you be interested?' Those who respond positively to this last question become prime prospects for evangelism. Sometimes, the survey taker is also equipped to talk with people and lead them to the Lord as they conclude the survey. Other churches opt to have someone from the evangelism office call the prospects later to make an appointment for a visit. In both cases, many people have been reached through a religious survey.

One reason some churches have difficulty finding good evangelism prospects is because they are unprepared to deal with them. If your church has only a few prospects and no strategy to reach them for Christ, beginning a visitation evangelism ministry to reach those you can reach may result in God providing your church with more prospects. When we prove ourselves faithful in little things, God will give us a larger sphere of ministry (cf. Matt. 25:21, 23). Guidelines for beginning this kind of outreach ministry are discussed in the next chapter.

How Can I Qualify Evangelism Prospects?

Just as a salesman qualifies prospects and devotes most of his energy to those with the greatest potential for a sale, so the gifted evangelist would be wise to qualify the interest a prospect may have in the Gospel and devote his or her energies to those who are most receptive and responsive. Evangelism prospects can be qualified several ways.

Prospects from some sources are better than those from others. Often, pastors are asked to visit an unsaved friend or loved one, and the person asking says something like, "But don't tell them I sent you". In my experience, these kinds of referrals usually indicate the person asking you to visit has not been faithful in witnessing to their friend and the person being visited is probably not receptive to a visit. Then there are those who ask you to visit a friend with them. The different attitude conveyed in this request usually indicates a more fruitful visit ahead.

As you begin an evangelistic conversation, ask a few open-ended questions to gauge the interest of your prospect. Often the response indicates much about their level of interest. If you find a lack of interest in spiritual things, you may be wisest to let the fruit ripen while you work to reach those who are more receptive and responsive.

Even the best prospect can turn cold if there is an extended delay in contacting them. One church conducted a phone campaign and gathered a list of over 600 families who indicated an interest in their church. Unfortunately, no attempt was made to contact these prospects for over two years. By the time the church got around to following up that prospect list, many of the families had moved. Others who had been interested two years earlier had joined other churches or lost interest altogether. The delay in getting to those who were interested meant the church lost many potential members.

If your church has a formal visitation evangelism outreach, the evangelism secretary can screen prospects as she calls to arrange home visits. If the secretary calls a family who visited the church and finds a real reluctance to have someone visit, she might be wise not to schedule a visit. Others on her prospect list may be more receptive to a visit and will prove more responsive to the Gospel as it is explained.

What Happens When I Run Out of Prospects?

One of the worst things that could ever happen to a gifted evangelist is to run out of people to reach for Christ. With over five billion people living in the world today, that is technically not likely to happen. But it is possible that an effective evangelist will lead all those in his or her personal sphere of influence to Christ as Savior and in doing so, run out of prospects. There are certain things a wise evangelist can do to prevent this from happening in his or her ministry.

Do not become so involved in ministry that you isolate yourself from people outside the church. This often happens to pastors and others involved in vocational ministry. This can become a major source of frustration to a Christian gifted in evangelism. That's why those gifted in evangelism must establish a personal balance in their life between formal church ministry and other areas of their life which involve them primarily with unsaved people. When this crucial balance is established, the gifted evangelist can constantly build bridges with unsaved people who then become prospects for evangelism.

As you are effective in leading others to Christ, learn how to tap into other social networks to find new prospects. In the past, evangelists would lead a person to Christ and encourage the new convert to replace his or her unsaved friends with new Christian friends in the church. When this approach was taken, the new convert soon had no unsaved friends to witness to and his or her outreach potential was diminished. Today, zealous evangelists are encouraging new converts to invite unsaved friends and relatives to church social functions and using those opportunities to meet these new prospects. Again, as these new relationships grow and develop, many can be won to Christ who might otherwise have remained outside the church's sphere of influence.

This is one of the major strengths of *TEAM Evangelism* when it is implemented in the church. As church members work to build bridges and establish redemptive relationships with the unsaved in their community, an unending supply of prospects is produced. Many of these church members may feel uncomfortable pressing their friend for a decision even though they believe their friend may be ready to receive Christ. When that happens, they can visit their friend with a gifted evangelist who can lead the friend to Christ.

If God has gifted you in evangelism, let your burden to see people come to Christ motivate you to develop effective people skills to meet new friends on a regular basis. This will enable you to continue using your gift in ministry even if your church does not have a formal outreach ministry.

CHAPTER SIX

Visiting Prospects in Their Homes or in the Hospital

When asked, “What influenced you to make your decision for Christ?” about six percent of those questioned consistently identify themselves as the fruit of a church lay-visitation evangelism program. Many others who were primarily attracted to the Gospel through the witness of a friend were also influenced by a home visit or pastoral visit in the hospital. Visitation evangelism can be an effective means of reaching people for Christ.

Among Christians gifted in evangelism who have found a ministry in which they can express their gift, many are involved in the visitation outreach ministry of their church. This ministry gives gifted evangelists the opportunity to meet new people and introduce them to Christ as Savior. In a church that does a good job of identifying and qualifying prospects (see **Chapter Five**), this ministry may result in several people becoming Christians each week. Not only does the church experience the usual benefits associated with evangelistic effectiveness, the evangelists themselves experience a deep level of personal fulfillment and remain highly motivated to continue doing “the work of evangelism.”

Does a church need a visitation evangelism outreach to be an effective evangelistic church? Significant churches have effectively utilized other methods to reach people for Christ without establishing a formal visitation program. But few churches are effective in evangelism without a plan and, through the years, many growing churches have successfully incorporated visitation evangelism as part of their outreach and growth strategy.

Many Christians find the historic roots of visitation evangelism in the experience of the New Testament church itself. The church at Jerusalem was faithful in preaching the Gospel “in the temple, and in every house” (Acts 5:42). Paul reminded the Ephesian elders how he had “taught you publicly and from house to house” (Acts 20:20). These references indicate that preaching and teaching occurred outside the congregational gathering place such as the temple or public building and reached into the homes of people scattered throughout the city.

Using Visitation Evangelism to Reach People

Even if your church does not have a formal visitation evangelism program, you can still utilize this ministry to reach people for Christ. Many Sunday School teachers have a plan to visit class members and prospects. Workers involved in other ministries of the church may also utilize home visits to

enhance their ministry. One pastor who was beginning a new church started a church visitation program by taking recently converted men in the church with him. Because he had no prospects of his own, the pastor had each man prepare a list of unsaved friends and they visited them together.

Being involved in visitation evangelism through a typical evangelical church usually means a lot of “cold turkey” door-to-door visitation. The evangelistic teams are sent out from the church two-by-two and assigned to a particular street or block. Their objective is to knock on every door attempting to interest people in the Gospel and lead them to Christ. While this plan has been used widely to win many people to Christ, some visitors become discouraged as they encounter a hostile or apathetic response at the door. Also, those who do visitation evangelism this way often experience difficulty discipling the new believers and assimilating them into the church.

Some churches provide visitation evangelists with prospects. Rather than visiting up and down a street, visitors are assigned to specific homes for the evening. Depending upon the quality of the prospect, this approach usually results in greater responsiveness and more people coming to Christ as Savior (see **Chapter Five** on finding and qualifying prospects). Those who accept Christ on these visits already have some connection with the church and are more likely to become involved in the life of the church.

A word of caution: Although door-to-door evangelism is still valuable, it is controversial and our present-day culture does not freely allow it. People have become so busy, want more privacy and fewer interruptions, and are leery of strangers because of the increasing incidences of bizarre and hideous crime against individuals, that they often do not want uninvited people visiting in their homes.

One example that comes to mind is a story related to me by a director of evangelism. On visitation night, he sent two men from the church to the home of a lady who had recently visited their church. She would not let the men in the house and threatened to call the police on them. She angrily called the director of evangelism and exclaimed, “This is 1991. What’s the matter with you!?” Although this reaction represents an extreme, it does represent some of the mindset in our society.

To prevent this type of situation from happening and as a common courtesy, many churches nowadays have the secretary or outreach director call visitors to set up appointments for brief follow-up visits to give an information packet to the visitor, offer pastoral assistance if needed, and invite them to come again. For the best results, if your church members are visiting a woman, make sure the visiting team includes at least one woman, never two men (husband/wife, father/daughter, brother/sister, or two women). Likewise, if a man is being visited, make sure the visiting team includes at least one man, never two women.

Visitation evangelism is usually most effective when it is incorporated into a *TEAM Evangelism* church outreach and assimilation plan. This approach

identifies prime prospects that promise to be most responsive to the Gospel (i.e. the Friends, Relatives, Associates, and Neighbors of church members). Then the prospects are visited by gifted and trained evangelists who understand their role as members of the team. When the gifted evangelist visits in the home, he or she knows that others have already witnessed to the prospect and believe the prospect is close to making a decision for Christ. When that decision is made, the visitation evangelist also knows that gifted teachers and shepherds are in place to disciple the new believer and enfold him or her into the church. By using every church member in the process of evangelism according to each one's unique giftedness, the church experiences its greatest effectiveness in evangelism.

Most churches will want to establish a formal visitation evangelism ministry as part of their local *TEAM Evangelism* outreach. If your church does not currently have a visitation program, there are several steps you can take to establish an effective ministry. First, discuss your concern with your pastor and church leaders and offer to accept responsibility to begin developing this ministry. Then, identify a few others gifted in evangelism who share your interest in this kind of outreach. These individuals will comprise the initial outreach team.

Be careful not to make the common mistake of trying to enroll everyone in the church on a visitation team. Many will sign up for wrong reasons. Within a few weeks, these individuals will become discouraged and quit. As the number of visitors declines, people will begin to look at the visitation program as a failure. A better approach would be to start small with a few deeply committed workers who can enlist and train other workers as they are needed. Good communication between various ministries within the church is essential to the continued success of a visitation evangelism ministry. Visitors are dependent upon others to identify the best prospects for home visits. Also, visitors need to quickly pass on names of new converts to others involved in the discipling and assimilating process.

As church members learn of friends reached throughout the visitation evangelism ministry and meet new converts in their Bible study groups, they will become increasingly more supportive of this ministry. Some church members may have had negative experiences with visitation evangelism in a previous church. These individuals may even find themselves becoming involved in this fruitful ministry as they see it producing results.

Conducting a Visit in the Home

The key to any visitation evangelism ministry is the home visit itself. Before making the visit, the visitation team should take time to become acquainted with their prospect and pray for God's blessing on their efforts. Most churches find it best to establish visitation teams of two or three people rather than sending individuals out alone. Sometimes an experienced home visitor can take along a less experienced visitor and use the call as a training

session. Then later, the two visitors can separate and begin training two other visitors in the same way.

Prior to arriving at the home, decide which of the two visitors will lead the visit. That person will then be responsible for leading the conversation. The other team member may contribute to the conversation, but should be careful not to interfere. Rather, he or she may find it best to minimize potential interruptions. This might involve caring for children in another room so parents can continue talking with the other visitor.

As the visit begins, work to quickly secure a favorable environment. If a visitation appointment has been made, this will usually not be a problem. If not, you may have to decide if another time might be better. It is difficult to compete with a radio or television during a home visit.

Begin your visit by taking a personal interest in the people you are visiting. Many people are intimidated by a visit from a church, so work to put them at ease. You can remove a lot of tension from a visit by simply relaxing yourself and enjoying the visit. Ask general questions about their family and job and look for opportunities to build bridges.

At some point early in your conversation, express your interest in them as people and identify the purpose of your visit. Explain, "One of our major concerns is to help people develop a personal relationship with God. We find that many people would like to know God as their friend, but just aren't sure how to go about doing that." At that point, you may want to ask a couple of questions that invite your prospects into the discussion. Choose questions that get the prospects interested in the issue and reveal their spiritual state. Two widely used questions in visitation evangelism are:

1. If you were to die tonight, do you know for certain that you have eternal life?
2. If you were to die and God were to ask you, "Why should I let you into my heaven?" what would you say?

As you present the Gospel, it is best to use a presentation with which you are familiar (see **Chapter Two**). Throughout the presentation, involve the prospect, but be careful not to let the conversation wander from its preferred course. Work hard to avoid a negative response or an argument. When a question is raised, you may suggest coming back to it later. Sometimes those questions resolve themselves as a person hears, understands, and responds to the Gospel.

When you finish presenting the Gospel, discern the receptivity of those with whom you have been talking. Often, you may find yourself visiting a couple in a home. Ideally, you should try to lead both husband and wife to the Lord at the same time, but often one of the partners may be hesitant. Many visitation evangelists make a practice of addressing the one who promises to be most receptive first when inviting a response. In some cases, a reluctant

spouse may become more receptive to the Gospel when he or she sees the receptiveness of the other.

While the goal of your home visit may be to secure a decision for Christ, that goal is only a part of the disciple-making process implied in evangelism. Take a few moments toward the end of your conversation to advise the prospect concerning his or her next logical step in the Christian life. This step will vary in each situation. It might involve a follow-up visit next week to discuss some unresolved issues or give a person time to consider making their decision for Christ. In another situation, you may need to encourage the prospect to make a public profession of faith in church this Sunday. Or you may wish to encourage the prospect to become involved in a church-sponsored Bible study later in the week.

For many visitation evangelists, the visit does not end when they leave the home. If they are part of a church visitation program, there may be forms to complete to help the church keep up-to-date records in order to better minister to the family. Some visitation evangelists write the prospects a brief letter thanking them for their hospitality, reviewing what took place during the visit (i.e. any decisions made), and encouraging them to take that next step they discussed together.

Visiting People in the Hospital

Visitation evangelism is also effective in hospital visitation. Many who find themselves in hospital beds welcome a caring visit from a church representative. In many hospitals, patients identify their religious background as they are admitted. That information is then made available to pastors and lay hospital visitors from the churches in the community. Some community hospitals have a pastoral care department willing to train lay members of area churches in hospital visitation.

When visiting people in the hospital, remember to take into consideration the physical condition of the patient. While the patient may welcome a visit, he or she will probably tire quickly. Therefore, every effort should be made to keep the visit brief. Ten to fifteen minutes should be sufficient time to indicate your interest and discuss spiritual matters. In many cases, you may find it best to arrange a series of visits during the patient's hospital stay. This will enable you to establish a relationship with the patient and give you greater opportunities to share the Gospel.

Hospital visitation can also be a means of making contact with others you might otherwise not reach. Most patients are assigned to rooms with other patients. When you visit your prospect in the hospital, be aware of others in the room who may be listening to your conversation. Many hospital visitors take time to have an informal conversation with each patient in the room before leaving. The purpose of these conversations is to begin making contact with others and determine what interest may exist. Sometimes, the

person you visit in the hospital may hesitate to respond to the Gospel, but a patient in another bed may be more receptive.

When visiting in the hospital, have a clear understanding of hospital rules and work within their framework. These rules are usually established with the best interest of the patient in mind. Also, you want to build positive relationships with the hospital staff as you visit. When you do this, you may find doctors and nurses referring you to other patients who would appreciate a visit. In the process of visiting patients in the hospital, you may also be able to reach members of the staff. They are more likely to be responsive to the person who makes their job easier than the person who consistently arrives outside of visiting hours at inappropriate times.

Sometimes God brings problems in our lives to get our attention. While not every hospital patient finds himself or herself in that position, some do. Be sensitive to the patient's situation and prepare to offer comfort while also leading him or her to Christ through hospital visitation. As you look for a place of service where you can express your giftedness, you may want to consider this area of ministry.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Using Literature In Evangelism

“Give me 26 lead soldiers and I will conquer the world.” Benjamin Franklin believed in the enormous power of the printed page.

Literature is widely used in society today to promote a variety of causes and products. How many newspapers, magazines, and promotional brochures came to your house this week? While there is legitimate concern over increasing functional illiteracy rates in North America, there are still many people who can and do read daily. Some of these people can be reached for Christ through the effective use of literature in evangelism.

Some Christians minimize the role of literature in evangelism, noting statistical evidence that comparatively few people identify a Gospel tract as the means by which they came to faith in Christ. Perhaps that is because the wrong questions are being asked in the survey. Most people do not respond to the Gospel by receiving Christ the first time they hear or read it. Instead, they need time to consider the implications of the Gospel before committing themselves.

The process by which people come to Christ involves many things that may not directly result in a person trusting Christ as Savior, but are effective in moving them closer to making that decision for Christ. How many people have been able to lead a friend to Christ because their friend had read a Gospel tract, a testimony in a religious magazine or read a good evangelical book that made them more receptive to the witness of their friend?

As you develop your personal evangelism plan, consider a role for literature evangelism. Standing on the street corner handing out tracts to those who pass by may not be the most effective means of reaching people for Christ, but as you learn how to use literature in evangelism your effectiveness will increase.

Incorporating Literature in Your Evangelism Plan

There are different ways literature evangelism can be incorporated into your evangelism plan. Sometimes, evangelical literature can be used to stimulate a conversation about the Gospel. At other times, you may give someone a tract to read when there is interest in the Gospel but not enough time to discuss it. Some effective evangelists use tracts such as *Life's Greatest Discovery* or *The Four Spiritual Laws* as part of their Gospel presentation (see **Chapter Two**). Others have tracts ready to give to those who hear the Gospel but are hesitant to respond.

Some people are critical of literature evangelism because it fails to meet preconceived expectations. In many cases, the problem is not with this evangelistic strategy but rather with expectations. Those who believe simply

handing out tracts to strangers in shopping malls or on street corners will result in multitudes coming to faith in Christ will most often be deeply disappointed. Although some people do come to faith in Christ because a stranger gave them a tract, they are comparatively few in numbers. Just as we view other evangelistic strategies as tools to be incorporated into a total plan of evangelism, so we should recognize that literature evangelism will be more effective when it is part of a larger outreach strategy.

Of course, not all evangelical literature will be suitable in each situation. Before distributing a Gospel tract, take time to carefully read it yourself and understand what the author is saying. Sometimes a tract can be used to stimulate a conversation about the Gospel later. When this happens, you need to be able to pick up where the tract concludes and bring your friend a step or two closer to responding positively to Christ and salvation.

As you read the tract yourself, evaluate it in the context of how you plan to use it. First, be certain the tract includes the Gospel. Many publishers distribute evangelistic tracts as well as tracts which are directed to other needs. Second, be sure the presentation of the Gospel relates to a felt need in the life of the person to whom you plan to give this tract. Although a tract may explain the Gospel clearly, it may do so in a context that fails to appeal to a person's felt needs.

Evangelical literature is often most effective when careful thought is given to how it can be best used to reach a particular person. Some Christians take time to highlight parts of the tract they feel may be most appropriate for the individual to whom they plan to give it. Then they are careful to direct the conversation with their unsaved friend to make offering the literature most natural. You may wish to share or loan a tract, magazine or book with your friend rather than give it to them outright. When you loan your friend a book, he or she then knows you will contact them later for the book and will be more motivated to read it before you ask for it.

Campus Crusade for Christ has developed four questions to use in follow-up on evangelical literature you have distributed. These questions will help you direct a conversation toward a personal response to the Gospel. They are...

1. What did you think of the literature (book, article, tract...)?
2. Did it make sense to you?
3. Have you personally received Christ as explained in the literature?
4. You would like to, wouldn't you?

Many effective evangelists habitually carry several different pieces of Gospel literature in their purse or pockets. C. Summer Wemp used to tell his students, "A Christian is not fully dressed until he has put tracts in his pockets." This is one way you can "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15).

Then, as you engage in evangelistic conversations with those you meet, ask the Holy Spirit to direct you in giving the appropriate tract to the right person.

Writing Effective Gospel Literature

Some Christians gifted in evangelism have found they can multiply their ministry through writing. There are many ways to “publish the Gospel”. Many smaller community newspapers are open to publishing a well-written column by a local resident. These papers tend to be well read in the community and often the columnist had great liberty in choosing his or her subject matter. This is often an effective outreach tool utilized by pastors of rural or small town churches.

A well-written profile of a prominent Christian may be another means of communicating the Gospel in print. People are always interested in people and tend to read profile articles. Many Christians who have experienced success in athletic endeavors or business are happy to use their influence to point others to Christ. Many publications will pay writers for this kind of article.

A third way of writing the Gospel is to produce a Gospel tract. Some churches publish their own tracts written by church members. This enables them to make specific references to things that may be important in their community but would be meaningless elsewhere. A tract of this nature may be very appealing to a restricted group of people, but not have a wide enough appeal to be published by a major tract publisher.

Several years ago, I noticed that many churches were publishing a tract entitled, “*How to Get to Heaven from (Their City)*,” On the cover, each tract had a road map of the area around the city. The inside text explained the Gospel as a road that would take them to heaven. The tract also included the name, address, and phone number of the church that published the tract. The title and cover of the tract made it very appealing to those who lived in or were visiting the city. Thousands of these tracts were published and used to win many people to Christ.

When writing evangelical literature, follow a writing plan. First, choose a theme that is likely to attract attention. Then, as you begin writing, build on that natural interest and show its relationship to the Gospel. Be careful not to assume too much or try to include too much. A good rule to follow is to concentrate on one aspect of the Gospel in each literature piece and be clear in what you want the reader to do next.

Don't be discouraged if your first attempt at writing evangelical literature falls short of your personal expectations. Writers become better writers by continuing to write. Also, the best writers often find it necessary to review and edit what they have written several times before they are content with what they have written. If you plan to write evangelical literature, understand that it will take time to do it right.

Using Evangelical Literature Effectively

Evangelical literature can be an effective means of reaching people for Christ. There are many inoffensive ways Christians can distribute Gospel tracts. Some make a habit of including a tract in their letters or when paying their bills (make sure your bills are paid on time though!). Others have a supply of tracts on a table near the entrance of their home and give them to those who call. Some Christian businesspeople place an attractive tract rack in the reception area of their office or near the door so people can help themselves to available literature.

Evangelical literature is only effective when it is read understood. Therefore, as you select tracts to use in your personal evangelism plan, select tracts that are most likely to be read by the individuals you intend to reach. Does the tract clearly communicate the Gospel? Is it written in a style that encourages or discourages a person from reading it? How does the published tract appear at first glance? Does it say, "Here is something worth reading" or "Here is something cheap and hard to read."

Should we have target groups in evangelism? While we want everybody to come to faith in Christ, we must also recognize that each of us will be most effective evangelizing a specific type of person. As good stewards of all the resources entrusted to us including influence, we should concentrate our evangelistic efforts in the areas that promise to be most fruitful without neglecting other opportunities God may give us. As we do what we can to reach those most receptive to us, God will raise up others outside our spheres of influence.

As you become increasingly involved in evangelism, you may begin to see greater results among one people group than others. That group may be defined by age (i.e. youth, children, seniors, etc.), by ethnic background (i.e. Asians, Europeans, Native Peoples, etc.), or by socioeconomic background (i.e. inner-city residents, Yuppies, blue collar workers, etc.).

At least three groups of people are most likely to come to Christ through literature evangelism. First, new readers tend to be eager to read everything they can find and will read the Gospel if given the opportunity to do so. Therefore, plan to give easy-to-read evangelical literature to those involved in literacy programs. Second, those who tend to be skeptical are more likely to come to Christ after reading and studying a well-written Gospel presentation than through preaching. Therefore, literature evangelism can be effective on university campuses and among more resistant people groups. Third, leaders tend to be readers. Therefore, well-written evangelical literature can be used effectively to reach those who are most influential in our society.

Christians who want to be most effective in bringing people to Christ and salvation need to be men or women of prayer. As you utilize literature evangelism in your personal evangelism plan, pray during each stage of this important ministry. First, ask God for wisdom as you select or prepare literature to be used in evangelism. Then, ask God to soften hearts to be

receptive to the message of the tract. Third, ask God to direct you in distributing the tract so the right literature goes to the right person. Finally, pray for the person who receives the tract, asking God to use the message of the tract and other things in their life to draw them to Himself.

Finding Literature for Evangelism

When you have worked through how you plan to use literature in your personal evangelism plan, the next step involves securing the literature. There is an abundance of evangelical literature available today from many sources. If your church is affiliated with a particular denomination, you may wish to contact those responsible for evangelism within your denomination to learn what literature is available through them. Many local Christian bookstores also carry a supply of tracts. Various parachurch ministries have developed their own literature that they will usually make available to you for a nominal fee. These tracts are especially helpful in reaching special groups of people for Christ, i.e. Roman Catholics, Jews, Mormons, Muslims, youth, children, etc.

In addition to these sources, some publishers exist primarily to produce Gospel tracts. Because of the large quantity they produce, they are often able to sell quality evangelical literature at a very low cost. As you look for literature, you will want to consider tracts produced by these publishers. Most have catalogs available for those who request them. Some publishers also make available samples of the tracts they produce at a minimal cost. This enables you to see the tract, read it, and decide if it is suitable for your purpose before purchasing a quantity.

Many publishers of Gospel tracts do not advertise themselves widely and are therefore difficult to find. To help you locate literature you can use in evangelism, I have included a partial directory of publishers who currently distribute a significant quantity of Gospel tracts.

American Tract Society
P.O. Box 402008
Garland, Texas 75040

Canadian Tract Society
P.O. Box 203, Port Credit
Mississauga, Ontario L5G 4L7

Chick Publications
P.O. Box 662
Chino, California 91710

Concordia Tract Mission
P.O. Box 201
St. Louis, Missouri 63166

Faith, Prayer, and Tract League
2627 Elmridge Drive N. W.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504
(616) 453-7695

Good News Publishers
1300 Crescent Street
Wheaton, Illinois 60187
(708) 682-4300

Good Seed Tracts
Aneta, North Dakota 58212

New Life Tract Society
103 Village Road
Lynchburg, Virginia 24502

Pilgrim Tract Society, Inc.
Randleman, North Carolina 27317

Western Canada Tract Mission
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Canada



NOTE: Church Growth Institute publishes
The Guide to Effective Gospel Tract Ministry, by Roscoe Barnes III,
which will help you organize and carry out your tract ministry
as you either develop and publish your own tracts or use tracts
published by other organizations.

To order this manual, visit www.ChurchGrowth.org
or call 1-800-553-GROW (4769).

CHAPTER EIGHT

Finding Your Place on the Ministry Team

As the evangelical church in North America approaches the end of the twentieth century, she is returning to the biblical practice of team ministry. Some view this change as a result of the growing influence of Baby Boomers who are becoming increasingly involved in the leadership of the evangelical church. While that may be the stimulus that has brought about this much-needed change, there is a valid biblical precedent for a team approach to ministry.

Team ministry was practiced throughout the New Testament, beginning with Jesus. While no one would dispute the ability of our Lord to meet needs in the lives of others without the assistance of others, He chose to gather disciples (first the twelve, later seventy others) to assist Him in His ministry objectives. The fact that these others were so unqualified for ministry only serves to emphasize the importance Jesus must have placed on the team ministry concept.

The apostles continued ministering as a team in the early days of the church. They were recognized as a distinct group within the church and together were involved in the ministries of evangelism (Acts 2:14; 5:42), teaching (Acts 2:42; 5:25), miracles (Acts 2:43; 5:12), prayer (Acts 3:1; 4:24), and administration (Acts 4:37; 6:2). They chose to appoint ministry teams to solve problems whether those problems were as common and everyday as feeding widows (Acts 6:3) or as major as confirming the authenticity of a reported new ministry (Acts 8:14).

The apostle Paul also used team ministry effectively throughout his ministry, particularly on his second missionary journey. Before engaging on this mission that brought the Gospel to Europe, he gathered a team that included Silas, Timothy, and Luke. At times, various members or groups within his ministry team were sent off on special assignments and on at least one occasion Paul found himself involved in ministry alone (cf. Acts 17:16-18:4). But his preference was apparently ministry as a team. Twelve of the thirteen epistles which bear his name in the introduction also include a reference to others with him at the time he wrote the epistle. The only exception is his first epistle to Timothy, a long-standing member of his ministry team.

There are two approaches to forming a ministry team depending upon what that ministry team is trying to accomplish. Some churches establish highly specialized teams which tend to resemble a colony of similarly gifted individuals. This may be planned or just occur as gifted individuals naturally gravitate toward each other. The resulting team proves extremely effective in

a particular area of ministry and less effective in other areas. While this plan has inherent long-term problems, churches may elect to take this approach in forming a team to initiate a new ministry and get it established.

A second approach to team ministry recognizes the strength of pluralism and blends various individuals with differing gifts into a ministry team. Just as the more highly specialized team may be established to initiate a new ministry, this alternative approach may be better utilized to build greater stability in existing ministries. Having different spiritual gifts represented on the team means various perspectives are applied to the ministry and this insures a more balanced approach to ministry.

Knowing our spiritual gift and how it can be utilized in various aspects of ministry is the key to finding our place on the ministry team. As we come to understand how God can uniquely use us in ministry, it removes our desires for someone else's gift(s), helps us recognize how others who have different gifts can also be involved in ministry, and prevents any tendency we may have to impose our gift(s) on them.

Spiritual Gifts and Ministry Potential

One of the problems people seem to have with spiritual gifts is confusing the *gift* which only certain people have with the *ministry* in which every Christian should be involved. Each of the nine task-oriented spiritual gifts is apparently related to a particular ministry in which all Christians should be involved. There is a natural tendency for one gifted in a certain area to also be deeply committed to a particular ministry pattern due to his or her effectiveness in exercising his or her gift in that area. It is important that we understand where the ministry bias of each member of the ministry team lies as we work with those gifted in different areas.

If you could gather nine people, each gifted in one of the nine task-oriented gifts, and ask them the question, "What is the most important ministry in our church?" you would likely get nine completely different responses.

Each person would likely identify an aspect of the church's ministry in which he or she is most effective. Of course every aspect of ministry is important and each gift can be used effectively as part of a ministry team in any of the other eight ministry areas. However, most Christians prefer to use their gift in the ministry that holds their greatest potential for growth and effectiveness. In light of our team approach to ministry, it is important to understand both (1) how other gifts can be used effectively in evangelism and (2) how we can use our gift of evangelism in other ministry areas.

Spiritual Gifts and the Ministry of Evangelism

While each person is uniquely gifted to be most effective in a particular ministry area, all Christians can use their giftedness in the ministry of evangelism. Few would dispute a role for those gifted in evangelism in the

ministry of evangelism. As one understands the process of evangelism more fully, it becomes clear that certain other gifts have a vital role if *TEAM Evangelism* is going to be most effective.

Since evangelism is the process by which the church reaches the world for Christ, everyone can and should be involved to some extent in that process. The aspect of evangelism in which we prove most effective is related to the particular gift we bring to this ministry. Some Christians have gifts which make them most effective in building relationships and bringing people to the point where they can make a decision for Christ. Others are gifted in ways that make them most effective in discipling new converts and assimilating them into the church. Still others contribute to evangelism by administering or underwriting the efforts of others on the team, thereby enabling evangelists to be most effective.

Christians gifted in serving contribute most as they build bridges and establish redemptive relationships. Others gifted in showing mercy are effective in using a personal testimony as part of a credible witness in evangelism. Those gifted in exhortation are most effective in stair-stepping others to Christ and salvation. Individuals gifted in prophecy are most effective in overcoming barriers to evangelism and reaching hard-to-reach people for Christ. Gifted teachers continue the evangelistic process by discipling new converts in the Christian life and witness. Gifted shepherds (pastors) tend to be the key to successfully assimilating new converts into the church. Still others who are gifted in administration are most effective in organizing outreach ministries of evangelism. Gifted givers can be effective in evangelism as they invest in opportunities that pay eternal dividends.

The Gift of Evangelism in Relation to Other Gifts and Ministries

Your gift of evangelism colors the way you look at other ministries. If you realize that your different perspective on the ministry is the result of a God-given gift, you do not need to be intimidated by others who appear more effective in certain ministry areas because of their unique giftedness. God will use someone gifted in an area that is most complementary to a particular ministry emphasis to make a good ministry better. But He will also use the rest of us to make that better ministry best.

As an evangelist, you can contribute a perspective to other areas of ministry that other Christians are likely to overlook. Using your gift to help others maximize the effectiveness of their giftedness will help you avoid falling into the trap of gift imposing – expecting others to exercise your gift rather than that which God has given them.

When a prophet involves you in social action, you can use your stand for a particular conviction as an opportunity to explain how the Gospel can change people and societies.

When a teacher involves you in team teaching, you can help make sure the Gospel is clearly communicated in the lesson.

When the exhorter involves you in team building, you can motivate others with an influx of new life into the group as you introduce them to new converts.

When the shepherd (pastor) involves you in team nurturing, you can help the flock develop a concern for the lost sheep in their sphere of influence.

When the mercy shower involves you in compassion ministries, you can help people find the real answers to their felt needs and root problems in a dynamic relationship with Christ.

When the server involves you in team ministry, you can use that ministry as an opportunity to build bridges and establish redemptive relationships.

When the giver involves you in financial aspects of the ministry, you can help evaluate the most cost-efficient means of reaching people for Christ.

When the administrator involves you in team leadership, you can keep the leadership team on track with your vision commitment or tendency to manage by objective.

God expects us as stewards of the resources He has entrusted us to know how to use our spiritual gifts as part of a ministry team. At times, you may be part of a highly specialized team launching a new evangelistic outreach. At other times, your perspective as an evangelist may be needed on a more balanced ministry team. Regardless of the situation we find ourselves in, it is important that we continue developing and using our giftedness in ministry to the glory of God.

Where Do I Go from Here?

This book has addressed several issues important to those who are gifted in evangelism and want to be good stewards of the spiritual gift God has entrusted to them. While I hope the reader has learned something that enhanced his or her understanding of the gift of evangelism, I never intended simply to produce a book to add to your sum total of knowledge on this subject. Rather, this book was produced as a tool to help you develop your giftedness in evangelism. Before you put this book on the shelf beside the others you may own, let's talk about making this book work for you!

Evangelism Is a Team Ministry

Too often, evangelism has been described as a ministry accomplished by an individual rather than a team. The Great Commission was given to the church because the Lord knew that the most effective evangelism involves many people in the process of disciple-making. The gifted evangelist can experience some success in reaching people for Christ through a solo approach to ministry, but the same evangelist becomes far more effective when he or she works with others in the context of *TEAM Evangelism*.¹

Because evangelism is a team ministry, it is imperative for you to be a part of a ministry team in your church where you can use your gift to reach others for Christ. For help in finding a suitable place of ministry, talk with your pastor about outreach opportunities in your church.

As you think of the opportunities available to those gifted in evangelism, you may be overwhelmed and find yourself saying, “But I can’t do that!” There are some things all of us find difficult. Rather than focusing on what you cannot do and becoming discouraged, consider what you can do. Remember, the key to effective ministry is to let Christ work in and through us to accomplish His purpose in the lives of others around us.

One thing you can do today is to begin listing people in your sphere of influence (friends, relatives, associates and neighbors) who to the best of your knowledge have never received Christ as personal Savior. Then add them to your prayer list and look for (1) way to demonstrate your interest in them as people through specific acts of kindness and (2) formal and informal opportunities to share the Gospel with them as they are ready to listen and respond.

You Can Become a Better Evangelist

One of the objectives of this book is to describe way you can become more effective in exercising of your spiritual gift. If you do not already have a plan that you can use comfortably to lead others to Christ, refer to **Chapter Two** and learn the approach given there for presenting the Gospel. Read and study that chapter until you can express the key concepts in your own words and can quote the key verses from memory. You may not always lead people to Christ the same way, but it is important to have a plan as you begin.

Once you are comfortable with your plan for presenting the Gospel, begin looking at other ways to win people to Christ. You can find alternative approaches to the Gospel in various Gospel tracts or by contacting ministries which specialize in the evangelization of specific classes of people (i.e. Jewish evangelism, Moslem evangelism, youth evangelism, etc.). Just as a fisherman has a tackle box full of lures for different types of fish and environments, so you will want to develop several ways of explaining the Gospel to different people.

Serving God in the power of God is important for every Christian regardless of their giftedness, but it is especially important for the lay evangelist. You will never be as effective as you can be if you attempt to do evangelism without the fullness of power God has provided for you. As you review **Chapter Three**, examine your own life and determine how you should respond in light of the biblical principles discussed.

If you have not already done so, you may want to enroll in a program of Scripture memory to increase your knowledge of the Bible and become more effective in reaching people for Christ. Information on developing your own

Scripture memory program or enrolling in other programs is includes in **Chapter Four**.

While the study of your gift is important, ultimately your effectiveness in ministry will only be realized as you exercise your gift in ministry. If you are not currently involved in a ministry where you can effectively use your gift of evangelism, take steps this week to find such a ministry opportunity. God may want to use you as part of a new ministry team in your church.

Additional Evangelism Resources Available

Part of this book has described specific ways of doing evangelism. There are many other ways to reach people for Christ that could not be included here due space limitations. I do not mean to imply that evangelistic strategies not specifically mentioned are in any way inferior to those discussed. As noted earlier, “There is no wrong way to win persons to Christ” as long as your method is biblically based.

Because there are many valid and effective ways to reach people for Christ, you will want to become better acquainted with different evangelistic strategies and ministries. As we approach the end of the second millennium, many churches, denominations, and interdenominational movements have begun looking at evangelism with a sense of renewed zeal and a dream of reaching the world for Christ. One of the spin-offs of this contemporary emphasis is a growing number of tools and strategies for evangelism. You may find some of these helpful in your own evangelistic ministry.

Church Growth Institute (CGI), the publisher of this book, is committed to helping people develop their spiritual gifts and equipping churches to reach their potential. CGI distributes several books dealing with evangelism and is committed to producing other resources to help churches effectively evangelize their communities. As you prepare a personal growth plan by which you can further develop your gift of evangelism, you may want to check a current catalogue to learn what specific evangelism resources are available.

FOOTNOTES

¹ *Team Evangelism* is described more fully by Larry Gilbert in *TEAM Evangelism: Giving New Meaning to Lay Evangelism* (Lynchburg, Virginia: Church Growth Institute, 1991).

APPENDIX ONE

Scripture on Evangelism

2 Timothy 4:5, But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

Ephesians 4:11, And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

1 Corinthians 14:12, Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

Ephesians 6:19-20, And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Acts 10:42, He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

James 5:19, Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Isaiah 58:1, Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

Matthew 28:19, Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

Acts 26:18, ...To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

John 3:16, For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 10:10b, I come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Romans 3:23, For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Romans 6:23, For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Proverbs 14:12, There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Isaiah 59:2, But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

1 Timothy 2:5, For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

John 14:6, Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 1:12, But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believeth on his name.

1 Peter 3:18a, For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.

Romans 5:18, But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Colossians 1:14, In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

2 Corinthians 5:21, For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Revelation 3:20, Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Romans 10:9, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Romans 10:13, For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

APPENDIX TWO

A Two-Year Plan To Begin Thinking Like an Evangelist

One of the things Jesus accomplished when He ascended into heaven was the granting of spiritual gifts to all Christians to be used in the ministry (Eph. 4:8). Specific spiritual gifts are identified by different names in Scripture. When the various biblical lists of spiritual gifts are examined, there appear to be three kinds of spiritual gifts. One group may be described as miraculous gifts or “signs and wonders.” This group includes gifts such as speaking in tongues and gifts of healing. Then there are four enabling gifts that each Christian appears to have to some degree. These include spiritual discernment, faith, knowledge and wisdom. These four gifts enhance a third group, the task-oriented spiritual gifts (TEAM Gifts). These task-oriented gifts are tools for effectiveness as part of the ministry team. Each of these nine tools for ministry is the subject of one of the books in this series on spiritual gifts.

Spiritual gifts are given to Christians for several reasons. They equip Christians with tools for effective outreach ministries (Eph. 4:12). These same tools equip Christians with the ability to edify, encourage, and care for fellow believers (Eph. 4:12). They also enable each Christian to contribute practically to the unity of the church (Eph. 4:13). Spiritual gifts provide the means by which Christians can experience their greatest personal fulfillment, that which comes from using their gifts in ministry to others (Rom. 12:4-8).

While the focus of this and other books in this series is spiritual gifts, it is important to remember that all gifts are given by the same Giver who distributes those gifts “to each one individually as He wills” (1 Cor. 12:11). When churches develop a gift-orientation to ministry, they recognize Christ’s authority as the head of their church to determine the nature of their ministry. Ultimately, the key to an effective gift-oriented ministry is not the gift, but the Giver. He determines who gets which gift and in doing so, He also designs the unique gift mix within each congregation to accomplish the specific ministry He intends for that church. That is why, despite the failings of the Corinthian church in many respects, Paul could affirm with confidence that they came “short in no gift” (1 Cor. 1:7). God gave them and us every gift we need to accomplish the ministry He wants us to accomplish.

Looking at Spiritual Gifts from the Perspective of the Giver

When Paul addressed the Corinthians on the subject of spiritual gifts, he used five different Greek words to describe the nature of these gifts (1 Cor. 12:1-7). Each term tends to emphasize a different aspect of our spiritual giftedness. Paul used the word *pneumatikon* that is translated “spiritual” (1

Cor. 12:1). This adjective describes the character of these gifts as spiritual. The second Greek word used was *charismata* that is usually translated “gifts” (1 Cor. 12:4). This term emphasizes gifts as God’s free and gracious gifts. The word *diakonia* is the third term used to describe gifts. This word is translated “ministries” (1 Cor. 12:5) and reveals gifts as opportunities for ministry. Fourth, the word *energema*, translated “activities” (1 Cor. 12:6), suggests that gifts are an endowment of God’s power or energy. The fifth the word used by Paul, *phanerosis*, translated “manifestation” (1 Cor. 12:7), means that gifts are evidence of God working through us.

That last word creates a problem for many Christians. If my spiritual gift is a manifestation of God working through me, it will be frustrated unless I get out of the way. God and the people He made have two different ways of thinking. Speaking on behalf of God, the prophet Isaiah wrote, “‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways’ says the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts’” (Isa. 55:8, 9). At some point in the development of our spiritual gifts, we need to begin thinking like the Giver of our gifts.

Paul understood this principle. Just before discussing spiritual gifts in his epistle to the Romans, he wrote, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2). The key to that renewing of our mind is found in saturating your mind with the Word of God. Paul urged the Colossians, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16). The psalmist wrote, “How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to your word. With my whole heart I have sought you; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against you” (Ps. 119:9-11).

A Two-Year Strategy to Begin Thinking Like God about Your Gift

In our hurry-up world many people look for quick solutions to fix problems, but learning to think like the Giver is a challenge bigger than can be accomplished in a weekend seminar or by reading a book or taking a course. The gap between our way of thinking and God’s way of thinking is so great it could take a lifetime to bridge. Even then we may discover we still have more to learn. But the more we allow God’s word to saturate our thinking process, the more inclined we will be to begin thinking like Him.

As you strive to begin thinking like God about your spiritual gift, there are two spiritual disciplines that will help you accomplish that goal. The first is the discipline of reading through the Bible. Christians who depend exclusively on the ministry of their pastor to teach them the Scriptures often end up with a

piece-meal understanding of the Scriptures. If a pastor preached on a different chapter each week, it would take him 1189 weeks to preach through the Bible (about twenty-three years and five months). Of course there are some chapters that might take several weeks to preach through and times when the pastor may choose to preach on some doctrine, problem, social issue or other topic. Most people don't stay in the same church long enough to understand their Bible using this approach exclusively. But despite the size and scope of the Bible, you can read it through your self in a year by devoting fifteen minutes daily to personal Bible reading. There are many "through the Bible" Bible reading guides published as tracts or special edition Bibles to help you accomplish this goal.

The second spiritual discipline to help you begin thinking about your gift from God's perspective is Scripture memory. While most people believe they cannot memorize, throughout history, this has been the most often used means of teaching the Scriptures. Even those who cannot read can memorize the Scriptures because it involves only two steps, repetition and review. To learn a new verse of chapter, continually repeat the verse until you can say it without error. Then to remember the verse, review it often on a regular basis. In the Old Testament, parents were encouraged to review the principles of the law they memorized with their children four times each day, "when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deut. 6:7). Regardless of our lifestyle we can still find time to repeat and review the Scriptures during our wait time and commute time and when we go to sleep and wake up each day.

One Hundred and Four Key Verses for Evangelists

To help you get started in your own personal spiritual gift development plan, the following list identifies one hundred and four key verses you can use in your evangelism ministry to explain the gospel to others. Don't let the list overwhelm you and don't try to memorize them all this evening. Instead, take the first verse and read it over until it becomes familiar. Set a goal to memorize that verse this week and begin thinking about how that verse relates to your giving ministry. Then review that verse daily for the next month, even as you begin learning the next verse on the list next week. At the end of the month, set the verse aside to be reviewed monthly so you don't forget it.

The following list does not include every verse related to your gift, but it will help you get started and develop this discipline over the next two years. You may come across other verses to add to the list as you read your Bible daily. In addition to changing the way you think about your gift, this plan will also help you experience accelerated spiritual growth. Peter understood the link between the Scriptures and spiritual growth when he wrote, "as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2). As you mature in Christ and begin thinking like God about your spiritual gifts you will find yourself using your gift with greater effectiveness in ministry.

In doing so you will also experience a greater sense of personal fulfillment as you serve God the way He designed you to serve Him.

1. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).
2. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23).
3. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name (John 1:12).
4. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me (Rev. 3:20).
5. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life (John 5:24).
6. Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned (Rom. 5:12).
7. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8).
8. That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. 10:9- 10).
9. For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13).
10. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).
11. He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him (John 3:36).
12. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God (Ps. 9:17).
13. For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2).
14. As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10-12).

15. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me (Ps. 51:5).
16. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek (Rom. 1:16).
17. Not by works of righteousness we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3:5).
18. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast (Eph. 2:8, 9).
19. There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death (Prov. 14:12).
20. The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you" (Jer. 31:3).
21. Then I will punish their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes (Ps. 89:32).
22. How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him (Heb. 2:3).
23. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53:6).
24. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear (Isa. 59:2)
25. So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31)
26. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in me has everlasting life (John 6:47).
27. Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon (Isa. 55:6, 7).
28. Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine; the soul who sins shall die (Ezek. 18:4).
29. There is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin (Eccl. 7:20).
30. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time (1 Tim. 2:5, 6).

31. Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).
32. Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).
33. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12).
34. "Come now, and let us reason together," says the LORD, "though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18).
35. Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins might live for righteousness – by whose stripes you were healed (1 Pet. 2:24).
36. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree") (Gal. 3:13).
37. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight – that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge (Ps. 51:4).
38. But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away (Isa. 64:6).
39. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit (1 Pet. 3:18).
40. So then each of us shall give account of himself to God (Rom. 14:12).
41. Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).
42. If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O LORD, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, that you may be feared (Ps. 130:3, 4).
43. I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes (Job 42:5, 6).
44. Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth (Prov. 27:1).
45. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mark 8:36).

46. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).
47. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out (John 6:37).
48. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil (John 3:19).
49. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? (Jer. 17:9).
50. For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns – broken cisterns that can hold no water (Jer. 2:13).
51. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed (Isa. 53:4, 5).
52. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all (James 2:10).
53. For your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my iniquity, for it is great (Ps. 25:11).
54. Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4).
55. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17).
56. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 5:9).
57. In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel (Rom. 2:16).
58. But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out (Num. 33:23).
59. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account (Heb. 4:13).
60. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Matt. 10:28).
61. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

62. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience (Col. 3:6).
63. Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away (James 4:14).
64. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him (1 John 4:9).
65. "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked" (Isa. 57:21).
66. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths (Prov. 3:5, 6).
67. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him (Ps. 32:10).
68. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20).
69. I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings (Jer. 17:10).
70. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:18).
71. I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud, your sins. Return to me, for I have redeemed you" (Isa. 44:22).
72. The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit (Ps. 34:18).
73. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:28, 29).
74. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them (Heb. 7:25).
75. That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world (Eph. 2:12).
76. Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it (Matt. 7:13-14).

77. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses (Col. 2:13).
78. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8).
79. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law (Rom. 3:28).
80. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture (John 10:9).
81. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life (1 John 5:12).
82. And you will seek me and find me, when you search for me with all your heart (Jer. 29:13).
83. He shall regard the prayer of the destitute, and shall not despise their prayer (Ps. 102:17)
84. He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy (Prov. 28:13).
85. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead (1 Pet. 4:5).
86. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your own mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled (Col. 1:21).
87. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15).
88. I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins (Isa. 43:25).
89. He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy (Prov. 29:1).
90. Therefore, to him who knows to do god and does not do it, to him it is sin (James 4:17).
91. He will not always strive with us, nor will he keep His anger forever (Ps. 103:9).
92. For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6).
93. They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work (Tit. 1:16).
94. But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not

- see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7).
95. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly (John 10:10).
 96. Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Gen. 6:5).
 97. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:20).
 98. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:1).
 99. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us (Ps. 103:12).
 100. The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe (Prov. 29:25).
 101. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope (Jer. 29:11).
 102. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends (John 15:13).
 103. Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it (1 Pet. 3:11).
 104. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Col. 1:13).