

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

AN ANALYSIS OF THE *FRIEND DAY* PROGRAM, WRITTEN BY ELMER TOWNS
AND PUBLISHED BY CHURCH GROWTH INSTITUTE, LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

A Thesis Project Submitted to Liberty
Baptist Theological Seminary in
partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

Rick L. Rasberry

Lynchburg, Virginia

April, 1995

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THESIS PROJECT APPROVAL SHEET

GRADE A-

MENTOR, Dr. Elmer Towns, Dean, School of Religion, Liberty University

READER, Dr. Sam Towns, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, Liberty University External Degree Program

READER, Dr. Robert T. Adkins, Dean, School of Business and Government, Liberty University

READER, Dr. Larry Gilbert, President, Church Growth Institute

ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF THE *FRIEND DAY* PROGRAM, WRITTEN BY ELMER TOWNS AND PUBLISHED BY CHURCH GROWTH INSTITUTE, LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

Rick L. Rasberry

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 1995

Mentor: Dr. Elmer L. Towns

The purpose of this project is to analyze the Friend Day evangelistic program, developed by Elmer Towns and published by Church Growth Institute, Lynchburg, Virginia. Through interviews, it traces the program's development. Through analysis of the program and research of literature in the areas of church growth and evangelism, it examines the theological presuppositions of friendship evangelism and discovers the principles of outreach employed in Friend Day. Based on questionnaires mailed to purchasers of the program, the project studies the strengths and weaknesses of Friend Day, and establishes that it is an exceptionally effective tool for local church evangelism.

CONTENTS

Chapter I. INTRODUCTION

The Basis for the Choice of the Topic
The Limitations of the Topic
The Methodology Employed in the Research
A Review of Selected Literature

Chapter II THE HISTORY OF FRIEND DAY

Relationship Evangelism in the Bible and the Early Church
The Development of the Concept by Wendell Zimmerman
The Refinement of the Concept by Elmer Towns
Conclusion

Chapter III. THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF FRIEND DAY

The Nature of Sin Suggests an Evangelism Strategy
The Nature of Salvation
The Foundation for the Task of Evangelism in the Nature of the Church
Spiritual Giftedness as Equipping for Evangelism
Conclusion

Chapter IV. PRINCIPLES OF EVANGELISM EMPLOYED IN FRIEND DAY

Types of Evangelism
Principles of Evangelism and Church Growth Conclusion

Chapter V. ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONWIDE FRIEND DAY SURVEY

Introduction
Rationale for the Questionnaire
Survey Results
Interpretation of Survey Results
Conclusion

Chapter VI. CONCLUSION

APPENDIX ONE

APPENDIX TWO

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

VITA

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This project will analyze the contemporary evangelistic event, Friend Day. The following questions will guide the research, and their answers will become the basis for any conclusions that are reached:

1. What is Friend Day, and what is the history of its development?
2. What is the underlying theology of Friend Day?
3. What principles of evangelism and church growth are employed in Friend Day?
4. What appear to be the strengths and weaknesses of Friend Day, as indicated by the responses of a survey of churches that have used it?

These questions guided the research for the main areas of concern. The answer to question one is found in chapter two. The answer to question two is found in chapter three. The answer to question three is found in chapter four. The answer to question four is found in chapter five. It is assumed that satisfactory answers to these questions will complete this study.

I. The Basis for the Choice of Topic

This topic has been chosen for several reasons. First, the author was introduced to the Friend Day concept when invited to attend a Friend Day at the Florence Baptist Temple of Florence, South Carolina, in 1974. The success of the idea was apparent in the large and enthusiastic crowd, the number of church members who had brought friends to the service, and the professions of faith seen at the Baptist Temple. (Later the author will demonstrate the development of Friend Day by Dr. Elmer Towns, Dean, School of Religion, Liberty University.

While doing research for the book Getting a Church Started in the Face of Insurmountable Odds with limited Resources in Unlikely Circumstances¹, Towns visited the Florence Baptist Temple.

Perhaps their use of Friend Day arose from that association.)

As Associate Pastor of Collinswood Baptist Church, Portsmouth, Virginia, the writer examined and had the church purchase a Friend Day resource packet from Church Growth Institute. Unfortunately, the church soon afterward went through a split and the program was never used.

In December 1991, the author began working part-time as a seminar manager for Church Growth Institute. The job involves traveling to Church Growth seminars conducted by Dr. Elmer Towns to set up, conduct registration, and sell Church Growth Institute resource materials to attending churches. In his seminars, Towns presented Friend Day to the audiences. The author has heard this presentation many times. In addition, he has had the opportunity at the resource table to speak with attendees who have successfully used Friend Day. These impromptu interviews, coupled with Towns' teaching on it, have prompted the author to further explore the concept of Friend Day.

In addition to his growing familiarity with Friend Day, the author chose this topic in the hope of becoming better equipped to help build the local church. Whether as a pastor or in consultation with churches using Church Growth Institute resources, the author feels that the knowledge gained in this research will give him a valuable contribution to make to evangelistic outreach.

Thirdly, this topic was chosen in hopes of making a contribution to the field of church growth. While Friend Day is an excellent tool for evangelism and church growth, many churches have not made use of it. Some are simply not aware of it. It is hoped that this project

will increase familiarity, and therefore the use of Friend Day. A second reason for some not using Friend Day is the lack of success that some have had in using it. It is again hoped that this project will demonstrate statistically the value of using Friend Day when each step of the program is followed carefully. A third reason some have not used Friend Day has been hesitance to employ a program used by other congregations in the same vicinity. It is hoped that this project will demonstrate the value of every church using Friend Day.

The fourth reason for the choice of this topic is the primacy of the Great Commission. If one agrees, as this author does, that the measure of a church's success is how faithfully it has sought to help fulfill the Great Commission, then no project could be more important than one which can help churches evangelize more effectively.

II. The Limitations of the Project

A project of this scope could be as broad as the church's outreach; therefore, the author will need to specify the limitations that give focus to the project.

First, the project is not concerned with the weekly endeavors of Christians to invite visitors to Sunday School and church. While such activities are important, they are not the focus of this study. Rather, this project is an analysis of a specific evangelistic program, Friend Day, written by Elmer Towns and copyrighted by Church Growth Institute in 1983.

Second, the project is not concerned with evaluating similar programs of relationship evangelism produced by individual churches, denominations, or other organizations.

Third, the project is not an attempt to rewrite or improve Friend Day; it is simply an analysis of it. If that analysis leads to applications that make Friend Day even more successful, or results in the development of a new evangelistic resource, the author will be gratified, but that is not his focus.

The focus of this study is reflected in the questions raised at the beginning of this chapter. The issues that are not raised by these questions are outside the focus of this study. When the author has adequately answered these questions, the project will have reached a successful conclusion.

III. The Methodology Employed in the Research

Several avenues of research are employed in this project. First, biblical and theological works have been consulted to examine the theological basis of friendship evangelism as applied in Friend Day. Second, church growth literature, particularly the works of Elmer Towns, author of the Friend Day program, were surveyed to determine which church growth principles and methods are utilized in Friend Day. Third, interviews were conducted with Elmer Towns (author of Friend Day), Larry Gilbert (president of Church Growth Institute), and Jerry Falwell (who for a year was on the pastoral staff of the church where Friend Day originated) to learn the history of the development of the Friend Day concept and the Friend Day resource packet. Fourth, a questionnaire was mailed to 5000 purchasers of the Friend Day resource to determine the results achieved with the employment of Friend Day.

A computer search for related material proved not to be helpful. Using “friend,” “friend day,” “friend evangelism” and similar key words for the search produced a list of a number of works concerning the Quakers and evangelistic work by them, but nothing germane to this study. This was not surprising. When Church Growth Institute sought to go beyond copyright and to register the name Friend Day in the Office of Patents in the Library of Congress, the request was denied because the name is too generic to be registered and owned by one organization. For the same reason, the computer search was not useful in this study.

IV. A Review of Selected Literature

Engel, James F. and Wilbert Norton. What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest? Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975.

This presents an excellent argument for the importance of cultivating receptivity for the gospel. Engel provides the definitive scale for measuring a person's degree of openness to spiritual matters.

Gilbert, Larry. Team Ministry. Lynchburg: Church Growth Institute, 1987.

Gilbert provides practical teaching on nine serving gifts, rather than attempting another delineation of all the gifts of the Spirit. He not only defines these gifts, but suggests how they might be exercised in the church today.

_____. Team Evangelism. Lynchburg: Church Growth Institute, 1991.

Gilbert here applies his TEAM concept of ministry to evangelism, showing how those who do not have the spiritual gift of evangelism can exercise the gifts they do have to help maximize their church's evangelistic fruitfulness.

Towns, Elmer, with John Vaughan and David Seifert. The Complete Book of Church Growth. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1981.

Large and thorough, this book offers a number of case studies of dynamic, growing churches and an analysis of different approaches to church growth. Proponents of various schools of church growth present their own principles and methodologies.

_____. A Practical Encyclopedia of Evangelism and Church Growth. Lynchburg: Liberty University, 1994.

This volume offers an exhaustive treatment of the principles of evangelism and church growth. It is scholarly, defining each principle, but also practical, instructing the reader how to employ the principles for making outreach more effective.

_____. Winning the Winnable: Friendship Evangelism. Lynchburg: Church Growth Institute, 1986.

This small volume is one of Towns' best. He presents cogent arguments for the primacy of relationship evangelism and offers down-to-earth insights for effectively implementing it.

Wagner, C. Peter. Leading Your Church to Growth. Ventura: Regal Books, 1984.

Wagner makes clear in this work the importance of strong pastoral leadership for church growth. He is balanced, presenting also the need for pastors to multiply their effectiveness by training able lay leadership.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORY OF FRIEND DAY

I. Relationship Evangelism in the Bible and the Early Church

The history of Friend Day goes back to the pages of the Old Testament. Moses, instructing the priests concerning their duty to teach the law, commanded, “Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law” (Deuteronomy 31:12). Moses made it clear that the word of God was to be taught, not only to the household of Israel, but also to “thy stranger that is within thy gates,” that is, to the gentiles who lived among them but were not related to God by covenant. These gentiles were also, first, to hear the word of God; second, to learn the word of God (as it was made plain by the teachers); third, as a result, to fear God; and, fourth, to obey God. Thus, the people of God were to bring into their assemblies their neighbors who were unbelievers, who would there be taught the word of God with the goal of bringing them into the covenant. This use of existing relationships to bring people to God is the principle underlying Friend Day.

The concept underlying Friend Day is also seen in operation in the New Testament. In the first chapter of John (1:29-51), after Andrew and John were pointed to Jesus by John the Baptist, each of them invited one close to him (Andrew, his brother Simon, and John, his brother James) to come and see Jesus for himself. Later in the same chapter, after Philip became a follower of Jesus, he invited his friend Nathanael to also come and see for himself whether Jesus were the promised Messiah. In each of these instances, one who was a believer used an existing relationship, whether kinship or friendship, to “bridge” another person to a relationship with Jesus.

This concept was also instrumental in the development of the early church. In Acts 10, when Peter came to preach the gospel to Cornelius, he found that Cornelius had gathered together in his house many of his relatives and friends so that they, too, might hear the message.

As a result of Cornelius' invitation, they heard and believed as well. A similar manifestation of the principle is seen in Acts 16. When the fearful jailor in Philippi perceived that Paul and Silas were the messengers of salvation, he took them to his home, where they could proclaim the message to "all that were in his house" (Acts 16:32). As a result, not only the jailor, but also all of his household were saved.

This "friendship evangelism" concept--using existing relationships as bridges for sharing the gospel--appears to have continued as the primary method for the advancement of the church beyond the New Testament era. In Eerdmans' Handbook to the History of Christianity, Michael A. Smith notes that, while public preaching, Christian literature, and other such methods were used in evangelism, personal witness "...was by far the most common method of evangelism used by Christians, because it was the easiest to organize. Personal friendship formed the basis for bringing many people to Christ."²

II. The Development of the Friend Day Concept by Wendell Zimmerman

Probably, the beginning of Friend Day is recognized among independent Baptists as being a contest that was developed in the 1950's by Dr. Wendell Zimmerman, who was pastor of Kansas City Baptist Temple.³ Wendell Zimmerman founded Kansas City Baptist Temple (Kansas City, Missouri), which ultimately became one of the largest churches in America. Rather than being a neighborhood church or having a traditional ministry of worship and Bible teaching, this church was known for its strong "platform" ministry, that is, the strong evangelistic preaching from the platform by Dr. Zimmerman and other noted preachers he brought to the church to proclaim the gospel. Dr. Zimmerman conducted a number of special events, also known as "big days," for which he would have special speakers, politicians to give testimonies, and noted personalities to draw a crowd. Hence, the church had a reputation of

bringing in lost people and presenting the gospel, resulting in a strong invitational appeal whereby the unsaved were invited to come forward and receive Jesus Christ as their Savior.

In this evangelistic setting, Dr. Zimmerman had a number of days such as “Harvest Day,” “Police Day” (when police officers were invited to come to the church and gifts were given to them), “Anniversary Day,” and “Patriotism Day.” The best known of these was simply called “Friend Day.” For this day, Dr. Zimmerman would exhort his people for several weeks in advance to bring their friends on the designated day. On that day, the friends were honored and friendship was celebrated.

The first appeal of Friend Day was that Dr. Zimmerman had “sign-up cards” he asked his members to use to get a written commitment from their friends to attend on the special day.

A second strength of Zimmerman’s Friend Day was the attraction of the platform. He would usually bring in a guest speaker and guest musicians to attract larger crowds.

Zimmerman’s third appeal was offering gifts to those who visited the church for Friend Day. A gift might be a “twin” candy bar, Popsicle, or a similar type of gift that could be shared; duplicate gifts, such as two bookmarks that were printed together but could be detached or two Bible markers for reading through the Scriptures; or non-theme gifts such as flowers for the ladies and boutonnieres for the men. These gifts were to enhance the personal invitation given by each member.

Although Dr. Zimmerman held the event annually, he sometimes used titles other than “Friend Day” for it, such as “Twin Day” and “Double Day.” While the title might change, the strategy for success was constant.⁴

During his senior year at Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri (1955-1956), Jerry Falwell served as pastor of the college and career age single adults under Wendell

Zimmerman at Kansas City Baptist Temple. He recalls their use of Friend Day the spring of 1956:

Cards were printed to give to everyone who wanted to bring friends. The concept was that every person in the church brings at least a friend. No one comes without at least a friend. But if you brought a certain number of friends... you got a certain gift from the church.... The person or three persons who brought the most visitors received a very nice gift.... All we talked about for a couple of months was Friend Day. Banners were up everywhere.

Sunday School was the emphasis, by the way.... You had to bring your friend to Friend Day Sunday School, and then you were commissioned to bring that person into the preaching service, sit with them, and, at the invitation when the sermon was preached ... encourage some of them to come forward and receive the Lord.

That was my first exposure to Friend Day. I brought it to Thomas Road Baptist Church the next year, because I started Thomas Road Baptist Church in June of '56, and we had a Friend Day the next spring.... It is a great means of introducing lost people to Christ. They will come with you, as your friend, as a favor to you, one time.⁵

In 1968, Wendell Zimmerman left Kansas City and assumed the pastorate of the Jacksonville Baptist Temple in Jacksonville, Florida.⁶ He was succeeded as pastor of Kansas City Baptist Temple by Truman Dollar. Dollar continued the tradition of Friend Day with great success, setting an all-time high attendance record of 1,883 on the first Friend Day the church held after he became pastor.⁷ The new pastor made some modifications to Friend Day at Kansas City. He added a strong political connotation, moving Friend Day to the fall in order to conduct it close to election time. He began inviting notable politicians to be his guests for Friend Day, capitalizing on their recognizability from their own election campaigns. Dollar at first invited politicians running for local office; later, he expanded his influence and invited state senators and the governor; still later, he set his sights on Washington, D.C., inviting congressmen from

his state to be his friends for Friend Day. Under Dollar's influence, Friend Day grew larger every year, to the point that someone remarked that it resembled a Democratic primary (because Dollar's inclinations were more Democrat than Republican).⁸

III. The Refinement of the Friend Day Concept by Elmer Towns

After his book The Ten Largest Sunday Schools and What Makes Them Grow⁹ was published by Baker Book House in 1969, Towns was invited to speak on Sunday School growth at a number of local churches, as well as state and denominational Sunday School conventions. His travels took him to many churches of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, where he saw and experienced Friend Day. He interviewed Wendell Zimmerman regarding his use of the concept, and began encouraging other churches he visited to also have a Friend Day. To follow through on his suggestion, he began conducting a seminar for Sunday School workers on the topic, "How to Double Your Attendance." In this seminar, he detailed for his students a chronological sequence of what they had to do to plan a Friend Day. He also added this information to his class lectures at Liberty Baptist College, Lynchburg, Virginia; Baptist University of America, Atlanta, Georgia; and Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, Virginia. When Towns published The Successful Sunday School and Teachers Guidebook¹⁰ in 1976, he included material describing Friend Day, although in the first edition he did not give instructions on how to conduct a Friend Day.

In approximately 1980, Dr. Towns coined the phrase, "the Law of Seven Touches" (a person will respond to a church and make a decision to bond with it after having been contacted by that church approximately seven times). At first, Towns indicates that he could not empirically demonstrate the Law of Seven Touches; it was simply the result of his observation as he visited and studied various churches. He began incorporating this "law" into his teaching on

Friend Day, telling his students that the secret of Friend Day was not merely getting visitors to church for the platform ministry, but following up every first-time visitor at least seven different times.

Towns took the idea of Friend Day and added several innovations. First, he suggested that the pastor, rather than a guest speaker, preach the message on Friend Day, because Towns observed that people who made the decision to join a church under the pastor's preaching ministry were more likely to continue than those who joined because of the influence of a guest speaker (whom they would not be hearing in succeeding weeks).

Second, Towns indicated that the giving of gifts as incentives to attend on Friend Day could be discontinued. It was his observation that the gift was not a determining factor in getting the friend to visit the church nor in his decision to join the church. In addition, during the 1970's there was a move in Sunday School away from contests (giving gifts to attract people to Sunday School) and toward campaigns (assigning responsibility and maintaining accountability as a means of getting Sunday School pupils to bring visitors). Therefore, Towns' suggestion of dropping gifts as incentives was in keeping with a trend.

Third, Towns formalized and systematized the follow-up after Friend Day. In his observations of churches using Friend Day, he had seen little follow-up of those who visited on the special day. Those churches that had active visitation programs followed up these visitors as part of their on-going evangelistic efforts; those churches that did not have active visitation programs did little or nothing with the prospects garnered by the Friend Day event. Therefore, Towns introduced the Law of Seven Touches, spelling out how prospects could be "touched" (i.e., contacted by the church) seven times after they had visited for Friend Day: *one*, a phone call from the pastor on Sunday afternoon; *two*, a letter from the pastor mailed on Sunday

afternoon, to be received by the visitor on Monday; *three*, a phone call from the church secretary to set an appointment for a visit in the prospect's home by someone from the church; *four*, a letter from the secretary confirming the appointment and giving further information concerning the visit; *five*, a phone call to the prospect on the day of the appointment; *six*, the appointment itself, and *seven*, a phone call to the prospect the following Saturday evening.

The fourth innovation Towns added was the Friend Day resource packet, published by Church Growth Institute. In 1983, Dr. Towns was invited to share Friend Day with the Sunday School workers at the First Southern Baptist Church of Dell City, Oklahoma, where Bailey Smith was pastor. At the time, the church was averaging 4,000 in Sunday School attendance and was recognized as one of the aggressive churches of the Southern Baptist Convention. The educational director, William Bryan, had an artist draw the first picture of "Friendly Freddy," the mascot for Friend Day, basing the drawing on a photograph Dr. Towns showed the workers at First Southern Baptist Church of a father and son attending Friend Day at Heritage Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia. "Friendly Freddy" appears on the artwork which Towns included in the Friend Day resource packet. This resource packet is actually a kit, including masters of the posters, letterheads, commitment cards, Sunday School lessons, etc., needed for conducting Friend Day, as well as giving detailed instructions for the preparation for the event and techniques for the follow-up of those who attend the special day. All the material in the packet is easily reproducible, so that a copying machine becomes one of the greatest tools for making Friend Day successful.

Regarding the development of the Friend Day resource packet, Larry Gilbert recalls:

Towns had been teaching Friend Day in his seminars, and he had a one-page handout that he gave which laid out, very simply, what to do, and then, after you held Friend Day, what to do. He had four lessons that he

had written on friendship (those are the lessons that are in the Friend Day resource packet now). He would say to people, “Look, if you’ll write my office and send \$2.00, I’ll send you the notes on Friend Day.” Well, that’s what it was, it was just a one-page outline of what to do over the four weeks, and what to do to follow up, and the four lessons....

He gave it to me [with William Bryan’s artwork].... In the early 80’s, we were still fighting this gimmick [thing]: come to Sunday School, watch the Sunday School superintendent or pastor swallow a frog, or preach from the rooftop, or swallow a goldfish, and somehow balloons seemed to be the symbol of it. Bill Bryan gave us the right to use that artwork, but I didn’t like this gimmicky balloon thing, so I took it and re-did the artwork and gave Freddy a Bible. Instead of holding a bunch of balloons, he’s now holding a Bible, which is a little more appropriate for going to Sunday School.

I took those three pieces and [put together the resource packet]. I put the whole calendar together, did the posters.... [I asked myself], if I were going to do a Friend Day, what would I do? So I put down all the details ... everything, and when it needed to be done. Then I put in the promotional section, which we said was reproducible....¹¹

Concerning the importance of having a step-by-step resource packet, Towns has observed that about five percent of pastors are creative and can imagine a program, put it into a strategy, develop the resources, and put it all into effect. Ten percent of pastors cannot create a program, but, once given an idea, can fill in the details and work out the strategy. Eighty-five percent of pastors can neither create an idea for a program nor formulate a strategy once given an idea; they need a complete packet like the Friend Day resource packet. While these percentages cannot be verified, the fact that most pastors need an entire program laid out for them has been verified by the success of such programs when they have been made available.

A fifth innovation added by Towns was the preparation for the big event. Towns felt that Friend Day succeeds, not because of marketing and advertisement, but because of the dynamics

of friendship, so he added the strategy of the four-week preparation for the special day. On the fourth Sunday prior to Friend Day, the pastor will hold up before his congregation a letter from a prominent individual who has promised to attend that day as the pastor's friend. This gives the pastor credibility before his people. On the third Sunday before Friend Day, the members of the church board will stand before the congregation with letters or postcards from individuals who have promised to attend as their friends, again giving credibility to the leadership as well as serving as an example to the other members of the congregation. Two Sundays before the special day, Sunday School teachers should all stand before the congregation, each holding a postcard from someone who promises to attend on Friend Day. On the Sunday before the big day, every individual in the church service is to stand and display a postcard from his friend who will join him for Friend Day. Towns called this concept "creek jumping," the analogy being that, just as a person must get a running start in order to jump a creek (and the wider the creek, the more speed the jumper needs to have), so a church must start in advance to "get up speed" for a successful Friend Day.¹²

In the fall of 1981, Towns was teaching a class in Sunday School administration at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in which an incident occurred which influenced the development of Friend Day. One of the students in the class was Reverend Rod Kidd, who pastored the Heritage Baptist Church, which at the time was averaging 83 in attendance and was meeting in a convenience store building on Lakeview Drive in Lynchburg, Virginia. After explaining the concept to the class, Towns turned to Kidd and said, "You ought to have a Friend Day in your church." Kidd's honest reaction was that his church did not have the platform necessary to attract a crowd. Towns proceeded to explain that Friend Day is not a platform program and gave illustrations of the success of other churches that had used it. Kidd's response

was, “I think it will work at my church. I will have a Friend Day if you will come and be my friend.” Towns agreed, and also agreed to write Kidd a letter promising to come.

Rod Kidd read the letter to his congregation, announcing that the well-known authority on the Sunday School would be his friend for Friend Day. This generated excitement among his small congregation. The following week, the five deacons of Heritage Baptist Church each read to the congregation a letter from a friend who promised to attend on Friend Day. The next Sunday, each of the church’s eight Sunday School teachers stood before the congregation with a postcard signed by a friend who was promising to come to their church for Friend Day. On the fourth week, Kidd gathered commitment cards from all those who were attending.

On the Sunday prior to their Friend Day, Heritage Baptist Church moved into their new facilities on Breezewood Drive in Lynchburg, Virginia. Their new auditorium, which would seat 200, still needed a few finishing touches, and the parking lot was paved only with gravel, but the church members were eager to hold Friend Day in their new location. During class at Liberty on the Friday before the big day, Dr. Towns asked Rod Kidd how many the pastor anticipated would attend his church that weekend. Kidd was uncertain, but indicated that they had cards and letters from 167 friends who had promised to attend.

Towns immediately thought that not all 167 people, in addition to the 83 regular attendees, would show up for Friend Day, so he asked whether Kidd would be happy if a total of 150 were in attendance for Friend Day. Kidd’s response was, “I’ll be happy if we have 100!” The church had never had that many in attendance in its existence. Understandably, excitement was hard to contain as Friend Day drew a record-breaking 237 people to the worship service of the young church.

Dr. Towns' wife, Ruth, also wanted to bring a friend when she attended Friend Day with her husband, so she invited Kathy Burley, a co-worker.¹³ Kathy Burley attended with Mrs. Towns on Friend Day, and during the following week, the church employed the Law of Seven Touches in its follow-up, following Dr. Towns' instructions. Pastor Kidd's wife phoned every visitor. The pastor personally visited in the home of each first-time visitor who was not known to already be active in another church. (These visits were actually completed over the course of the following two weeks.) On the afternoon of their Friend Day, a letter from Pastor Kidd was sent to everyone who had visited that morning. Every Sunday School teacher wrote a letter, phoned, and made a visit to each person who had visited his class. All who brought guests for Friend Day were encouraged to make three follow-up contacts as well, by phone, postcard, and personal visit.

On the Sunday following Friend Day, Kathy Burley attended Heritage on her own. Pastor Kidd asked her for permission to visit her in her home, and the following evening he led both Kathy and her husband Mike to professions of faith in Christ.

Kathy Burley had been raised in a non-church family, but during her teenage years had visited churches of various denominations. She knew very little about church procedures. About two weeks after her conversion, she asked Mrs. Towns, "Why do Christians do such strange things?" Mrs. Towns assumed Kathy was referring to matters of separation from sin, but that was not the issue. Kathy explained that, since she and her husband had gotten saved, they were receiving letters almost every other day from some person in the church; that, since attending Friend Day, they had received a phone call from someone in the church almost every other night; and that, since Friend Day, people from the church always seemed to be coming to their home. She asked, "Do we have to write and phone and visit like that now that we are

Christians?” Mrs. Towns explained to Kathy the concept of follow-up. Heritage Baptist Church’s use of those follow-up principles bore fruit in the Burley family. Her husband’s involvement at Heritage Baptist Church remained only casual, but Kathy became a faithful member and Sunday School teacher.

Dr. Towns has used this story to motivate many other churches to use Friend Day and to employ the Law of Seven Touches in follow-up. By his own estimation, he has taught Friend Day to representatives of over 30,000 churches over the past twelve years. ¹⁴

IV. Conclusion

Since the development of the resource packet, over 26,000 churches have purchased Friend Day from Church Growth Institute.¹⁵ According to a National Evangelism Survey conducted in 1994, forty-five percent of clergy who responded had used Friend Day in the previous three years, nine percent use it as one of their one or two primary evangelistic tools, and overall it was rated as the second most effective evangelistic effort or event used in their churches.¹⁶ Obviously, Friend Day has enjoyed wide success. When asked to evaluate why Friend Day is so successful, Gilbert notes that the program employs five basic church growth principles:

Principle number one is *the principle of the evangelistic event....* Everybody knows Bill Hybels and they know about his seeker service.... The seeker service is not the principle that has built Bill Hybels’ church. The seeker service is the methodology. The principle behind the methodology, the principle that drives the methodology, is the evangelistic event, an event that is geared toward unsaved, unchurched people; an event where you do everything you can to not offend them, but to appeal to them and to get them to come back, to make them feel comfortable.... That’s all an evangelistic event is.... Not everyone can use Hybels’ methodology, but everyone can use the very same principle that drives it.

Principle number two ... is *the principle of existing relationships*. Churches that are growing today are churches that are reaching out through existing relationships, through their extended families.... Friend Day utilizes the principle, it sends friends out to reach friends; it sends friends out to reach people they care about....

Number three ... is *the principle of saturation*.... Friend Day is successful because we say, "Every time you have a service, have special prayer, designate a person to come forward and have special prayer just for Friend Day...." Some churches have all-night prayer meetings the night before.... Some churches have a prayer committee along the way. You're turning all these names in as you collect the cards, and the prayer committee are praying for all these people.... Everywhere you can tie prayer into this thing, it's saturating.... Along the way you write letters, not a few, but many letters. When it's over, you write more letters, and you make phone calls, and you visit all these people. And it's saturating the elements of what you're doing.

The fourth principle is *the principle of work force economics*.... Friend Day does not involve sending everybody out to be soul-winners; it doesn't send everybody out knocking on doors. It uses people in allowing them to use the gifts that God has given them.

The last principle is the principle of balanced ministry, which we say is leadership, bonding, involvement and evangelism.¹⁷

Towns suggests six further reasons for the success of Friend Day:

First, the principles that made Friend Day successful are biblical. Second, the strategy was understandable by the common lay people. Third, the strategy was believable, i.e., people believed it would work. Fourth, the credibility of Heritage Baptist Church, Jerry Falwell and Wendell Zimmerman gave a practical role model to what was presented. Fifth, the people were searching for a tool that would work rather than giving away prizes in Sunday School contests. Sixth, it reflects the influence of boomers who look to relationships as a judge of one's spirituality and express their outreach in life-style evangelism.¹⁸

While Friend Day has been successful, its development is not over. According to Larry Gilbert, Church Growth Institute is still responding to market feedback from churches that use Friend Day, and in the fall of 1995 will introduce a newly-revised Friend Day resource packet. It is his hope, like that of Dr. Towns, that Friend Day will in the future be an even more widely-used tool for bringing the lost to know Christ and to be united with His visible church.¹⁹

CHAPTER THREE

THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF FRIEND DAY

The Friend Day resource packet developed by Elmer Towns and published and distributed by Church Growth Institute has been purchased by over 26,000 churches, according to the records of Church Growth Institute.²⁰ In a nation-wide evangelism survey conducted by Christianity Today in cooperation with the Church Growth Institute, Friend Day was rated the second most effective evangelism effort or event used.²¹ Is the effectiveness of Friend Day in local church evangelism and outreach based on methodology and pragmatism, or does it have its roots in biblical theology and strategy? This chapter will examine the theological basis for evangelism in general, for friendship evangelism in particular, and how one's theology affects the adoption and implementation of friendship evangelism, particularly as embodied in Friend Day. It is not the purpose of this chapter to discuss the various approaches to theology, such as Calvinism and Arminianism, nor is it the intent of this chapter to survey the relationship of evangelism and theology, or of friendship evangelism and theology; only those aspects of theology relating to Friend Day will be examined.

This chapter will examine four aspects of the theological foundation of friendship evangelism: *first*, the nature of sin and its impact on people, i.e., revealing that one of the

essential results of sin is that people are alienated from one another as well as from God (because Friend Day assumes it is necessary to establish a relationship with alienated people before they can be won to Christ); *second*, the nature of salvation, i.e., that salvation begins with conviction by the Holy Spirit that motivates the sinner to seek God, and results in the convert's being given a new nature, justified, and given a new standing with God (because Friend Day assumes a person is motivated to salvation by relationships); *third*, the nature of the church includes the foundation for the task of evangelism, to "make disciples of all nations" (because Friend Day assumes a process is involved in discipling people to Jesus Christ); and *fourth*, the doctrine of spiritual gifts teaches the inter-related tasks of different gifted people who cooperate to bring unsaved people to know Jesus Christ (because Friend Day assumes that each person in the church can contribute to reaching the lost by the exercise of his own spiritual giftedness).

1. The Nature of Sin Suggests an Evangelism Strategy

There are many ways to define sin. The classic definition is found in the Larger Westminster Catechism: "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature."²² This statement indicates that the nature of sin is breaking one's relationship to God by breaking His laws or by not living up to them. The issue of alienation, i.e., broken relationships with God and others, is studied here because of its implication for Friend Day. Boice speaks of the impact of sin on the nature of man:

In the area of the spirit the effect of Adam's sin was instantaneous and total. When the spirit died, communication with God was broken. Adam proved it by running away when God came to him in the garden. In contemporary language this is described as alienation, alienation from God, and it is the first result of that spiritual death which came to us as the result of sin....

Sin has also affected us in the area of intellect.... [Paul denies] that we have understanding in spiritual things apart from the working of the Spirit of God who alone

gives understanding. That is expressed in 1 Corinthians as “the unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14).

The third area affected by the death of the spirit is our will.... It is referred to in the sentence “no one seeks for God.” The meaning is that not only are we incapable of coming to God because of our sin and his righteousness, and incapable of understanding him because his way can be discerned only by the aid of the Spirit of God, but in addition we don’t even want to come to God.²³

From man’s vantage point, his alienation from God is irreparable, because of his inability to understand his dilemma or seek after God. God determined, however, to address this need by providing His Son to be the reconciliation between God and His estranged creature. When God the Son became flesh, He presented Himself on the cross and arose from the grave to eliminate the sin that had erected between God and man an impenetrable wall.

There are four ways that God dealt with this alienation. First, the death of Christ was vicarious. He gave Himself and His perfect holiness in the place of man, who now possessed only sinfulness and was thus unable to be reconciled to a holy God. Christ, who was without sin, became “sin for us ... that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Second, He became the propitiation for “the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). As propitiation, His death “fully satisfied all the righteous demands of God toward the sinner... God is propitiated--His holiness is vindicated and satisfied by the death of Christ.”²⁴

Third, because of His vicarious, propitiatory sacrifice, Christ can offer to man justification. Justification “is a forensic (legal) act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous on the basis of the blood of Christ. The major emphasis of justification is positive and involves two main aspects. It involves the pardon and removal of all sins and the

end of separation from God.”²⁵ Because of Christ’s vicarious, propitiatory, justifying work, reconciliation is possible. Enns defines reconciliation as “God removing the barrier of sin, producing peace and enabling man to be saved.”²⁶ God, from whom man was by his sinfulness alienated, took the initiative to make reconciliation possible.

Fourth, God also takes the initiative to enable man to respond to the offer of reconciliation. For one to respond and be reconciled to God, he must first be aware of his alienation and he must also be aware of the offer of reconciliation that is being made. Evangelism is the means chosen by God to make alienated man aware of his need and of the offer of reconciliation, and also to give man the opportunity to accept the offer. Towns, in Church Growth: The State of the Art, defines evangelism as “Proclaiming the Good News (gospel) of salvation by grace through faith toward the goal of making disciples of Jesus Christ, resulting in their incorporation into the church.”²⁷ The goal of evangelism is the reconciliation of the sinner to God, signified by the convert’s incorporation into the church, which is the body of Christ. Friendship evangelism seeks to bring man to this point of understanding and acceptance of reconciliation by addressing a second result of sin in his life: alienation from other people.

When God confronted Adam and Eve after they had eaten of the forbidden fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, Adam attempted to justify himself by shifting the blame to Eve (and to God for giving her to him). Eve, in turn, tried to shift the focus of blame to the serpent. In commenting on this, Boice focuses on the further impact of sin on man:

The point is that shifting the blame is typical of the sinful nature and illustrates what happens once the connection with God has been broken. God is the source of all good (Jas. 1:17). When the connection with God is broken, irresponsibility, cowardice, lying, jealousy, hatred and every other evil descend on the race. To put the situation

into contemporary terminology as we did when we spoke of alienation, we could say that we are dealing with moral and psychological *decay*.

But there is more. Personal decay inevitably has social implications. Thus a further result of the Fall is *conflict*. Was the relationship between Adam and Eve as harmonious after Adam had tried to blame his wife for the Fall as beforehand? Of course not. That was the beginning of marital conflict. Similarly, the wish to blame others, self-interest and desire for self-advancement produce conflict between individuals, races, social stratifications, institutions and nations.²⁸

In other words, just as sin brought alienation from God, it also brought alienation from one's fellow man. In friendship evangelism, Christians seek to build relationships with unsaved people, in a real sense allowing the love of God within the Christian to heal the social rift between them and to bring reconciliation between man and man. This interpersonal, social reconciliation becomes a bridge by which the unsaved friend may be led to the point of reconciliation with God.

The Single Adult and the Church was Elmer Towns' first attempt to deal with this concept. In it, he defines the nature of spiritual ministry as "the communication of the gospel at the point of need," that "point of need" being spiritual isolation, i.e., alienation:

Man is a sinner (see Rom. 3:23). Too often, the consequences of sin are confined to life after death, but the consequences of sin to the young single adult become "felt needs." Sin results in isolation or separation from God. The sinner cannot come into the presence of God, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God" (Isa. 59:2). The isolation of the sinner from God destines him for eternal separation. But spiritual isolation has a daily repercussion. Man finds himself in a struggle against isolation from other men....

Spiritual care is communicating the gospel through relationships. Christianity is a relationship. First, man must establish his relationship with God through Jesus Christ. After this relationship is established, then man reaches out in relationships with other men. As man is shut

up to himself he stagnates and grows sour. Every man is a potential loner....

The definition of spiritual ministry includes the phrase, “the communication of the gospel.” How do we communicate the gospel? We not only sit and tell the gospel to a young single adult. The gospel in the person of Jesus Christ is in our lives. As we form a meaningful relationship with the young single adult, we communicate the gospel of Christ....

Since the main problem of the young single adult is isolation and loneliness, spiritual ministry through a meaningful relationship can communicate the gospel. If healing of the personality is found in relationships, then spiritual ministry cures the sickness of isolation.²⁹

This early view by Towns became the foundation for his writing on man’s spiritual need and the impact of sin upon people, hence an early groundwork of friendship evangelism, particularly as embodied in Friend Day. Towns’ observation concerning ministry at the point of felt need is a crucial concept in friendship evangelism. The unregenerate heart may feel more keenly its need of relationship to other people than its need of relationship to God. Addressing recognized need by building meaningful friendships with the unsaved person may allow the Christian to help reveal to him his need for reconciliation with God.

II. The Nature of Salvation

The nature of salvation is reflected by Lewis Sperry Chafer, the founding president of Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas, in his classic presentation, True

Evangelism:

All evangelism finds its consummation in one phase of the great Scriptural word, “Salvation.” A word which covers more than the objective of evangelism, in that it includes, beyond the deliverance from the penalty and condemnation of sin, both the deliverance from the present power of sin and the final unfolding and development of the saved one into the image of Christ. The word includes a whole series of other great doctrines and revelations in

which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are seen working toward the transformation of the individual, body, soul, and spirit, into a celestial being and a partaker with Christ of the heavenly glory. This is the mighty working of the Triune God toward the heavenly perfection of every one who believes. Blessed indeed are they who learn to yield themselves wholly to His saving power!³⁰

Jesus described the purpose of His incarnation with the words, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). The goal of evangelism is the salvation of the lost, in all of the richness of its meaning as described above. Salvation begins with God. He took the initiative to offer His Son to make salvation possible. Man also has a role in salvation. He must accept as a free gift the salvation for which God the Son paid so dearly. Yet before he will accept this salvation, he must desire it, he must recognize his need for it.

The obstacle faced in evangelism is the inability of the unsaved to see their need of salvation. The apostle Paul describes this blinded condition as he writes, “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). One might be amazed at the inability of unsaved people to recognize their dire spiritual predicament or their unwillingness to consider the offer of salvation were it not for an understanding that Satan has rendered them unable to comprehend this whole matter. Chafer observes,

The wide difference in appreciation of the Gospel which exists between people of equal mental attainments cannot be explained on the grounds of personal temperament or training, else their various attitudes would be more or less permanent, when in reality the attitude of indifference is often suddenly changed to a glowing fire. It need hardly be pointed out that unsaved men do not weigh the evidence of testimony and fact as accurately in matters

relating to salvation as they do in any other sphere of investigation. In matters between men in the world the sworn testimony of two reliable witnesses demands a corresponding conclusion; yet the obvious fact of regeneration and the willing testimony of multitudes, “whereas I was blind, now I see,” creates little impression on others who are yet in their blindness.

There is a reality in Satanic blindness.³¹

Just as God took the initiative in providing the way of reconciliation for sinners, He also has taken the initiative in providing the means by which this spiritual blindness may be removed and the need of salvation recognized. This means is the ministry of *conviction* that is carried on by the Holy Spirit. Jesus delineates three areas in which the Holy Spirit works to cause the unsaved to see: “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (John 16:8-11).

The sin of which Jesus says the Holy Spirit convicts the sinner is the sin of unbelief, specifically unbelief in Jesus. The lack of belief in Jesus is the point of conviction because it is precisely at this point that salvation is offered. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). This was the message proclaimed by the apostle Paul throughout his ministry: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31 a). Chafer notes,

The only sin to be revealed, according to this passage, is the sin of personally rejecting Christ (see also John iii. 18). The reason that there is but one sin is obvious. Christ has perfectly borne the condemnation of the individual’s sins, hence God in no wise lays them back again upon the sinner; but rather holds him responsible for not believing the record of the atoning death of His Son (I John v. 10-12). Hence it is clear that present condemnation cannot result from the sins which God reckons to be

covered by the blood of His Son. The issue is plainly the rejection of the Son Who bore the sins. The fact that the blinded sinner must comprehend that his sins have been borne for him by Christ, and that he has the one responsibility of receiving that Saviour and his saving work, however, demands a further illumination by the Spirit.³²

According to Jesus, the second area in which the Holy Spirit convicts the unsaved is righteousness. This conviction concerning righteousness is three-fold. First, the sinner is convicted concerning the righteousness of Christ. This facet of conviction is possible, Jesus said, “because I go to my Father” (John 16:10). The resurrection of Christ from the dead and His ensuing ascension into heaven and exaltation to the right hand of the Father vindicate all that Jesus claimed to be. The Holy Spirit convicts to show Jesus as absolutely righteous. Second, the sinner is convicted concerning his own righteousness. Perhaps it would be better said, the sinner is convicted concerning the inadequacy of his own righteousness. In the light of the righteousness of Christ, men are enabled to see that “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6b). Third, the sinner is convicted concerning the availability of the righteousness of Christ to be imputed to the sinner’s record: “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” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Jesus says that the Holy Spirit also convicts concerning a third area, “judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (John 16:11). Here, the sinner is made to see the triumph of Christ over Satan and the surety of his own condemnation:

When Jesus died on the cross, one of His last statements was, “It is finished” (Jn. 19:30). That victorious pronouncement marked the sealing of a victory in a battle which began in the Garden of Eden. At the Fall of man, God promised One who would win the battle over the serpent and his seed (Gen. 3:15). This struggle continued through the years and continues today. When Jesus was about to leave His disciples for the cross, He said, “Be of

good cheer, I have overcome the world” (Jn. 16:33). Though the struggle between God and the devil has continued since then, the victory is secure. The Holy Spirit causes men to see that the devil has been judged and their sin will also be judged if they continue in it.³³

Of this ministry of the Holy Spirit to the unsaved, Towns writes,

The word conviction includes a number of biblical expressions in its meanings. Originally, the word comes from two Latin terms meaning “cause to see.” Broadly speaking, reproof, conviction, and illumination are all part of this ministry of the Holy Spirit whereby He causes the individual to see (i.e., with understanding) truth. These terms speak of the work of the Holy Spirit in setting forth the truth and causing a person to see it as such.³⁴

With Friend Day, the need of bringing the sinner into an encounter with the Word of God is recognized. If the program is followed as directed, the unsaved friend will visit two or three church services in which the Word of God is preached from the pulpit. In addition, the follow-up contacts will yield additional opportunities to share the gospel message on a one-to-one basis. Each of these contacts is designed to bring the sinner under the hearing of the word of God, the tool which the Holy Spirit uses to bring conviction (cf. Romans 10:17).

The response of the sinner to the conviction of the Holy Spirit that results in salvation is *conversion*. Towns defines conversion as “[m]an’s response to the message of the Gospel whereby he understands the nature of Christ’s atonement, he feels guilt from conviction and love to God, and his will responds to the offer of salvation so that God converts him and gives him eternal life.³⁵ This definition shows that conversion relates to man’s intellect, his emotions, and his will.

First, in order to be converted, a person must understand the truth of the gospel. It is not necessary that he be a Bible scholar, but he must understand the basic gospel truth before he can exercise faith (cf. Romans 10:13-15, where Paul notes that one cannot call upon

the name of the Lord in faith until he has first heard of Him). The core of the gospel which must be comprehended for salvation is *man's need*. he is a sinner, unable to make himself acceptable to a holy God, and justly condemned to eternal death; God's provision to *meet that need*: God the Son became a sinless man who died, was buried, and rose again to pay the penalty for sin and make it possible for man to be reconciled to God; and how to *personally appropriate that provision*: through the exercise of faith in Christ, transferring trust from self to Him as Savior and Lord.

Second, conversion involves the emotions. Towns comments:

God made man complete with an emotional capacity. If kept in proper perspective, our emotions lead to a healthy conversion... A person will be emotionally affected by his conversion by either a cause or an effect experience.

...Paul recognized there were two kinds of emotional reactions to the gospel: "godly sorrow" and "sorrow of the world." There is a place for "godly sorrow" in our lives that leads to further spiritual insight. The "sorrow of the world" is remorse for getting caught, not sorrow for the act committed.

Sometimes God will allow a person to experience guilt so he can understand and appreciate forgiveness of sins, Often God must use our emotions to cause us to respond to the gospel. On other occasions, God will use our emotional reaction so he can better deal with us after salvation.

...A person is not more or less saved depending upon the volume of his emotional outbursts, but when we are converted, it will affect our emotions.³⁶

Third, conversion involves the will. It is not enough for a person to simply know the truth of the gospel. He must respond to the truth in repentance and faith.

None of this should be taken to mean that a person may in any way participate actively in his salvation. God is the actor and initiator in salvation. Man simply responds to God by

accepting freely the gift of forgiveness and reconciliation. This human response is conversion. God's action is *regeneration*.

Towns defines regeneration as “the work of God through the Holy Spirit of placing in one who has been given the gift of faith a new nature which is capable of doing the will of God.”³⁷ He goes on to make four observations concerning regeneration:

1) Regeneration is an act of God, for only He can forgive and save; 2) Regeneration produces spiritual life, for the believer receives the life of God as the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within him; 3) Regeneration instills a new nature, not replacing the old nature but enabling him to desire to do the will of God; and 4) Regeneration is transformation, the formation of a new creation.³⁸

In the work of salvation (regeneration/conversion), the Holy Spirit is the operative agent. It is He who convicts the sinner, who draws him to Christ, who indwells him when he believes to give him eternal life. The instrument He uses to effect salvation is the Word of God. Towns reminds his readers of the paramount importance of the Word of God in evangelism:

When we are seeking to reach the lost for Christ, we would do well to remember the power of the Word of God and use it. People are not saved because of intellectual arguments, but because the Holy Spirit uses the Scripture to point out needs and to convict of sin. We should learn to work with God in winning souls.³⁹

Friendship evangelism as embodied in Friend Day is built upon this understanding of regeneration/conversion. It seeks, not to supplant the initiative of God in salvation, but to be used by the Holy Spirit to identify and create receptive prospects for the gospel message. Friendship evangelism sees the task of evangelism as not simply a one-time event of confrontation but also a process of “stair-stepping” people toward greater receptivity of the gospel. The friendship with the unsaved person thus becomes a tool for the Holy Spirit to use in

the process of conviction, “causing the sinner to see” his need and to become open to the Savior who can meet that need. Engel and Norton describe this cooperation with the Holy Spirit in their book, What’s Gone Wrong with the Harvest?:

Some will have awareness of the Supreme Being through God’s ministry of general revelation (conscience and nature) but no effective awareness of the gospel. Others will have the necessary awareness and grasp of its implications. When this is accompanied by strong felt need for change (designated as personal-problem recognition), the individual is open to a challenge to turn his life over to Christ. Prior to that time, there is neither sufficient understanding nor felt need to permit a valid response to such a challenge. Those who have made such a commitment, then, are in various stages of spiritual growth as they are being conformed to the image of Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

God and man uniquely interact to influence the spiritual decision process. It is God’s sole responsibility to bring about awareness of the Supreme Being through general revelation. The human communicator has no role in this whatsoever. From then on, however, the human communicator assumes a critical responsibility. It is his task to impart the necessary awareness of the claims of the gospel through a ministry of proclamation as God, through the Holy Spirit, convicts the recipient of sin. Once sufficient biblical awareness and problem recognition have been achieved, the function of the communicator is to persuade--to call for a life commitment to Jesus Christ. After this step has been taken, God, and God alone, imparts new life through regeneration.⁴⁰

In friendship evangelism, Christians are encouraged to develop “redemptive relationships” with unsaved people. These relationships are redemptive because their goal is not only friendship for its own sake, but also as a means of 1) discovering those who are now receptive to the gospel and seeking to persuade them to accept Christ and 2) creating a greater degree of receptivity in those who are not yet ready to be saved. Towns addresses the process of cultivating receptivity:

The process of cultivating receptivity begins by winning people to yourself. Remember, the citizens of Nazareth refused to hear the message of Christ, because they rejected Him and His claims to deity. Therefore, before people will hear the gospel from your lips, you must establish credibility by winning them to yourself. you must take the initiative to contact them and begin building a friendship. Paul clearly taught that Christians can contact people for the gospel's sake (1 Cor. 9:20-23).

Once you have won an individual to yourself, you must then win a hearing for the message. That means two things. First, you must demonstrate through your life that Jesus Christ is meeting your needs (2 Cor. 9:8). Second, you must point out that Jesus Christ is also sufficient to meet their felt needs.

Share with them the sufficiency of Christ by both victorious Christian living and verbal testimony. If you are not victorious, it will be very difficult to convince others that such a victory is available to them. Be open and transparent with the people you are trying to influence for Christ. Allow them to see that you have problems and burdens just as they do, but that God helps you through them (Phil. 4:19). Share with them how God is meeting your needs and lifting your burdens.

Showing others how Christ can meet their needs will require some knowledge of their needs. This can be gained by observation and listening. Once you know their needs, you can show them how Christ can help them. The Word of God is the final key. Whether you are dealing with an unsaved person--trying to stair-step him to the gospel--or with a Christian trying to help him become more mature, the Word of God is essential to the process. Faith in Jesus Christ and Christian growth come through the Word of God (Rom. 10:17; 1 Pet. 2:2).⁴¹

Friend Day, as an evangelistic event, seeks to target those who through friendship with Christians have been brought to receptivity to the gospel or discovered to already be receptive. Believers are encouraged to invite a friend to attend church with them on the designated Sunday, thus using the friendship as a bridge between the unsaved friend and the church. On this Sunday, believers are encouraged to make the visitors feel as welcome as possible, in order to make attending the service a pleasant (and therefore more likely to be repeated) experience. Of

course, on this Sunday the preacher and the Bible class teachers seek to give a clear presentation of the gospel message, thus allowing the agent of regeneration (the Holy Spirit) to employ the instrument of regeneration (the Word of God). In addition, churches using Friend Day are encouraged to designate it for a Sunday one to two weeks in advance of a normal high attendance day, such as Easter, Mother's Day, or Time Change Sunday. The reasoning behind this strategy is that it will make more likely multiple attendances to the church services, and, thus, multiple hearings of the gospel. In Friend Day, Towns applies what he calls "*The Law of Three Hearings*. Research shows that the average visitor to church does not come forward during the invitation to accept Christ the first time he visits a church. He will usually visit 3.4 times before making a meaningful decision to become a Christian.... The 3.4 figure is a statistical average and implies those who make a permanent decision for Christ usually attend church about three times before they decide to be saved.⁴² "Another way in which Friend Day seeks to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to facilitate receptivity and conversion is the employment of the "*Law of Seven Touches*. Research shows that a person usually makes a meaningful decision for Christ after the church has contacted him seven times."⁴³ This principle is employed as churches are encouraged to begin making friendly, non-confrontational follow-up contacts with visitors the afternoon of Friend Day. Through friendly phone calls, letters, and visits from the pastor, Sunday School teacher, and the member who brought the friend, visitors actually receive nine contacts from the church during the week following Friend Day. These contacts serve to bond the visitor in a friendly relationship with the church, making it more likely he will return to the services and be receptive to a personal presentation of the gospel.

III. The Foundation for the Task of Evangelism in the Nature of the Church

The third facet of the theological foundation of friendship evangelism is the Great Commission. While it is enunciated in all four of the Gospels as well as in the book of Acts, it is in Matthew 28:18-20 that the fullest expression of the Great Commission is found:

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 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: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

This commission is a mandate to the church from her Lord. It is therefore imperative that it be rightly understood and carefully obeyed.

Jesus gives the basis of the commission when He says, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” The word translated power is exousia, better rendered “authority.”⁴⁴ Because He has successfully completed His atoning work of substitutionary death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus has the authority to issue commands to the church. Because they go under His command and with His presence (verse 20), His followers (the church) have His authority to confront the world and carry out the particulars of the mandate.

The Great Commission itself is in three parts: 1) to go and “teach all nations”; 2) to baptize those who are taught; and 3) to teach those whom they baptize to obey all that they had been commanded by Jesus. In the first part of the commission, the word translated “teach” is matheteuo, and is more accurately rendered “disciple” or “make disciples of.”⁴⁵ 26 Reisinger comments that the thrust of this part of the commission is “seeking to bring men into a right relationship to the Son of God.... A disciple, in the biblical sense, is: 1. A learner of the teachings. 2. A follower of the teacher. 3. One who is seeking to be conformed to the teacher

and the teachings.”⁴⁶ This command is then that those who know and obey Christ should cause others to likewise know and obey Him.

The second part of the Great Commission is to baptize those who become Christ’s disciples. While this does mandate the act of immersing believers, its meaning goes deeper:

The true meaning of baptism is identifying the person with Christ. First the Christian is identified with Christ as he died, was buried, and then rose again from the dead.... Just as we are identified with the Body of Christ in his death on the cross, so we should be identified with the Body of Christ in baptism. Paul identified “the church, which is his body” (Eph. 1:22, 23). Again the church is called his body (1 Cor. 12:25). Water baptism is an act of identifying the convert also with a local body of believers, since the church is an organized assembly (body) of believers with the responsibility of evangelizing the unsaved, educating Christians, worshiping God, and administering the ordinances.⁴⁷

The third part of the commission Towns speaks of above as educating Christians. Reisinger comments:

“Teaching them...” is a life-long ministry. Jesus defines a disciple in these words: “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31, 32). There must be a continuing in the Word and growing in grace. This is why Christians need to be under sound preaching and teaching. This is the means to bring them into a right relationship to the Word of God and the God of the Word.⁴⁸

The Great Commission is the foundation of the task of evangelism, regardless of one’s philosophy concerning it or the methodology he adopts. The One who is called Lord has issued the mandate. The church cannot be disobedient.

As noted previously, friendship evangelism recognizes that making disciples is a process. Evangelism is not just decision making, it is disciple making. The new birth event is preceded by a series of interrelated decisions whereby the sinner is made aware of God, of his own

lostness, of the provision through Christ for him to be saved. The new birth is followed by more discovery and more decisions, as the believer grows to spiritual maturity. Friend Day, like friendship evangelism in general, seeks to encourage Christians to build relationships with the unsaved through which may be facilitated receptivity to the gospel, and through which the new believer may be bonded to the church and built up in his faith.

IV. Spiritual Giftedness as Equipping for Evangelism

The fourth facet of the theological basis of friendship evangelism deals with those who are the disciple makers, and how they are equipped by their Lord to carry out their task. This equipping of the church for evangelism is the real key to friendship evangelism. The Great Commission was not given to believers individually, but to them collectively, that is, to the church. The church is equipped to fulfill its evangelistic mandate by the spiritual gifts that are imparted to its members.

Towns suggests, “Five terms are used interchangeably or explicitly in Scripture to identify spiritual gifts. These terms each occur in the introduction to the discussion of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12. An understanding of these terms will give insight into spiritual gifts and lead to a workable definition.”⁴⁹ Those terms are 1) pneumatikon, literally “spiritual,” “an adjective which gives meaning to the thing or person that possesses it. Hence, when the word is used, the author is emphasizing the spiritual nature of the gift”⁵⁰; 2) charismata, the usual word for gifts, from the root charis, “grace,” “Hence a spiritual gift is that which is not sought or earned by human initiative, but is bestowed by the Spirit”⁵¹; 3) diakonia, translated “administrations” in 1 Corinthians 12:5, implying “that spiritual gifts are in fact spiritual ministries.... The verb form diakoneo means to be a servant, to serve or wait upon another person, particularly to wait on tables by serving food to guests. Hence, those who are given a

spiritual gift should receive it with the purpose of serving other people”⁵²; 4) energema, translated “operations” in 1 Corinthians 12:6, denoting “spiritual gifts as the activity produced by God’s enduements of men for service.... Hence, a spiritual gift is not the natural ability of the individual but is a ministry empowered by God”⁵³; and 5) phanerosis, translated “manifestation” in 1 Corinthians 12:7, which “comes from the verb phaneroo which means ‘to make visible or to make clear’ When a Christian exercises a spiritual gift, it should be an evident work of the Holy Spirit.”⁵⁴ “Therefore, a spiritual gift is spiritual in character... sovereignly given by God the Holy Spirit ... to minister to others ... in the power of God ... with an evident manifestation of the Holy Spirit through the Christian as he serves God...”⁵⁵

This definition, like the passage in 1 Corinthians 12 from which it is drawn, makes clear that the source of spiritual gifts is the sovereign choice of the Holy Spirit, “dividing to every man severally as He will” (verse 11). The passage also makes it clear that every believer is gifted by the Spirit (“every man,” verses 7 and 11). As for their purpose, “All spiritual gifts are for our ministry to others in the building of the church, quantitatively and qualitatively, during this age (Eph. 4:7-16).”⁵⁶

While the five listings of spiritual gifts in the New Testament seem to indicate that there are eighteen spiritual gifts, friendship evangelism as embodied in Friend Day is built upon the nine serving gifts that Gilbert calls TEAM gifts.

They are job, activity or task oriented gifts. They are functional. The TEAM Gifts are then divided into two groups, speaking and ministering gifts. That is not to say you do not minister with the speaking gifts nor speak in the ministering gifts. In 1 Peter 4:9-11, Peter speaks of two groups in which to place the gifts. He says in verse 11, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth.” Therefore, Peter gives us two groups of the TEAM Gifts: (1) “speaking” (the Greek word *laleo*) means to talk,

utter words. Those who have the speaking gifts are: Evangelist, Prophet, Teacher, Exhorter and Pastor-Teacher; (2) “ministering”--ministers are not kings but “king-makers.” They are support gifts. They are people who are happy to work behind the scenes supporting the ones who have the “speaking” gifts. Ministering gifts include Pastor-Teacher, Mercy shower, Server, Giver and Administrator. Note that the Pastor-Teacher is on both lists. This is because of the many responsibilities God has given him as a shepherd.⁵⁷

In this approach to evangelism, the members of the church exercise their spiritual gifts toward one another, building up one another. As the individual members are edified, so is the church as a whole, and the healthy church is more effective in its collective task of evangelism. Some within the body are gifted as evangelists. As they receive ministry from the other members of the body, they are better enabled to exercise their own spiritual gift toward the unsaved, confronting them with the gospel in the power of the Spirit and bringing them to Christ. Every member of the body is responsible to be a witness, building redemptive relationships with the unsaved and helping to move them up the scale of receptivity. Every member of the body should be prepared to give an intelligent presentation of the gospel message as God gives him the opportunity. In the TEAM ministry approach underlying Friend Day, however, it is usually the one with the gift of evangelism who in the latter stages of stair-stepping (that is, after the “seven touches” and the “three hearings”) actually confronts the sinner personally with the gospel and leads him to Christ. The evangelistic “fruit” is not the evangelist’s alone; it is the fruit of every member of the team who served faithfully as a witness within the community and who exercised his spiritual gift faithfully within the body.

Not everyone subscribes to this understanding of evangelism and who is to be an evangelist. Some would hold that every believer is to be an evangelist. For these, the Great Commission is for every Christian individually, who should be equipped to present the claims of

the gospel message and should be actively pursuing and confronting the lost, pressing for a decision for Christ. Others hold that the gift of evangelism is given to the vocational evangelist, who moves from place to place conducting evangelistic meetings, primarily carrying on mass evangelism rather than personal evangelism. Still others hold that the evangelist is the missionary/church planter who goes to a new place or even a new culture to win souls and establish a church. It is interesting to note that at this point Towns seems to have changed his view of what the gift of evangelism is. In his earlier works, he holds that this gift is for church planting, whether in-culture or cross-culturally. His more recent writings indicate a belief more in line with that taught by Gilbert, with the exception that Towns now believes that every believer possesses the gift of evangelism to some extent.

V. Conclusion

At the outset of this chapter it was stated that one's theology should affect his approach to evangelism. The question arises as to what theological systems would not allow for the use of the friendship evangelism of the Friend Day program. Obviously, those who are not evangelistically oriented would not adopt this or any other program of evangelism. But within the sphere of those who take seriously the mandate of the Great Commission, Friend Day would seem to be a viable consideration. Even among those who differ on the concept of the evangelist can profitably use the approach, since it has proven to be so effective in providing good evangelistic prospects.

What will influence one's consideration of the use of Friend Day is his view of the purpose of the public worship services of the church. Friend Day by definition creates the possibility of (perhaps large numbers of) unsaved people attending the worship services.

For some, this would simply not be acceptable. Churches that are restricted to specific ethnic groups or lifestyles (for example, the Amish) might not welcome an influx of outsiders who are different. Those, whose view would make the worship services of the church open only to Christians for edification and fellowship, restricting evangelism to a task accomplished only outside the walls of the church, would not use this program.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRINCIPLES OF EVANGELISM EMPLOYED IN FRIEND DAY

As one analyzes the principles of evangelism and church growth which are employed in Friend Day, it is important not only to discern the principles, but also to discern how those principles are understood by Elmer Towns, author of the program. This chapter looks at the types of evangelism as Towns has delineated them, and how they are used in Friend Day. It also analyzes the Friend Day program to discern which of the principles of evangelism and church growth, as recognized and defined by Towns in A Practical Encyclopedia of Evangelism and Church Growth, are employed in Friend Day.

I. Types of Evangelism

Towns recognizes ten different types of evangelism, which he has formulated into the chart which accompanies this section. It is instructive to see how (or whether) each of these types of evangelism is employed in Friend Day.

1. *Personal evangelism*, defined by Towns' chart as "presenting the gospel to one person and motivating him or her to respond," is more implicit than explicit in the Friend Day program. In Winning the Winnable, his book on friendship evangelism, Towns expressly states that the fifth of the seven touches of follow-up should be a visit in the home of the

prospect by the pastor or a trained soulwinner, with the intent of presenting the plan of salvation.⁵⁸ The only explicit reference to personal evangelism in the Friend Day resource packet, however, is found on the “Let’s Take Inventory” handout.⁵⁹

2. *Crusade evangelism*, defined in Towns’ chart as “a planned evangelistic meeting to present the gospel to the lost,” is the sort of evangelism carried on in local churches by traveling evangelists, or on a city-wide level by such men as Billy Graham. It is not used in Friend Day.

3. *Mass media evangelism*, “using various media to present the gospel,” is also not the thrust of Friend Day. While the Friend Day resource packet does include camera-ready promotional artwork, this is primarily for use in promoting Friend Day among the members of the congregation, not for advertising the event among the general public or presenting the gospel.

4. *Saturation evangelism*, “using every available means to reach every available person at every available time,” is not the same as Larry Gilbert’s principle of saturation, which is discussed in the chapter, “The History of Friend Day.” That principle has to do with using every available opportunity for keeping the theme of Friend Day before the members of the congregation in the weeks preceding Friend Day. Saturation evangelism is the use of “multiple agencies for maximum evangelistic outreach, such as Christian Schools, homes for unwed mothers, deaf ministries, camps, bookstores, and other local ministries to reach the church’s ‘Jerusalem’ by ministering to the various needs of individuals in the community.”⁶⁰ This type of evangelism is not employed in Friend Day.

5. *Super-aggressive evangelism*, “an aggressive outreach by faith to create the situation where the lost will be saved,” is certainly the kind of evangelistic attitude that Friend Day embodies. In its instruction that the church be friendly and that visitors be made to feel welcome

and comfortable, the Friend Day resource packet seeks to create the situation where the lost will be bonded to the church and bridged to Jesus Christ.

6. *Life-style evangelism*, “living a good testimony before the lost so that an opportunity is gained to present the gospel,” is foundational for Friend Day. The evident reality of Christ in the believer’s life is the basis for the appeal to an unsaved friend to come to church and learn how he, too, might share in that experience.

7. *Busing evangelism* is “canvassing the neighborhood to motivate people to ride a bus to Sunday school where they will hear the gospel.” It may be used in conjunction with Friend Day, but it is not mandated.

8. *Front door evangelism*, “ingathering techniques and programs that motivate people to come into the church to hear the gospel,” is, indeed, the approach of Friend Day. Friend Day encourages Christians to invite their unsaved friends to attend the church service, where they will hear the gospel, rather than to seek to personally present the way of salvation to those friends individually.

9. *Side door evangelism*, “bringing people into various church activities through natural relationships with members where their felt needs are met, then presenting the gospel,” is by definition not the type of evangelism employed in Friend Day.

10. *Oikos evangelism*, “motivating church members to use their various family and social relationships to present the gospel to their friends and relatives,” is, of course, the genius of Friend Day. Believers are motivated, not to approach strangers, but those with whom they already have relationships and influence, and to invite them to come to their church for the Friend Day event.

Each of these ten types of evangelism is legitimate. Each type has been used of God to draw people to himself. Sometimes one of the types is more profitable in a given situation than the others. All of them maybe used in conjunction with Friend Day, although it is specifically a front-door approach encouraging Christians to build, on the foundation of their testimonies, bridges for the gospel through the webs of their personal relationships.

TYPES OF EVANGELISM⁶¹

Type of Evangelism	Description
Personal Evangelism	<i>Presenting the gospel to one person and motivating him or her to respond</i>
Crusade Evangelism	<i>A planned evangelistic meeting to resent the gospel to the lost.</i>
Mass Media Evangelism	<i>Using various media to present the gospel.</i>
Saturation Evangelism	<i>Using every available means to reach every available person at every available time.</i>
Super-aggressive Evangelism	<i>An aggressive outreach by faith to create the situation where the lost will be saved.</i>
Life-style Evangelism	<i>Living a good testimony before the lost so that an opportunity is gained to resent the gospel.</i>
Busing Evangelism	<i>Canvassing the neighborhood to motivate people to ride a bus to Sunday school where they will hear the gospel.</i>
Front Door Evangelism	<i>Ingathering techniques and programs that motivate people to come into the church to hear the gospel.</i>
Side Door Evangelism	<i>Bringing people into various church activities through natural relation-ships with members where their felt needs are met, then presenting the gospel.</i>
Oikos Evangelism	<i>Motivating church members to use their various family and social relationships to present the gospel to their friends and relatives.</i>

II. Principles of Evangelism and Church Growth

In his book, A Practical Encyclopedia of Evangelism and Church Growth, Dr. Towns gives an exhaustive presentation of many principles of church growth and evangelism. The author has gone through the entries in this work, seeking to identify principles of church growth, as they are

understood by Towns, which are employed in Friend Day. In this section, these principles are listed alphabetically, and analysis is made of how each is incorporated into Friend Day. The following chart lists these nineteen principles:

Principles of Evangelism and Church Growth Employed in Friend Day

1. Axioms for church growth
2. E-1 evangelism
3. Bonding people to the church
4. Conversion growth and transfer growth
5. Enrollment in Sunday School
6. Felt need
7. Homogeneous Unit Principle
8. Intercession
9. Law of the Clenched Fist
10. Law of Seven Touches
11. Law of Three Hearings
12. Law of the Two-Humped Camel
13. Leadership
14. Networking
15. Organization
16. P-1, P-2, and P-3 evangelism
17. Stair-stepping
18. Targeting receptive/responsive people
19. TEAM evangelism

1. In the encyclopedia entry entitled “Axioms for Church Growth,” Towns gives four preconditions for church growth:

- (1) The pastor must want the church to grow and be willing to pay the price. (2) The people must want the church to grow and be willing to pay the price. (3) The church must agree that the goal of evangelism is to make disciples. (4) The church must not have a “terminal illness.”⁶²

The Friend Day program presupposes the first three of these four axioms. The first axiom is in place when the pastor determines to have a Friend Day; the second, when the people follow his leadership and invite their friends for Friend Day; and the third, as the church continues the

task of bonding the Friend Day prospects to the church, with the intent of bridging them to Christ.

2. In his entry on “E-1 Evangelism,” Towns defines the term as

Evangelism which crosses barriers related to the church building or the perception of the church in the minds of the unsaved. Evangelism at this level overcomes “the stained-glass barrier” which refers to popular perceptions of the church that hinder the unsaved from becoming personally involved.⁶³

Friend Day breaks down the “stained-glass barrier” as the unsaved are invited to attend the church by people with whom they have relationships; as the visitors are made to feel welcomed; and as the church employs the laws of Seven Touches and Three Hearings in continued friendly contacts to bond the prospects to the church.

3. In his entry entitled “Bonding People to the Church,” Towns observes:

The process of bonding (assimilating or churching) newcomers into the church is commonly referred to as post-evangelism, but it is actually a part of the biblical and holistic process of disciple-making....

When someone visits the church on a Sunday morning (usually the most common time for a person to make a first visit to a new church), they should be immediately followed up in accordance with the laws of the three hearings and seven touches. The most important immediate concern of the church should be to get that visitor back the second and third time. To do this, the visitor should be contacted seven times before the next Sunday.⁶⁴

With this observation, Towns is making it clear that the process of bonding should begin immediately upon the prospect’s first visit to the church, not after a profession of faith in Christ is made. Bonding to the church is not only necessary for the believer’s spiritual growth and well-being, it is also necessary for stair-stepping the unbeliever to Christ.

Friend Day employs bonding as prospects are brought to church through existing relationships; as churches using the resource packet are encouraged to schedule the event one or two Sundays prior to a natural attendance day (such as Easter or Mother's Day), thus making the three hearings more likely; and as the nine contacts are made during the following week, creating multiple, friendly contacts with representatives of the church.

4. "Conversion church growth" is defined by Towns as "a measured numerical increase in church attendance and/or membership resulting from effective evangelistic efforts which result in unsaved members of the community being converted to faith in Christ and incorporated into the life of the church."⁶⁵ Friend Day offers to its users "the potential for doubling or tripling the attendance of your church."⁶⁶ The stated goal for this attendance increase is "church growth and the expansion of the Kingdom."⁶⁷ The program is designed to facilitate the reaching of the lost with the gospel.

5. In his encyclopedia entry headed "Enrollment, Sunday School," Towns reminds his reader:

Sunday School enrollment is the "handshake" that welcomes the outsider into the fellowship of the class and makes that person an "insider." When people are enrolled in Sunday School, they no longer have a barrier to attending church services or to hearing the Gospel. They network with other believers in a Bible study fellowship where they can learn from the Word of God.⁶⁸

Later in the same article, he presents the principle that "the number of people present and the number absent will remain relatively constant in a ratio of 40 percent (attending) to 60 percent (absent). As enrollment rises, so does the number of those attending the class."⁶⁹

The resource packet incorporates this principle in the nine follow-up contacts that are made the week following Friend Day. Three of those nine contacts are made by the teacher of the Sunday School class which the prospect would normally attend (even if the prospect attended

only the worship service on Friend Day). Those three contacts are made with a view to enrolling the prospect in that class as another means of bonding him to the church and bridging him to Christ.

6. Towns writes that “Felt Need”:

Describes the conscious wants and desires of a person; considered to be an opportunity for Christian evangelism which stimulates within the person a receptivity to the gospel.⁷⁰

As is discussed in the section on “The Theology of Friend Day,” part of the impact of sin on the individual is social alienation. Friend Day takes advantage of the inherent longing in people for friendships, using it as a means of bringing them into the church and, as new relationships are formed through the follow-up contacts, keeping them in the church.

7. In the entry on the “Homogeneous Unit Principle,” Towns quotes Donald McGavran as stating, “People like to become Christians without having to cross racial, linguistic, or class barriers to do so.”⁷¹ While one might wish it were not so, this does seem to be an accurate observation of people’s preferences, and Friend Day, by reaching people through networks of existing relationships, tends to draw into the church people who are like those already there. Thus, barriers of culture, class, race, etc., are not erected between the prospect and Jesus Christ.

8. Towns begins his article on “Intercession” by saying,

The foundation of evangelism and church growth is prayer, but not just any type of prayer. It must be intercessory prayer. Prayer for the lost to be saved, for conviction of sin, for the growth of the church and for power in preaching the gospel.⁷²

Friend Day recognizes the importance of prayer, and the resource packet encourages much of it. The promotional section includes the master for a prayer bookmark. The planning calendar encourages that the prayer bookmarks be distributed on the day that Friend Day is first

announced to the congregation, and that the congregation be asked to immediately begin praying for the success of Friend Day. The planning calendar also encourages that specific prayer for Friend Day be offered in each of the public services of the church for the four weeks leading up to Friend Day. In his audio-taped introduction to Friend Day and the lecture “Twenty Ways to Double Your Sunday School Class” (both included in the resource packet), Towns makes much of the importance of intercessory prayer on the part of both the pastor and the congregation. Additionally, the first two of the three Sunday School lessons designed to be taught on the three weeks preceding Friend Day remind the believers of the importance of intercessory prayer for their friends.

9. The first of four “laws” observed in Friend Day is the “Law of the Clenched Fist.”

Towns explains,

The law of the clenched fist is built on the law that pressure builds the body. That’s why runners put pressure on their legs and lungs, to strengthen their bodies for the race. Weight lifters do the same thing. They pump iron, i.e., put pressure on their bodies to build them up. Spiritual pressure, i.e. discipline, also builds the body of Christ.... A Sunday School campaign puts pressure on all to be included.

A man can keep his fist taut only so long, then the muscles give out. Likewise, a leader can put pressure on his workers for only a short time. Just as a runner who puts too much pressure on his body causes a stroke, too much pressure on the body of Christ builds up resentment or resignation in workers.⁷³

Friend Day conforms to this law by virtue of its being a short-term campaign. It does not ask that every worker give his absolute maximum all the time, but that every member do his part during the five weeks of the Friend Day event.

10. The second law observed in Friend Day is the “Law of Seven Touches.” Towns writes,

Research shows that a person is more likely to return for a second and third visit if they are contacted seven times after their first visit, hence the Law of Seven Touches. These contacts can be initiated by the church through letters, phone calls, visits, or other personal contacts. The obvious conclusion is that the church that contacts the most people the most times, will probably have the greatest evangelistic results.⁷⁴

This is, of course, one of the most obvious principles employed in Friend Day. As is noted in the planning calendar, Friend Day afternoon is when follow-up begins, and, “Now is the most important part of *Friend Day*. If you slide on this part, all the other work was done in vain.”⁷⁵ The resource packet carefully outlines who should make each of nine follow-up contacts during the week following Friend Day, what should be involved in each contact, and when it should be made.

11. The third law observed in Friend Day is the “Law of Three Hearings.” The encyclopedia article on this topic states,

Research shows that the average visitor to the church does not decide to accept Christ or join the church the first time he visits a church. A person will usually attend a church 3.4 times before making a meaningful decision to become a Christian or unite with the church.⁷⁶

When he teaches Friend Day in his seminars, Towns recommends that Friend Day be scheduled one or two Sundays in advance of a natural attendance day, such as Easter or Mother’s Day. This strategy makes it more likely that the prospect will return for a second and third visit to the church, in accordance with this law. While this advice is not included in the Friend Day resource packet (and, perhaps, ought to be), the principle is still in operation. All of the attempts at friendliness on Friend Day, as well as the nine friendly contacts of the following week, are designed to help bond the prospect to the church and make it more likely that he will return to its services.

12. His observations of Sunday School attendance patterns led Towns to formulate the “Law of the Two-Humped Camel”:

A growing Sunday School will have an attendance chart that looks like a two-humped camel. Growth is experienced in the spring and fall; attendance dips in the summer and winter (unless the area is impacted by holiday, vacation, etc.). Since these are seasons when Sunday Schools grow, set attendance goals and conduct outreach campaigns in the growth seasons, not at other times of the year.⁷⁷

Friend Day observes this law as it instructs on the accompanying audio cassettes that Sunday School campaigns should be planned for either the fall or spring. Towns gives this instruction in his taped “Introduction,” as well as in his “Twenty Ways to Double Your Sunday School Class” lecture. Also, Reverend Rod Kidd makes explicit reference to this law in his portion of the taped “Introduction.”

13. Towns stresses the importance of leadership for evangelism in his article, “Leadership and Church Growth:”

Numerical growth of a New Testament church begins with the power of God. The leader is the length and shadow of the work he builds for God.... New Testament growth does not come from Madison Avenue public relations men, but begins with the man of God.⁷⁸

In his entry on “Leadership Training,” Towns adds, “Leadership is the difference between a healthy and sick church, between a growing and stagnate church.... Leadership makes a difference and the greatest need in today’s church is leadership.”⁷⁹ Friend Day is designed to build the pastor’s credibility as a leader in the eyes of his people. In his introduction to the resource packet, Towns writes,

However, a planned *Friend Day* will work because it builds credibility into the Sunday School pupils. As a leader, you will teach your pupils biblical evangelism because you will teach them how to reach their friends with the Gospel.

This Friend Day Campaign is designed to give your members that believability and give you credibility.⁸⁰

In his taped introduction to Friend Day, Towns uses the motto, “Everything rises and falls on leadership.”⁸¹ The resource is designed to give the leader credibility in the eyes of his followers. As he uses Friend Day, the pastor gains credibility as a leader because he has a vision of what God can do in their church, which he keeps before his people. The pastor gains credibility as a leader because he has a strategy, a step-by-step plan for achieving success with Friend Day. The pastor gains credibility as a leader when he is the first to display a letter from a friend who promises to join him for Friend Day. The pastor gains credibility as a leader because he involves others in leadership, and he involves everyone in the congregation in achieving success. The pastor gains credibility as a leader because of the number of visitors who attend on Friend Day. The pastor gains credibility as a leader because of the new people who are saved and bonded to the church as the Law of Seven Touches is applied.

14. “Networking” is “the principle of establishing and building redemptive friendships for the purposes of evangelism.”⁸² “This principle is applied in Friend Day as the members of the church are led to see their friendships with the unchurched as being more than ends in themselves, but opportunities to bridge those friends to Christ. Friend Day succeeds because it reaches out, not to strangers, but to the unchurched who are within the relationship networks of the members of the church.

15. Friend Day succeeds because it employs principles of good organization. In the entry entitled “Organization,” Towns writes:

Organization is the breaking down of group responsibility into parts which can be assigned to individuals or small groups of individuals. Organization assures orderly planning, work and problem solving. It will help the church carry out the plan and purpose of the

church: presenting the message of Christ to the world in the most effective way. The church must be properly organized for an effective spiritual thrust into its community.⁸³

The Friend Day resource packet places in the pastor's hands the tools of effective organization for the event. He is given a week-by-week, step-by-step planning calendar to insure that everything that should be done is done at the proper time. This ready-made organization "... (1) makes planning possible, (2) identifies areas of responsibilities, (3) identifies problems, (4) charts the future, (5) provides a channel of communication and (6) makes for cohesiveness."⁸⁴

16. In his encyclopedia, Towns credits C. Peter Wagner with the recognition of three types of evangelism: (1) Presence evangelism (designated P-1), which has to do with maintaining a good personal reputation (or testimony) among the lost; (2) Proclamation evangelism (designated P-2), which involves actually sharing with the lost the claims of Christ and the way of salvation; and (3) Persuasion evangelism (designated P-3), which seeks not only to present the gospel to the lost, but to press him to respond to the message and be saved.⁸⁵

Friend Day builds upon P-1 evangelism by reaching out to those within the circles of influence of the members of the church. It employs P-2 evangelism as the gospel is presented in the Sunday School and worship service on Friend Day. It implies P-3 evangelism, because the stated goal is not only to bond these unchurched friends to the church, but to bring them to Christ.

17. In his conclusion to his article on "Stair-stepping," Towns writes,

In evangelism, the decision to trust Jesus Christ by faith is preceded by many other decisions. Some of those decisions may be subconscious, or they may come so early in life that a person has forgotten he or she made them, but they must nevertheless be made. Unsaved people do not

repent and trust Christ until they see their need and understand the gospel. Looking at the stair-stepping process, it is obvious that each step is dependent upon the one before it. Stair-stepping is natural to effective evangelism.⁸⁶

Friend Day is built on the understanding that evangelism is not only an event, it is a process. The unchurched friends of the members are stair-stepped to Christ as they see the reality of Christ in the lives of their friends and as they are bonded to the church and given more opportunities to hear the gospel preached, be convicted by the Holy Spirit of their own need of forgiveness, and drawn by the Holy Spirit to be reconciled to God through faith in Christ.

18. Friend Day succeeds because it targets receptive-responsive people. In his article on “Receptivity,” Towns writes,

Time and resources are limited. Therefore, there should be a stewardship of these factors in every aspect of life, even evangelism. Jesus Himself clearly taught that evangelistic efforts should reach all (Mark 16:15) but concentrate on those who are receptive and responsive (Matt. 10:14; 29:19). This principle brought about the turning point in the apostle Paul’s ministry (Acts 13:46).⁸⁷

Friend Day incorporates this principle because it targets those who are most likely to be receptive: those who have friends within the church and have seen the positive impact of Christ in the lives of those friends.

19. Finally, Friend Day, like all the resources from Church Growth Institute, grows out of the TEAM philosophy of ministry. The encyclopedia article on “TEAM Evangelism” explains,

This approach to evangelism views evangelism as a team ministry in which the conversion of the unsaved is achieved through the cooperative efforts of various individuals with different gifts using their gifts to reach others.⁸⁸

In this approach to evangelism, the members of the church exercise their spiritual gifts toward one another, building up one another. As the individual members are edified, so is the church as a whole, and the healthy church is more effective in its collective task of evangelism. Some within the body are gifted evangelists. As they receive ministry from the other members of the body, they are better enabled to exercise their own spiritual gift toward the unsaved, confronting them with the gospel in the power of the Spirit and bringing them to Christ. Every member of the body is responsible to be a witness, building redemptive relationships with the unsaved and helping to stair-step them toward Christ. Every member of the body should be prepared to give an intelligent presentation of the gospel as God gives him the opportunity. In the TEAM ministry approach underlying Friend Day, however, it is usually the one with the gift of evangelism who, in the latter stages of stair-stepping, actually confronts the sinner personally with the gospel and leads him to Christ. The evangelistic “fruit” is not the evangelist’s alone; it is the fruit of every member of the team who served faithfully as a witness within the community and who exercised his spiritual gift faithfully within the body.

This underlying philosophy of ministry is implicit in the Friend Day resource. It is explicitly taught, albeit briefly, in the third of the three Sunday School lessons for the weeks preceding Friend Day.

III. Conclusion

All of these church growth principles (and, perhaps, others that are not listed by Towns in his encyclopedia⁸⁹) are interwoven in the Friend Day resource. In some cases, the principles are explicitly taught; in most, they are simply understood and followed. Whether they are explicit or implicit, they are there, and they function together to create a program that has been remarkably successful for evangelism and church growth.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONWIDE FRIEND DAY SURVEY

I. Introduction

For the purpose of measuring the effectiveness of Friend Day, it was decided to survey users of the Friend Day resource packet, published by the Church Growth Institute, Lynchburg, Virginia (afterwards referred to as CGI). On the assumption that churches which had purchased the resource packet within the previous six months had probably not used it yet, questionnaires were sent to the 5,000 churches that had purchased the Friend y resource packet most recently, yet prior to six months before the mailing of the questionnaire. The goal of the survey was to determine the users' reaction to Friend Day (their perception of the effectiveness of the individual components of the Friend Day resource packet, as well as their perception of the overall effectiveness of Friend Day), and to gather data which would help objectively measure the effectiveness of Friend Day.

II. Rationale for the Questionnaire

The chart accompanying this section lists the questions used in the survey of Friend Day users. Following the chart is a reiteration of those questions with explanations for their inclusion in the questionnaire:

NATIONAL FRIEND DAY SURVEY

1. Since 1990, which years have you hosted a Friend Day?
2. Which time of year did you host your last Friend Day (spring or fall)?
3. Did you host Friend Day in conjunction with one of the following (Easter, Mother's Day, or Time Change Sunday)?
4. Did you participate in the National Friend Day on October 30, 1994?
5. How many times have you used Friend Day in your present church?
6. How many times have you used Friend Day in other churches?
7. Rate the following components of the Friend Day resource (very effective, effective, moderately effective, ineffective, did not use):
 Friendly Freddy artwork

- Planning calendar
 - Quotations about friendship
 - Sunday School lessons
 - Friend Day poster
 - Promotional material
 - Audiocassettes
 - Friends booklet
 - How to Reach Your Friends booklet
 - Lapel pins
8. Have you purchased Second Friend Day?
 9. Rate the following components of the Second Friend Day resource (very effective, effective, moderately effective, ineffective, did not use):
 - Friendly Freddy artwork
 - Planning calendar
 - Quotations about friendship
 - Sunday School lessons
 - Friend Day poster
 - Promotional material
 - Audiocassettes
 - Friends booklet
 - How to Reach Your Friends booklet
 - Lapel pins
 10. Please answer the following questions (giving estimates if exact figures are not available):
 - a. What was your average weekly Sunday School attendance for the previous year?
 - b. What was your average weekly Sunday School attendance after Friend Day?
 - c. What was your average weekly worship attendance for the preceding year?
 - d. What was your average weekly worship attendance after Friend Day?
 - e. What was your record high attendance before Friend Day?
 - f. What was your Sunday School attendance for your last Friend Day?
 - g. What was your worship attendance for your last Friend Day?
 - h. What was your average weekly number of conversions for the preceding year?
 - i. What was the number of conversions on Friend Day?
 - j. What was your average weekly number of conversions 4 weeks following Friend Day?
 - k. Approximately how much money did you spend on promoting Friend Day?
 - l. How many letters did you send during the weeks following Friend Day?
 - m. How many phone calls were made during the weeks following Friend Day?
 11. Did you follow the planning and calendar sections exactly as outlined in the resource?
 12. Did you do the follow-up exactly as outlined in the resource?
1. Since 1990, which years have you hosted Friend Day?

It was decided to limit the survey to those who had used Friend Day since 1990. While the choice of 1990 was arbitrary, there were valid reasons to limit the survey to more recent uses of the Friend Day resource: first, since some of the information requested was dependent upon the memory of the individual completing the questionnaire, it was thought that limiting the survey to recent users would help guarantee the accuracy of the responses; second, because of the rate of turnover of professional ministry staff, it was thought that limiting the survey to

recent users would help insure that those who had conducted Friend Day would still be available to participate in the survey; third, it was thought that asking for less recent information might discourage recipients of the questionnaire from responding at all.

2. Which time of year did you host your last Friend Day (fall or spring)?

This question was included because the Friend Day resource packet specifically instructs users to plan Friend Day as a fall or spring attendance push. The aim was to discover whether the users of the resource are following the guideline and, if so, which season more of them are choosing.

3. Did you host Friend Day in conjunction with one of the following: Easter, Mother's Day, or Time Change Sunday?

This question was included because Towns recommends that Friend Day be planned in conjunction with one of these three natural attendance days. The desire was to determine whether the users appear to be aware of, and following, that recommendation.

4. Did you participate in the National Friend Day on October 30, 1994?

Church Growth Institute introduced National Friend Day in 1994 as the day on which churches across the United States were encouraged to hold Friend Day. This question was added in order to have some measure of the impact of this national emphasis.

5. How many times have you used Friend Day in your present church?

This question was introduced to see whether churches are using Friend Day more than once. Since the resource packet suggests that it can be used repeatedly, it was thought to be worthwhile to know how many times Friend Day is being used. (After conducting the survey, the author realized that a question could have been included to determine whether the first use of

Friend Day, when the idea is novel, or later uses, when churches are more familiar with the mechanics of the event, are more successful.)

6. How many times have you used Friend Day in other churches?

This question was included to determine whether the church personnel had used Friend Day in another church and, hence, knew of the viability of Friend Day from seeing its effectiveness in another church.

7. Rate the components of Friend Day.

The seventh question asked the respondents to rank the various components of the Friend Day resource packet from “very effective” to “did not use.” This question was included to measure the opinion of the program’s users of the relative value of each of those components. This question was included primarily to test the success of CGI in their marketing of a companion program. It also has value to the author, in conjunction with questions five and six, in determining whether users are finding the Friend Day concept successful enough for repeated use.

9. Rate the components of Second Friend Day.

The ninth question asked those who had purchased Second Friend Day to rank the various components of that resource packet from “very effective” to “did not use.” It was added in connection with the previous question, primarily because of its value to CGI.

10. This question asked the respondents to give 14 individual statistics, estimating if exact figures were not available. These sub-questions were included by the author as a means of measuring the impact of Friend Day on subsequent attendance of Sunday School and worship services (questions a,b,c,d); of determining whether Friend Day set a record attendance (question e); of determining whether the most recent Friend Day was more successful than earlier use of it

(questions f, g); of measuring the evangelistic impact of the Friend Day event (questions i, j); of estimating the actual cost of conducting Friend Day (question k); and of measuring the number of follow-up letters, phone calls and visits directed to those who were guests on Friend Day (questions l, m, n).

11. Did you use the planning and calendar sections exactly as outlined in the resource?

This, one of the most important questions in the survey, was included to determine the effectiveness of those churches that carefully followed the resource packet instructions for preparing for the Friend Day event. To help in accomplishing this goal, a comparison was made of the responses to the survey of those who answered “yes” to this question with those who answered “no.” This comparison can be found in the section, “Interpretation of the Survey Results.”

12. Did you do the follow-up exactly as outlined in the resource?

Obviously, follow-up is imperative for the success of Friend Day. Therefore, it was felt necessary to ask whether users are observing the guidelines for follow-up which are given in the Friend Day resource. To help analyze the effectiveness of that follow-up, a comparison was made of the survey results of those churches that did the follow-up exactly as outlined and those that did not. The results of that comparison can be found in the section entitled “Interpretation of the Survey Results.”

III. Survey Results

The following are raw data of the National Friend Day survey. These are listed in one chart in order to enable the reader to make comparisons and draw conclusions without the influence of the author’s interpretations.⁹⁰ The author’s conclusions are found in the section, “Interpretation of the Survey Results.”

1. Since 1990 which years have you hosted a Friend Day?
 1990--107; 1991--130; 1992--165; 1993--204; 1994--257
 (24.15%) (29.35%) (37.25%) (46.05%) (58.01%)

2. Which time of year did you host your last Friend Day?
 Spring--179 Fall--241
 (40.41%) (54.40%)

3. Did you host Friend Day in conjunction with one of the following?
 Easter--41; Mother's Day--5; Time Change Sunday--78; None--292
 (9.26%) (1.13%) (17.61%) (65.91%)

4. Did you participate in National Friend Day on October 30, 1994?
 Yes--72 No--359
 (16.25%) (81.04%)

5. How many times have you used Friend Day in your present church?
 1.9

6. How many times have you used Friend Day in other churches?
 0.7

7. Rate the following components of the Friend Day resource.

	Very <u>Effective</u>		<u>Effective</u>		Moderately <u>Effective</u>		<u>Ineffective</u>		Did <u>Not Use</u>	
Friendly Freddy artwork	89	20.09%	190	42.89%	101	22.80%	12	2.71%	37	8.35%
Planning calendar			165	37.25%	190	42.89%	58	13.09%	1	0.23%
Quotations about friendship	76	17.16%	188	42.44%	121	27.31%	9	2.03%	34	7.67%

Sunday School lessons	44	9.93%	133	30.02%	115	25.96%	29	6.55%	105	23.70%
Friend Day poster	136	30.70%	215	48.53%	68	15.35%	5	1.13%	11	2.48%
Promotional material	138	31.15%	206	46.50%	70	15.80%	5	1.13%	13	2.93%

Audiocassettes	49	11.06%	121	27.31%	121	27.31%	26	5.87%	108	24.38%
Friends booklet	37	8.35%	103	23.25%	99	22.35%	14	3.06%	161	36.34%
How to Reach Your Friends	36	8.13%	105	23.70%	82	18.51%	15	3.39%	176	39.73%

Lapel pins	50	11.29%	100	22.57%	66	14.90%	26	5.87%	162	36.57%

8. Have you purchased Second Friend Day?
 Yes--63 No--372
 (14.22%) (83.97%)

9. Rate the following components of the Second Friend Day resource.

	Very <u>Effective</u>		<u>Effective</u>		Moderately <u>Effective</u>		<u>Ineffective</u>		Did <u>Not Use</u>	
Friendly Freddy artwork	21	4.74%	22	4.97%	9	2.03%	2	0.45%	13	2.93%
Planning calendar			10	2.26%	21	4.74%	14	3.16%	4	0.90%
									11	2.48%

Quotations about friendship	0	0.00%	14	3.16%	20	4.51%	7	1.58%	19	4.29%
Sunday School lessons	0	0.00%	15	3.39%	16	3.61%	8	1.81%	22	4.97%
Friend Day poster	4	0.90%	12	2.71%	17	3.84%	9	2.03%	19	4.29%
Promotional material	14	3.16%	24	5.42%	15	3.39%	2	0.45%	5	1.13%

Audiocassettes	18	4.06%	20	4.51%	15	3.39%	2	0.45%	6	1.35%
Friends booklet	20	4.51%	18	4.06%	14	3.16%	1	0.23%	8	1.81%
How to Reach Your Friends	5	1.13%	7	1.58%	15	3.39%	4	0.90%	30	6.77%

Lapel pins	2	0.45%	14	3.16%	15	3.39%	7	1.58%	21	4.74%

10. If you don't have exact numbers please estimate the following questions.

	Average
a. What was your average weekly Sunday School attendance for the previous year?	173.28
b. What was your average weekly Sunday School attendance after Friend Day?	184.78
c. What was your average weekly worship attendance for the preceding year?	213.99
d. What was your average weekly worship attendance after Friend Day?	227.06
e. What was your record high attendance before Friend Day?	317.76
f. What was your Sunday School attendance for your last Friend Day?	270.84
g. What was your worship attendance for your last Friend Day?	321.38
h. What was your average weekly number of conversions for the preceding year?	8.80
i. What was the number of conversions on Friend Day?	6.16
j. What was your average weekly number of conversions 4 weeks following Friend Day?	2.81
k. Approximately how much money did you spend on promoting Friend Day?	321.52
l. How many letters did you send during the weeks following Friend Day?	108.40
m. How many phone calls were made during the weeks following Friend Day?	82.04
n. How many visits were made during the weeks following Friend Day?	53.99

11. Did you follow the planning and calendar sections exactly as outlined in the resource?

Yes--218 (49.21%) No--212 (47.86%)

12. Did you do the follow-up exactly as outlined in the resource?

Yes--126 (28.44%) No--300 (67.72%)

TOTAL RESPONDENTS: 443

IV. Interpretation of Survey Results

This section is included so that implications and practical applications from each question may be demonstrated and explained. The following results are suggestive, and are as complete as the author can at this time make them without further empirical investigation. The author believes this research has not only contributed to the body of knowledge, but has also raised other questions which should fuel further research.

1. Since 1990 which years have you hosted a Friend Day?

1990--107; 1991--130; 1992--165; 1993--204; 1994--257
(24.15%) (29.35%) (37.25%) (46.05%) (58.01%)

The first obvious conclusion is that the use of Friend Day is growing, since the number of churches using it each year since 1990 is seen to climb steadily. Possible challenges to this conclusion are (1) the questionnaire was mailed to the 5000 most recent purchasers of the resource, making it likely that they will have used it more recently, thus skewing the responses; (2) churches that used Friend Day less recently may have been less likely to respond to the survey because of the loss of the excitement of immediacy; (3) conversely, churches that used Friend Day more recently may have been more likely to respond to the survey because the excitement of the event is still fresh with them; and (4) the longer it has been since Friend Day was held, the more likely it is that the data concerning it is not readily available or that those who were in charge of the event are no longer in that church.

A second observation is that churches are repeating Friend Day. Since the sum of the number of churches holding Friend Day is greater than the number of respondents, churches must be repeating the event. Questions 5 and 6 will deal more with this observation.

2. Which time of year did you host your last Friend Day?

Spring--179 Fall--241
(40.41%) (54.40%)

Obviously, more churches are using Friend Day in the fall rather than the spring, in spite of the fact that the two most-attended Sundays of the year are in the spring (Easter and Mother's Day). This may be attributed to a natural tendency to attempt to re-gather those who were lost to the "summer slump"; to the thinking that spring attendance will take care of itself, since Easter and Mother's Day are a part of that season; or to CGI's promotion of National Friend Day in October (but see the discussion of question 4).

3. Did you host Friend Day in conjunction with one of the following?

Easter--41; (9.26%)	Mother's Day--5; (1.13%)	Time Change Sunday--78; (17.61%)	None--292 (65.91%)
------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------------	-----------------------

The great majority of churches are not using Friend Day in conjunction with any of the three natural attendance days of the year, in spite of Towns' instruction in his seminars that they do so. This may be due to the failure to include that same instruction in the Friend Day resource packet itself; churches may not be following Towns' counsel simply because they are not aware of it. Churches may also be opting to host Friend Day in observance of some important day on their own calendar, such as the anniversary of the church.

It can also be noted that more churches used Friend Day in conjunction with Time Change Sunday than with Easter and Mother's Day combined. This may reflect an awareness of Towns' teaching that this is the highest attendance day of the fall season. It may also be indicative of the success of CGI's promotion of National Friend Day, which fell on Time Change Sunday, 1994. This is supported by the numbers: 78 of the respondents held their Friend Day in conjunction with Time Change; 72 of the respondents said that they did participate in National Friend Day (see question 4).

4. Did you participate in National Friend Day on October 30, 1994?

Yes (16.25%)	No (81.04%)
-----------------	----------------

The overwhelming majority of respondents to the survey did not participate in National Friend Day. This could be because 1994 marked the first attempt by CGI to encourage churches nationwide to all observe Friend Day on the same Sunday. It could also indicate the priority to the churches of their individual church calendars over what may appear to the respondents to be an arbitrarily chosen "rally day." It may also show that the churches really are not aware that Time Change Sunday, on which National Friend Day was held, is one of the three natural attendance days of the year (see question 3).

5. How many times have you used Friend Day in your present church? 1.9

6. How many times have you used Friend Day in other churches? 0.7

These two statistics taken together appear to indicate the users' satisfaction with Friend Day, and, therefore, its successfulness. A significant number of respondents used Friend Day in previous churches and then chose to use it again in their current ministries. Coupled with 1.9 uses of Friend Day in their current places of ministry, this seems to demonstrate that respondents are experiencing a high degree of continued success with the concept.

7. Evaluation of the Artwork

	Very <u>Effective</u>	<u>Effective</u>	Moderately <u>Effective</u>	<u>Ineffective</u>	Did <u>Not Use</u>
a. Friendly Freddy artwork	89 20.09%	190 42.89%	101 22.80%	12 2.71%	37 8.35%

The development of Friendly Freddy as the mascot for Friend Day is described in the chapter on the "History of Friend Day." He appears on the Friend Day promotional poster, post card, bulletin cover, "Friendly Contract," and clip art for creating additional promotional material. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (62.98%) rate the artwork "effective" or "very effective." Another one-fifth rate it "moderately effective" (22.80%), for a total of 85.78% who give the artwork a positive rating.

Evidently, Friendly Freddy has proven to be a good choice as the Friend Day mascot. One may also conclude that the artwork provided in the promotional section of the resource is meeting the needs of those who purchase it, and is not in need of revision.

7. Evaluation of the Planning Calendar

	Very <u>Effective</u>	<u>Effective</u>	Moderately <u>Effective</u>	<u>Ineffective</u>	Did <u>Not Use</u>
b. Planning calendar	165 37.25%	190 42.89%	58 13.09%	1 0.23%	19 4.29%

The planning calendar offers a step-by-step guide for implementation of Friend Day. It is set up as a check list, detailing what actions should be taken to prepare for the Friend Day, beginning eight weeks before the day, as well as what should occur on the big day and in the

	Effective	Effective	Effective	Ineffective	Not Use
d. Sunday School lessons	44 9.93%	133 30.02%	115 25.96%	29 6.55%	105 23.70%

Four friendship lessons are included in the resource, to be used as Sunday School lessons in the individual classes or as sermons to be preached to the entire congregation. The first three lessons are designed to teach Christians the importance of ministering to their friends, and are to be taught the three Sundays before Friend Day. The fourth lesson presents the gospel and an invitation for commitment to Christ, and is to be taught on Friend Day. Fewer than half (39.95%) rated these lessons as “effective” or “very effective.” 25.96% rated the lessons “moderately effective” (nearly as many as rated them “effective”). One can conclude that this component of the Friend Day resource needs to be analyzed. While nearly two-thirds gave this a positive rating (65.91%), a fourth of those who have used Friend Day chose not to use the lessons (23.70%). While this may indicate that these churches simply prefer to continue using their normal curricula, the large number who rated the lessons as only “moderately effective” combines with this statistic to suggest that, perhaps, the lessons should be revised or replaced. On the other hand, the positive rating given by the majority of users indicates that the lessons are valuable and should not be deleted from the resource.

7. Evaluation of the Friend Day Poster

	Very		Moderately		Did
	<u>Effective</u>	<u>Effective</u>	<u>Effective</u>	<u>Ineffective</u>	<u>Not Use</u>
e. Friend Day poster	136 30.70%	215 48.53%	68 15.35%	5 1.13%	11 2.48%

The Friend Day poster is a “Friendly Freddy” promotional piece, designed to be used “in-house” (that is, displayed in various locations within the church buildings to remind the members of the upcoming event) rather than as an advertisement to draw visitors. While the master artwork for the poster is included in the resource packet, it is also the one piece of artwork that can be ordered in bulk from CGI.

Nearly half (48.53%) rated the poster “effective”; another third (30.70%) rated it “very effective.” 15.35% rated it “moderately effective,” giving the poster an over-all positive rating of 94.58%. Obviously, users of the Friend Day resource are pleased with the results achieved through the use of this poster.

7. Evaluation of the Promotional Material

	Very Effective	Effective	Moderately Effective	Ineffective	Did Not Use
f. Promotional material	138 31.15%	206 46.50%	70 15.80%	5 1.13%	13 2.93%

The promotional section of the Friend Day resource packet includes camera-ready artwork to be used for creating posters, bulletin covers and inserts, offering envelopes, postal envelopes, letterhead stationery, postcards, note pads, thank you notes, prayer bookmarks, name tags, and “Friendly Contracts.” Nearly one-third of users (31.15%) rated this section of the resource as “very effective.” Almost one-half (46.50%) rated it “effective,” and 15.80% rated it “moderately effective.” This gives this component an over-all positive rating by 93.45% of respondents. Again, CGI has evidently provided an effective tool for conducting a successful Friend Day event.

7. Evaluation of the Audiocassettes

	Very Effective	Effective	Moderately Effective	Ineffective	Did Not Use
g. Audiocassettes	49 11.06%	121 27.31%	121 27.31%	26 5.87%	108 24.38%

The Friend Day resource includes four audiocassettes on which are found an introduction to the Friend Day concept and resource by Elmer Towns, some comments about Friend Day by Rod Kidd, a presentation by Dr. Towns of the preparation for Friend Day as found in the planning calendar, Dr. Towns’ presentation of the four lessons found in the resource, and a lecture given by Towns on “Twenty Ways to Double Your Sunday School Class.” 65.68% of

respondents give the cassettes a positive evaluation, although the majority are evenly divided between “effective” and “moderately effective” (27.31% each). Nearly a quarter of the respondents (24.38%) chose not to use the cassettes, perhaps perceiving them as simply duplication of material also printed in the resource (the planning calendar and the lessons). It is interesting to note that roughly the same number did not use the audiocassettes as did not use the lessons (24.38% and 23.70%, respectively). Since under 40% gave the cassettes an “effective” and “very effective” rating, CGI should, perhaps, consider investigating how this component of the resource might be enhanced.

7. Evaluation of the Friends Booklet

	Very <u>Effective</u>	<u>Effective</u>	Moderately <u>Effective</u>	<u>Ineffective</u>	Did <u>Not Use</u>
h. Friends booklet	37 8.35%	103 23.25%	99 22.35%	14 3.06%	161 36.34%

The Friends booklet is a 31 page acclamation of friendship, ending with a five-page chapter on “What It Means to Have Jesus for a Friend.” A copy is included in the resource packet, along with an order blank recommending that a copy be purchased for every member of the church. Just over half (53.95%) gave this booklet a positive rating.

Over one-third did not choose to use Friends, but this is not surprising since the booklet appears to have been added as an afterthought rather than planned as an integral part of Friend Day (nothing on the planning calendar or audiocassettes makes reference to it). Since the majority of respondents gave the booklet a positive rating, with nearly one-third (31.60%) rating it “effective” or “very effective,” CGI should consider a better integration of Friends with the body of the resource in the next revision.

7. Evaluation of the How to Reach Your Friends Booklet

Very <u>Effective</u>	<u>Effective</u>	Moderately <u>Effective</u>	<u>Ineffective</u>	Did <u>Not Use</u>
--------------------------	------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------	-----------------------

i. How to Reach Your Friends 36 8.13% 105 23.70% 82 18.51% 15 3.39% 176 9.73%

How to Reach Your Friends for Christ is a 63 page booklet teaching friendship evangelism, particularly the principle of stair-stepping a person toward Christ. It includes an appendix that teaches the reader how to use the “Romans Road” to lead an individual to Christ. There is in the resource an order form which recommends that a copy be purchased for every member of the church, and that the pastor consider preaching the lessons in the resource packet and teaching this booklet in the Sunday School lessons. Like the Friends booklet, How to Reach Your Friends for Christ is not integrated into the body of the program, but appears to have been added later. Probably for that reason, 39.73% of respondents chose not to use it in their Friend Day events. Just over half, however, gave it a positive rating of “moderately effective,” “effective,” or “very effective” (50.34%). Once again, CGI should consider a better integration of the booklet into the body of the resource in the next revision.

7. Evaluation of the Lapel Pins

	Very Effective	Effective	Moderately Effective	Ineffective	Did Not Use
j. Lapel pins	50 11.29%	100 22.57%	66 14.90%	26 5.87%	162 36.57%

The Friend Day lapel pins, unlike the two previously considered components, are integrated into the body of the resource. A sample pin is attached to a specially-prepared tab in the packet; the order form is on one of the consecutively numbered pages of the resource; and reference is made to the use of the pin in the planning calendar. In spite of this, slightly more than one-third (36.57%) chose not to use the lapel pins. Just under one-half of the respondents (48.76%) rated the pins positively, but a higher percentage ranked them “very effective” (11.29%) than did either booklet, the audiocassettes, or the Sunday School lessons. For these reasons, eliminating this component would seem unwise. On the other hand, placing greater

emphasis on their use in the planning calendar would seem unwarranted. Perhaps CGI will simply need to continue to make this component available to those who find it profitable and wish to use it.

8. Have you purchased Second Friend Day?

Yes--63 (14.22%) No--372 (83.97%)

Because both this question and the next deal with Second Friend Day, rather than with the subject of this study, they will be viewed together in the comments following question 9.

	Very		Moderately		Did	
	<u>Effective</u>	<u>Effective</u>	Effective	<u>Ineffective</u>	<u>Not Use</u>	
Friendly Freddy artwork	21 4.74%	22 4.97%	9 2.03%	2 0.45%	13 2.93%	
Planning calendar	10 2.26%	21 4.74%	14 3.16%	4 0.90%	11 2.48%	
Quotations about friendship	0 0.00%	14 3.16%	20 4.51%	7 1.58%	19 4.29%	

Sunday School lessons	0 0.00%	15 3.39%	16 3.61%	8 1.81%	22 4.97%	
Friend Day poster	4 0.90%	12 2.71%	17 3.84%	9 2.03%	19 4.29%	
Promotional material	14 3.16%	24 5.42%	15 3.39%	2 0.45%	5 1.13%	

Audiocassettes	18 4.06%	20 4.51%	15 3.39%	2 0.45%	6 1.35%	
Friends booklet	20 4.51%	18 4.06%	14 3.16%	1 0.23%	8 1.81%	
How to Reach Your Friends	5 1.13%	7 1.58%	15 3.39%	4 0.90%	30 6.77%	

Lapel pins	2 0.45%	14 3.16%	15 3.39%	7 1.58%	21 4.74%	

These questions were added to the survey because of the value of this information to CGI rather than for their contribution to the present study. For that reason, the responses will not be given the amount of attention being accorded the other portions of the questionnaire.

Only a minority of the respondents (14.22%) have purchased the Second Friend Day_ resource. This may be interpreted as a reflection on the marketing of this companion program for Friend Day by CGI; on the other hand, it may simply reflect the high level of satisfaction with the original Friend Day (that is, churches are repeating the proven event rather than experimenting with a different product).

10. Sunday School Attendance Statistics

	<u>Average</u>
a. What was your average weekly Sunday School attendance for the previous year?	173.28
b. What was your average weekly Sunday School attendance after Friend Day?	184.78

Average weekly Sunday School attendance climbed 6.64% after Friend Day from the average for the year prior. A Sunday School maintaining this rate of growth would more than double in twelve years, growing from 173.28 in year one to 351.46 in year twelve.

0. Worship Attendance Statistics

	<u>Average</u>
c. What was your average weekly worship attendance for the preceding year?	213.99
d. What was your average weekly worship attendance after Friend Day?	227.06

Average weekly worship attendance climbed 6.11% after Friend Day from the average for the year preceding. Churches maintaining this rate of growth would more than double their worship attendance in 13 years, growing from 213.99 in year one to 435.98 in year thirteen.

10. Previous Record Attendance Figure Compared with Friend Day Attendance

	<u>Average</u>
e. What was your record high attendance before Friend Day?	317.76
f. What was your Sunday School attendance for your last Friend Day?	270.84
g. What was your worship attendance for your last Friend Day?	321.38

Friend Day is not proving to be the highest attendance day for Sunday School; however, Friend Day is setting new over-all attendance records in worship for the reporting churches, besting the previous high mark by 1.14%. It seems likely that this statistic is simply a reflection of the current trend for worship attendance to exceed Sunday School attendance. Visitors now are more likely to pay their first visit to a church in the worship service rather than in the Sunday School. For this reason, Friend Day should be employed, not only as a *Sunday School* campaign, but as a *church* campaign.

10. Conversion Statistics

	<u>Average</u>
h. What was your average weekly number of conversions for the preceding year?	8.80
i. What was the number of conversions on Friend Day?	6.16
j. What was your average weekly number of conversions 4 weeks following Friend Day?	2.81

These statistics present an unexpected difficulty, since they indicate that churches are actually having fewer conversions with the Friend Day event than they average normally.

Apparently, the problem was created by the question itself. CGI's former director of research, Jim Copeland, noticed that the average weekly number of conversions for the previous year seemed unusually high. He contacted the Sunday School boards of the Southern Baptist and Wesleyan denominations, and was told that their churches' average weekly conversion rates were five and four, respectively. He then made phone contacts with ten randomly chosen respondents to the questionnaire, and in each instance was told that the question had been misunderstood and that the annual average had been given.⁹¹ The evidence seems to warrant the conclusion that the question itself misled the respondents, and they uniformly gave their annual number of conversions rather than their weekly average.

These statistics appear to show the evangelistic effectiveness of the Friend Day concept. Respondents had nearly as many professions of faith on the Friend Day itself as they had for the entire previous year. When coupled with the number of conversions over the next four weeks (the period of follow-up employing the laws of Seven Touches and Three Hearings), the number of conversions for the Friend Day event (17.4) is more than twice the number for the prior year.

10. Friend Day Expenses

	<u>Average</u>
k. Approximately how much money did you spend on promoting Friend Day?	321.52

These churches spent an average of \$321.52 and had an average of 107.39 more for Friend Day worship than their normal average. This breaks down to a cost per prospect of \$2.99.

Respondents saw an increase in average worship attendance of 13.07. Friend Day was used to bring a 5.76% average increase in attendance for \$24.60 per person. Figured at cost per conversion, Friend Day brought 17.4 conversions for an investment of \$18.48 each. Based on cost per person in attendance for Friend Day, churches spent a dollar (\$1.0004) per person for the event.

10. Friend Day Follow-up Contacts

	<u>Average</u>
l. How many letters did you send during the weeks following Friend Day?	108.40
m. How many phone calls were made during the weeks following Friend Day?	82.04
n. How many visits were made during the weeks following Friend Day?	53.99

If the Friend Day follow-up is followed precisely, each visitor will receive three letters, three phone calls, and three visits in their homes following their visit to the church. The responses to the questionnaire indicate an average increase for Friend Day worship of 107.39. Those using the resource are sending one letter per guest (1.01), making phone contact with three-fourths of them (76.39%), and visiting in the homes of one-half (50.27%). There are several possible explanations. (1) Churches may simply be reporting the number of follow-up contacts made by the pastor, rather than adding those made by the Sunday School teachers and those who brought the guests. This explanation seems to be supported by the statistics of those churches which claimed to have adhered exactly to the follow-up procedures (see question 12). (2) Pastors may think it too difficult to motivate their people to make the recommended number of follow-up touches. (3) Follow-up contacts may be being limited to those visitors who are perceived to be good prospects (i.e., not active in other churches, etc.). See the comments on question 12 for a comparison of the results of those churches that did the follow-up “by the book” with those who did not.

11. Did you follow the planning and calendar sections exactly as outlined in the resource?

Yes--218 (49.21%)	No--212 (47.86%)
----------------------	---------------------

Assuming that those who did not answer this question did not follow the planning calendar exactly, respondents are almost evenly divided between those who did (49.21%) and those who did not (50.79%). While respondents were not asked why they chose not to follow the planning calendar or what changes they made, a comparison of those churches that did follow the planning with those who did not is instructive.

The smaller churches adopted the planning calendar, while the larger churches did not. Churches which did follow the planning calendar averaged 183.13 for worship during the previous year, in contrast with 230.97 for those which did not. One may surmise that the larger churches already have the machinery in place for promoting attendance campaigns (which may be one reason they are larger).

Churches which did follow the planning calendar, though building from a smaller base, experienced a larger increase for Friend Day worship, 112.34 (61.34%) compared to 98.26 (42.54%). They also recorded more conversions on Friend Day than the churches which did not follow the calendar: 6.64 versus 5.40. The clear implication is that following the planning calendar to the letter will make Friend Day more successful; larger churches should consider adhering to the guidelines of the resource even if they do already have their own promotional machinery in place.

12. Did you do the follow-up exactly as outlined in the resource?

Yes--126 (28.44%)	No--300 (67.72%)
----------------------	---------------------

Just over a quarter (28.44%) of the respondents adhered to the follow-up program of the Friend Day resource. Once again, a comparison of those churches which did with those which did not is instructive.

Those that exactly followed the instructions mailed 35.15% more letters (132.37 compared to 97.94); made 71.54% more phone calls (112.07 compared to 65.33); and made 53.77% more visits to homes (69.21 compared to 45.01). Perhaps as a result, churches closely following the follow-up instructions had a larger number of conversions for the ensuing four weeks than those that did not, 3.33 per week compared to 2.61.⁹² In addition, churches adopting the Friend Day follow-up experienced an 8.94% (14.08) increase in worship attendance over the previous year's average compared to a 4.72% (11.11) increase in churches not doing the follow-up exactly.

Once again, it was the larger churches which chose not to use the Friend Day follow-up precisely (with a pre-Friend Day worship average of 235.22 compared to 157.53 for those who did use it). This may be due to their already having a follow-up program of their own in place (perhaps another reason they are larger). In spite of this, the churches that exactly adhered to the follow-up program of the resource packet saw more conversions for the following four weeks and a higher percentage of increase in worship attendance than those that did not.

The conclusion seems inevitable: The greatest success in the use of the Friend Day resource will be realized by those who follow the guidelines to the letter, both in preparation and follow-up. This conclusion is borne out by an analysis of the responses of those churches which employed both the planning calendar and the follow-up exactly. 24.83% of respondents (110) reported that they followed the planning calendar and did the follow-up exactly as outlined in the resource. These churches experienced a 2.43% increase in Sunday School attendance after Friend Day, growing from 136.36 to 139.67; had a worship attendance increase of 10.18% after Friend Day, growing from 162.57 to 179.12; and exceeded their previous high attendance on Friend Day by 1.64%, increasing from a previous record of 273.12 to 277.60 for Friend Day

worship. In addition, they saw 8.24 conversions on Friend Day (88.99% more than the 4.36 conversions they had in the previous year). During the weeks following Friend Day, these respondents sent an average of 141.01 letters, made 122.22 phone calls, and paid 75.68 visits to their guests. Their post-Friend Day conversions averaged 3.60 for each of the next four weeks, for a total of 22.64 conversions for the Friend Day event. All of this was accomplished with an expenditure of \$280.73 for promotion, 12.69% (\$40.79) less than the average of all churches responding to the questionnaire.

The following chart compares the attendance increases for Sunday School and worship services, as well as the numbers of conversions, of the entire sampling of respondents with those who followed the planning calendar (answering “yes” to item 11 of the questionnaire), all those who exactly employed the follow-up procedures (answering “yes” to item 12 of the questionnaire), and those who exactly followed both the planning and follow-up procedures (answering “yes” to both items 11 and 12 on the questionnaire). It is interesting to note that those churches which followed both the planning calendar and the follow-up procedures had the smallest increase in Sunday School attendance, but the largest increase in worship attendance, as well as the largest number of conversions both on the Friend Day and during the four weeks of the follow-up.

	All Surveys	Q.11 Yes	Q.12 Yes	Both Yes
Sunday School Before Friend Day	173.28	149.33	131.31	136.36
Sunday School After Friend Day	184.78 (+6.64%)	154.80 (+3.66%)	136.12 (+3.67%)	139.67 (+2.43%)
Worship Before Friend Day	213.99	183.13	157.53	162.57
Worship After Friend Day	227.06 (+6.11%)	192.48 (+5.11%)	171.61 (+8.94%)	179.12 (+10.18%)
Conversions on Friend Day	6.16	6.64	7.41	8.24
Conversions 4 Weeks After Friend Day	2.81	3.27	3.33	3.60

V. Conclusion

The evidence from the survey indicates that the Friend Day resource is an excellent tool for evangelism and church growth. The expense is moderate, and the results are uniformly good. While even those churches choosing to modify the planning or follow-up procedures enjoy good success with Friend Day, those who follow the guidelines of the resource step-by-step experience an even higher degree of success, with larger numbers of professions of faith and greater increases in attendance both for the Friend Day itself and on-going worship services.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

A number of conclusions can be drawn from this analysis of Friend Day.

First, Friend Day is a biblically-grounded program. The underlying concept of using existing relationships to bridge people to God is seen in both the Old and New Testaments. While Wendell Zimmerman incorporated that principle into his Friend Day concept, it was Elmer Towns who took the concept and developed it into a well-rounded and complete program.

Second, Friend Day understands that sin has both alienated man from God and from his fellow man. Fallen man may be more keenly aware of his need for relationship with other men than with God, so Friend Day appeals to the felt need, encouraging the utilization of friendships with the lost as opportunities to stair-step them to God.

Third, Friend Day approaches evangelism as a process, not simply an event. The lost friend is brought under multiple hearings of the gospel and has multiple, meaningful contacts with the church. Each of these hearings of the gospel can be used by the Holy Spirit (the agent of regeneration) to bring conviction of need for salvation. Each of these meaningful contacts

with the church can be used by the Holy Spirit to create in the lost a greater degree of receptivity toward the message of salvation.

Fourth, Friend Day approaches evangelism as a corporate responsibility of the church. Spiritual gifts lie at the heart of this “Team” approach to evangelism. While every member uses his friendships with the lost as means of stair-stepping them toward Christ, not every member is gifted to present the gospel to the lost and bring them to salvation. However, as all the members exercise their gifts toward one another, the body as a whole is edified, and their corporate evangelistic fruitfulness is increased.

Fifth, Friend Day can be fruitfully integrated with any type of church-related evangelistic effort. While it is itself a front-door approach to evangelism, it can be used successfully to build upon, or as the foundation for, the other types of evangelism.

Sixth, Friend Day succeeds because it offers a step-by-step, organized plan for success. While many pastors cannot create programs or are not themselves efficient organizers, they can implement a packaged plan. Friend Day gives them such a plan, with a proven record of success.

Seventh, the use of Friend Day is growing. Sales of the resource packet by Church Growth Institute have exceeded 26,000; the reported uses of Friend Day increased in each of the past four years; and churches appear to be using it repeatedly, rather than once only.

Eighth, the information that Friend Day works best when held in conjunction with a natural attendance day, such as Easter, Mother’s Day, or the end of Daylight Savings Time (thus encouraging multiple visits to the church and multiple hearings of the gospel) needs to be included prominently in the Friend Day resource packet.

Ninth, the Friend Day resource packet has been designed well. Overall satisfaction with its major components is high. While some of the components (the Sunday School lessons, the audiocassettes, and the quotations about friendship) perhaps should be refined, and some (the Friends and How to Reach Your Friends for Christ booklets) need to be more fully integrated into the program, the plan as a whole is well received by those who use it, and it yields superior results for those who use it as directed in the resource packet.

Tenth, while Friend Day works acceptably as a Sunday School emphasis, the greatest success with it (measured by increases in record attendance) is realized in the worship service. Long-term, the increase in average worship attendance is roughly equal to the increase in Sunday School attendance (except for those churches following the program “by the book,” which have a significantly higher increase for worship). Therefore, Friend Day is best used as a church campaign rather than as only a Sunday School emphasis.

Eleventh, Friend Day is an extremely effective evangelistic tool. Churches using the program see more conversions for the Friend Day event than they saw for the entire previous year.

Twelfth, Friend Day works best when all its instructions are observed carefully. The greatest increases in conversions and in average worship attendance are realized by those churches which most faithfully follow the planning calendar and follow-up procedures.

It is believed that further avenues of investigation are suggested by this project. These might include:

- (1) A study of whether a church’s first use of Friend Day, or subsequent uses, is more successful;
- (2) A separate analysis of Second Friend Day;

- (3) A comparison of the modifications made by users of Friend Day to determine whether there is any consensus regarding necessary changes;
- (4) A comparison of the success of Friend Day when used in “high church” versus “low church” settings (more liturgical versus less liturgical churches);
- (5) A comparison of the results of Friend Day by geographical regions;
- (6) A study of the success of Friend Day when used in ethnic churches; and
- (7) A comparison of the effectiveness of Friend Day in small, medium-sized, and large churches.

This study has shown Friend Day to be biblically-grounded, theologically sound, and extremely effective as an instrument for church growth and evangelism. Churches which use it will be employing sound principles of church growth, and should expect to realize significant increases in attendance and professions of faith in Christ. It is an exceptional tool for reaching out to receptive prospects, bringing them under the gospel, bonding them to the church, and winning them to Christ.

APPENDIX ONE

DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire used in gathering information from churches which had purchased Friend Day from Church Growth Institute went through several revisions. This appendix includes each of those versions, allowing the reader to see how the instrument developed.

1. Original version

FRIEND DAY EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please rate the effectiveness of each component of the Friend Day program. Rate each component as follows:

1. Did not use

2. Ineffective--would not use again
3. Somewhat effective--would modify or not use again
4. Moderately effective
5. Very effective

Please rate all components. If you leave a blank, it will be assumed you did not use that component.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Artwork theme	___	___	___	___	___
2. Sample, reproducible artwork	___	___	___	___	___
3. Planning calendar	___	___	___	___	___
4. Sayings about friendship	___	___	___	___	___
5. Sermons	___	___	___	___	___
6. Children's Sunday School lessons	___	___	___	___	___
7. Adults' Sunday School lessons	___	___	___	___	___
8. Audio tapes	___	___	___	___	___
9. Optional videocassette	___	___	___	___	___
10. Coloring book	___	___	___	___	___
11. Buttons	___	___	___	___	___
12. Four-week pre-sessions	___	___	___	___	___
13. Pastor's letter	___	___	___	___	___
14. Board member's letter	___	___	___	___	___
15. Worker's card	___	___	___	___	___
16. Yes card for all	___	___	___	___	___
17. Twelve follow-up contacts	___	___	___	___	___
18. Name tags	___	___	___	___	___
19. Food/refreshments	___	___	___	___	___
20. Greeters	___	___	___	___	___
21. Activities in Sunday School	___	___	___	___	___
22. Activities in worship hour	___	___	___	___	___
23. Special music	___	___	___	___	___
24. Friend Day sermon	___	___	___	___	___
25. Invitation on Friend Day	___	___	___	___	___

Give the following information. Leave blank if unknown.

26. Average Sunday School attendance for year preceding Friend Day ___ After Friend Day ___
27. Average worship attendance for year preceding Friend Day ___ After Friend Day ___
28. Record high attendance before Friend Day ___ Attendance on Friend Day ___
29. Estimated number of conversions resulting directly from the use of Friend Day ___
30. Estimated number of new members from Friend Day ___
31. Time of year when Friend Day was used (please circle): Fall Spring
32. Was Friend Day used in connection with one of the three major attendance days?
Yes ___ No ___ If yes, please circle Easter Mother's Day Time Change
33. Approximately how much was spent promoting Friend Day? ___
34. Estimated amount of increase in giving resulting from Friend Day? ___ per week

- 35. Estimated total number of phone calls made to follow up Friend Day____
- 36. Estimated number of letters written to follow up Friend Day____
- 37. Estimated number of personal visits made to follow up Friend Day_____

2. Second version

FRIEND DAY EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please rate the effectiveness of each component of the Friend Day program. Rate each component as follows:

- 1. Did not use
- 2. Ineffective--would not use again
- 3. Somewhat effective--would modify or not use again
- 4. Moderately effective
- 5. Very effective

Please rate all components. If you leave a blank, it will be assumed you did not use that component.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Artwork theme	___	___	___	___	___
2. Sample, reproducible artwork	___	___	___	___	___
3. Planning calendar	___	___	___	___	___
4. Quotations about friendship	___	___	___	___	___
5. Sermons	___	___	___	___	___
6. Children's Sunday School lessons	___	___	___	___	___
7. Adults' Sunday School lessons	___	___	___	___	___
8. Audio tapes	___	___	___	___	___
9. Optional videocassette	___	___	___	___	___
10. Coloring book	___	___	___	___	___
11. Buttons	___	___	___	___	___
12. Four-week pre-sessions	___	___	___	___	___
13. Pastor's letter	___	___	___	___	___
14. Board member's letter	___	___	___	___	___
15. Worker's card	___	___	___	___	___
16. Yes card for all	___	___	___	___	___
17. Twelve follow-up contacts	___	___	___	___	___
18. Name tags	___	___	___	___	___
19. Food/refreshments	___	___	___	___	___
20. Greeters	___	___	___	___	___
21. Activities in Sunday School	___	___	___	___	___
22. Activities in worship hour	___	___	___	___	___
23. Special music	___	___	___	___	___
24. <u>Friend Day</u> sermon	___	___	___	___	___
25. Invitation on Friend Day	___	___	___	___	___

Give the following information. Leave blank if unknown.

	1st use	2nd use	3rd use	4th use
26. Avg. Sunday School attendance _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
for year preceding Friend Day				
27. Avg. Sunday School attendance _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
for year following Friend Day				
28. Average worship attendance for year preceding Friend Day	_____	_____	_____	_____
29. Avg. worship attendance for year after Friend Day	_____	_____	_____	_____
30. Record high attendance before Friend Day	_____	_____	_____	_____
31. Attendance on Friend Day	_____	_____	_____	_____
32. Estimated number of conversions resulting directly from Friend Day	_____	_____	_____	_____
33. Estimated number of new members resulting from Friend Day	_____	_____	_____	_____
34. Was Friend Day used in the fall (write "F" in blank) or in the spring (write "S" in blank)	_____	_____	_____	_____
35. Was Friend Day used in connection with Easter (mark "E"), Mother's Day (mark "M") or Time Change (mark "T")?	_____	_____	_____	_____
36. Approximately how much was spent promoting Friend Day?	_____	_____	_____	_____
37. Estimated amount of <u>increase in</u> <u>giving per week</u> resulting from Friend Day	_____	_____	_____	_____
38. Estimated number of phone calls made to follow up Friend Day	_____	_____	_____	_____
39. Estimated number of letters written to follow up Friend Day	_____	_____	_____	_____
40. Estimated number of personal visits made to follow up Friend Day	_____	_____	_____	_____

If you would like to make additional comments concerning Friend Day, please do so. Your insights are valuable.

3. Third version

FRIEND DAY EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____

Church Name _____

Address _____

1. Please circle the word that best characterizes your church:
Rural Suburban Small town city/downtown Metropolitan (large, servicing a broad area)
2. How many times have you used Friend Day in your present church? ____ Which time was most successful? _____

Please rate the effectiveness of each component of the Friend Day program. Rate each component as follows:

1. Did not use
2. Ineffective--would not use again
3. Somewhat effective--would modify or not use again
4. Moderately effective
5. Very effective

Please rate all components. If you leave a blank, it will be assumed you did not use that component.

	1	2	3	4	5
3. "Friendly Freddy" (small boy w/friend) artwork theme	___	___	___	___	___
4. Planning calendar	___	___	___	___	___
5. Quotations about friendship	___	___	___	___	___
6. Sermons	___	___	___	___	___
7. Children's Sunday School lessons	___	___	___	___	___
8. Coloring book	___	___	___	___	___
9. Optional videocassette	___	___	___	___	___
10. Pins	___	___	___	___	___
11. Pastor's letter	___	___	___	___	___
12. Friendly Contract (Yes card)	___	___	___	___	___
13. Twelve follow-up contacts	___	___	___	___	___
14. <u>Friend Day</u> sermon	___	___	___	___	___
15. Evangelistic invitation after <u>Friend Day</u> sermon	___	___	___	___	___

Please supply the following information.

	Answer	Unknown
16. Average weekly Sunday School attendance for year preceding Friend Day (estimate if not available)	_____	_____
17. Average weekly Sunday School attendance for year after Friend Day (estimate if not available)	_____	_____
18. Average weekly worship attendance for year preceding Friend Day (estimate if not available)	_____	_____

19. Average weekly worship attendance for year after Friend Day (estimate if not available)

20. Record high attendance before Friend Day

21. Attendance on Friend Day for Sunday School

22. Attendance on Friend Day for worship service

23. What other factor besides Friend Day impacted your growth?

24. Estimated number of conversions resulting directly from Friend Day

25. Was Friend Day used in the fall (write "F" in blank) or in the spring (write "S")?

26. Was Friend Day used in connection with Easter (mark "E"), Mother's Day (mark "M") or Time Change Sunday (mark "T")?

27. Approximately how much money was spent promoting Friend Day?

28. Estimated number of phone calls made to follow up Friend Day

29. Estimated number of letters written to follow up Friend Day

30. Estimated number of personal visits made to follow up Friend Day

If you would like to make additional comments concerning Friend Day, please do so. Your insights are valuable.

NATIONAL *FRIEND DAY* SURVEY

Thank you in advance for participating in this important nationwide study. This questionnaire is designed to be as easy as possible for you to complete. Nearly all the questions can be answered with a simple check mark. The survey should take about 5 to 10 minutes to complete. If you wish to keep your comments confidential remove the address label. Please return your completed questionnaire by folding so the preaddressed, postage-paid return side of the survey is facing out and mail before December 5, 1994.

1. Since 1990 which years have you hosted a *Friend Day*? (choose all that apply)
 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994
2. Which time of year did you host your last *Friend Day*? Spring Fall
3. Did you host *Friend Day* in conjunction with one of the following?
 None Easter Mother's Day Time Change Sunday
4. Did you participate in National *Friend Day* on October 30, 1994? Yes No
5. How many times have you used *Friend Day* in your present church? _____
6. How many times have you used *Friend Day* in other churches? _____
7. Rate the following components of the *Friend Day* resource.

	Very Effective	Effective	Moderately Effective	Ineffective	Did Not Use
Friendly Freddy artwork	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Planning calendar	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Quotations about friendship	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Sunday School lessons	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Friend Day poster	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Promotional material	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Audiocassettes	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Friends booklet	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
How to Reach Your Friends	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Lapel pins	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

8. Have you purchased *Second Friend Day*? Yes No

9. Rate the following components of the Second Friend Day resource.

	Very <u>Effective</u>	<u>Effective</u>	Moderately <u>Effective</u>	<u>Ineffective</u>	Did <u>Not Use</u>
Friendly Freddy artwork	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Planning calendar	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Quotations about friendship	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Sunday School lessons	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Friend Day poster	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Promotional material	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
-----Audiocassettes	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Friends booklet	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
How to Reach Your Friends	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
-----Lapel pins	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

10. If you don't have exact numbers please estimate the following questions.

	Average	Unknown
a. What was your average weekly Sunday School attendance for the previous year?	_____	_____
b. What was your average weekly Sunday School attendance after Friend Day?	_____	_____
c. What was your average weekly worship attendance for the preceding year?	_____	_____
d. What was your average weekly worship attendance after Friend Day?	_____	_____
e. What was your record high attendance before Friend Day?	_____	_____
f. What was your Sunday School attendance for your last Friend Day?	_____	_____
g. What was your worship attendance for your last Friend Day?	_____	_____
h. What was your average weekly number of conversions for the preceding year?	_____	_____
i. What was the number of conversions on Friend Day?	_____	_____
j. What was your avg. weekly number of conversions 4 weeks following Friend Day?	_____	_____
k. Approximately how much money did you spend on promoting Friend Day?	_____	_____
l. How many letters did you send during the weeks following Friend Day?	_____	_____
m. How many phone calls were made during the weeks following Friend Day?	_____	_____
n. How many visits were made during the weeks following Friend Day?	_____	_____

11. Did you follow the planning and calendar sections exactly as outlined in the resource?
 ___Yes ___No

12. Did you do the follow-up exactly as outlined in the resource?
 ___Yes ___No

13. What other factors besides *Friend Day* impacted your growth?

APPENDIX TWO
TESTIMONIALS

Many unsolicited testimonials of success with Friend Day have been received by Church Growth Institute. A few of these are included as anecdotal evidence of the results achieved with the employment of Friend Day.

Dear Bro. Towns and Staff:

Just a belated word to let you know (as you already know) that the Friend Day promotion really, really works.

I had been with this congregation only two months when we initiated the Friend Day promotion. On the Sunday prior to Friend Day the attendance was 351; on Friend Day itself we broke all record attendances with a total of 745!

It's a fantastic concept, and I heartily recommend it to any minister who desires to share in one of the church's greatest attendance days.

Let's Keep On Keeping On For Jesus,

Darrell R. Cordrey
Mt. Pleasant Christian Church
Greenwood, IN

Dear Dr. Towns,

Our church is located, of all places, right at the Mouth of Hell for Certain Creek. There is a community 1 1/2 miles back a dirt road from our church that is called the same. We live in the Appalachian Mountains. In the winter time when the leaves are off the trees, I can only see 3 houses near our church. We are rural and live 9 miles from a small town called Hyden that has a whopping population of 500.

When we read about Friend Day our people were skeptical & I had reservations. However, we decided to go by the book and we did. Our Congregation averages around 65 to 70. On Friend Day we had 155. We were thrilled.

My problems with Friend Day was the follow up. We probably were only 75% on our follow through. The people I invited and who came only had me as a contact, because I was the S.S. Teacher and Pastor and Inviter.

WE ARE NOW READY FOR FRANTASTIC DAYS ... PLEASE SEND US INFO. ON THAT. THANKS!!!

Pastor Sam Baer
Victory Mountain Grace Brethren Chapel
Dryhill, KY

Dear Dr. Towns:

I want to share with you the results of our Friend Day this past Sunday. We did our best to follow your outline to the fullest detail. In spite of complications: our building burned down; we were meeting in a tent; we also had a missions conference in the midst of the emphasis, the goal was 1,001 and praise the Lord, we had 1,044, twenty-four professions of faith, two baptized and three by letter. We mailed out 100 letters to visitors Sunday afternoon. The letters were sent to families so we had far more than just 100 visitors. We normally run around the 600 mark. It was a great day and we praise the Lord for the victories. I thought you would be interested in the results.

Sincerely,

W. A. McMillan
Normandy Baptist Temple
Jacksonville, FL

Dear Dr. Towns,

We used your "Friend Day" campaign this last Sunday. The church was averaging in the 70's a year ago. I became Pastor on August 20, 1987. Since then, we have applied some of your Sunday School Methods. God has certainly blessed us.

So far this fall, we averaged 204, and yesterday, "Friend Day," we had 321. We had 8 saved. God bless you in your ministry.

In His Service,
Kevin C. Youse
Lehigh Valley Bible Baptist Temple
Allentown, PA

Dear Dr. Towns:

I want to thank you and all you did to help make our church grow on Friend Day! We followed the outline in the package, planned and worked, and on the sixth of this month DOUBLED OUR REGULAR SUNDAY MORNING ATTENDANCE! Normally we had been running about 120, but on the 6th, 241 people were present! Not only that, but souls have been won every Sunday since, we will be baptizing about ten converts this Sunday (27th), and it looks like we will be adding 10 to 15 families to our church!

The Friend Day package was a real blessing to me as pastor, and helped me teach my people what to do. They did it and God surely blessed. My most sincere appreciation to you and your staff!

Sincerely,
Ernie Moore
Calvary Baptist Church
Harrisburg, PA

Dear Sirs:

We have just completed the process of "Friend Day" at Friendly Mid-Rivers Baptist Chapel. What a joy and a huge success. I wanted to write to you to share our results with you.

Mid-Rivers is a new church in St. Charles County which is right outside of St. Louis, MO. We are four years old and have been meeting in our first building since April 1, 1990. We are and have been a growing church from the very beginning. Our recent stats show that before the Friend Day promo we had been running about 165 in Sunday School and 220 in worship. We had a Sunday School growth banquet on a Sunday evening and presented Friend Day to our Sunday School workers and deacons two Thursdays after. The following Sunday our Sunday School attendance was 195. Through the eighth weeks of promotion our Sunday School attendance went to 220. On Friend Day, our Sunday School attendance was 350 and our worship attendance 492. We all continue to rejoice!

One element that we added to your program was to have the Christian news anchor man from the CBS affiliate KMOV-TV in St. Louis as a guest speaker the following Sunday. Our Sunday School attendance was 275 and our worship attendance was 432. Note: We did not announce this special speaker to our people until the day of Friend Day as we did not want to give people a choice as to which week to attend. We consider the entire Friend Day promotion to be a huge success. In the past four weeks we have added over 30 people to the church. We still have 20 families we consider prospects and expect to add many of them in the days ahead.

Friend Day is a common sense but dynamic approach to the job we are all about. Thank you for your help. I would gladly recommend the Friend Day promo to any one who asks.

Experiencing His love,

Kirk D. Herweck
Mid-Rivers Baptist Chapel
St. Charles, MO

Dear Dr. Towns:

Our Friend Day was an overwhelming success. Our Sunday School attendance increased from 225 to 317, and worship attendance increased from 275 to 450.

Our people were great in receiving all the guests. We had people everywhere.

Our follow-up was immediate, and we are continuing to have families unite with our fellowship. The following Sunday we had four families to unite with us and five of them were by profession of faith.

Thank you for putting this tool in the hands of so many churches. Our people have seen that when we pray and work hard anything is possible.

You and your staff are in our prayers. Serving together,
Ralph E. Jett
Enon Baptist Church
Salisbury, NC

Dear Dr. Towns,

Greetings in that precious name above all others, the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

I just wanted to write and thank you for your excellent Friend Day materials. They have proven to be a big time saver for this busy pastor. It would have taken me endless hours to put together what would have doubtless been an inferior program to Friend Day.

Friend Day works! Our attendance in Sunday school had been running between 38 and 45. Our Morning worship was between 45 and 50. On our Friend Day, April 16, our Sunday school attendance reached 88 and worship hour reached 116! Of our 64 visitors, few had been saved. I have since led one man to Christ and two others are in salvation Bible studies. We now have 28 very good prospects, of whom only seven are professing Christians.

Thank you for being there for this busy pastor and our local church. May God richly bless you as you continue to serve our Savior.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Gregory F. White Temple Baptist Church
Charles City, IA

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arn, Win. A Celebration of Friendship. Pasadena: Church Growth Inc., n.d.
- _____, and Charles Am. The Master's Plan for Making Disciples. Pasadena: Church Growth Press, 1982.
- Barackman, Floyd Hays. Practical Christian Theology v. Bible School Park, NY: Practical Press, 1981.
- Bama, George. Marketing the Church. Colorado Springs: Nav Press, 1988.
- Boice, James Montgomery. Foundations of the Christian Faith. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1986.
- Bring a Friend Sunday. Anderson: Board of Extension and Home Missions of the Church of God, n.d.
- Chafer, Lewis Sperry. True Evangelism. Grand Rapids: Dunham Publishing, 1919.
- Chaney, Charles L. and Ron S. Lewis. Design for Church Growth. Nashville: Broadman, 1977.
- Engel, James F. and Wilbert Norton. What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest? Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975.
- Enns, Paul. The Moody Handbook of Theology. Chicago: Moody Press, 1989.
- Gibbs, Eddie. I Believe in Church Growth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.
- Gilbert, Larry. Friends. Lynchburg: Church Growth Institute, 1989.
- _____. Team Evangelism. Lynchburg: Church Growth Institute, 1991.
- _____. Team Ministry. Lynchburg: Church Growth Institute, 1987.
- Hunter, George G., III. The Contagious Congregation. Nashville: Abingdon, 1979.
- Jenson, Ron and Jim Stevens. Dynamics of Church Growth. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981.
- Lightner, Robert P. Evangelical Theology. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986.

- McGavran, Donald A. Understanding Church Growth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.
- McGavran, Donald and George G. Hunter, III. Church Growth: Strategies That Work. Nashville: Abingdon, 1980.
- Miles, Delos. Church Growth: A Mighty River. Nashville: Broadman, 1981.
- Mylander, Charles. Secrets for Growing Churches. New York: Harper and Row, 1979.
- Reisinger, Ernest C. Today's Evangelism, Its Message and Methods. Phillipsburg: Craig Press, 1982.
- Schaller, Lyle E. Assimilating New Members. Nashville: Abingdon, 1978.
- _____. Effective Church Planning. Nashville: Abingdon, 1979.
- _____. Activating the Passive Church. Nashville: Abingdon, 1981.
- _____. Growing Plans. Nashville: Abingdon, 1983.
- Schuller, Robert H. Your Church Has Real Possibilities. Glendale: Regal Books, 1974.
- Sisemore, John T. Church Growth Through the Sunday School. Nashville: Broadman, 1983.
- Smith, Michael A. "Spreading the Good News," in Eerdmans' Handbook to the History of Christianity. Tim Dowley, ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977.
- Tippett, Alan R. Church Growth and the Word of God. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.
- Towns, Elmer L. America's Fastest Growing Churches. Nashville: Impact Books, 1972.
- _____, and Jerry Falwell. Capturing a Town for Christ. Old Tappan: Revell, 1973.
- _____, C. Peter Wagner and Win Am. Church Growth: State of the Art. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1986.
- _____, John Vaughan and David Seifert. The Complete Book of Church Growth. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1981.
- _____, Friend Day resource packet. Lynchburg: Church Growth Institute, 1983.
- _____. Getting a Church Started. Lynchburg: Church Growth Institute, 1985.
- _____, Getting a Church Started in the Face of Insurmountable Odds with Limited Resources in Unlikely Circumstances. Nashville: Impact Books, 1975.

- _____. How to Grow an Effective Sunday School. Denver: Accent Books, 1979.
- _____. How to Reach Your Friends for Christ. Lynchburg: Church Growth Institute, 1989.
- _____. 154 Steps to Revitalize Your Sunday School and Keep Your Church Growing. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1988.
- _____. A Practical Encyclopedia of Evangelism and Church Growth. Lynchburg: Liberty University, 1994.
- _____. The Single Adult and the Church. Glendale: Regal Books, 1967.
- _____. Spiritual Factors of Church Growth: Internal Church Growth. Lynchburg: Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 1990.
- _____, and Jerry Falwell. Stepping Out on Faith. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1984.
- _____. The Successful Sunday School and Teachers Guidebook. Carol Stream: Creation House, 1976.
- _____. The Ten Largest Sunday Schools and What Makes Them Grow. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969.
- _____. Theology for Today. Lynchburg: Elmer L. Towns, 1984.
- _____. What the Faith Is All About. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1983.
- _____. Winning the Winnable: Friendship Evangelism. Lynchburg: Church Growth Institute, 1986.
- Towns, Sam Stephen. "How Friend Day Works," Ministries Today July/August 1988.
- Vine, W.E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. Old Tappan: Revell, 1981.
- Wagner, C. Peter. Leading Your Church to Growth. Ventura: Regal Books, 1984.
- _____. Your Church Can Be Healthy. Nashville: Abingdon, 1979.

VITA

Rick L. Rasberry

PERSONAL

Born: April 2, 1958

Married: Tamra Lynn Weatherford, February 14, 1981.
Children: James Eric, born May 8, 1984.
Andrew Trevor, born November 20, 1986.

EDUCATIONAL

B.A., Free Will Baptist Bible College, 1978.
M.Ed., Hyles-Anderson College, 1979.
M.A.R., Liberty University, 1990.

MINISTERIAL

Ordination: August 20, 1978, First Free Will Baptist Church, Florence, South Carolina

PROFESSIONAL

Associate Pastor, Collinswood Baptist Church, Portsmouth, Virginia, 1981-1988. Instructor, Southeastern Free Will Baptist College, Virginia Beach, Virginia, 1984-1987.

Academic Advisor, Liberty University School of Lifelong Learning, 1988-1991. Instructor, Liberty University External Degree Program, 1991-1995.

ENDNOTES

Chapter One

¹ Elmer Towns, Getting a Church Started in the Face of Insurmountable Odds with Limited Resources in Unlikely Circumstances (Nashville: Impact Books, 1975).

Chapter Two

² Michael A. Smith, "Spreading the Good News," in Eerdmans' Handbook to the History of Christianity, Tim Dowley, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 86.

³ Truman Dollar, Zimmerman's successor at Kansas City Baptist Temple, has publicly claimed that he created "Friend Day." Both Elmer Towns and Jerry Falwell credit the development of the concept to Zimmerman, noting that "Friend Day" was an established outreach theme at Kansas City Baptist Temple prior to Dollar's arrival there.

⁴ Interview with Dr. Elmer Towns, 9 February 1995. This interview was the source for all the background information on Wendell Zimmerman's development of Friend Day.

⁵ Interview with Dr. Jerry Falwell, 15 February 1995. He stated of Friend Day, “There’s no question that it is the number one Sunday School concept that I know about today.”

⁶ Elmer Towns, America’s Fastest Growing Churches (Nashville: Impact books, 1972), 132.

⁷ Ibid., 139.

⁸ Towns, Interview.

⁹ Towns, The Ten Largest Sunday Schools and What Makes Them Grow (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969).

¹⁰ Towns, The Successful Sunday School and Teachers Guidbook (Carol Stream: Creation House, 1976).

¹¹ Interview with Dr. Larry Gilbert, 10 March 1995. Gilbert made other changes in the artwork he received from William Bryan. Originally, Freddy had long pants and wore a beanie with a rotor. His father wore “jams” (short pants) and carried a Bible. Larry Gilbert put the father in long pants, shorts on Freddy, and eliminated the beanie.

¹² Towns, 154 Steps to Revitalize Your Sunday School and Keep Your Church Growing (Wheaton: Victor Book, 1988), 123

¹³ The Story of the conversion of Kathy Burley was related on the front page of the Easter edition of the News and Daily Advance newspaper in Lynchburg, Virginia, in 1987.

¹⁴ Towns, Interview. This interview was the source for the information concerning Rod Kidd’s use of Friend Day at Heritage Baptist Church and the conversion of Mike and Kathy Burley.

¹⁵ Interview with Dr. Larry Gilbert, March 10, 1995. As of that date, 26, 191 Friend Day resource packets had been purchased from Church Growth Institute. According to Gilbert, the actual number of uses cannot be known, but is probably much higher since purchasers of Friend Day often use it a number of times and also share it (in spite of the copyright) with other pastors.

¹⁶ Nation Evangelism Survey, conducted January-March, 1994 by Christianity Today in cooperation with Church Growth Institute. The survey results have not yet been formally published.

¹⁷ Gilbert, Interview.

¹⁸ Memo from Dr. Elmer Towns to the author, March 14, 1995.

¹⁹ Gilbert, Interview.

Chapter Three

²⁰ Interview with Larry Gilbert, president of Church Growth Institute, 10 March 1995.

²¹ National Evangelism Survey conducted January-March, 1994 by Christianity Today in cooperation with Church Growth Institute. The survey results have not yet been formally published.

²² Larger Westminster Catechism, quoted in Robert P. Lightner, Evangelical Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986), 176.

²³ James Montgomery Boice, Foundations of the Christian Faith (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1986), 201-202.

-
- ²⁴ Paul Enns, The Moody Handbook of Theology (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989), 325.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 326.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 324.
- ²⁷ Elmer Towns, "A Glossary of Church Growth Terms," in Church Growth: The State of the Art, C. Peter Wagner, ed. (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1986), 289.
- ²⁸ Boice, Foundations, 204.
- ²⁹ Towns, The Single Adult and the Church (Glendale: Regal Books, 1967), 63-69.
- ³⁰ Lewis Sperry Chafer, True Evangelism (Grand Rapids: Dunham Publishing, 1919), 27.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 73-74.
- ³² Chafer, True Evangelism, 64.
- ³³ Towns, Theology for Today (Lynchburg: Elmer L. Towns, 1984), 210.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 209.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 620.
- ³⁶ Towns, What the Faith is All About (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1983), 294-295.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 288.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 288-291.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 296.
- ⁴⁰ James F. Engel and Wilbert Norton, What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest? (Grand Rapids: Zonderavan, 1975), 46.
- ⁴¹ Towns, Winning the Winnable: Friendship Evangelism (Lynchburg: Church Growth Institute, 1986), 32-33.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 53.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 54.
- ⁴⁴ W. E. Vine, Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (Old Tappan: Revell, 1981), 89.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 316.
- ⁴⁶ Ernest C. Reisinger, Today's Evangelism, Its Message and Methods (Phillipsburg: Craig Press, 1982), 6.
- ⁴⁷ Towns, What the Faith is All About, 387-388.
- ⁴⁸ Reisinger, Today's Evangelism, 9.

⁴⁹ Towns, Spiritual Factors of Church Growth: Internal Church Growth (Lynchburg: Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 1990), 75.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 76.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 76-77.

⁵⁶ Floyd Hays Barackman, Practical Christian Theology (Bible School Park, NY: Practical Press, 1981), 162.

⁵⁷ Larry Gilbert, Team Ministry (Lynchburg: Church Growth Institute, 1987), 66.

Chapter Four

⁵⁸ Elmer Towns, Winning the Winnable, 59.

⁵⁹ Towns, Friend Day resource packet (Lynchburg: Church Growth Institute, 1983), “Promotion” section.

⁶⁰ Towns, “Evangelism: The Why and How,” in Church Growth: The State of the Art, C. Peter Wagner, ed., 51.

⁶¹ Ibid., 55.

⁶² Towns, A Practical Encyclopedia of Evangelism and Church Growth (Lynchburg: Liberty University, 1994), 18.

⁶³ Ibid., 129.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 24-25.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 108

⁶⁶ Larry Gilbert, in Towns’ Friend Day resource packet, cover letter.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁸ Towns, Encyclopedia, 133.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 175.

⁷¹ Ibid., 201, citing Understanding Church Growth, third edition, 163.

⁷² Ibid., 206.

⁷³ Ibid., 100.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 260.

⁷⁵ Towns, Friend Day resource packet, 14.

⁷⁶ Towns, Encyclopedia, 286.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 287.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 215.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Towns, Friend Day, 3.

⁸¹ Ibid., cassette one, side A, “Introduction.”

⁸² Towns, Encyclopedia, 230.

⁸³ Ibid., 233.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 141-145.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 276.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 249.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 159.

⁸⁹ For Example, Towns speaks on the audio tapes included in the Friend Day resource packet of the “Law of Creek Jumping” (the principle that there must be time for preparation and “building up steam” before the big event) and the principle of “Supersaturation” (using every means and every opportunity to keep the goal and theme before the people). Neither of these principles has an entry in A Practical Encyclopedia of Evangelism and Church Growth.

Chapter Five

⁹⁰ Because the respondents could give more than one answer to some questions, and because not all respondents answered every question, the totals do not always equal one hundred percent.

⁹¹ Interview with Jim Copeland, former director of research for Church Growth Institute, 16 February 1995.

⁹² It is noteworthy that the reported number of follow-up touches by those who claimed to do the follow-up exactly as outlined in the resource do not equal 3 letters, phone calls, and visits per visitor. This seems to support the conclusion that churches reported only the follow-up touches made by the pastors and did not include contacts by Sunday School Teachers and the church members who brought the visitors. Since the number of phone calls and home visits are considerably fewer than the number of letters, pastors may be reserving their phone calls and visits for those whom they perceive to be good prospects (that is, not already active in other churches).