

a new day in evangelism

Winning the Winnable

FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM

ELMER TOWNS

 Elmer Towns ONLINE LIBRARY

w w w . e l m e r t o w n s . c o m

WINNING THE WINNABLE FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM

The most winnable people are those who are closely related to us, Friends, Relatives, Associates, and Neighbors (F.R.A.N.s)

by

Elmer L. Towns

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The title of the book is taken from Dr. Donald McGavran, the church growth leader of Pasadena, California. He used it several places, including his book *Understanding Church Growth*.

I want to recognize my student, Rev. Bob King, an M.A. graduate in Church Growth from Liberty University, for his research in this manuscript. Also, Linda Pethke typed the manuscript, and several other friends counseled me on the text. No book is the single product of one mind, and the strength of this book is evidenced by my many friends who contributed to this manuscript.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface: Friendship Evangelism in Action.....	1
Chapter One: Networking People into Redemptive-Friendships.....	3
Chapter Two: Stair-Stepping People to the Gospel.....	13
Chapter Three: Communicating the Gospel	21
Chapter Four: Targeting Receptive-Responsive People.....	27
Chapter Five: Removing Barriers that keep the Unsaved at Arm's Length	35
Chapter Six: Bonding People to the Church.....	43
Chapter Seven: F.R.A.N.gelism Follow-Up.....	57
Chapter Eight: Using Your Spiritual Gifts to Reach Others.....	63
Chapter Nine: Evangelists that Win.....	73
Chapter Ten: Equippers that Train.....	81
Chapter Eleven: Encouragers that Minister.....	87
Chapter Twelve: Helpers that Intercede and Support.....	93
Chapter Thirteen: Churches That Work	101
Suggested Bibliography	107
For Further Information: Resource Packet	108

PREFACE

Friendship Evangelism is the principle of reaching others for Christ through natural relationships - our friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors.

This type of evangelism is as old as the first apostles, Andrew brought his brother Peter, to Christ, John influenced his brother James, and Philip told his friend Nathanael about the Messiah.

Relationship is what Christianity is all about. The result of sin is a broken relationship between God and Man. The death of Christ re-established a relationship between the heavenly Father and His lost children. Christ is the way to God (John 14:6) and the friend of sinners (Luke 7:34).

Evangelism is making contact with a person and motivating him to give an honest hearing to the gospel. A soulwinner takes the sinner by the hand and leads him over the threshold into eternal life. Christ, who dwells in the believer, is communicated to the unsaved person in a relationship.

I trust Friendship Evangelism will work for you and that many of your loved ones and acquaintances will be won to Christ because you cared enough to share your Friend.

CHAPTER ONE

NETWORKING PEOPLE INTO REDEMPTIVE-FRIENDSHIPS

Cathy is a typical young all-American girl who married the man of her dreams. Both she and her husband work full time to fulfill their dreams.

Cathy believed in God, was moral in character, and was involved in community activities. As a young girl she made a salvation decision, but as she grew into young adulthood forgot her commitment to Christ.

My wife, Ruth, worked in the same office with Cathy and tried to influence her for Christ. My wife did not try to "preach" to Cathy for several reasons. First Cathy was not ready to enter into a relationship with a local church. Second, she knew some of the terminology but didn't understand the meaning -of Christian words. Finally, there were several barriers that kept her from attending church.

Ruth didn't want to press her prematurely, that's not her way of relating to people. She does not manipulate people but relates to them as friends.

Cathy didn't want to attend our church because parking is hard to find as it is down a hill and across a busy street. Also, it is difficult to find a good seat. Also, our church seats 4,000, and Cathy liked the idea of attending a small family church.

Cathy had heard preaching over the television but had not responded. Several strangers had invited her to attend their various churches, but she declined.

Heritage Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia had a Friend Day in November 1981. I was the speaker and was the friend invited by Rod Kidd, pastor at that time. When I told my wife about the idea of everyone inviting a friend, she thought of Cathy.

Ruth asked Cathy to attend church and be her friend. Cathy agreed enthusiastically. The church was in her neighborhood, but she never would have attended by herself.

Ruth and Cathy sat together and during the Friendship Hour, Ruth stood and introduced Cathy to the congregation.

After I preached, I gave an invitation for people to come forward where someone would pray with them to receive Christ. Twelve were saved that morning, but Cathy did not respond. Perhaps the idea of publicly walking forward was new to her. Maybe she was scared, or she just wasn't ready. That was her first exposure to gospel preaching and she wasn't comfortable with the idea.

Sunday afternoon, the pastor wrote a personal letter to Cathy, offering pastoral help and friendship. She got the letter the day after she attended church.

Pastor Rod Kidd had planned to phone and visit everyone who visited on Friend Day, but the response was so great (from an average of 83 in attendance the church jumped that day to 237), that he couldn't personally phone or call on every visitor. Rod's wife took the responsibility to phone everyone. She contacted Cathy and offered friendship and help.

Monday night one day after Cathy attended church, Pastor Kidd visited in the home. She and her husband made a re-commitment of their lives to Christ. The following week Cathy and Mike went forward in the church service as a public profession. A week later, Cathy asked if she could talk to Ruth about some things that puzzled her about Christianity. Ruth started to explain why Christians lived separated lives.

"I understand that," Cathy answered. Then Cathy explained that almost every night when she and Mike got home from work, there was a letter in the mailbox from someone in the church. Also, they usually got a phone call from someone in the church during the evening and people kept coming to visit them.

"Why do Christians always write letters, phone and visit one another?" Cathy asked.

Ruth explained that the church had a program of follow-up, where they networked people into the church and salvation.

"Tell them we mean business," Cathy told Ruth.

Mike and Cathy got involved in the couples' class at Sunday school. Within two years, Cathy was teaching Sunday school and they had a baby boy to raise in the church.

Heritage Baptist Church used the principles of Friendship Evangelism to reach Cathy. In 1981 the church averaged 83 people in attendance, and four years later averaged over 500 people.

Friendship is an effective means of making people receptive and responsive to the gospel. On the human level, the single key to establishing friendships is to be friendly. Solomon wrote, "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly" (Pr. 18:24). The implication of Solomon's statement is quite clear. The Christian witness must take the initiative in establishing redemptive friendships.

Recently I spoke to a combined Sunday school of youth and adults at North Syracuse (NY) Baptist Church. The auditorium was filled with over 400 in attendance. I was asked by the pastor to challenge the church for a Friend Day. I did not want to give a promotional "pitch" for them to use the plan. I wanted the people to see what the program could do for them. I decided to take a survey by an informal raising of hands.

I knew that most new converts were influenced by Friends and Relatives and if the congregation saw that many of them were influenced in the same way, they would be convinced to use Friend Day. So I asked, "How many of you were influenced to receive Christ or join this church through advertising. Two people out of 400 raised a hand.

How many were influenced by pastoral contact? Eight or ten hands.

How many were influenced by an evangelistic visit from the church? Eight or ten hands.

How many were saved because of an evangelistic service? No hands.

How many became a Christian because of the influence of FRIENDS or RELATIVES?
A multitude of hands, so many I did not try to count.

This informal survey reveals the same results that research discovered in various denominations that the key influence in bringing people to Christ is friends and relatives. People are reached for Christ through existing relationships.

What Influenced People to Salvation
Results of National Survey Advertisement 2% Organized Visitation 6% Contact by Pastor 6% Friends & Relatives 86%

So I asked the church in North Syracuse if they needed to hire another Pastor for evangelism. They shook their heads in dissent.

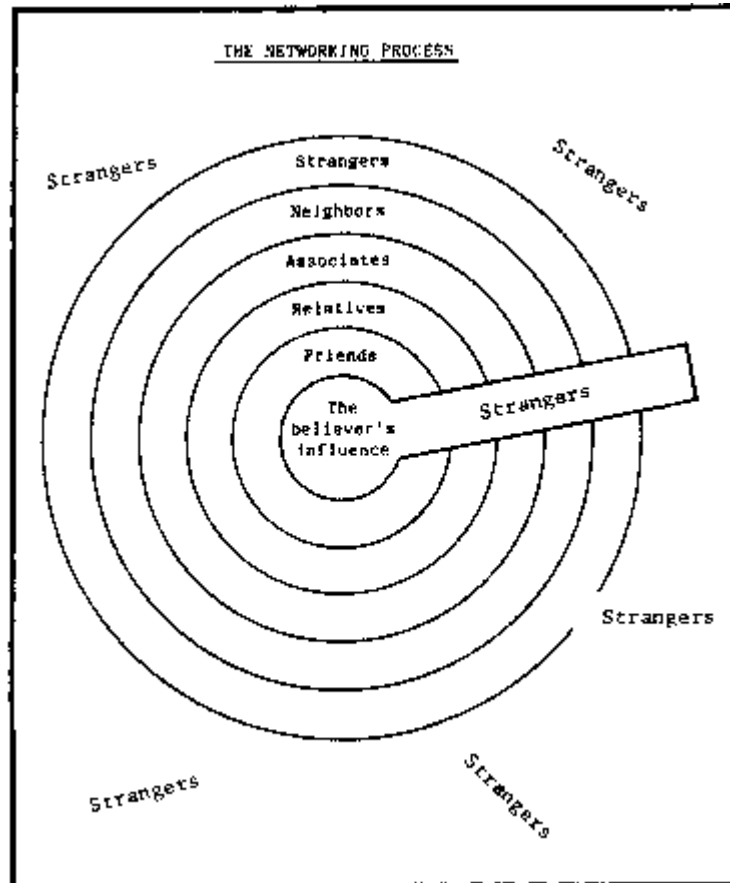
"Do you need an evangelistic meetings" I questioned. Again they responded negatively.

"Do you need to get more people attending the Thursday night visitation programs" "No" was their response.

"Do you need a program that works through existing relationships to bring people to the church and to Christ." They responded with an enthusiastic yes.

The term *networking* has been coined to reveal the principle of establishing and building redemptive (Some call this Web Evangelism which is reaching through social webs.) friendships for purposes of evangelism. The process might also be thought Friendship Evangelism.

If the chart of a relationship web or social network were drawn over the church of concentric circles of influence and then adjusted to show the effect of networking, the result would be similar to the chart seen here.



1. *Making people receptive by forming relationships.* Christianity is a reflection of relationships. Man's problem isn't one of being maladjusted, irreligious, a non-worshipper or a slothful church attainer. Man's problem is sin. He is alienated from God (Eph. 4:17,18; Col. 1:21). The unsaved man has no relationship with God, and until such a relationship is established he has no hope of salvation (Eph. 2:12,13). The key is not going forward, weeping, or even repenting of certain sins. The key is establishing a relationship with God.

A relationship between Christians and unsaved people has proven to be the most effective means of influencing unsaved people to get saved.

Working through existing relationships was used effectively during the earthly life and ministry of Christ. John the Baptist introduced Andrew, one of his own disciples, to Jesus (vs. 35,36), then Andrew immediately introduced his brother, Simon Peter to Christ (vs. 41,42). The day following, Jesus found Philip (v. 43) a resident of the same town as Andrew and Simon Peter (v. 44). Friendships played some part in Philip's meeting the Saviour. Philip applied the principle of networking by immediately finding his friend Nathanael and introducing him to Jesus (vs. 45,46). In retrospect, three things become clear. 1). A relationship with God is the foundation to the Christian faith. 2). Human relationships are the most effective way of opening the door to reach people for Christ. 3). Working through existing relationships, or networking people for the gospel is a biblical approach to evangelism.

2. *Bonding newcomers to the church through networking.* Getting new converts or members into a group is the glue that keeps them in the church. Newcomers who become actively involved in Sunday School classes and feel a needed and vital part of the class are usually permanently bonded to the church. Research shows that new converts and members who do not become involved in a cell group are often lost to other churches, or they drop out of church completely.

Since the cell (Illustration, Sunday School class, Bible study, etc.) is the glue that holds groups of people to the church, what is the glue that holds individuals to the cell? The answer is meaningful interpersonal relationships. Cell groups are small enough to allow interaction between members and newcomers. This interaction cultivates friendships and bonds newcomers to the cell and to the church.

HOW TO ESTABLISH AND BUILD REDEMPTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

1. *Getting a vision of what can be accomplished* The success of reaching people through networking hinges upon vision, and this is nowhere more true than in the task of establishing friendships for the purpose of evangelism (Prov. 29:18).

First, there must be an accurate vision of the condition of the unsaved. The unsaved are not merely in trouble, they are dead in sin and without hope in the world (Eph. 2:1). Unless they are brought to repentance and faith in Christ, they will perish (Lk. 13:3,5; Acts 4:12).

Second, there must be a vision of what you can do. Christians must be reminded that the task of evangelism is not impossible. Jesus Christ has commanded us to make disciples, and He has promised to go with us in the task, even to the end of the age (Mt. 28:19,20). He has provided tools that are not dependent upon our power or ability (Rom. 1:16). If we will but yield to Him and His plan, God will work in us to accomplish the task (Phil. 2:13). Believers too often say "I can't" or "I quit" before they even start.

2. *Getting a vision for the method* In Acts 1:8, Jesus said, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and you *shall be witnesses* unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8, emphasis added). The method of evangelism is witnessing, which is sharing Jesus Christ with friends. Being a witness is not optional. Christ did not say, "You *should* be witnesses, you *may* be witnesses or you *might* be witnesses." He commanded Christians to be witnesses. Therefore, the only choice a believer has is whether he will be a good witness or a bad one.

A Christian is a witness for Jesus Christ, and whether he is a good one or bad depends upon vision. Vision is prerequisite to success in establishing redemptive relationships. Believers need a vision of networking their friends to the gospel.

3. *Making friends.* Begin building redemptive friendships by learning names, smiling, looking friendly and showing a sincere interest in others. A person's name is said to be one of the most pleasant sounds he can hear. Furthermore, the use of the name shows personal interest.

Look pleasant. Try to look like the kind of person that a stranger would want to know. Be a good listener. Don't transmit all the time. Tune in to their frequency and listen attentively. Center the conversation around their interests rather than your own. Make every effort to make the new acquaintance feel important. A good way to do that is to seek his advice and/or assistance in some area of his ability or expertise. These simple efforts will show genuine interest in him as a person.

Talk about things like job or profession, sports and hobbies, family interests, vacations and trips, current news, books, cars, boats, campers, gardening, religious background, etc.

It takes time to establish a meaningful relationship and build an environment suitable for decision making. Unlike people in most of the rest of the world, Americans tend to think that everything must be done today. Doubtless, the man who prayed, "God give me patience, and do it right now" was an American. Redemptive friendships cannot be built that way. We need a new motto, "PATIENCE."

4. Building relationships. The warmest climate for building a meaningful friendship may be provided by your own home. Many biblical scholars believe that hospitality is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Christians are exhorted to be hospitable (Rom. 12:13). It will be difficult to convince anyone that you would like to live with them in heaven if they are not made welcome in your earthly home.

As the relationship begins to develop, the believer should continue taking the initiative by cultivating common interests. This is not nearly as hard as it may seem. Think of every activity that you have an interest in, and arrange them in order of your priority. As you get to know your new acquaintance, take a mental inventory of his/her interests. Then compare the two lists, and every place they match is a point of common interest. It is then a simple matter to work toward getting involved together in those common activities.

In addition to your personal concern and friendship, your new acquaintances should be introduced to other Christians who have interests similar to theirs and who will share your concern for their spiritual welfare. This will allow your unsaved friend to see that you are not the only Christian in the world who is a normal human being, and that Christians do have fun and enjoy life. At the same time, it will expose them to a broader base of spiritual influence.

New friends become receptive and responsive, as they are included in Christian group activities (this is called Side Door Evangelism). Again, this will serve to broaden their exposure to the truth and expand the base of spiritual input. It will also open the door for both lifestyle or personal evangelism.

Throughout the process, the believer should always be alert to the changing seasons of the soul, those times when people are more receptive than at others. These are typically holidays and special times such as Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, birthdays, anniversaries, etc.; times of joy, such as job promotion, graduation, marriage, the birth of a child, etc.; and times of sorrow, such as extended illness, financial reversal, loss of a loved one, a fire, automobile accident, etc.

Circumstances such as these often serve to make the heart more mellow and receptive. The Christian witness should be alert to such changes and capitalize on them.

UNDERSTANDING FRIENDSHIP

In establishing Friendships for Christ and for the furtherance of the gospel, there is real danger of false friendships, or being nice for the church's sake. No one likes to be used or deceived, and such deceit is not a Christian virtue (Phil. 1:10). Therefore, redemptive friendships must be genuine friendships that requires a thorough understanding of true friendship.

1. A friend makes you comfortable. A reeving of comfort is a by-product of the security produced by unconditional love (Pr. 17:17A). A true friend is one who not only loves you for yourself, but in spite of yourself. He recognizes your imperfection, frailty and weakness and chooses to go on loving you anyway. His motive is not to get, but to give (2 Cor. 12:14). Friends do not wear a mask of pretended perfection. You can relax, be yourself, and still feel comfortable because you know your relationship will not be threatened if your friend should spot one of your imperfections.

The patriarch Job had a different kind of friends. As long as Job was prosperous and healthy they were his friends. But when he needed them, their friendship proved to be conditional (Job 19:19). They were the kind of fair-weather friends Solomon warned against (Prov. 19:4). They were loyal when it was advantageous to them. But when Job needed their support they turned on him. Solomon also warned against that type of friends (Prov. 19:6).

2. A friend can always be trusted A true friend can be trusted to stand by you even when it might be more profitable to forsake you (Prov. 27:10). King David had at least two such trusted friends in Hushai and Jonathan. Hushai stood by David when he might have been greatly rewarded by Absalom if he had forsaken him (2 Sam. 15:32-37; 16:15; 17:16). Jonathan defied the orders of his own father to protect his friend David (I Sam. 18: I; 19:1,2; 20:142).

Friends do not always agree on all things. But they can agree to disagree and still remain friends. There are times when a sincere rebuke is essential to friendship. He is no friend who allows wrong to continue uncorrected. But such rebukes are no threat to true friendship because true friends can be trusted (Prov. 27:6).

3. A friend gives encouragement A true friend is one who helps you through the trials and tests of life. When the world and the devil attack from the outside, and the flesh is undermining your strength within, a friend will be there to encourage and build you up (Prov. 27:9,17).

4. A friend will make sacrifices. Friendship goes beyond just being trustworthy. Hushai remained a faithful friend to David when it might have been more profitable to forsake him. This principle implies a willingness to remain faithful even when there is a cost involved, and true friendship always involves some cost.

Friendships are not found, they are established and developed through the investment of time and effort. A real friendship is a psychologically and emotionally intimate relationship. It involves caring and sharing in the life of another person. It is the kind of relationship Paul spoke of when he said, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Rom. 12:15). Such caring relationships are not built without considerable investment of time and labor.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the networking process is to build redemptive friendships. Those who become involved in networking may be accused of building friendships for ulterior motives, but nothing could be farther from the truth. One of the hallmarks of friendship is giving attention to the good of others. What greater good could one possibly purpose than to lead a friend to Christ.

CHAPTER TWO

STAIR-STEPPING PEOPLE TO THE GOSPEL

I did not become a Christian the first time I heard the gospel. Even though I grew up in church and knew religious terminology, I was not seeking God nor was I concerned with my eternal destiny.

I went to a youth rally when I saw Christian young people who had something I did not have. I wanted to be like them. Next I went to hear Jack Wyrzten, a youth evangelist preach the gospel. For the first time I sensed I was lost and going to hell. I did not go forward to get saved, but I was no longer satisfied in my sin.

Then I went to a revival meeting where I heard the gospel. I was told to invite Jesus Christ into my heart to be saved. I did it on July 25, 1950.

It took several stair-steps for me to realize my need and to be saved. When we witness to our unsaved friends we must recognize the steps they need to take to be saved.

Obviously, anyone can be saved the first time he hears the gospel, as was the Philippian jailor and Zacchaeus. When God has prepared their heart, we must lead a person to Christ. But our research tells us a person hears the gospel 3.4 times (the Law of Three Hearings) before they accept Christ. Usually they are stepping closer to salvation each time they hear the gospel.

In 1985, I preached at a church in Danville, Virginia, where one of my students was pastoring. A young married couple in their late teens sat on the aisle of the second pew. It was obvious from their response that they did not attend church often.

I gave the invitation with a view of stair-stepping people toward Christ. With everyone's head bowed, I asked for anyone who had been thinking about getting right with God to put up his hand and lift his head to look at me.

Then I explained that lifting one's hand for prayer or looking toward a preacher will not save anyone. "But it helps you take another step toward God."

I feel the more often a person says yes to God, the easier it will be for him to pray to receive Christ. Therefore, I get him to say yes by lifting his hand and looking my way.

The young man sitting on the aisle first lifted his hand, then he looked at me.

"Do you want to become a Christian?" I asked. He responded by nodding his head. "You should come forward during the invitation," I instructed.

The young lady then lifted her hand but not her head. She continued in prayer. "If you are sincere, look this way." I asked. When she did, I asked if she wanted to be a Christian. She nodded, yes.

They did not come forward during the invitation. It was their first time in that church. Perhaps they were embarrassed or they did not fully understand. There may have been other reasons for not coming forward during the invitation. But, I did not want them to step back from Christ.

After the service, I stood at the back door of the church with the pastor. When the couple came out I took both of them by the hand and told the pastor, "This couple is going to get saved." It was a positive affirmation of what they had done, not a criticism for not coming down the aisle.

"Will you go to their home and lead these people to Christ?" I asked the young pastor.

"Yes, I will do it this week." he responded.

When a person is stair-stepped toward the gospel he is not presented with a "now-or-never" decision. When the gospel is presented with such finality and the prospect does not accept Christ, he thinks he has turned his back on God. As a result sometimes the prospect leaves church farther away from God than when he entered. A prospect should be stair-stepped toward the gospel. Like helping a young baby walk, every step he takes toward God should be supported.

Evangelism is too often viewed as an isolated activity. You, the soulwinner, confront the unsaved person with the gospel, which means proclaiming the gospel and trying to persuade him to respond. Every contact with him is viewed as a separate isolated activity. Evangelism should be seen as an on-going process that includes pre-evangelism and postevangelism.

The Scriptures refer to evangelism in terms of "making disciples." Evangelism is not painted as a fragmented picture. The biblical approach of making disciples is neither haphazard nor piecemeal. God has clearly given an on-going approach to the task of disciple-making, one that begins with relating to the unsaved person where he is and is not complete until the person becomes a mature, productive and reproducing member of the body of Christ.

EVANGELISM - A PROCESS AND AN EVENT

1. Salvation (the new birth) is an event Jesus referred to salvation as a new birth experience (Jn. 3:3,5). Peter also used the analogy of birth in reference to salvation (I Pet. 1:23). John, in his first epistle, indicated that salvation is a birth experience, that begins with faith in Jesus Christ (I Jn. 5:1). Just as birth is an event, so salvation is an event.

Salvation is like a light bulb; it is either on or off. The lights may gradually become brighter or dimmer, but there is a point when they are turned on. So it is with salvation. Faith may gradually grow stronger, but the exercise of faith in which a person is saved is always instantaneous.

A birth is always an event. Look at any birth certificate. One baby is not born at all hours of the day and night. The birth certificate may state "Born alive at 2:45 A.M.," "Born alive at 5:18

P.M.," or even "Stillborn at 11:00 A.M." But it will never read, "Born from 6:40 A.M. to 11:02 A.M." A birth happens at a point in time - it is an event.

But just as there are nine months of preparation before a birth, so a person is prepared for salvation before his conversion. This is called stair-stepping or pre-evangelism. The human life cycle begins with an event commonly referred to as conception. That event is then followed by a nine-month gestation period during which the prenatal development process takes place. That process leads up to the event of birth. After the event of birth, another process begins. This process, called postnatal, includes further growth, development, training, and maturing. In reference to salvation, this is called post-salvation.

HUMAN LEFE CYCLE CHART

Event	Process	Event	Process	Event
Conception	Gestation	Birth	Maturing	Death

Each contact that the church makes with a lost person should move him closer to acceptance. Just as there are nine months of prenatal growth before a baby is born, so there is usually a period of preconversion influence that brings a person to Christ. This is sometimes called pre-evangelism, but in Friendship Evangelism it is called "stair-stepping a person to the gospel."

2. *Salvation is an event.* The event of salvation (the new birth) is an indispensable and unalterable part of the process of evangelism. In the human life cycle, the gestation period can be and is often cut short by a premature live or dead birth. Birth, however, is essential to the completion of the life cycle.

Growing churches must not lose sight of the *NEW* birth experience. Stair-stepping cannot be completed apart the salvation of the unsaved. Salvation is neither the beginning nor the end of the process of evangelism, but without it there is no true evangelism. Like the human life cycle, evangelism is a process (pre-evangelism, conversion, post-evangelism) that consists of events.

EVANGELISM LIFE CYCLE CHART

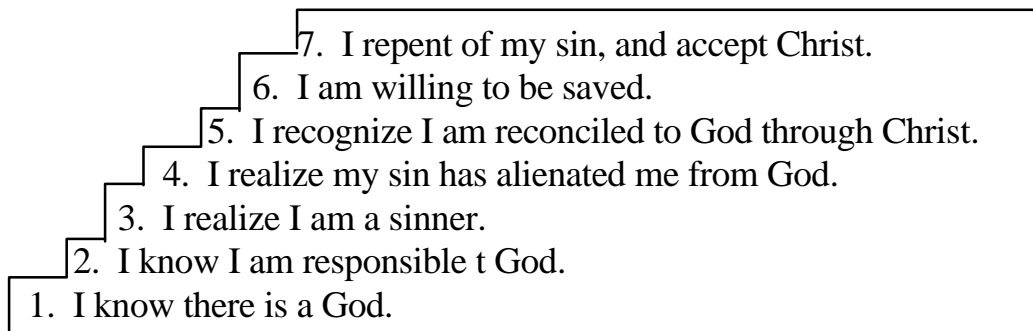
Event	Process	Event	Process	Event
Initial	Stair-	New	Spiritual	Rapture
Contact	Stepping	Birth	Growth	Death

STAIR-STEPPING PEOPLE TO A DECISION FOR CHRIST

1. *The process of evangelism* Stair-stepping includes all that is involved in reaching the unsaved where they are and influencing them to Christ. It is moving people through a process, which is accomplished one step at a time.

The following chart shows the entire process. The initial contact could be made with a person at any level. An unsaved person is not required to begin on the first step. Therefore, stair-stepping can begin or end with any of the various steps in the process.

CONVERSION



2. *Stair-stepping is both supernatural and natural* Many things bring a person to Christ; such as the power of the gospel, the convicting work of the Holy Spirit and the drawing of the Father. The power of God that brings salvation resides in the gospel, not in any human program or humanly devised scheme (Rom. 1:16). Only the Holy Spirit can convict the sinner (Jn. 16:8ff), and every possible precaution must be taken to see that no conscious or unconscious attempt is made to replace spiritual conviction with psychological pressure or human manipulation. Regardless of human effort, only God can draw sinners to Himself (Jn. 6:44).

At the same time, it is neither logical nor biblical to expect a "God-hater" to be saved without taking some intermediate steps in his understanding and acceptance of the person of God. Before he can exercise faith in Christ, he must understand the provision Christ has made for his redemption (Heb. 11:6).

In evangelism, *the* decision to trust Jesus Christ by faith is usually preceded by many other decisions. Some of those decisions may be subconscious, or they may come so early in life that the person has forgotten that he made them. Unsaved people do not repent and trust Christ until they see their need for 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 Friendship Evangelism.

3. *Entry level to stair-stepping.* The first step of an individual toward God is determined by his need. As previously stated, that could be on step five, six or even seven of the stair-stepping process. The important thing is that the process begin at the sinner's understanding of the gospel. Then he must proceed to salvation. Most of the time the process begins when a

friend contacts a lost person. Usually, the believer has some general biblical knowledge, understands the implications of the gospel and has a positive attitude toward both the gospel and the Christian faith. If the lost person believes in the existence of God, the believer must begin farther up the stairs toward conversion. The unsaved person already believes in God. He should take the next step.

When a contractor begins construction of a thirty- story skyscraper, he begins work with the foundation, and then moves up one floor at a time. It would be foolish to consider building even the first floor without the foundation. That would be like the foolish man who built his house upon the sand (Mt. 7:26,27). If, however, the contractor goes bankrupt after having completed only twenty floors, and the bonding company employs another builder to complete the structure, he does not go back and lay the foundation again. Rather, the crews take up work on the twentieth floor.

MAINTAINING PERSPECTIVE

1. *Understanding the goal of evangelism.* The vast majority of Christians think of evangelism as a confrontational event, rather than a stair-stepping process. They are under the impression that evangelistic success can only be measured in terms of decisions for Christ. If their efforts do not produce decisions as quickly as expected, they experience a sense of failure. The perception of failure then breeds discouragement, and believers may give up on witnessing to their most promising friends before the task is completed. Some become completely disillusioned and stop all efforts to reach the unsaved. A proper understanding of stair-stepping can eliminate much of this problem.

Without question, the success of evangelism is -the- decision of the unsaved to trust Jesus Christ as personal Saviour. But, just as a sinner makes many decisions while being stair-stepped to the gospel, there are many levels of successes in the process of sharing Christ with a friend.

A young man chooses boxing because he sees an Olympic gold medal as the height of success. However, there must be many successes before he achieves the Olympic gold. Before he can even compete in the Olympics, he must first win the local competition, the state, the regional, the national and ultimately the Olympic trials.

Success - whether in sports or evangelism - is reaching goals which stair-step people toward the ultimate objective. When initial contact is made with an unbeliever, the ultimate goal is to see him become a mature Christian. But the immediate goal is to see him move one step closer to salvation. Each time he progresses from one step to the next, there is success.

2. *Witnessing goals must be realistic.* The ultimate objective of introducing the unsaved to Jesus Christ must be broken down into realistic goals. The Christian must exercise patience to stair-step the unsaved toward faith in Christ in steps small enough that the unsaved are able to follow them (Isa. 28:10). Too often, the Christian tries to bring every unsaved friend to Christ in a single leap. If the person is not a responsive/receptive prospect, the Christian feels he has failed because no decision was made for Christ. Instead of feeling used by God because he was able to share his faith, he becomes discouraged because no decision was recorded. Remember an adult

could easily climb two or three steps at a time, but teaching small children usually requires taking them one step at a time.

3. Measure success in terms of moving people closer to a decision for Christ

Understanding the nature of success and setting realistic goals provides a means of constantly evaluating the process of evangelism. Each time a goal is reached, success can be measured in terms of the progress that has been made toward the ultimate goal of bringing a person to Christ.

Stair-stepping enables the Christian to concentrate his efforts on winning the winnable while they are winnable. He is either sharing his faith which makes some more receptive, or he is bringing a prepared person to a decision of salvation. In either case he is making progress.

CONCLUSION

Stair-stepping is nothing more than a systematic and natural approach of bringing people to Christ. It allows the Christian to keep the ultimate objective in clear focus and, at the same time, see where he is in the process of evangelism. The unique quality of stair-stepping is that it takes the guesswork out of evangelism and provides an objective means of measuring progress.

All Christians must be aware of the stair-stepping goal. They will come in contact with people on different steps. Their aim is to network people into the church and stair-step them to a meaningful decision for Christ. Barriers must be removed. The unsaved must hear the gospel often so they will become more receptive to it.

The key to getting started is determining where the prospect is in relationship to God. Then, the believer must know what entry-level to make in witnessing to him. Once a relationship has been made, the process of evangelism is a matter of stair-stepping the prospect toward faith in Christ.

CHAPTER THREE

COMMUNICATING THE GOSPEL

Christianity is similar to the wrench in a plumber's toolbox - it is there to fix something. Those who just keep the wrench shiny are similar to the theologian who is always perfecting his doctrine but does not apply it to his life or ministry. Christianity repairs broken lives. To help people, we must share Christ with them. But where do we begin? They must realize that they are lost before they will come to salvation.

My sister lived a moral life, was faithful in Sunday School attendance, and read her Bible daily. She didn't understand repentance because there was no outward sins to turn from.

My sister was better than me in outward actions but after I experienced salvation, I had questions if she was born again.

"Have you been saved?" I asked her. She gave me the right answers. She understood conversion for she had even played the piano in several evangelistic crusades where I led singing.

My sister did not have a biblical understanding of sin and I felt she didn't have to fall into outward sin to understand it.

I knew the Bible was the basis of my salvation so I promised her a new Bible if she memorized 100 verses. Each day when I came home from work I quizzed her over the verses she memorized that day. I gave attention to their meaning, not just rote memory. When she got half through the project she went to a Christian camp. A couple of days later she phoned long distance.

"I just got saved," she told me over the phone. We rejoiced together, then she explained. "The preacher quoted almost every verse I learned." She went on to explain how God used those Scriptures to convict her of sin and bring her to salvation.

A person will not get saved until he realizes he is lost.

EVANGELISM IS MEETING NEEDS

The ultimate reason to get saved is because a person is lost. He needs God. But most people do not realize they need God. Some are outwardly good like my sister, others live in the dregs of sin; neither feel a need to repent and turn to God.

1. People are cut off from God. When Satan tempted Adam in the garden, he had the ability to make a moral choice, but fell into sin. Sin cut him off from God.

Not only Adam and Eve, but everyone from that time forth was cut off from God's presence. The Scriptures teach, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

Man is a sinner in three ways. First, anything less than God's perfect holiness is sin. Sin is similar to an arrow falling short of the target. It did not attain to the perfect standard. So every person born into the world does not measure up to God's perfect standard.

Second, rebellion is sin, usually translated "transgression." Sin is the breaking of God's law, either volitionally or ignorantly.

The third way men sin is by inherent wickedness or moral impurity. This is described as filth or uncleanness and is abhorred by God, who is pure and holy.

The result of sin is that it blinds the sinner (2 Cor. 4:3,3; Eph. 4:17). Usually man does not recognize that he is a sinner and that he is cut off from God. Therefore a sinner needs the gospel communicated to him, to reveal that he is a sinner.

2. *People become their own point of reference.* When Satan promised Eve, "Ye shall be as gods" (Gen. 3:5), he somewhat fulfilled that promise. As a result, each person today is his own standard of measurement. Each has become the focus of the circle in which he lives. The Fall of man has created an upside-down condition. Instead of man's placing God on the throne of his life, man sits there in supreme ignorance that he has usurped the place of God.

3. *People suffer alienation and isolation.* Sin is not just punishment after death. People also suffer the consequences of sin in this life. Sin results in isolation or alienation from God. Spiritual death is the ultimate form of isolation from God. As a result of man's sin, he needs eternal salvation to bring him into fellowship with God.

But there is a second aspect, sin cuts people off from relating to one another. Man is a social animal who needs relationships to keep him healthy. The recluse who hates people and the mystic who separates himself from people in his search for spirituality does not reflect God who created man to fellowship with Him. Friendship Evangelism strikes at the core of the problem. A soulwinner uses his relationship with F.R.A.N.s to bring them to Christ.

The answer to isolation is that God took the initiative with man. "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son" (Gal. 4:4). And again we read "God ... hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb. 1:1,2).

4. *People are filled with anxiety.* Any life that is separated from authority and purpose is like a boat without an anchor; it is drifting. A person may be anxious because he does not have all the answers to the questions raised by other, or even the questions asked in his heart. Every person has basic needs within his heart. He knows that something is missing but he usually refuses to identify it as God. He looks for answers and does not find any. The vacuum created by God's absence produces anxiety. "Anxiety" is another word for fear, depression, jealousy, or any other condition.-that keeps man in an emotional disequilibrium.

5. *People search for meaning.* Because man is isolated and affected by sin he usually has a lack of meaning in life. Those who are slaves to drugs know that narcotics do not lead to happiness or meaning. The same can be said for wealth, fame or even success. Some people do

not know where to go or how to get where they want to go. But they want to go somewhere. They have not found the secret in life. They need the God that gives purpose for which men should live.

6. *People march inevitably toward death.* Thousands die annually of some form of cancer; and that frightens most. We experience the same fear when a friend is killed or we hear of a tragic accident.

The threat of death is all about us. Within our decaying bodies we realize death is our enemy. We want to rise -above the limitations of the body. Yet we see dimly because our eyes are wearing out. Our arms ache because of arthritis. Even tied thirty-year-old feels the inevitable rising tide of age when a younger man takes his place on the team.

The Bible teaches that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), and the ultimate need of man is an explanation I for death. A little boy standing next to his father asked, "Does &Very6ne have to die?"

"Yes."

The young son pondered, then blurted out, "Even if they are lucky?"

EVANGELISM IS COMMUNICATION

We win our friends to Christ through relationship. Since we know Christ and we know them, we become the bridge they travel to salvation. Evangelism is communicating the gospel to them at their point of need.

The word "communicate" actually means "to have in common."

When we communicate with a friend, the two of us have something
in common.

God communicated to man in many ways but the greatest was Jesus Christ. Christianity is a relationship between God and man, based on the life, death, and resurrection of his Son Jesus Christ. Now, every person who is saved has a living relationship to God. That is another reason we call it Friendship Evangelism.

Christians are expected to reach out in relationships to others. Every man is potentially a loner, but he can reach out of his shell for meaningful relationship when he has a full understanding of the relationship between God and himself.

The Word of God is the basis of man's communication with God. The Bible is the communication of the gospel to people at their point of need. The gospel must be communicated so that people can understand it. They must see it in the lifestyle of a Christian. This means the lost must see that the gospel works in life, but it also means the prospect has a role-model with which to identify. They see Jesus Christ in the believer and want to receive Him.

EVANGELISM IS GIVING THE GOSPEL

As a young boy I joined Eastern Heights Presbyterian Church on Easter Sunday, 1944. I had memorized the children's catechism so I knew about God and the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. During Sunday School I went into the pastor's office along with a group of other young people who were joining the church.

"Do you believe in the Virgin birth?" the pastor asked me.

"Yes" I responded because I believed it with all my heart.

The pastor went around the room and asked each youth a different question about the fundamentals of the faith. After the youth answered, he turned and asked the rest of us, "Do you also believe this?" Each time I said yes, because I believed it sincerely.

But I knew in my heart I was not going to heaven. If the pastor had asked if I had an assurance of my salvation, my answer would have been, "I *hope* so!"

I knew all about salvation but I did not know the Saviour Jesus Christ. I knew the propositional truth of the gospel but I did not know the person - Jesus Christ.

The word "gospel" means "good news" salvation. The gospel has two aspects, a proposition and a Person.

The gospel - a proposition. The basis of good news is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. "I declare unto you that gospel which I preached unto you, ...that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15:14). Those who deny the reality of the gospel deny the foundation of Christianity. But, for a person to be saved, mere mental agreement. to a propositional statement is not enough.

The gospel - a Person. The gospel is a Person - Jesus Christ' A prospect must give more than mental assent to the fact of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. When Jesus Christ enters his heart he is acting on the gospel and is saved, "But as many as received him (Christ) to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (Jn. 1:12).

By definition we have said that evangelism is the communication of the gospel to people at their point of need. We communicate not only by writing and speaking. The gospel is a Person - Jesus Christ. We communicate Jesus Christ by our relationship to our friends. Therefore, the unsaved come to know the content of *Christianity (prepositionally)* and be in right relationship to Jesus Christ (*personally*).

EVANGELISM IS LEADING THROUGH THE PLAN OF SALVATION

The plan of salvation is sometimes called the Roman Road of Salvation since the verses that are often used to lead a person to Christ are found in the Book of Romans.

The first step in this plan is to (1) *know your need*. The Bible says, "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). This does not mean there is nothing good in man but rather that none of us is as righteous as God himself. Unfortunately, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). It makes little difference how good we are. We are not good enough to go to heaven.

Even if we were "almost perfect," we still fall short of God's holy standard of perfection.

The second step is to (2) *know the penalty*. The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). This refers to both physical and spiritual death. Physical death occurs upon the separation of the body and spirit of man (Jas. 2:26). Spiritual death occurs when one

is eternally separated from God.

A third step in God's plan of salvation is to (3) *know the provision*. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Because we could not pay the price for our sins, Jesus did. He provided salvation as a free gift to all who will take it (Rom. 6:23). That provision gives the sinner the option to receive or reject God's gift of eternal life.

A person can know the above three steps in this plan and never be saved. The fourth step is (4) *respond to Christ*. "That is thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9). To confess Christ is the same as receiving Him. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (Jn. 1: 12).

CONCLUSION

God is in the life-saving business, but he uses us to communicate the good news to those who need it. We must, (1) know the need of lost people and be motivated to help them. Then we must, (2) understand the necessity of communicating with them, not just preaching to them. Next, we must (3) give them the gospel both in our life style and by careful explanation. Finally, we must (4) lead them through the logical steps of the gospel. They must know the propositional nature of the gospel and receive Jesus Christ, having a personal relationship with Him.

CHAPTER FOUR

TARGETING RECEPTIVE-RESPONSIVE PEOPLE

Some people want to evangelize house to house. But they cannot get into most homes because the residents are not receptive to them.

There is a place for house to house outreach, but the most effective evangelism is when Christians share Christ with their Friends, Relatives, Associates and Neighbors. These people are usually *receptive* to their friends and are *responsive* to the gospel. This chapter will give reasons why we should focus our evangelistic attention on winning those with whom we have relationships.

The church should evangelize all people in its "Jerusalem" by using as many means as possible. This involves spreading the gospel by radio, TV, newspapers, flyers, tract distribution, etc.

We should invest our priority-time reaching those who are responsive-receptive people because: (1) time is short, (2) resources are limited, (3) it follows the biblical example, and (4) through discipleship it produces greater results.

If a soulwinner can make only five evangelistic visits during a period of time, it would seem wise that he place priority on visiting those who are ready to receive Christ. Why? Because emphasizing receptive- responsive people is: (1) trying to be as fruitful as possible for Christ, (2) winning the winnable while they are winnable, before their receptivity cools, (3) growing the church faster and larger; and (4) being a good steward of one's time and resources.

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 (Mk. 16:15) but concentrate on those who are receptive and responsive (Mt. 10:14; 29:19). This principle brought about the turning point in the apostle Paul's ministry (Acts 13:46).

In light of his stewardship, the Christian must establish priorities for evangelism. He must be interested in reaching all, but he also must determine where his evangelistic efforts are likely to be most productive, and give that area attention. That does not mean he can forget or ignore the rest of the world. It does mean, however, that he should determine which people are likely to be most receptive and responsive to him, then concentrate his efforts on them.

IDENTIFYING PROSPECTS

1. *Who is a prospect?* At one time, a church considered a prospect anyone in its neighborhood that was not its member, or not a member of another church, or not a professing Christian. So a neighborhood canvass was conducted to determine who fit the above parameters, and those who did not were identified as prospects. A community canvass is a first step and still is useful in identifying receptive-responsive people. But some who are identified as prospects are not receptive to the gospel messenger, nor are they responsive to getting saved. They have been

hardened to the church or the gospel. The canvasser identifies them as a prospect because they have no church affiliation, but they are not a responsive-receptive person. Therefore, we must be careful when using the word *prospect*, for many times it simply means a non-church member.

In this chapter, a prospect is also a receptive-responsive person. A technical definition of a prospect is one who is "a likely or potential candidate." That definition points to two distinct groups of people: potential candidates and likely candidates. The *potential candidates* are those unsaved persons who might possibly become Christians. *Likely candidates* are those whose conversion seems probable because they are more receptive to the witness and/or to the gospel message.

2. *Potential candidates.* For purposes of evangelism, every unsaved person is commonly thought of as a prospect, and rightly so. Every unsaved person is a sinner who needs salvation; there are no exceptions (Rom. 5:12). When Christ died on the cross, He made a provision sufficient for all (I Tim. 2:6; 4: 10; I Jn. 2:2), and it is not the will of God that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:4). Therefore, every unsaved person is a potential or possible candidate for salvation, and the church is commissioned to take the gospel to every unsaved person (Mk. 16:15).

3. *Likely candidates.* Likely candidates are those who are receptive and responsive to both the messenger and the message. Because they are receptive and responsive, they have a far greater probability of being stair-stepped through the process to trust Christ as Saviour. Or, they are ready to be saved. Therefore, a responsive-receptive person has the greatest possibility of success.

Likely candidates are those who are already in the believer's sphere of influence, or could be brought into that sphere. Because everyone has a different sphere of influence, every believer has a different group of likely candidates for evangelism.

Targeting receptive-responsive people knows no racial, economic or social barriers. It does not imply any respect of persons, but, rather, it simply stresses pinning the winnable while they are winnable.

UNDERSTANDING RECEPTIVITY

1. *The necessity of receptivity.* Some people become receptive to both the messenger and the message. Naaman is the perfect example of receptivity (2 Kgs. 5:1,9-14). He was a highly respected man of position, but he was leper. In the providence of God, Naaman went to Elisha the prophet of God in search of cleansing. Elisha sent a messenger to tell Naaman that he should go and wash seven times in the Jordan River. Naaman was offended: first by the fact that Elisha sent a servant instead of coming himself, and secondly by the content of the message. In short, Naaman rejected both the messenger and the message.

When someone pointed out to Naaman that pride was standing in the way of his cleansing, he repented. He responded to the message and was cleansed. But Naaman was not

responsive to the message until first he was receptive to the messenger. Receptivity is usually tied to responsiveness.

2. *The degree of receptivity varies.* The degree of receptivity varies from one person to another. The most receptive people are usually those to whom a believer is closest. These are his Friends, Relatives, Associates and Neighbors (F.R.A.N.s).

Jesus likened evangelism to sowing the seed of the gospel in four different types of soil, representing four different types of people. He referred to the varying receptivity of the people in terms of four kinds of soil (Mt. 13:3-23).

First, the soil by the wayside represents those who were unreceptive. They hear the message might be people who are receptive to the messenger but reject the message. They superficially receive the message; but when tribulation or persecution arise because of the Word, they are offended and fall away. Third, the thorny soil illustrates those who are temporarily receptive, but they are unwilling to make the changes required of them. Fourth, the truly receptive are represented by the good ground. They respond and become fruitful.

The good soil brought forth fruit, thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and an hundredfold. The different amounts of fruitfulness indicates that people respond differently to the message of God.

The degree of receptivity will vary from one person to another. Among one's closest friends there are likely to be some who are indifferent some who are receptive, and some who are totally unreceptive.

SCALE OF RECEPTIVITY

Unreceptive	Indifferent				Receptive			
-10 -8 -6	4	-2	0	+2	+4	+6	+8 +10	

Receptivity not only varies from person to person, but also from time to time. People change with the passage of time and the change of events. One who is unreceptive today may become receptive tomorrow. Those who are unreceptive or indifferent can be cultivated. Those with a hard heart can become soft to God. Such changes in receptivity are often referred to as "Seasons of the Soul." Just as there is a season to plant and a season to harvest, so there are times in the seasons of people's lives when they are "ripe to harvest," or they are responsive to the gospel.

What produces seasons of the soul? What makes a person receptive to God? What softens a person who is hardened to the gospel? There are both supernatural and natural factors that make a receptive-responsive person.

The supernatural factors that make a receptive- responsive person are; (1) the conviction of the Holy Spirit whereby a person sees his sin and its result, (2) the influence of the Word of God, (3) the guidance of the Lord that brings a man to understand his condition, and the natural revelation of God in the world.

But there are natural factors that make a person receptive to God. Some of these natural factors are transitions of life that disrupt the normal area of security a person has, such as: (1) marriage, (2) the birth of a child, (3) job change such as firing or bankruptcy, (4) sickness, (5) death in the family, or (6) being jailed. Any time a person goes through a social disequilibrium, or culture shock; he becomes a receptive-responsive person.

When a person moves from one home to another he may become receptive to God, especially if he moves far enough away to disrupt family and friendship roots. A person who has been reared Roman Catholic, in another city will attend a Bible preaching church and become open to its message. This will happen especially if he has a positive relationship to someone in the church. Moving one's home makes a person receptive, also the loss of familiar emotional ties increases his receptivity. The influence of a Bible Christian adds another level of receptivity.

3. *Receptivity must extend to both the messenger and the message.* It is possible for a person to reject either the messenger or the message. Jesus warned about this twofold possibility when He told His disciples "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet" (Mt. 10:14). The words of that verse translated *receive* and *hear* mean "to approve" and "to give ear." The two possibilities of rejection were (1) the unsaved would reject the messenger, and (2) refuse to listen to the message.

In practice, some received the messenger but rejected the message. The rich young ruler apparently had confidence in Jesus. He addressed Jesus as "Good Master," or literally, "Good Teacher." The word for *good* means "upright, honorable or acceptable." The rich young ruler seems to have been quite receptive to the messenger.

As Jesus began answering his questions, the young ruler's attitude changed. He was not willing to receive the message that required him to part with his riches (Mt. 19:21,22). He was receptive to the messenger but he rejected the message.

Today, some fail to hear the message of salvation because they reject the messenger. When Jesus returned to His home town of Nazareth, He went to the synagogue and began teaching (Mt. 13:54-57). The people were astonished, literally "struck with amazement," by the wisdom of the message He proclaimed. However, they refused to receive the message because they rejected the Messenger. The word *offended* in verse 57 is the same word rendered "stumbling-block" in Romans 11:9 and I Corinthians 1:23. They were impressed by the message of Jesus, but stumbled over the Messenger.

RECEPTIVE-RESPONSIVE PEOPLE

1. *Some people are already receptive and responsive.* Most of our friends are open to the gospel because of their relationship to us, yet each one has a different degrees of receptivity. You must recognize their receptivity if you will be successful in reaching them.

F.R.A.N.s are usually receptive-responsive people. These people are already within our sphere of influence. Usually, an initial contact has already been made because a relationship has been established. If the relationship is positive, a trust has been built. They are already receptive

to the messenger, because they are close enough to us to be familiar with the Christian life style. In most cases, they should already have some knowledge of the gospel.

A second group of receptive-responsive people are those who have visited the church, but it is not limited to them only. They may feel a need for change. These are people in whom the Holy Spirit has already been working to bring conviction because they heard the gospel in church. Their hearts are softened to the gospel because of Christian influence. They may have no idea what their real need is, but they are aware that a need exists.

The third group consists of those who are experiencing external changes. God works through circumstances to make them receptive. Some event of joy or sorrow may force them to re-evaluate their lives. Things like graduation, marriage, the birth of a child, separation or divorce, a move across country, the death of a friend or loved one may be used by God to make them aware of their need for God.

Many of those receptive-responsive people may not be within the sphere of influence of any Christian. A community search, sometimes referred to as a community census, can help locate such people. The process is simple. It involves going door-to-door throughout the community to locate those who seem receptive to the gospel.

2. *Receptivity can be cultivated in others.* 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 (I 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 comes through the Word of God (Rom. 10: 17; 1 Pet. 2:2).

CONCLUSION

The church that is growing through evangelism is: (1) locating those in its community who are most receptive to the gospel, (2) establishing relationships to them, (3) presenting the gospel to them, and (4) moving those who are less receptive to become more receptive to Christ.

Time is limited and resources are scarce. We cannot spend equal time on all people in the world, trying to reach them for Christ. So first we must evangelize all, using every available means at our disposal. Then, we must give quality time to reach responsive-receptive people. Good stewardship demands that time be invested where it will bring the greatest return for the glory of God. In the area of evangelism, that means targeting receptive-responsive people, and making a concentrated effort to stair-step them toward a decision.

CHAPTER FIVE

REMOVING BARRIERS THAT KEEP THE UNSAVED AT ARM'S LENGTH

Recently I talked to a middle-aged lady from Mexico who said she could not get saved because she wore slacks. Only prostitutes wore slacks in her former village in Mexico; all other women wore dresses. I was able to lead her past this culture barrier and she prayed to receive Christ.

I talked to Jerry White, who told me he could not get saved because every Friday he had a couple of beers with the guys after they got their paychecks. He accepted Christ when I explained that salvation was not getting rid of beer, but accepting Christ, who would give him victory over habits. His wrong understanding of good works was a barrier to getting saved.

A lady living in my condominium told me she would not come to my church because she could not find a parking spot and there were no seats available in the auditorium. My wife and I invited everyone in the condominium to our home for a Sunday evening meal, then drove them to a reserved parking spot and had a reserved seat waiting for all my guests. She was able to hear the gospel when the "stained-glass" barrier was removed. She accepted Christ that evening.

A young girl told me at the altar she had gone forward in an evangelistic meeting once before, but nothing happened internally. When she went back to her worldly habits, her friends laughed at her "supposed" conversion experience. Her fear was a barrier to trying again. When she fully understood the nature of conversion, she accepted Christ. Later she wrote that "It works."

There are many barriers to evangelism, Christians should understand them if they are going to successfully reach others for Christ. Friendship Evangelism recognizes the barriers that keep people from Christ and overcomes them. Friendship Evangelism focuses on receptive-responsive people through existing relationships.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECOGNIZING THE EXISTENCE OF BARRIERS

Back in the early 1960s, somewhere along Highway 301 in central Florida there was an American buffalo ranch that was open to the public. The buffalo were restrained only by a chicken-wire fence. When asked about the seeming lack of security, the attendant responded, "Those animals weigh over a ton and can run 60 miles per hour." (That isn't altogether true, but it is what he said.) "They could run right through any fence we put up, so one kind of a fence is as good as any." The buffalo were effectively restrained, not by force but by conditioning.

Like a chicken-wire fence, the barriers to evangelism have two sides. The wire fence served both to keep the buffalo in and the people out. The barriers to evangelism serve to keep Christians separated from the unsaved, and the unsaved separated from Christians. The barriers can be equally difficult to cross from either side.

One of the first principles of evangelism deals with barriers or hindrances that keep people from getting saved. The more barriers placed between a lost person and the gospel, the more difficult it is to get him converted.

Donald A. McGarvan, was one of the first to speak publicly and in print of barriers to evangelism. He said, "Men like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers." Some do not understand the implication of this statement and others question it.

1. Barriers are both spiritual and natural. Some barriers grow out of the nature of the gospel message. The message of "repentance" (Acts 2:38) is a barrier to those who do not want to give up their sin. Their sin may involve an act, place, or person and he has difficulty giving it up. Also, the message of the cross is foolish (I Cor. 1: 1 8), or an offense (Gal. 5:1 1). The instinct of natural man is to save himself, or perform good works. So the conditions of grace (Eph. 2:8,9) become a barrier to salvation. These barriers are spiritual in nature and there is no way to remove them, nor can you water down the implication of the message.

There are natural barriers that are constructed by the church. Some create barriers by their bad breath, poor grammar, or adding of church membership to the message of salvation.

Some unsaved people have created barriers by their prejudice against people from certain denominations, races, sections of the country, or language presentations. There are many barriers to effective evangelism, and most of them are far less obvious than race, language and ethnic differences, but their effect is no less real. People do not like to cross barriers of any kind.

Children are conditioned from infancy not to cross barriers such as the playroom door or the street in front of their home. Infants are placed in playpens. Toddlers and small children are held back by doors and fences. Young people and adults are restrained by the written and unwritten rules and regulations of family, society and government.

At some point, emotional conditioning becomes so strong that the reality of the barriers is unimportant. Whether real or imagined, if barriers are perceived to exist, the effect is the same.

2. Barriers are erected from both sides. A security chain link fence will often have three or four strands of barbed wire around the top. If the fence is intended to keep intruders out, the barbed wire will usually be tilted outward. If it is intended to keep the occupants in, the barbed wire will tilt inward.

Some churches have symbolic chain link fences surrounding their churches, seemingly to keep people away. The barriers to evangelism can be thought of as fences with barbed wire tilted in both directions. They make it difficult for the unsaved to cross into the family of God, they also make it difficult for the Christian to cross out to the unsaved.

Failure to admit the existence of barriers, and overcome them is devastating the cause of evangelism. If barriers are not removed, money and time is wasted getting out the gospel and those involved in the task become frustrated and discouraged by their failure to get results.

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS?

1. *General classifications of barriers.* Dr. Ralph D. Winter has established four very helpful classifications for the barriers to evangelism.

E-0	Internal barrier
E-1	Stained glass barrier
E-2	Class and cultural barrier
E-3	Language barrier

E-0 stands for evangelism that is carried on among people who are already church attendees. The "O" represents those already in the church, so there are no barriers for them to cross. The "E" Evangelism which means these people in the church need to be evangelized. This includes the evangelization of unsaved church members, the children born to church members, children and young people brought in by bus, and any other unsaved people who might be attending the church.

E-1 is evangelism that crosses the stained-glass barrier: i.e., the church building becomes a barrier to getting people saved. E-1 evangelism is carried on outside the local church setting, but it does not cross any linguistic, ethnic or cultural barriers. This would be near-neighbor evangelism, reaching people who do not attend church.

E-2 evangelism crosses cultural or class barriers. E-2 evangelism reaches out to people who are separated by ethnic, cultural and class barriers.

E-3 evangelism crosses the linguistic barrier. This is usually thought of as foreign missions because the missionary who goes to another country has to learn another language or dialect. But there are diverse speaking groups in most cities of America. There are cultural barriers and language barriers in the United States. Since the principles of reaching people in foreign countries are the same that are used in some places in this country, E-3 evangelism is now usually called cross-cultural missions.

The stained-glass barrier refers to the imagined barrier between the church and those on the outside. Obviously, it does not mean that a stained-glass window is wrong, nor is it a barrier to getting some saved. This phrase is used only as a symbol. A stained-glass barrier is usually a wall of fear that outsiders have about what goes on in the church, and has no real foundation in fact.

This barrier is built by both Christians and the unsaved. Christians build the barrier from inside the church. Some construct it with the fear of being contaminated by the influence of the world. Sometimes they hide behind the wall of fear. Even though the Christian should be

separated from sin and the influence of ungodly, he must cross the stained-glass barrier to share Christ.

The unsaved build the barrier from the outside. They make their bricks from the fears of what they do not understand. Sometimes their barrier is the conviction of sin they experience in the presence of the people of God. These fears are to be expected. Paul indicated that the unsaved man understands neither the things of God nor the people of God (I Cor. 2:14,15). Furthermore, being in the presence of Christians is a reminder of God's impending judgment (2 Cor. 2:15,16), and that produces both fear and discomfort.

Most Christians are probably more comfortable remaining behind the stained-glass barrier in their attempts to evangelize the lost. They want the outsider to come in the front door and respond to the gospel. The unsaved prefer to remain outside where they can go on in their natural life without the convicting presence of the people of God. Also, outside the church they are not faced by those truths that they do not understand.

Fear is a very real barrier to evangelism. Christians are often reluctant to witness because they fear rejection. To be accepted and liked is a basic human need. The very possibility of rejection strikes fear. Other Christians are reluctant because they fear failure. Again, everyone wants to succeed, and the possibility of failure, especially in serving God, becomes a barrier.

No one is immune to the barriers built by fear. Even the great apostle Paul had to deal with the problem of fear. In his first letter to the church at Corinth, he wrote, "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (I Cor. 2:3). Fear was an apparent barrier to Paul, he requested of the Ephesians that they would pray for him that he might preach the gospel without fear (Eph. 6:19).

Christians often create a barrier between themselves and the unsaved by their judgmental attitude. This often occurs because Christians tend to measure the unsaved by their own list of acceptable and unacceptable behavior, which many times contains a mixture of the commands of God and the traditions of men.

Non-Christians begin to sense their disapproval. Often they will even apologize for their conduct, but such apologies are only words. In reality, many resent having been censored. Instead of Christ attracting the sinner to Himself, the Christian has used his legalism to drive the sinner away. Remember, the law brings conviction of sin, but the law never saves. The law when wrongly presented, is a legalistic barrier to presenting the gospel.

3. Are the barriers real? Most barriers to evangelism have no more basis in fact than the chicken-wire fence used to restrain the buffalo in Florida. They lack any true restraining qualities, but they remain barriers, because they are perceived to be barriers. Even the most formidable barriers - those of culture, language, and ethnicity - can be overcome by a determined effort to bridge the culture, language and ethnic background of another person.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

1. Identifying the barriers. The first step in overcoming barriers is to identify them. The Christian has the responsibility to make that step. Paul said, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (I Cor. 9:22).

In the treatment of any physical sickness, the first step is always diagnosis. This process may require days and even weeks of testing, but it is essential to proper treatment. Viruses are treated differently than bacteria, and even among viruses, one particular drug may be more effective than another. So it is with the barriers to evangelism. It is needful to identify the classification of the barrier (E-0, E-1, E-2 or E-3).

Remember, people are all different, and the barriers standing in the way of each are different. The key is to identify the specific barrier, and tear it down. If it is one the prospect has erected in his own mind, you have to take the initiative and cross the barriers. If the barrier is in your church, again you must take the initiative to change it.

You may not have erected the barrier, but you must remove it. Do not let your fears keep you from being a witness. The task begins with gaining victory over fears. While the world, the flesh and the devil are the enemies, they are not to be feared. Jesus prayed that believers (Jn. 17:5-26) should not be taken out of the world but that they should be insulated against it. His petition was, "that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (Jn. 17:15). Victory is available to the believer by his walking in the Spirit rather than in the flesh. "Nay, in all things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). For the believer, the key to victory over fear is faith in God and His promises.

Once Christians have overcome their own fears, they are free to begin tearing away the fears of the unsaved. This is done by establishing redemptive friendships. This exposes them to Christians, the Christian life style and the joys of the Christian life. In Luke 14:12,13, Jesus suggested that when believers give a dinner they should not invite only friends and relatives, because they will only feel obligated to return your hospitality. Instead, he said invite the poor, maimed, lame and blind. (This means those who are rejected by others.) When they begin to see that Christians are people much like themselves, the stained-glass barrier begins to dissolve.

We must not be judgmental. Christ alone is the righteous judge, and Paul indicated that He will judge His own servants (I Cor. 4). Our task is to accept the unsaved man as he is, win him to ourselves, so that we can lead him to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Once he has become a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17), the Holy Spirit will work through the Word of God to bring about the needed changes in his conduct and life style.

CONCLUSION

The natural barriers to evangelism are man-made. They are the products of wrong thinking on the part of Christians and unbelievers alike. However, that does not mean they are not real. They are as real as they are perceived to be by those who create them. It is the responsibility of the Christian to recognize the barriers and tear them down.

CHAPTER SIX

BONDING PEOPLE TO THE CHURCH

Many churches have back door problems. A large percentage of those who come down the isle to profess Christ or join the church, slip out the back door and never return. Those who profess Christ, he must also be bonded to a local church so they can grow in his new-found faith. This chapter will help bond new believers to the church. It will help slam the back door shut!

Churches are too often like flow-through tea bags. New members are allowed to flow in the front door and out the back with little effective effort made to stop them. They should be like sponges, taking in all they can find, and keeping all they get.

Research shows that a new convert must become a part of a primary group within the church within two weeks of joining the church, or he will become a dropout statistic. The new convert must do more than join the local church, he must become identified with a sub-group within the church.

The Frank Adams family joined a Baptist church in Montgomery, Alabama. When the pastor found out that Frank had been an usher in the previous church where the family attended, he was recruited into the job. The ushers became Frank's new primary group and the Adams family was immediately bonded to the new church.

The Manuel Rodriquez family walked forward to join a church in Northern Indiana. They had never been active in a church. Manuel was recruited to drive a Sunday School bus. He found fellowship with the other bus workers and began growing in Christ through his service. Manuel never missed a Sunday because he was bonded to the church.

In the winter of 1981 I visited First Baptist Church, Euliss, Texas where Dr. James Draper is pastor. That evening five people walked forward to join the church. There were three women and two men; their ages ranged between 20 and 40. As Dr. Draper called each name of the new members to introduce them to the church, the pastor told them what Sunday School class they would be attending. Dr. Draper then called the name of the teacher who came forward and stood next to the new member. Then he asked other class members to come and meet their new member. The front of the auditorium was filled with several from each Sunday School class who met the new members.

A person must not only join the church, at the same time he should become involved in a Bible class.

WHY A PRIMARY GROUP IMMEDIATELY?

1. Discipleship is a process - and a product. When a person makes a decision for salvation, it happens at a point in time. He is a new babe in Christ that is the end product of evangelism. But just as a baby is growing nine months before the moment of birth, so salvation is a process that includes pre-conversion, salvation and post-conversion. If we only think of getting the saved person as a PRODUCT, we have terminated the task in our mind. If the

evangelist gives the convert the impression that conversion is only a "point action," the new believer sub-consciously begins to feel no need to return to the church or to grow in their new faith. A new convert must identify with a primary group of believers within two weeks of his salvation to insure post-conversion growth.

By stair-stepping a prospect to salvation, some of the bonding process will already have been made. The unsaved person will have been successfully led to the Lord Jesus Christ; the event of new birth will have taken place, and the new-born Christian will formally have become a member of the local church. But the on-going process of discipline will not have been completed.

Obviously, if a person is saved, he has eternal life. Losing his salvation is not the issue being discussed. But many who do not continue in Christ were probably never saved in the first place (2 Cor. 13:4).

If a person who is only profession salvation (not possessing eternal life) is bonded into a primary group and continues in the church, he then will receive continual exposure to Scripture. Later he may become converted. I have spent 30 years teaching in Christian colleges and have led many students to Christ who thought they were previously saved. But under the continuous influence of a Bible class at college they become convicted of their sins and received Christ.

Jesus commanded "Go ye therefore and make disciples" (Mt. 20:19). Since a disciple is a follower of Christ, then the new convert must become part of a primary group where he will continue his Christian life.

2. *Discipleship is Contextual.* Someone made the statement, "You can't be Christian alone." He did not mean a convert had to accept Christ in a group. Each person must accept Christ individually. But others are involved in sharing Christ with the convert and teaching him to grow in Christ. He must become involved in the church, and fellowship with other believers.

To become a disciple, a Christian must follow Christ within the context of his life. Repentance, confession, and a new life style are contextual aspects of conversion.

The most obvious expression of contextual discipleship is expressed in the larger local church and the small primary group. The new convert must become involved immediately with a group of believers. It is not just a practical technique to slam the back door, group fellowship is absolutely essential to express contextual discipleship.

3. *Discipleship is Shepherding.* Every new believer needs someone to watch over his soul. This is shepherding (Acts 20:28), The duty of shepherding new believers is done in Sunday School classes, Bible study groups, service groups, and other small cells in the church. F.R.A.N.gelism is a program that arranges for Equippers to visit new converts once a week to teach them the first steps of Christianity. They are actually shepherding the souls of new believers.

For normal growth and development, the new Christian must become settled in, or bonded to, a primary group (a Sunday School class) and the local church. That is where he will be brought under the ministry of the Word of God which will result in spiritual growth (I Pet. 2:2), victory over sin (Ps. 119:105), answered prayer (Jn. 15:7), growth in character (I Cor. 3:23) and strengthened faith (Rom. 10:17). The local church is also where the new Christian will be able to grow through fellowship with other Christians (Heb. 10:25).

WHY CONVERTS DO NOT BOND TO GROUPS

Many new converts are not aware of the necessity of joining a group of believers. We must recruit them into our groups. Some don't want to get involved with others. We must instruct and invite them into any groups. Many new members or converts try to get into our groups but can't fit. It is this last group that needs our attention. Why do converts dropout of our church? Because they can't get into our circle of friends or don't feel welcome?

1. *Groups Inbreed.* Animal breeders know if they inbreed their stock, the line will go sterile. Some Sunday School classes are causing sterility in our churches because members only have fellowship among Christians who have been in the church for a long time. Bible studies can become cliques and freeze out new people.

Since it is natural to talk to friends and invite them to our homes, Christians must be taught to be interested in others, take them to lunch and invite them over after church.

As a general rule, long-existing classes are difficult to penetrate. It is not that the members are selfish or snub new members. It is only natural to relate to those who are affirming to us.

New classes easily attract new members. They have one thing in common - newness. Therefore, begin at least one new adult class each year.

2. *Sociological Tissue Rejection.* Just as some bodies reject organ transplants because the tissue doesn't match, some new Christians don't seem to fit into church groups because of value differences. The person who loves country music, pick-up trucks, tractor pulls, and grits; probably does not feel comfortable in a class of yuppies who value Volvo's, art museums, and hot air balloons. They both love the same Lord, the same Bible, but their life style differs.

The church must create several different Sunday School classes, each ministering to the unique needs of different groups within the church. The church must be a heterogeneous group of Christians, yet contain many homogeneous Bible study groups that can meet the unique needs of those within.

3. *Cowboys versus Barbwire.* The cowboys were pioneers who roamed the range. All the land they saw was open to them. These are similar to classes in our churches. They are usually "self-motivated" people who reached out to people around them.

But the pioneer-cowboy days didn't last. The settlers put up barbwire to fence others out of their property. Barbwire created range wars and led to blood shedding. Settlers are usually similar to second generation Christians who occupy Sunday School classes.

They settle into rooms, programs and offices. Either knowingly or unknowingly they place barbwire, barriers around their turf. It is hard for new Christians to get into a Bible class that is protected by settlers.

MAKE YOUR CHURCH MORE EFFECTIVE

1. Use the existing classes effectively. The various groups and organizations of the church cannot serve as glue to bond members to the church if the newcomers are unaware that they exist. In Romans 10:14 Paul asked the rhetorical question, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" The question does not need an answer because the answer is obvious. They cannot believe in Him if they have not heard of Him. The same principle is applicable to classes in the church. Newcomers cannot become involved in them if they do not know of their existence. Newcomers must be made aware of every opportunity of worship, fellowship and service that is available through the various groups and organizations of the church.

The second key is to develop openness and receptivity to new members. Most primary groups are naturally resistant to outsiders. If this natural tendency is not neutralized by a conscious effort to welcome newcomers, the group will unintentionally and usually unknowingly become a private club. Paul warned the church in Rome against this very danger (Rom. 15:7; 16:2).

The final key to the effective use of existing classes is placement. Newcomers should not be required to search out a place to belong. It is the church's responsibility to assist newcomers in locating a class or cells where his needs can be met and his spiritual gifts can be applied.

Such placement requires a knowledge of the purpose, organizational structure, and activities of each primary group in the church. It also requires some knowledge of the needs, expectations, and spiritual gifts of the newcomers. With such knowledge the newcomer can be directed to those classes where he is more likely to experience a sense of belonging.

The larger the church becomes, the more important cells or Sunday School classes become. It is impossible for anyone to know a thousand people intimately. In fact, surveys have shown that the average church member, regardless of the size of the church, knows only 59 people. In a Sunday School class the new member is not expected to know a thousand people, only 12 or 15. Therefore, in a church of a thousand members, a newcomer can know and be known in a class.

2. Create new classes. There are two basic reasons for the creation of new classes. One, all newcomers may not be able to find a place of involvement in an existing class. If this is the case, the creation of new classes may be necessary to provide a suitable place for them.

Every Christian is a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17), and each is created differently (I Cor. 12:29,30). Each has different needs, different natural abilities, different spiritual gifts and different burdens for ministry. Newcomers should be expected to fit into classes for which they are suited.

Christian unity does not require uniformity. The local church is a body of Christ (I Cor. 12:27), but a body is made up of many different parts (I Cor. 12:12), and God intends that a place should be provided for each member to fit and function (I Cor. 12:13-25).

The second reason for creating new classes is that existing classes are usually saturated. Many groups cannot effectively accommodate additional members. A ball team, church choir or Sunday School class with limited seating space are prime examples.

There are two methods of creating new classes. One is through division and the other is by multiplication. Division involves splitting an existing class into two classes. This often meets strong resistance. Since classes are the glue that holds the church together, such forced division can be destructive.

Multiplication of cells is accomplished by recruiting individuals to form a nucleus of a new class. This method is far more safe because it does not apply undue outside pressure. A small number of people are asked to serve as "seed members" or a nucleus for the new class. The class develops around that seed group. Once the new class is established, the seed group may remain with the new class or return to their original class.

CONCLUSION

The process of evangelism does not end with a decision to trust Jesus Christ. The event of new birth introduces a new task to the parents. They must now care and feed the new infant. More important, they provide him a home - or loving environment - for growth, acceptance and safety. The new Christian must then be bonded to the church in the same way so that he may be brought to maturity and become a truly productive member of the body of Jesus Christ. The church is responsible for not only his birth but also for his continued development.

Bonding is essential to the task of closing the back door of the church. Nothing is more frustrating than spending time and effort to win people to Christ and then watching them become unfaithful, or drop out of church completely. But that is exactly what happens when the task of bonding is not taken seriously. Some new Christians drift from one Sunday school class to another, and from one social group to another, trying to find a place where they are made to feel like a vital part of the church. If such a place is not found, they become discouraged and stop searching. In time, they either become casual church members, move to another church, or just dropout of church.

CHAPTER SEVEN

F.R.A.N.GELISM FOLLOW-UP

Rev. Dave Janney is pastor of Shiloh Hills Baptist Church 25 miles north of Atlanta, GA. In four years, attendance has grown from under 300 to over 1,000. Rev. Janney attributes the incredible growth of the church to his follow-up evangelism.

Before becoming senior pastor, Janney served on staff and was involved in Thursday night visitation. He recognized that the organized visitation program had only marginal success, and he confessed he was not excited about it. When he became pastor, he changed the strategy.

Instead of using Thursday evening to make initial evangelistic calls in the neighborhood, he organized an outreach strategy to those who visited his church. (Much of the previous visitation is termed "cold turkey" calling: i.e., going unannounced to the front door of a home with a view of getting inside where the gospel could be presented.)

Janney's excitement about his new program was contagious. The people got excited. Many feared going to a home unexpected because they faced hostility. They were fearful of trying to get strangers to make a decision for Christ. In the previous program, many laymen were discouraged because there was little success.

Pastor Janney's program included several contacts from the church with visitors (we call this Seven Touches) with a view of getting them to return to the church to hear the gospel again (we call this Three Hearings).

On Sunday afternoon Rev. Janney phones every visitor to establish a friendly relationship with them. (As this manuscript is written I preached in the Shiloh Hills Baptist Church and they were averaging between 35 to 40 adult visitors a week. It is impossible for Rev. Janney to phone them all, so he has laymen make the phone calls for him.)

The Sunday afternoon phone call attempts to establish four things. First, he offers them any spiritual help they may need in their life - including counseling, hospital visits, or specialized ministry. Secondly, he tells them that he would like to bring a Friendship Packet to their home. The Friendship Packet includes a Bible, a Christian music record, a daily devotional guide, literature to explain Christianity, and some further information on the church.

"This packet is free," Janney tells them. Janney then explains how the material in the friendship packet would help them. Third, Janney tells the visitor that his secretary will phone to make an appointment for him to visit in the home at their convenience. Fourth, Janney determines if they are good prospects that demand a priority evangelistic visit during the week.

Janney is careful in this first phone call not to ask any questions to which they may say no. These are receptive-responsive people and he wants to stair-step them toward the gospel.

Also, by phoning on Sunday afternoon he applies the principle of "Win the winnable, while they are winnable." They have heard the gospel sermon and have met Christians. Because they have been in the house of God, the Holy Spirit must have been speaking to them and drawing them to the Lord.

A letter follows up Rev. Janney's phone call - in essence, saying the same thing on paper that he said over the phone. This is the second touch from the church.

The third touch comes on Tuesday when the secretary phones the prospect. She identifies herself as Pastor Janney's secretary and then repeats the three items that Janney said in his phone call on Sunday. She then suggests a time when Pastor Janney or a team from the church could visit in the home. She reminds them that the Friendship Packet is free and will be brought to them.

The fourth touch is a confirmation letter from the secretary concerning the appointment.

The fifth touch is the visit from Pastor Janney or the team. After Janney leaves the home, he follows up with a letter to re-affirm his discussion in the home. If they have made a decision, he affirms it and instructs them in their next step. This letter is the sixth touch from the church that week - it's also the third letter.

The seventh touch is a helpful phone call on Saturday evening. This is not from the pastor, but from someone who has been trained to serve in this ministry. The phone call is to offer help and answer any questions the prospect has about his anticipated attendance the following day.

Drawing people to the local church is often looked upon as a separate task from evangelism. If that happens, following up visitors is given low priority. It is not uncommon for visitors to be ignored. All too frequently it is assumed that they will naturally find their own way into the life and ministry of the church. Consequently, many never become actively involved or never return.

Friendship Evangelism includes drawing people to the local church as a vital part of the process of evangelism. Stair-stepping and Friendship Evangelism follow-up is intended to accomplish several things simultaneously. The process is designed to move the prospect toward a decision for Jesus Christ, introduce them to Christians, model the Christian life, and draw them to the local church. The effort to draw them to the local church begins the first time a newcomer attends the church or any of its activities.

WHY F.R.A.N.GELISM?

The word F.R.A.N. stands for Friends, Relatives, Associates and Neighbors. The program is called F.R.A.N.gelism Follow-up because usually it is F.R.A.N.s who visit a church in response to a relationship. These are receptive-responsive people who can be stair-stepped to the gospel.

But some attend church who are not F.R.A.N.s. They don't know anyone in the church. The purpose of follow-up is to network them into a relationship with someone in the church so they can be drawn to Christ.

WHY SO MANY CONTACTS?

1. *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. It is similar to a person purchasing a new suit: the more significant the purchase, the longer it takes some people to make up their mind. This does not mean that some are not saved the first time they visit a gospel-preaching church. The time it takes to get someone saved depends on receptivity to the gospel and responsiveness to the church. 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.

2. *The Law of the Seven Touches.* Research shows that a person usually makes a meaningful decision for Christ after the church has contacted him seven times. These contacts, or touches, can be initiated by the church through letters, phone calls, visits, or other personal contacts. These seven touches also include times the prospect sees the church message in the Yellow Pages, billboards, advertisements, flyers, or church newsletter. The obvious conclusion is that the church that contacts the most people, the most times, will probably have the greatest results. However, evangelistic results never depend on only one aspect, such as the number of contacts a church makes with a prospect or the number of hearings given to the gospel. But when all aspects of evangelism are followed including the three hearings and the seven touches - the more likely a person will respond to the gospel.

WHY GO TO THE TROUBLE?

1. *F.R.A.N.gelism Follow-up helps in the stair stepping process.* Follow-up draws people to the church and is especially helpful in stair-stepping people to a decision for Jesus Christ. The follow-up program is called F.R.A.N.gelism because it is making friends with prospects in order to reach them for Christ.

Through the drawing process, the prospect is brought into personal contact (networking) with several Christians. When the unsaved prospect comes to one of those difficult places where he is unable to make the next step toward the Lord, and a soulwinner can't seem to provide the needed answer, a word from another Christian may be just what is needed. The drawing process enables Christians to become laborers together with one another, as well as with God. The strengths of one believer can offset the weakness of others, and this is exactly as it should be (I Cor. 3:6-8).

2. *F.R.A.N.gelism Follow-up prepares for the event of new birth.* As the unsaved person becomes personally acquainted with different Christians through the drawing process, he is well on the road to understanding Christians and the church. He will come to understand that the Christian life is not a legal system but true freedom in Christ. He will learn that Christians can experience lasting joy and contentment. He will see that a Christian will have problems, but can

have victory over sin and the circumstances of life. When he comes to the point of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, he will understand that what he is gaining is far greater than what he is turning from or giving up (Phil. 3:8).

The apostle Paul experienced the working of this principle in Macedonia and Achaia. The unsaved of that region did not have to be convinced of the value of the Christian life. They were persuaded that the new birth would lead to a better quality of life because they had seen it in the believers of Thessalonica (I Thes. 1:7-10). They had been effectively drawn by the church of the Thessalonians even before they were saved, and that drawing had helped to prepare their hearts for the event of the new birth.

3. *F.R.A.N.gelism Follow-up is essential to proper Christian growth and development.* Active involvement in the local church is essential to the proper growth and development of Christians. Peter wrote, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Pet. 2:2). Spiritual growth, like physical growth, requires proper feeding, and God has provided for feeding through the ministry of the local church. He has given gifted individuals to the church for the purpose of perfecting or maturing the saints (Eph. 4:11,12), and these gifted individuals exercise their ministry in local assemblies or flocks (I Pet. 5:2,3).

Since the local church is the God-ordained center for growth, active involvement in the local church is essential to proper and normal development. The unsaved must not only be brought to Christ, but be drawn into the local church as well.

NATURE OF F.R.A.N.GELISM FOLLOW-UP

1. *F.R.A.N.gelism Follow-up is personal.* People resent being treated as statistics, numbers, or part of the mass. They need to belong to a group, but they also have a desire and need for personal attention and personal identity. The drawing process used in Friendship Evangelism provides that needed personal touch.

2. *F.R.A.N.gelism Follow-up is persistent.* Surveys have shown that a visitor who attends the church an average of 3.4 times usually make a responsible decision to become saved or join the church. The purpose of the drawing process is to positively communicate to the visitor the love, care and concern of the church, so that he will come back an average of 3.4 times. However, statistics also show that when the church contacts a prospect an average of 8.6 contacts, he usually makes a responsible decision to accept Christ or join the church. Therefore, the drawing process must begin by making the contacts necessary to motivate the first visit, and it must continue by making the necessary contacts to bring them back again and again until a responsible decision has been made.

3. *F.R.A.N.gelism Follow-up is powerful.* Because the drawing process used in Friendship Evangelism is both personal and persistent, it is also a powerful force. Jesus Himself pointed out the power in personal persistence in Luke 11:5-8. In that passage, an approach was made on the basis of personal friendship (v. 5). Friendship is a powerful force, but friendship was not enough by itself. However, personal friendship in conjunction with persistence proved to be more powerful than the forces of resistance.

Many churches fail to draw new people into the fellowship, because those doing the evangelizing are too easily discouraged. The Friendship Evangelism drawing process is powerful and effective because it is personal and persistent.

Many men are married to women who turned them down when they asked for the first and even the second date. If these men had become discouraged and stopped asking, the couple would never have been married. But they didn't quit, they asked again and again.

BEGINNING THE DRAWING PROCESS

1. When to begin? The process of drawing people to the church should begin with the first contact. Visitors usually attend one of the regular worship services, or they may be brought to some activity, social function or fellowship meeting. Whatever the contact, it indicates some degree of receptivity on the part of visitors. That openness and receptivity should be stimulated and cultivated lest it cool and die for lack of care. The time for harvest is when the fruit is ripe.

When Jesus had finished talking with the Samaritan woman, He turned to His disciples and said, "Say not ye, there are four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (Jn. 4:35). Some have suggested that He was referring to the multitude of men coming out of the city. Whether that is true, or whether he was strictly speaking a parable, the application is the same. The harvest cannot be postponed until the convenience of the harvester. The crops must be harvested when they are ripe, and people must be won to Christ and to the church while they are winnable.

If the farmer fails to harvest his apples from the orchard when they are ripe, they will not long remain on the tree. And, once they have fallen to the ground they are lost to by rabbits, deer, or other wild animals, or soon begin to rot.

2. Who starts the process? If a visitor who has no contact with members of the church attends a regular worship service, then the first contact should be made by the pastor. If the visitor attended only Sunday school or came to a function sponsored by some other group or cell, the teacher or the person in charge should make the first contact.

THE DRAWING PROCESS

The actual drawing process depends upon several variables: (1) whether the visitor knows no one in the church and the first contact is made by the pastor or some other church leader, (2) whether the individual being drawn to the church is already involved in the stair-stepping process, or (3) whether the prospect is a F.R.A.N. (Friend, Relative, Associate or Neighbor to someone in the church). While the ultimate goal is the same in each case, each situation must be handled slightly differently.

The key to a correct approach is information. This information is best pined from visitors' cards, conversations with the visitors and from the church member who brought or invited them to the service. It is helpful to know whether the church member (a Christian) already has the visitor involved in the stair-stepping process. It is also helpful to know the visitor's religious background, spiritual condition and receptivity to the Christian message. All this information will

enable the pastor, or the churchworker who makes the first contact, to know how to begin drawing the newcomer to the church.

1. Drawing prospects - those who initially attend the church for reasons of their own or are invited to church by a member, but are not involved in the stair-stepping process.

First Touch - On Sunday afternoon, the pastor should phone all those who visited in the morning service. His purpose is not to invite them to visit again. In fact, he should not make an invitation to return, he should assume they will return. He should assume that God is working in the visitors' hearts. With this positive attitude, the pastor should assume that they are already planning to return. By faith he assumes the Holy Spirit is working in their heart. This phone call should express appreciation and a genuine display of friendship.

The pastor should attempt to accomplish four things through this phone call: (1) He should determine whether or not they are receptive-responsive people. Some will quickly state that they are members of another church, hence the pastor will know that they are not prospects. Others will give the reason for their attending, but they will not want the pastor to visit them. (2) The pastor should sincerely offer his personal ministry and the services of the church. (3) He should express a desire to visit in their home and present them with a Friendship Packet from the church. The packet might contain such things as a Bible, a devotional guide, a cassette tape on Christian family living, an appropriate book on the Christian life and a Christian lapel pin. The packet should also contain information about the various worship and service opportunities offered by the church. (4) Close the conversation by telling them that the church secretary will phone to make an appointment for the pastor to visit later in the week. He should tell them that he will not drop by unannounced. Do not ask if the secretary may phone; assume that they would appreciate such a call. If they do not want a visit, they will usually say so at this point.

Second Touch - Sunday, evening, the church secretary should send a personal letter from the pastor to each visitor. A form letter is acceptable only if the church has the equipment to personalize it. If a form letter is used, it should be personally signed by the pastor. The letter should offer pastoral help, remind that the secretary will be calling to make an appointment for a visit by the pastor, and that he will bring a Friendship Packet.

Third Touch - Monday or Tuesday the secretary should phone to make an appointment for the pastor to visit in the home. She should indicate that the pastor has several visits to make, and he will not be visiting in the home all evening. They are more likely to be receptive to the visit if they know it will be brief. She should also remind them of the things the pastor has already shared with them. n she should offer her personal friendship as well.

The pastor, secretary and all other church leaders who might be involved in making first contacts should recognize that some will not be receptive to the church. About half of those who are called by the pastor can be expected to decline a visit, and half of those who do not decline the pastor, will do so when the secretary calls. This means about 25 percent of those who visit the church on Sunday will be receptive to a visit from the pastor the following week. But these are prime prospects for membership or to accept Christ.

Fourth Touch - The secretary should mail a letter to confirm the pastor's appointment and thank the newcomer for their hospitality.

Fifth Touch - The pastor or trained soulwinner will make a visit to the homes of all who have made appointments. He should take a moment to go over the material in the Friendship Packet, and give special attention to the Scripture portion. The prospects may prove to be saved people. If so, this will provide the pastor an opportunity to introduce them to the doctrinal beliefs of the church. If not, it will give him a natural opportunity to point out the plan of salvation and explain the gospel. If they are receptive and the Holy Spirit leads, he may give them the opportunity to trust Christ. If the Holy Spirit does not seem to be leading or they reject the pastor's offer, he knows the networking approach of the Friendship Evangelism program will give other opportunities to present Christ. Therefore, he should avoid the "now-or-never" offer of salvation.

During this visit, observe and listen closely to determine the felt needs, experience, abilities and interests of the newcomer. This information will be of great importance in determining which Bible study or Sunday school class might have the greatest probability of influencing this individual for Christ and for the church.

Sixth Touch - After the pastor's visit, he should send a letter to follow up the presentation given in the home. In this letter he should explain the simplicity with which they could receive Christ and/or join the church.

The pastor should determine on the basis of the information he obtained during his visit, which of the classes in the church might be most effective to influence this particular individual or family for Christ. The prospect's name and pertinent information should be passed along to the leaders of those classes (The purpose of this will be clarified later.)

Seventh Touch - On Saturday evening someone should be appointed to make a phone call to remind the prospect of the Sunday service.

THE SECOND SUNDAY

1. On Sunday morning, while the newcomer is at the church for the second visit, one or more members of an appropriate cell group should meet him.

By getting the prospect into a class, the process of evangelism works on two fronts. The pastor is working to win the prospect through front-door evangelism (getting him to come to church, hear the gospel, trust Christ and join the church). The group is working to influence the prospect through side-door evangelism (establishing friendships, getting the newcomer involved in the group, making him feel like a vital and needed part of the group, winning him to Christ and then bringing him into the fellowship of the local church as an accepted member). If front-door evangelism fails - and it often does - the process of evangelism can be carried on to completion through side-door effort.

After the prospect has attended for the second time, continue efforts to draw them, but on a declining scale. Remember, each week there are other new prospects to contact, and time is limited. Therefore, in the second week and those following, the drawing effort is taken up by different members of the outreach team. They will then have the option of continuing the evangelistic effort through both the front and side doors or turning their full attention to that which proves most effective.

2. Drawing those who attend the church at the invitation of a member who already has them involved in the stair-stepping process. These prospects are handled in much the same way. However, consult with the member involved in drawing the prospect and coordinate effort with theirs. Since they already have an established friendship, they may already have the prospect involved in a group. If not, they may still be in a better position to know which groups are best suited to the prospect's needs and interests. They will also be able to give some insight into the newcomer's religious background.

CONCLUSION

The business of drawing newcomers to the local church is an essential part of the process of evangelism, both before or after the event of new birth. But, to be effective and powerful, it must be persistent and personal. It should be started as soon as possible, and it should be an orchestrated effort by the entire undershepherding ministry of the church.

CHAPTER EIGHT

USING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT TO REACH OTHER

Using people where they are usable" is another way of saying "Get every church member involved in ministry according to his spiritual gift."

Three basic facts about spiritual gifts immediately affect all Christians in your church. First, every Christian has at least one spiritual gift (I Cor. 7:7). Second, every Christian ought to know his spiritual gift (I Cor. 12:1). Third, every Christian ought to be serving Christ with his spiritual gift (Rom. 12:6).

When it comes to evangelism, not everyone has the gift of evangelism. Paul indicates only -some- have the gift, "Some evangelists" Eph. 4:1 1). This does not mean others are excluded from soulwinning, nor does it mean they can't be used in reaching the lost. All are commanded to be witnesses (Acts 1:8), and to all has been committed the word of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19,20), so that all are ambassadors for Christ.

The following example from Skyline Wesleyan Church, San Diego, California reveals that everyone is involved in witnessing, ' those who have the spiritual gift of evangelism are used to "win the winnable."

An unsaved couple were invited to Skyline Wesleyan Church by their neighbors who lived in the same condo. The four had met at an association pool party when the people without Christ told the Christian couple how they were discussing a divorce with separate lawyers.

The Christian couple told how they had gone through the same experience until they were both converted. The Christians were not ,equipped to be soulwinners. All they could do was share their experience and invite the others to church (stair-stepping).

Next week the unsaved couple visited the church and were met in the visitors' parking lot by a greeter. This greeter had the gift of encouragement and mercy-showing (Rom. 12:8). They hit it off as friends, so the greeter took the unsaved couple to the hospitality table and registered them.

The hostess at the hospitality table was using her gift of serving or ministry (Rom. 12:8). This lady was faithful to her task, so she passed the information to the pastor.

The unsaved couple sat in church with their new-found friend He introduced them to some people seated nearby. When Pastor John Maxwell recognized visitors, the greeter stood and introduce the unsaved couple to the church.

During the next three days the unsaved couple received severe contacts from Skyline Wesleyan Church. First, the hostess with the gift of serving who was at the visitors' table saw that a friendly letter was sent from the pastor, Then she phoned for the pastor (s Friendship Evangelism Follow-up) to make an appointment for team to visit in their home on Wednesday

night. She then sent another letter to confirm the appointment. The hostess doesn't min details; as a matter of fact, she thrives on them because she has the spiritual gift of serving.

On Wednesday evening, a couple with the gift of evangelism visited in the condo of the unsaved couple. This couple from the church had met them the previous Sunday at the hospitality table.

The unsaved couple both prayed to receive Christ. They were receptive and responsive. Salvation was not something that needed to be "sold." The divorce had created the "Season of the Soul" and they did what they wanted to do - they asked Christ to come into their life.

The hostess then arranged for another couple in the church with the gift of equipping to disciple the new converts. This equipping had been trained and they loved to teach the Word of God. They were scheduled to visit in the condo of the new Christians for the next eight Wednesday nights to disciple them in the faith - couple to couple.

Who is responsible for winning this unsaved couple to Christ? No one person can take credit, nor should anyone want to take credit? Each used his spiritual gift according to his ability and desire.

Too often soulwinning is preached so absolutely and passionately from the pulpit that many Christians feel guilty because they have not won someone to Christ. They think they have to do a "sales job" on someone. If they don't get a decision for Christ, they feel frustrated. Then they "twist arms" and run people off, or they give up soulwinning altogether. Now they feel less spiritual or, even worse, they feel backslidden. Many Christians are in a spiritual pit because they were motivated to do something that they are not gifted to do.

If every Christian had a proper understanding of spiritual gifts, he could serve where he is gifted, hence, he could become more fruitful. Also, he could grow in the process and would have more fruit. ,

This lesson will introduce spiritual gifts, which may well be the foundation of the entire Friendship Evangelism program. It will define spiritual gifts, establish the existence of three different kinds of gifts, and show how the diversity of spiritual gifts can unify the body of Christ. In addition, this lesson will touch on the discovery and development of an individual believers gifts.

Rather than try to make all Christians function as though they had the gift of evangelism, Friendship Evangelism is designed to help each believer discover and develop his/her individual spiritual gifts and apply them in doing the work of evangelism. Christians should serve in those capacities for which God has specifically and uniquely gifted them. In Proverbs 18:16, Solomon wrote, "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great, men."

Friendship Evangelism establishes a wholistic approach to evangelism that is flexible enough to make room for those whom God brings into the local church. It places them in service on the basis of their gifts, rather than the needs of the program at the time. Friendship

Evangelism is an attempt to build an on-going out-reach program that is people-centered rather than program-centered.

WHAT ARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

1. Definition. Any adequate definition of spiritual gifts must address at least three vital areas: the source of spiritual gifts, the nature of the gifts, and the purpose of the gifts. Therefore, *a spiritual gift is a special ability given by the Holy Spirit to enable Christians to do productive service in the body of Christ.* This brief definition addresses three key issues. (1) The Holy Spirit is the source of the spiritual gifts, (2) “special ability” speaks of their nature, and, (3) “service” speaks of the purpose of the gifts.

Scripture addresses those same three key issues. Paul spoke of gifts as being “the manifestation of the Spirit” (I Cor. 12:7, which tells the source). Peter made clear the nature of spiritual gifts, when he wrote, “if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth” (I Pet. 4:1 1). Again in the first Corinthian letter, Paul indicated that the purpose of gifts is Christian service (I Cor 12:7,25).

2. Importance. The apostle Paul stressed the importance of understanding the nature of spiritual gifts when he wrote, “Now concerning spiritual gifts brethren, I would not have you ignorant” (I Cor. 12:1). Two things need to be observed. First, the word translated “spiritual” is plural in the Greek. Second, the word gift appears in italics, which means it was added for clarity and was not part of the original. Paul simply said, “I would not have you to be ignorant about matters (plural) concerning the Holy Spirit.” This means a Christian should not ignore this important topic if he is going to serve in the church.

3. The relationship of spiritual gifts to natural abilities. Everyone has natural abilities or talents, not only Christians. Our abilities are the result of the common grace of God. They are present from birth. Just as God causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall upon both saved and unsaved alike (Mt. 5:45), so He gives natural abilities or talents to both. Unbelievers are often very talented. They may be accomplished pianists, they may sing well, they may paint beautifully or be especially talented in athletics. Talents have to do with technique, methodology, dexterity, coordination and other products of natural power. Therefore, talents are limited in their effect. They can only produce in natural realms. They may instruct, inspire, motivate or entertain, but they cannot render spiritual benefit.

God often allows and enables Christians to use their natural talents and abilities as avenues or tools for the ministry of their spiritual gifts. For example, a Christian who has a natural talent for public speaking, may be endowed with the gift of evangelism for speaking as a tool to minister his gift of evangelism. But, remember that many with the gift of evangelism are not public speakers but win people one-on-one.

Although spiritual gifts are often ministered through the channel of natural talents, the two are different and they are in no way dependent upon each other. Many Christians have outstanding natural talents that are never used by the Holy Spirit in spiritual ministry. others have

spiritual gifts that operate to the glory of God in spite of the absence of natural talents in that particular area.

4. *Spiritual gifts are given to more than church officers.* Several church offices are specifically mentioned in Scripture - apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor-teacher (synonymous with elder and I bishop) and deacons (Eph. 4:1 1; I Tim. 3:8-13). In addition to these biblical offices, every local church has a diversity of appointed and elective offices that have been established for the effective ministry of the church. Obviously, those who occupy any of these offices should possess the spiritual gifts needed to function effectively in them.

One who serves in the office of a teacher should have the gift of teaching. However, that does not mean that Christians who do not hold an office in the church cannot have spiritual gifts. For example, an individual might have the gift of shepherding (pastor) and not meet all the qualifications to hold the office of pastor. Yet that individual could exercise the gift of shepherding in any number of other positions within the church or outside of it.

5. *Spiritual gifts are not the "fruit of the Spirit."* The fruit of the Holy Spirit is the mark of Christian character produced in the life of the believer by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22,23). These characteristics are in direct contrast to the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21).

Paul indicated that the *fruit* of the Holy Spirit works in cooperation with a person's spiritual *gifts*. In I Corinthians 13:1-3, Paul indicated that apart from love, which is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), spiritual gifts would be as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

God's purpose for every Christian is that he should bring forth fruit for His glory (Rom. 7:4). However, such fruit is not synonymous with the gifts of the Spirit. Spiritual gifts are special abilities for service, and spiritual fruit is Christian character.

A skilled woodworker can use his natural talents to produce a great piece of quality furniture, but the completed furniture isn't his talent - it is the product of his talent.

THE TWO KINDS OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The gifts of the Holy Spirit have been classified in many different ways, but one of the most useful is that proposed by several authorities. They have broken the list down into enabling gifts, and serving gifts.

CHART OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Enabling Gifts

Faith
Discernment
Wisdom
Knowledge
Pastor-Teacher
Mercy-Showing
Serving
Giving
Administration

Serving Gifts

1. Evangelism
2. Prophecy
3. Teaching
4. Exhortation

1. *Enabling gifts.* These gifts are qualities that are possessed by Christian rather than activities they perform. These gifts perform the function of spiritual enablement, rather than active ministry. This enablement allows the believer to make better use of his serving gifts. Paul seems to say that the enabling gift of faith would help a person with his serving gift of preaching. "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophecy according to the proportion of faith" (Rom. 12:6).

The spiritual gift of discernment is spiritual insight into people, Scripture or trends. A believer needs this ability along with the spiritual gifts of wisdom and knowledge to do a task for God.

2. *Serving Gifts.* These gifts are God-given abilities for Christian service and ministry (I Cor. 14:12, 26,31). When they are exercised they produce fruit in the lives of others (I Cor. 12:7; 14:3, 4; Eph. 4:12, 16). Each of the applicable serving gifts will be discussed in detail in later lessons.

THE GIFTS PRODUCE UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

All too often, wrong understanding of the gifts of the Holy Spirit divide the body of Christ and such division is a travesty. Paul clearly taught that spiritual gifts were intended to unify the church (I Cor. 12:25). Every Christian has been baptized (identified with) into the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13), and each has been endowed with at least one spiritual gift (I Cor. 12:7,11). Because each believer is gifted differently, there is diversity in the body of Christ, and Paul compared that diversity to the diversity that exists between the members of the human body (I Cor. 12:14). Paul also taught that diversity does not suggest division (I Cor. 12:15-21). God intends that the diverse members of the body of Christ should work together in harmony even as the diverse members of the human body work together. Each member should complement the function of the other members, because each member is necessary to the effective and efficient functioning of the body (I Cor. 12:22).

While the above truth was written for all, that which is true of the whole must be true of each of its parts, each local church. In fact, Paul implied the same in his letter to the Corinthian church. In the Authorized Version, I Corinthians 12:27 reads, "Now ye are *the* body of Christ, and members in particular." However, the definite article "the" does not appear in the Greek text. Paul actually wrote, "Now ye are a body of Christ, and members in particular." Paul was pointing out the fact that there was great diversity among the members of the Corinthian church, which is true in every local church, but diversity does not mean division. The diversity of spiritual gifts is intended to unify the local church and to enable the local body to edify itself in love (Eph. 4:11-16).

HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. *Study spiritual gifts.* Those who want to discover their spiritual gifts must understand the basic teaching of Scripture on spiritual gifts. Discovery is dependent upon some degree of knowledge. Therefore, a thorough study of spiritual gifts is the place to begin in an attempt to discover your spiritual gifts.

During the 1500s, Spanish conquerors began seeking for gold among the Aztec Indians of Mexico. A legend grew up about a land called El Dorado, where gold was as plentiful as sand. Through the centuries, many explorers searched throughout Mexico for the legendary El Dorado without success., The truth is, there was very little gold to be found anywhere in Mexico.

Those same explorers, however, might have become very rich if they had only looked for silver. Mexico is the world's fourth largest producer of silver and one of the two chief places where pure silver is found. Because they lacked knowledge, those early explorers came away empty. Many Christians are empty in service because they don't know the riches of the spiritual gifts.

2. *Spiritual gifts inventory.* A spiritual gifts inventory test is based upon the characteristics of Christians who are known to possess the various gifts. The Spiritual-gift Inventory is provided as a part of the Friendship Evangelism resource packet. Such an inventory will not give conclusive results, but it will provide an indication of which gifts you are likely to possess.

3. *Trial and error.* One of the most important ways to discover your spiritual gifts is to get busy in the work of the Lord. Your proficiency in an area of ministry may indicate that you possess a spiritual gift or gifts. This can be a very rewarding experience, even for those who think they know what their spiritual gifts are. Trying a new area of ministry may uncover gifts that have gone undiscovered for decades.

Remember, the only people who do not make mistakes are those who never do anything. Those who succeed have usually failed many times. It may be necessary to try many things and fail at several before a gift is discovered and developed.

4. *Consult other believers.* Older and wiser Christians sometimes recognize that a believer does not have the gift that he thinks and/or wishes he had. A young farm boy observed

a cloud formation that looked like the letters *G, P* and *C*. He decided that was an indication from God that he should Go Preach Christ. The young man's pastor, who was a very kind and understanding man, gave him an opportunity to preach in the church on a Wednesday night. After the service it was apparent to all (all except the young farm boy) that he lacked the gifts needed for preaching. The pastor very wisely and kindly suggested that the letters *G, P and C*, might have been an indication that the young man should Go Plow Corn. Solomon referred to the wisdom of seeking the counsel of others (Pr. 11:14; 15:22; 24:6).

Once the believer has, (1) studied all the gifts, (2) taken the test to determine which gifts he/she is likely to possess, (3) begun the process of trial and error; (4) there is great wisdom in seeking the counsel of older and wiser Christians. In Acts 6, the first deacons were chosen because the entire church observed that they had the gift of wisdom (v. 3).

CONCLUSION

Friendship Evangelism is designed to enable every believer to make use of his individual spiritual gifts in the task of evangelism. The key to effective implementation of the program is the discovery, development and use of spiritual gifts.

CHAPTER NINE

LAY EVANGELISTS THAT WIN

Bill Johns has been a salesman since he left high school. He sold encyclopedias to get through college and later was a sales representative of paper products and of pharmaceutical supplies. He had even tried his hand at get-rich-quick schemes by selling vitamins, land development and a pyramid scheme.

After he became a Christian, Bill was invited to go visiting with the church's Thursday-night calling program. He was trained by his pastor, who pressured people to get saved.

"I can twist arms in the world, but I can't 'strong-arm' people into salvation," Bill explained to his wife. He didn't return to help in the soul-winning program.

Bill knew his brother-in-law had been released from his sales job because of sloppy record-keeping. Bill naturally shares everything in his life, so he took one evening to teach his brother-in-law his record-keeping system. "Come with me tomorrow and I'll show you how easy it works."

Bill's brother-in-law learned the record-keeping system and was appointed to a territory next to Bill's when it came available. Bill's recommendation got him the position.

"You've gotta get right," Bill would share, "if you want to do right." By that Bill explained how his principles of business had been strengthened after he became a Christian. Every time Bill shared a technique to help his brother-in-law's sales, he always added biblical insight and Scripture.

The brother-in-law and family visited church and the pastor asked if Bill would take the responsibility of leading his brother-in-law to Christ. Bill had never led anyone to Christ. The thought didn't intimidate him, rather he was excited because he knew he could do it.

"I don't make sales," he thought. "I simply explain what my product will do for people." He planned to present Christ in the same way.

Bill asked the pastor if he could make the visit with another layman in the church, because they both knew his brother-in-law. Then he phoned to ask for an appointment.

"You're married to my sister, come on over" was the response. Bill opened his Bible and walked through the plan of salvation. He didn't preach, nor did he "strong-arm" his brother-in-law.

"How can I be saved?" his brother-in-law asked.

"I'll tell you what to pray..."

That was Bill John's first evangelistic presentation. Later he took a spiritual gifts inventory and determined that he had the spiritual gift of an evangelist. Not because he was a salesman, but because he *loved* to share his faith with others and had a *burden for* people. Also, he had some fruit as evidence that he had the gift of evangelism.

WHO ARE EVANGELISTS?

The biblical term *evangelists* is specifically defined as those gifted individuals that God has given to the church to work in winning others to Christ (Eph. 4:11,12). Paul qualifies this spiritual gift by saying, "He hath given ... some evangelists."

Philip was such a gifted man (Acts 21:8), who went about winning souls (Acts 8:5-12). In Friendship Evangelism the term *evangelist* is applied to those who have the ability to share the gospel with unsaved and lead them to pray to receive Christ. Therefore, the term *evangelist* has a broader meaning than those in full time evangelistic work. Evangelist is being used as a title and a program function. Any lay person, man or woman, can have the task of winning others to Christ.

In Friendship Evangelism, anyone in the church who has the ability to win others to Christ can function as an evangelist.

Paul exhorted Timothy to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5), but Timothy is nowhere referred to as an evangelist. Paul was simply telling Timothy to use the gift to win people to Jesus Christ. The business of winning people to Jesus Christ is the business of every believer, and that is the emphasis of this lesson.

In Friendship Evangelism, the work of winning people to Christ becomes a combined effort of several people with different gifts. It is not limited to one individual who is identified as an evangelist. Paul described a joint effort, "We are workmen together with God" (I Cor. 3:9). This is the same kind of cooperation he referred to in I Corinthians 3:6, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." Friendship Evangelism is a joint effort of those laymen with the gift of evangelism, plus others with different gifts.

When Friendship Evangelism is in full operation, the prospects (receptive-responsive people) are in direct contact with several Christians, who have a variety of spiritual gifts. As the prospects are stair-stepped until they are finally converted. There is usually a believer uniquely gifted to meet the new need of unsaved people.

FUNCTION OF A LAY EVANGELIST

The evangelists primarily focus on the last steps a person takes in becoming a Christian. By way of illustration, they are the "obstetricians" who help in the birth (God gives life), and others in the church are pediatricians who care for growth and health in the new life. Everyone in the church is responsible for making initial contacts, establishing redemptive relationships and stair-stepping people toward salvation. But usually - however, not always - the evangelist is involved in leading people through the final process to the point of decision and salvation.

The specific way that an evangelist carries out his work will differ from person to person. Everyone is different in terms of personality, background and spiritual knowledge. To carry out his work, the evangelist needs the four enabling spiritual gifts: (1) faith, (2) discernment, (3) wisdom, and (4) knowledge. These will help him evaluate different needs in the prospect and move him through the stair-stepping process as quickly and easily as possible. Depending upon the different needs of the unsaved person, the evangelist's emphasis and approach will be different.

The actual work of the evangelist is based upon the lessons already studied. He needs to overcome the prospect's barriers and create a climate of receptivity and responsiveness. The evangelist will accomplish this task by expanding his social relationships to include the prospect, and thereby networking him to salvation.

THE EVANGELIST AND THE ENABLING GIFTS

1. *The gift of faith and winning souls.* Faith is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:9) that enables him to see (vision) what can be accomplished and rely on God to overcome problems to get someone saved. Faith is the God-given ability to undertake a task for God and to sustain unwavering confidence that God will accomplish the task in spite of all obstacles. Apart from faith, those engaged in any phase of Christian service are powerless.

An evangelist must be a man or a woman of faith. Leading someone to Christ is beyond the scope of human wisdom and power. Jesus emphasized, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jn. 6:44). Paul noted men can sow the gospel seed, and men can water, but only God can give life (I Cor. 3:6). The evangelist needs faith because he must rely on God to save the person.

The evangelist will also need faith because he is opposing Satan, who "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8). Satan has blinded the very minds of the unsaved (2 Cor. 4:4). Satan will do all that within his power to discourage the evangelist, disrupt his work, and keep the unsaved person in the darkness of sin.

Faith is the evangelist's only means of getting power and protection from God (Heb. 11:6). In Ephesians 6:16, Paul spoke of faith as a shield capable of extinguishing the fiery darts of Satan.

Initially, someone may react, "I can't do the work of an evangelist because my faith is weak." However, the watermark of successful faith isn't the strength of his person, but the object of his faith Jesus Christ. Little faith can accomplish great things, if it is properly placed in Christ (Mt. 17:20). The evangelist must try to win people to Christ with an awareness that his dependence is entirely upon God.

2. *The gift of discernment and winning souls.* Like faith, discernment is one of the enabling gifts of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:10). A Christian has been given the ability of discernment, and is responsible for trying or testing the spirits (I Jn. 4:1). However, the gift of discernment goes beyond recognizing false doctrine. The spiritual gift of discernment is the

special ability to distinguish between truth and error. Those who possess this spiritual gift have an acute ability to distinguish between things that are raised up by God, and false imitations. Those with the spiritual gift of discernment are not easily taken in by the deceit of Satan because they can see through his mask.

This gift of discernment is important to the work of the evangelist because Satan is a master counterfeiter (2 Cor. 11:14,15). He has antichrists, false prophets, false teachers, false apostles, false sheep and false spirits. Among the wheat of God, Satan has sown his tares. Discernment is needed to distinguish between the real and the counterfeits.

Those doing the work of evangelism will encounter many who profess to be Christians and some who truly believe that they are saved. These people will speak the right language and act the outward part, but within, they have not been saved. Evangelists need discernment to see through that mask of pretense and know if the person is genuinely saved. They need the ability to penetrate the unbeliever's protective shell.

Discernment will also help the evangelists determine where unsaved people are in the stair- stepping process. Their gift of discernment will help them determine the "Seasons of the Soul" in the unsaved person.

3. *The gift of knowledge and winning souls.* The evangelist must have knowledge if he is going to be effective. This includes both knowledge of the plan of salvation, and knowledge of Scripture in general. He must have general knowledge to answer any objections raised when he is presenting the plan of salvation. His gift of knowledge must also include insight into people. The gift of knowledge is tied to the gift of wisdom. The enabling gift of wisdom is the God-given ability to use knowledge correctly in the achievement of spiritual goals. The gift of wisdom makes correct use of all knowledge, regardless of its source.

Paul demonstrated the wise application of knowledge on Mars Hill. He began his message with a reference to the religious practices of his hearers, information gained through observation (Acts 17:23). In the course of the message he not only applied his knowledge of Scripture (vs. 24-27), he also made use of his knowledge of Greek poets (v. 28). Doubtless, that knowledge had been gained during his formal education at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). The gift of wisdom makes correct use of all available knowledge to achieve God's purpose.

4. *The gift of wisdom and winning souls.* Wisdom is another of the enabling gifts of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:28). Divine wisdom is available to every Christian, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (Jas. 1:5). Paul prayed for the saints at Ephesus that God would grant them "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" (Eph. 1:17), but the spiritual gift of wisdom goes beyond that general wisdom. It is the applied insight that the evangelist uses when stair- stepping someone to a spiritual decision.

The gift of wisdom will be especially helpful to the evangelists in countering the arguments and answering the questions of the unsaved. Peter indicated that every Christian must

"be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Pet. 3:15).

Soul-winning activity can be likened to flashlights which have two basic designs. Some produce a large circle of low intensity light and are excellent for large work areas and general lighting. Others focus an intense light into a very small spot and are better suited to the small, tedious tasks.

Many Christians are like the broad-beam light with enough wisdom to apply knowledge correctly in a general way. Other Christians with the gift of wisdom are like the light that produces high intensity. They are endowed with a special talent for integrating all the available knowledge to lead a person to Christ.

MANIFESTATION OF THE GIFT OF EVANGELISM

Evangelism is a special God-given ability to share the gospel in such effective and motivational way that unsaved people respond and pray to receive Christ. The gift of evangelism is not limited to pastors, missionaries, full-time evangelists and other vocational Christian servants. In fact, Philip, the only person in the Bible specifically referred to as an evangelist (Acts 21:8), was not a "professional." He was a deacon in the church at Jerusalem (Acts 6:5).

Many Christians possess the spiritual gift of evangelism and can be effective soulwinners. This does not deny the reality of those in evangelism full-time.

Those who have the gift of evangelism usually have a *desire to* share the gospel with lost people and a *burden* to go soulwinning. They generally have an outgoing personality and enjoy meeting lost people. They usually meet strangers well. Their Outgoing personality may be a natural, or they may have developed it in order to become more effective in evangelism. They have a consuming love for lost people and believe that salvation is the greatest gift available to them. They have a thorough understanding of the gospel and love to share the Good News both one-on-one and in groups. But the greatest characteristic of evangelists is their fruit (Jn. 15:16); they get results.

Evangelists are especially well suited to make initial acquaintances and establish redemptive relationships. Their thorough understanding of the gospel makes them very effective in stair-stepping people to salvation.

The evangelist is one who shares the good news (the word *evangelist and gospel* come from the same root) and leads people to Christ.

2. *Some evangelist speak.* Those who are full time evangelists usually use the gift of preaching or exhortation to carry out their gift of evangelism. They usually give an invitation at the end of their sermon for people to get saved.

3. *Some evangelists work one-to-one.* According to contemporary surveys, approximately 86 percent of believers come to Christ through the influence of Friends and Relatives. These were not professional evangelists, but those who influenced lost people. All

these people who influence their F.R.A.N.s to salvation probably do not have the gift of evangelism. They are just witnesses. Many of these F.R.A.N.s in the 86 percent probably made decisions for Christ after a sermon. But it was a friend who was the primary influence who brought them to Christ. But some are won to Christ by laymen who have the gift of evangelism. They work one-on-one and lead people to Christ. The 86 percent figure tells us that probably more people have the gift of evangelism than most of us think.

CONCLUSION

In Friendship Evangelism many gifted people are involved in the process of establishing redemptive- relationships with unsaved people and networking them to the gospel. The ones who are evangelists use the gift of wisdom and discernment to determine where unsaved people are in the stair-stepping process. Then, they use the gift of evangelism to lead that person to Jesus Christ. One evangelist may work through preaching, another by personal evangelism. The evangelist may work alone or it may be a combined effort of several who pool their gifts for greater effectiveness. The goal is to get the unbeliever through the spiritual prenatal process and born into the family of God.

CHAPTER TEN

EQUIPPERS THAT TRAIN

Amy Freeberg received Christ in Big Valley Grace Community Church, Modesto, California. As a 19-year-old high schooler, she had bounced around the different churches in her town - Pentecostal, Baptist, Church of God - until she visited Big Valley.

The church had an aggressive follow-up program. Suzanne, the pastor's secretary, was interested in Amy and she began meeting with her every week to disciple Amy in her new-found faith. The session involved checking her Bible study, hearing the verse she memorized, and praying with her concerning her request.

At the end of the 13-week course, Pastor Dave Seiffert had Amy and Suzanne come to the front of the church for special recognition. He does this for all those who go through the 13-week discipling course. Amy was given a Christian book in recognition of completing 13 lessons; also the book was to help her grow in Christ. Suzanne was also given a Christian book, the church's way of showing appreciation.

There is a new group of people in the contemporary church who are discipline new believers one-on-one. They have the spiritual gift of teaching and they use their gift to establish new believers. In Friendship Evangelism we call them *equippers* who help new believers get established in the faith and grow toward maturity.

The Circle Alliance Church in Saskatoon, Sask., Canada, has over 1,000 in attendance and uses an equipping ministry for new believers during Sunday School. When I visited the church in the fall of 1984, there were about 14 different teaching dyads (one person with one) going on during Sunday school in the foyer, coatrooms, and in the church offices. There were two chairs facing each other and a trained discipler who was teaching a designated curriculum to a new believer, or a new church member, one-on-one. Their growing ministry, called "equipping," is done by laymen who have a special gift.

An equipper is the second of the personal titles in Friendship Evangelism. It is not a spiritual gift nor a biblical office, but it is a biblical function. In Ephesians 4:11, Paul describes five spiritual gifts (or gifted persons), "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." These had the task, "for the perfecting (equipping) of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12). The word *perfecting* is also translated "equipping." These gifted individuals have been given to the church to equip saints to do the work of the ministry. So, the title *equipper* is not a spiritual gift nor a biblical office, but it is a biblical function.

Just as many average laymen can do the work of the evangelists, so many laymen can do the work of the equippers.

As an unsaved person moves through the process of spiritual stair-stepping, his needs change, so God may use different persons with the gift of evangelism to lead the person to

salvation. In the same manner, after a person is converted, he will need someone who is an equipper to help him grow in Christ. As needs change, different people with different spiritual gifts best suited to meeting their specific needs also change. But, that doesn't frustrate the purpose and function of Friendship Evangelism. Different equippers have the needed diversity of gifts to help people grow in Christ. Remember, Friendship Evangelism is a cooperative effort. As the individual's needs change, there should always be an equipper near, who is especially gifted to meet that particular need.

FUNCTION

Equippers are primarily concerned with helping new believers after they are saved. They are responsible for helping new converts understand what has taken place when they trusted Jesus Christ. The equipper then introduces them to the basic doctrines, the function of the church, the importance and significance of baptism, how to have personal communion with God (Bible study and prayer), the importance of church membership, attendance and the principles of good stewardship (time, talents and possessions).

Equippers are active in the process of getting newcomers bonded to the church. Once a new convert has become a church member, it is the responsibility of the equippers to help them discover their spiritual gifts and put them to use. They help believers continue to grow in grace and knowledge and remain productive members of the body of Jesus Christ.

Every Christian is different in terms of personality, background, spiritual knowledge, felt needs and spiritual gifts (I Cor. 12:12-30). Because these differences exist, the specific way that the work of the equipper is carried out will differ. Each equipper must work according to his own ability, yet within the parameters of the church.

The foundation for the actual work of equippers is laid in Chapter Seven, BONDING PEOPLE TO THE CHURCH, but it reaches far beyond that. Because the Christian never becomes perfect in this life, the need for equipping never ceases. The equippers are responsible for bringing new converts to a degree of maturity so they can be active and productive in the body of Christ. But they are also responsible for helping older believers continue to grow and remain productive. That means they are even responsible for each other's continued growth and continued productivity (I Cor. 12:25,26).

THE EQUIPPERS AND THE ENABLING GIFTS

1. *The gift of faith (I Cor. 12-9).* The entire Christian life is a life of practical faith. It is by faith that we are saved (Eph. 2:8, 9), we are justified or declared righteous (Rom. 5:1), and we walk the Christian life (2 Cor. 5:7). We are assured victory through faith (1 Jn. 5:4).

The enabling spiritual gift of faith is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:9), and goes beyond the normal portion of faith exercised by all believers. It is a God-given ability to trust God. It is the kind of faith that allows someone to unwaveringly trust God for those things that seem impossible to others. The equipper will use his gift of faith to trust God to bring a new babe in Christ (Col. 2:6) to maturity.

Faith is important to the work of the equippers because they are expecting God to work through them to bring about results which they cannot yet see (Heb. II: 1). Faith helps them see new Christians being established in the faith and becoming productive members of the body of Christ. Equippers need the gift of faith because the devil is opposed to every work of God, (Eph. 6:12). First, the enemy could blind the equippers mind to what he could do; and, second, he could blind the new Christian's mind to his responsibility as taught in Scripture.

2. *The gifts of knowledge and wisdom (I Cor. 12:28)*. These two gifts are being considered together because they are so closely related, and each is useless without the other. Knowledge is information and wisdom is the correct use of information to achieve a proper end. Knowledge that is not put to proper use is wasted; and great activity, without the basis of correct information, produces nothing worthwhile.

Whether you think you have the gift of knowledge or not, every Christian is exhorted to, "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). Paul's prayer for the believers of the Corinthian church included his thanksgiving that they had been "enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge" (I Cor. 1:5). He prayed for the Colossians that they "might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. 1:9). Every believer can and should increase in knowledge, but such increase does not necessarily constitute the gift of knowledge.

The gift of knowledge referred to in I Corinthians 12:28 is the special God-given ability to search the Scriptures, summarize the truths discovered therein and systematically arrange them. It goes beyond the ability to study (2 Tim. 2:15). It is an unusually deep insight into the truths of the Word of God.

Since the gift of wisdom was previously covered thoroughly, it is sufficient to say that wisdom is the God-given ability to use knowledge properly and correctly in the achievement of spiritual goals.

The spiritual growth of those to whom equippers minister depends upon a steady diet of the truth of the Word of God (I Pet. 2:2). The equippers cannot impart knowledge they do not have (Heb. 5:12-14), and yet, all knowledge is useless apart from wisdom to apply and use it properly. The Jews of Jesus' day were prime examples of those who have knowledge without wisdom. Jesus commanded them, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (Jn. 5:39). A more literal translation would be, "You go on searching the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life; but you do not have eternal life because you reject me and the Scriptures."

3. *The gift of discernment (I Cor. 12:10)*. The enabling gift of discernment is a special God-given ability to distinguish between truth and error. Those who have this gift can quickly distinguish between those servants of God and those which only pretend to be of God. They are not easily deceived by the subtlety of Satan. They readily detect false teaching and false teachers. Such discernment is not a natural ability, but a spiritual quality (I Cor. 2:14).

The gift of discernment will help equippers distinguish between those who are saved and those who are only professors. It will enable them to determine where other Christians are in their growth and what is needed to help them progress to the next step. Discernment will also help them to see quickly when a believer has a misunderstanding of the truth of God's Word or is being taken in by false teachers.

THE EQUIPPERS AND SERVING GIFTS

1. *The gift of teaching (Rom. 12.7; I Cor. 12.28).* The gift of teaching is the God-given ability to make the Word of God clear and to effectively apply it to lives. When an equipper has the gift of teaching, he can lead the students to both an understanding of biblical principles and to apply those principles in his life.

The gift of teaching goes beyond the natural talent for teaching, in that it draws the students closer to God and conforms them to the image of Jesus Christ. The natural talent of teaching is generally concerned only with relating facts and altering the behavior.

Teaching is one of the most widely needed spiritual gifts. It is utilized in virtually every aspect of the ministry of the church and among every age group. Some are able communicators with adults. Others can relate better to teens or children. Still others are particularly gifted in teaching senior citizens.

Those endowed with the gift of teaching usually have a great love for people and a burden to see them grow in grace and knowledge. They generally enjoy study and have a deep desire to know the Bible and are able to teach it well. They place great emphasis upon correct interpretation and proper application of Scripture. These characteristics make equippers with the gift of teaching effective.

2. *The gift of pastor-teacher (Eph. 4.11).* The word *pastor* is found only once in the New Testament (Eph. 4:1 1), where it describes a gifted person who is synonymous with the office of *bishop or elder*. However, the same Greek word occurs several other times, and is translated "shepherd." In I Peter 5:4, Christ is referred to as the Chief Shepherd. Since he is the Chief Shepherd, pastors are lesser shepherds or undershepherds over whom Christ is Chief

The fact that pastor and teacher are grammatically connected in Ephesians 4:11 means that both spiritual gifts apply to the same person. Therefore, the one who occupies the office of pastor must possess the spiritual gifts of shepherding and teaching. The pastor is responsible to teach or equip the members of a church.

The pastor is the main teacher in the church. While he does teach publicly from the pulpit, he also teaches one-on-one. But the pastor cannot do all the teaching. It is usually a problem of time, ability to relate to different needs and mechanics. So the pastor must delegate his task of teaching to others. These are Sunday School teachers and others who function in public teaching roles.

In Friendship Evangelism, a number of laymen are involved in the teaching process to equip new believers on a one-to-one basis. Many times couples will equip another couple. But the process is private and relates to the need of the new Christian.

Those who possess the gift of equipping are usually people-centered individuals. They are patient and willing to spend great amounts of time praying for and ministering to the needs of others. They love to see others grow and develop, and they are very protective of those whom they teach and serve. They have a deep desire to care for the spiritual welfare of others.

CONCLUSION

The equipper is one who is primarily involved in building up the saints and equipping them for effective and productive Christian service. He must get the new Christian bonded in the church and firmly established in the faith. He must then help the believer go on to maturity and productivity in Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

ENCOURAGERS THAT MINISTER

At Skyline Wesleyan Church on Wednesday Outreach Night, the Encouragers have a specific duty. They do not make the soulwinning visits in homes - the evangelists do that. They don't go out to disciple or teach the new converts; the equippers do that. The Encouragers go out to visit the absentees with a view of getting them back to church. The encouragers visit the sick who need encouragement, or they visit in the nursing home for the aged.

I began my teaching ministry at Midwest Bible College, St. Louis, MO in the late 50's. In addition to teaching I directed the Christian Service of the students. An elderly couple was always coming by my office to get students to help them in their ministry. This couple spent almost every night of the week at a mission or rest home ministering. He led singing and she, played the piano. They got students to preach and win souls. They said they couldn't win souls but loved to see it done. They counseled, visited and encouraged. What I didn't understand then, I realize now. They had the gift of encouragement but not evangelism.

The encouragers usually are not trained in evangelism, or they are uncomfortable doing it. Also, there are some who should not be used to make evangelistic visits. They are not effective at it and might drive people from salvation, rather than stair-stepping them to Christ. But Encouragers could be used of God to be a great support to others.

The encouragers might not be effective teachers, hence they might not want to disciple others. Encouragers usually do not want to be Equippers. Encouragers are usually "people persons." They love people, sometimes they just enjoy talking to people more than sharing knowledge. Encouragers might love people so much, they couldn't be evangelists because that involves leading people to a decision.

A BIBLICAL EXAMPLE OF AN ENCOURAGER

The apostle Barnabas was an encourager. He was called "the son of consolation" (Acts 4:36). He probably had the gift of exhortation (Rom. 12:8), so he could motivate people to do the work of the Lord. When Barnabas got to Antioch he used his spiritual gift "and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11:23). There are some equippers like Barnabas who can't visit and teach or win souls, but they can encourage people in the faith. And the evidence that they are exercising the spiritual gift is that people want to be faithful because an Encourager has ministered to them.

Encouragers also have the gift of "showing mercy" (Rom. 12:8) They can "weep with those that weep" and sympathize with the needy. Not everyone has the ability to identify with the needy. Encouragers can identify with those who have physical, emotional or spiritual problems.

Barnabas was an encourager who had the spiritual gift of mercy showing. When Paul got saved in Damascus, the Christians had nothing to do with Paul. They remembered his persecution of the church. Perhaps they thought his conversion was only a ploy to get more names of believers. Barnabas, with the spiritual gift of discernment, knew Paul was saved, and

with the spiritual gift of mercy-showing, helped Paul. "But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles" (Acts 9:27).

Later in the book of Acts, Paul would not give John Mark a opportunity to go on the second missionary journey because the young man quit them on the first journey. But Barnabas was an encourager. Because he had the gift of discernment, he knew John Mark was ready to go. Because he was a mercy-shower, Barnabas gave the young man a second chance. "So Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus" (Acts 15:39).

THE FUNCTION OF AN ENCOURAGER

The encouragers might be thought of as "lubrication experts" who keeps things running smoothly. In the days before railroad cars had sealed axle bearings, one person was responsible to keep oil in the bearing boxes to cool the bearings. This lubrication process kept the cars rolling smoothly. When it was not done properly, metal rubbed against metal, and the bearing boxes could actually catch fire. Such fires were sometimes called "hot boxes." An encourager in Friendship Evangelism puts out fires before they occur in the church.

The encouragers' function, as the job title implies, is primarily one of encouragement and motivation. They must keep a watchful eye and be constantly ready to assist any who need help.

1. They encourage others by their own example. When anyone encourages others by example, this is a biblical function of ministry. In Paul's first letter to Timothy, he wrote, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Tim. 4:12). The apostle John, in the latter days of his life, received great encouragement from the example of Gaius (3 Jn. 1-4).

Sometimes Christians in the most adverse circumstances can be most effective in encouraging others. Perhaps the most encouraging book of the New Testament is Philippians, written by the apostle Paul from a Roman prison. In spite of his adverse circumstances, his experience provided an example of joy, peace and victory through Jesus Christ (Phil. 4:13).

2. They encourage others by their ministry. Encouragers do not necessarily speak, preach or teach. They exercise their gift by sharing their ideas, victories, and burdens, usually in a one-on-one relationship. Ministry is the communication of the gospel to people at the point of need. Sometimes, encouragers communicate nonverbally; at other times they have something to tell; but always they minister to needs.

THE ENCOURAGER AND THE ENABLING GIFTS

1. The gift of discernment (I Cor. 12.-10). An Encourager must have a portion of discernment. All that has been said in previous chapters about the spiritual gift of discernment must be applied to them.

They must see spiritual problems and potential problems before others are aware of them. This capacity for discernment will allow the encourager, who has the gift of discernment, to provide encouragement even before discouragement has begun to take its toll.

2. *The gift of knowledge (I Cor. 12.28)*. While most encouragers are not teachers, and generally don't have a burden to teach, they must have enough knowledge to give their ministry a firm foundation.

3. *The gift of wisdom (I Cor. 12.28)*. The gift of wisdom is the God-given ability to use knowledge correctly in the achievement of spiritual goals. The encouragers must determine what truth to apply to a particular need and how to best apply the truth to provide needed encouragement. Solomon spoke of such use of knowledge, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver, As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is the wise reprove upon the obedient ear" (Pr. 25:11,12).

THE ENCOURAGER AND SERVING GIFTS

The following list of applicable serving gifts is only representative of those that might apply to the encourager. Those who do not have these particular gifts should not conclude that they are not qualified. Every Christian should use his/her spiritual gifts in every way possible for the glory of God. Even those who do not possess all these particular gifts may be able to serve as encouragers through the example of their own lives and by applying the gifts they do have.

1. *The gift of exhortation (Rom. 12.8)*. The word *exhortation* is also translated, "beseech (beg), comfort, entreat and exhort," and came from the same root word used of both the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ. John called Jesus Christ our Advocate (I Jn. 2:1), and spoke of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter (Jn. 4:16). Both words, *advocate* and *comforter*, can be translated *paraclete*, one who is called alongside to help. Therefore, the gift of exhortation is the God-given ability to draw near to others for the purpose of helping. The encourager might be thought of as the helper or supporter.

Those who possess the gift of exhortation are usually practical or result-oriented people. They are particularly good at helping others face and work through their problems. They are very effective in motivating people to act upon what they know to be right and proper. Therefore, those possessing the gift of exhortation are uniquely qualified to function as encouragers.

2. *The gift of mercy-showing (Rom. 12:8)*. The gift of mercy-showing is a God-given ability to express compassion or cheerful love toward people who are hurting and/or suffering. It goes beyond pity, which is only an emotional response. Mercy-showing is more closely related to the experience of Christ when He saw the multitudes, and "He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (Mt. 9:36). He not only felt sorry for them (pity), He was moved to do something for them. Those who have the gift of mercy are moved to exhibit the love of Christ toward those who suffer, and they have a special ability for doing it cheerfully and with joy.

Christians who have this gift are often soft-spoken, with an introverted personality, yet they meet people and empathize with them. They find it easy to express themselves, and they are able to do so in such a way that they communicate love in the process. They have a great burden for others, and they are very sensitive to the needs of others. They are generally able to identify both emotionally and mentally with others. These characteristics are not unlike those

attributed to the Lord Jesus Christ in Hebrews 4:15, which says, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." While the mercy-shower is not sinless, he/she does have the God-given and Christ-like ability to feel with those who are in distress.

CONCLUSION

Simply stated, Encouragers are those who keep the wheels of Friendship Evangelism lubricated with the oil of godly kindness.

CHAPTER TWELVE

HELPERS THAT INTERCEDE AND SUPPORT

On a typical Wednesday outreach night in a Friendship Evangelism program, the Evangelists go out to visit the unreached, the Equippers go out to teach the new converts, and the Encouragers go to visit the absentees, the sick and shut-ins.

But what about those who come to the Wednesday night service expecting to pray? Also, there are others who use different spiritual gifts to keep the Friendship Evangelism program running smoothly. These are called the Helpers.

"They also serve who wait and pray." There will be any number of people who can't be involved in outreach for several reasons. Perhaps they haven't been trained, or they have secular work commitments and can't attend regularly. These Helpers can gather to pray for those who are reaching out. Also, some feel that prayer is the greatest investment they can make in outreach.

But there are other Helpers who support the outreach program of Friendship Evangelism, They keep the records regarding those who visit and those who need to be visited and for what reason. They make phone calls and write letters in Friendship Evangelism Follow-up. They keep the children in the nursery so parents can go soulwinning. They cook the fellowship meal for outreach workers. These are helpers.

THE FUNCTION OF HELPERS

1. Helpers who pray. Although the Helpers perform several functions in the Friendship Evangelism program, intercessory prayer is their most important function. No matter what, they can pray. Prayer is the key to success in every branch of Christian ministry and Friendship Evangelism is no exception. Prayer has been appropriately referred to as "the nerve that moves the muscles of Omnipotence." That does not mean that God cannot work sovereignly apart from prayer, and it does not mean that He is obligated to act in response to every prayer. But the Word of God clearly teaches that failure to pray leads to loss of God's provision. James writes, "Ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (Jas. 4:2,3).

The apostle Paul was just as deeply concerned that his ministry be undergirded by the prayer of Christians as those in the Friendship Evangelism program need prayer support. In his first letter to the Thessalonians, his request was, "Brethren, pray for us" (I Thes. 5:25). He was even confident that his ministry could be helped and furthered by the prayers of the Corinthian church (2 Cor. 1: II). In his letter to Philemon, Paul expressed a sincere hope of being released from the Roman prison as a result of the prayers of Christians (Phil. 1: 19; Phi. 22). He was aware that even the effective working of the Word of God was dependent upon the ministry of prayer. He asked the Thessalonians that they pray for the free course of the Word of God (2 Thes. 3:1).

From the human perspective, Peter's ministry might have been cut short, if it had not been for the prayers of the church. During a wave of persecution under Herod, Peter was cast into prison, "but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him" (Acts 12:5). As a result of those prayers, an angel visited Peter in the prison and set him free.

Helpers with a special burden, pray daily for all the workers as well as the needy being reached through the program. They meet on outreach for prayer and Bible study. Also, a group of Helpers meet during each church service to pray for a visitation of the power of God upon the service.

2. *Helpers who keep records.* Churches and Christian workers are often skeptical of counting heads and keeping detailed records. They are fearful of becoming more concerned with numbers than with people, and that is definitely a legitimate concern. But, this fear must not be allowed to hinder progress by keeping adequate statistics and records.

The Holy Spirit actually inspired Luke to keep records of the progress and growth of the early church. According to those records there were 120 praying in the upper room (Acts 1:15). On the Day of Pentecost Peter preached and there were 3,000 added to them (Acts 2:41). In Acts 4:4, Luke recorded that 5,000 were saved, and that only accounted for the men. Next, there was a great multitude (Acts 5:14) and the numbers continued to multiply (Acts 6:1,7).

Records are not kept as a source of pride. They are a tool to keep the Friendship Evangelism program going. If God had not inspired Luke to keep records of the progress of the early church, we would have had no way of knowing of the tremendous effectiveness of Peter's preaching. Without Luke's records of the missionary journeys of Paul, there would be no way of evaluating or measuring the missionary methods of Paul. And, without accurate records there will be no way of evaluating the effectiveness of the Friendship Evangelism program.

But more than encouragement, without the correct prospects to visit the evangelists waste an evening. Without proper appointments, a vital link with an unsaved person is broken. Helpers who keep records are then imperative. Without them the program fails because there are no prospects to visit, no indication of who is needy.

3. *Helpers who administer.* A detailed profile should be kept for every group and organization in the church. The profile should include the purpose, emphasis and activities of the group or organization, the constituency of the group, the time, place and frequency of their meetings. There needs to be a list of qualified Evangelists, Equippers, Encouragers and Helpers. This personnel profile should also be kept for each leader of each group and organization. These profiles should include such things as age, sex, marital status, education, place and type of employment, hobbies, travel experience, social and cultural interests, etc.

When new prospects are contacted and/or new members come into the church, a similar profile should be constructed of them. Of course, this should be done in such a way that it does not invade upon their privacy or threaten them in any way. Once this information is obtained, it can be used to determine which groups and/or organizations in the church might be of greatest

interest to the newcomer. This information will help groups and individuals glue, or bond, the new convert to the church. In working with prospects, this information can help determine which church groups and individuals might have a better chance of meeting their needs, establishing friendships and bonding the prospects to the church even before they are saved.

4. *Helpers who serve.* There are a vast number of Christians who consider themselves inconsequential in God's service. But they are glad to serve the Lord as babysitters, cooks, table-servers, ushers, handymen, etc. They usually do not see themselves as gifted people and they usually gladly serve in non-platform ways. They feel it's a job that someone has to do, or no one else will do; but they are usually happy to do it. Although they usually do not feel they are exercising a spiritual gift, they serve as unto the Lord.

They have the gift of helps (I Cor. 12:28), which is evident by: (1) their eagerness to do what they do, 2)-their burden or obligation to serve, and (3) the fact that God uses them in what they do. Encouragers Helpers carry out many small jobs that make Friendship Evangelism work.

THE HELPERS AND ENABLING GIFTS

1. *The gift of faith.* Faith is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:9) that will enable Helpers to more fruitful. It is the Godgiven ability to undertake a task for God and to maintain an unflinching conviction that God will accomplish the task in spite its seeming impossibility.

Since the Helpers are involved in intercessory prayer, the gift of faith is essential to their work. James made the vital connection between faith and prayer clear in his encouragement of believers to pray for wisdom. He wrote, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord" (Jas. 1:5,6).

2. *The gift of knowledge (I Cor. 12.-28).* Knowledge will enhance the Helpers ability to pray intelligently and to better understand the felt needs of newcomers and prospects.

3. *The gift of wisdom (I Cor. 12.28).* The gift of wisdom is the God-given ability to use knowledge correctly in the achievement of spiritual goals. It will be especially helpful in completing the task of the Helpers, because an unwise choice in placement can destroy all hope of reaching a prospect or bonding a newcomer to the church.

THE HELPERS AND SERVING GIFTS

The following list of spiritual gifts is only representative of those that might be used by the Helpers. Those who do not have these particular gifts should not conclude that they are unqualified. Every Christian has the privilege of entering by prayer into the very throne room of God and approach Him for mercy and grace. In fact, every Christian is encouraged to do so (Heb. 4:16). Every Christian has a responsibility to serve by prayer for other believers and for the success of the work of the Lord (Eph. 6:18; 1 Thes. 5:17).

1. The gift of administration (Rom 12-8, 1 Cor. 12:28). The Scriptures use two different terms in reference to the gift of administration. One, translated "ruleth," is located in Romans 12:8. The Greek word literally means "to be over, to superintend, or to preside over." The other term in I Corinthians 12:28, is translated "governments," which has reference to the office of governor or director. So, the gift of administration is the God-given ability to preside over, govern, plan, organize, promote and lead the various affairs of the local church. Those Helpers who administer the Friendship Evangelism program usually have the gift of administration.

Although the gift of administration is specifically one of ruling and giving direction, those who possess the gift should not consider themselves "church bosses." The gift of administration is an ability for leadership, not domination. Peter warned that even the pastor is not to behave as a tyrant over the flock of God (I Pet. 5:3). The apostle John spoke in scornful terms of one Diotrephes, who had presumptuously exercised authority over the local church (3 Jn. 9,10).

This gift, like all spiritual gifts, must be exercised in such a way that the flock of God is provided with a living example of humility (I Pet. 5:3), and a spirit of servitude (Mt. 10:42-44).

There are not biblical limitations placed upon the gift of administration in terms of who may possess it. The gift of administration is not limited to pastors or even to those who are called to vocational Christian service. Neither is the gift of administration limited to men only.

The gift of administration finds many opportunities for expression and service in the local church. It is particularly applicable to such tasks as presiding at meetings, dealing with problems of discipline, providing leadership for the various organizations within the church, planning and projecting for the future and general church administrative functions.

Those who possess the gift of administrations are usually good "housekeepers." They like to put the right thing in the right spot at the right time for the right lesson. They are generally well disciplined, goal oriented people. They work well under moderate to heavy pressure and rarely, if ever, procrastinate.

These individuals are usually willing to undertake seemingly impossible tasks for God. They are able to view tasks in terms of many smaller and more specialized jobs that can be delegated to others who have gifts and abilities in those specialized areas.

These characteristics are the very ingredient that make the gift of administration so important to Friendship Evangelism. These are the people who must look at the seemingly impossible task of evangelizing the community, the city and ultimately the entire world and see it in terms of many smaller and more realistic tasks. They must organize the work so that each worker's gifts are utilized to the fullest in the accomplishment of the task.

2. The gift of ministry (Rom. 12:7). The Scriptures call this spiritual gift "serving" or "helps" (I Cor. 12:28). This person has a servant's heart. He sees a need and (1) has a desire to help, (2) sees a way to help, and (3) carries out his plan to help someone, and usually (4) does not want any recognition for giving help. Yet those who run the Friendship Evangelism program

would be well advised to always recognize the Helpers who remain behind so others may go out and reach the unreached.

There is no biblical limitation on those who have this gift. It is evident in both clergy and laity, men and women. It is expressed in an attitude called a "servant's heart."

Martha probably had the gift of serving, or helps. She liked to be in the kitchen and could look after details. She was, "careful and troubled about many things" (Lk. 10:41). Martha was in the kitchen while Mary, her sister, learned at Jesus' feet (Lk. 10:39-42).

CONCLUSION

The outside observer might conclude that the Helpers have very little to do and that their work is of little importance, but nothing could be farther from the truth. The work of the Helpers is no less essential to the overall task of disciple-making than that of the evangelists themselves. True, the evangelists are in a more visible position, one which often receives greater public recognition. But, the servers are the ones who call down the power of God upon the work, and they are the ones who provide the direction to keep the task on course.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

CHURCHES THAT WORK

SKYLINE WESLEYAN CHURCH

Skyline Wesleyan Church is Friendship Evangelism in action. Attendance has more than doubled in the past four years, growing from 1,000 to over 2,200. In spite of having an auditorium that seats only 900, they have continued to evangelize. They solved the problem of sociological strangulation by adding a second and third worship service.

Skyline has grown in spite of the fact that their neighborhood has changed from middle-class white to minorities (Mexican and black). In the face of "ethnicitis" they have modeled a program of evangelism that employs all members and reaches all groups.

Skyline has grown in spite of the fact that it is not located on a freeway and the average new member drives over 10 miles to church.

Skyline has grown, despite the fact that John Maxwell, a second generation pastor, took over the pulpit from the church founder, Orville Butcher, a highly esteemed church leader in the denomination. Most second-generation pastors are not growth-oriented.

The most spectacular thing about Skyline's growth was the fact that it happened without Sunday school contests, Sunday school busing, radio and television support. Dr. John Maxwell, pastor has introduced Friendship Evangelism to Skyline that attracts visitors to the church.

When the call came to pastor Skyline, the California church had previously been listed as one of the 100 Largest Sunday Schools in America. The church had done it with a great Sunday school and a great music program. After the retirement of Dr. Orville Butcher, the West Coast church needed new leadership. This outstanding church was ready to leap past the eighties into the nineties.

FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM - LAYMEN INVOLVED IN MINISTRY

At Skyline Church there is a reserved parking lot at the front of the church for visitors. Several couples are stationed there to meet the visitors and offer to sit with them in the worship service. If the visitors are not responsive to those who first meet them, others are stationed at the front door or at the registration desk center to meet them. The purpose is to do more than be friendly. Laymen are there to network visitors into the church. Those with the gift of evangelism especially try to form a relationship with the visitors; and, if possible, they make an evangelistic call into the home the following Wednesday. This is the first step in networking.

During the announcements in the church service, the visitors are introduced to the congregation. The church host and hostess of the day are introduced by Pastor Maxwell. Visitors are asked to meet the host and hostess after the service where they will receive a Friendship Packet.

Wednesday night is outreach night. Approximately 250 gather for a fellowship meal; then, around the dinner table, Pastor Maxwell challenges them for the ministry of the evening. He trains them so they can disciple others.

The church does more than have a typical prayer meeting. Maxwell notes, "There is not much praying at the typical prayer meeting. Wednesday night at Skyline is the catalyst to the church's outreach program.

Maxwell realizes he cannot reach everyone, nor can he minister to everyone. He also realizes that hiring additional staff is not the answer to ministering to everyone. As attendance goes up, the base of ministry has expanded by training and involving more laymen in ministry.

The 250 people represent several groups. First a group of ladies prepares the meal. This is their way of being included in the outreach program. A lady who had cooked for the church all her life told Pastor Maxwell, "I want to thank you for letting me be a part of reaching people for Christ." She had used her cooking talents in the past, but now she felt that service was part of a greater task.

There is a group of Helpers. They keep the records (basic data on prospects, sick calls, new converts to follow-up, absentees, those with special problems, etc.) These *Helpers* look after the records, getting the right person to do the right thing at the right time.

A second group (we call them evangelists) are given the names of prospects to visit that evening. Because they have the gift of evangelism they want to meet strangers and present the gospel to them.

They are usually good at it because it is their spiritual gift. They probably have more success than those who go visiting from other churches, because they are going to see prospects who have visited the church. The prospects (receptive-responsive people) they go to see usually have a relationship with someone in the church. Hence, because they present the gospel to prospects with greater interest, they have a higher number of decisions for Christ.

A third group (we call them "equippers") will be given the names of those who have joined the church or have made a recent public profession of salvation. The equippers meet with a new convert to disciple him in the faith. Equippers are not soulwinners, although they may have some success in that area. They are gifted to teach or shepherd people. They teach one-on-one, or two equippers meet with a couple. This discipline relationship exists for eight weeks, making sure the new convert is grounded in the faith and "bonded" to the church. After an equipper has finished the eight-week lesson, he is given another new convert to teach.

The fourth group (Encouragers) are those with the spiritual gift of showing mercy (Rom. 12:8). They use their spiritual gift to encourage people. They are given a list of absentees who may need encouragement. Also, they are given the names of those who are sick, shut-in, or who have a special need. The encouragers are not expected to make soul-winning calls, although at times they may be directly responsible for leading people to Christ. As they encourage some and

help others, they build the body. They allow the evangelists to give priority-time to prospects. This allows both to be successful.

The last group (Intercessors) pray support for the outreach ministry. When the evangelists, equippers, and encouragers leave at approximately 7:00 P.M.; the intercessors go to prayer. The *Helpers* give the intercessors the names of those who are prospects, new converts and have special needs. The intercessors divide into smaller groups. Then, on their knees, they pray for specific people and for specific needs.

Each church has some who will not become involved in actual outreach, but they can pray. Also, there are some who want to pray because they have not been trained how to equip or evangelize others. Some cannot be regular so they cannot accept an outreach job, but they pray when they do attend. Those who pray feel they are a part of outreach, for they are praying for team members who are doing it. And when someone receives Christ, intercessors rejoice because they have had a share in the outcome.

CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH

Daniel Henderson began the Cornerstone Community Baptist Church, in the Seattle, Washington suburbs in the summer of 1984. At first the church had marginal growth. Henderson had transplanted the traditional church services of the south. He found that it is difficult to plant a church in the pacific Northwest. What he characterized as traits of the area that makes evangelism difficult, is a microscopic view of the problem faced by the church in United States. Henderson adapted the new church to meet the community needs. The gospel message was not changed but new techniques were used. The principles of preaching, teaching and soulwinning was not changed, but they were expressed through new forms. And after three years the church has reached over 300 people in attendance.

1. People are anti-traditional Henderson built his church on the premise that many Americans are non-traditional in method, yet committed to traditional Christian truth. Henderson's church has two morning services for preaching and worship. Sunday School is held Sunday evening which is the teaching program of the church. Tuesday evening the church gathers in a non-traditional prayer meeting. They meet in age-group cells to share, pray, and then go out to witness (evangelist) teach (equippers) and visit the sick, absentees' and shut-ins (encouragers). The non- traditional people of greater Seattle have responded to the church because it is fundamental in doctrine, yet contemporary in meeting people's needs.

2. People are independent. Henderson believes Americans want to be independent of traditional church forms, yet they are returning to conservative values. Henderson found a great thirst on the part of people to be involved in ministry, yet they were not committed to traditional church meetings. Henderson found the people did not want to attend the traditional prayer meeting on Wednesday where they hear just another message. He noted, "Many churches have substituted praying for the lost instead of witnessing to the lost. So in our church everyone kneels in prayer to intercede for specific lost people, then the soul-winners go visiting them that evening."

"Not everyone is equipped to win souls or wants to witness," notes the young preacher. "So we use them where they are effective" (Spiritual gifts).

3. *People want relationships.* Henderson sees Americans becoming more relational, rather than confrontational. Daniel Henderson reaches the unsaved friends of his church members by sponsoring a Sunday evening dessert at a local hotel. The fellowship resembles a banquet more than a church service. No offering is taken. After the gospel is explained, visitors indicate their decision for Christ on a card that is slipped into an envelope. Whereas the invitation to come forward is seen as confrontation, those who respond through the envelope are visited by an evangelist in their home. They are networked to the gospel. There the person can pray to receive Christ or be disciplined by an equipper.

ATLANTIC SHORES BAPTIST CHURCH

George Sweet, a Liberty Baptist College graduate spent four years traveling as a youth evangelist in local churches. God laid upon his heart a burden to plant a church so he returned to his home area and began the Atlantic Shores Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia in 1981. George Sweet used a big name to let people know he was attempting to reach a big area that included Portsmouth, Norfolk and other cities in the Tidewater area.

The church began with seven people in a Ramada Inn conference room and shortly thereafter moved to a rented elementary school.

After four years attendance averaged 500 with two adult classes and all the children's classes meeting in the school hallway. They could not use the elementary class rooms.

The church occupied a new 1.2 million dollar building on Labor Day weekend, 1985. Almost 1,000 were present. There were not enough seats in the 600 seat auditorium, so they began a second service. The church doubled in a day and attendance stayed over 1,000.

The single adult Sunday School class was expanded to eight classes. Classes were begun for each adult age group and other open classes were started for those who wanted to attend a large sanctuary class. Classes for single, divorced and women were started.

Evangelism and outreach focused on adult Sunday School classes.

Bill Brigman attended the Sunday School and was met at the front door by Ron Brooks, a church greeter. Brooks explained the nature of each class and escorted him to a class composed of others in his age group. A class secretary met him at the door and registered Brigman, then introduced him to class members. By the time Brigman went to the morning service he had met several new friends that he felt were genuinely interested in him.

Each Sunday School class at Atlantic Shores Baptist Church operates the F.R.A.N.gelism Follow-up program. Each class has someone who phones visitors on Sunday afternoon, then contacts the visitors during the week.

CONCLUSION

Skyline Wesleyan Church operates its follow-up program by organizing the total local church. Atlantic Shores Baptist Church operates its outreach through Sunday School classes. The key is that both apply the principle of Friendship Evangelism through a local church program of outreach.

Suggested Bibliography

Dr. Towns has written 48 books on church growth, Sunday school and the Christian life. The following are still in publication and contribute to evangelism.

Becoming a Leader (Resource Packet), Church Leadership Institute,
Lynchburg, VA; 1985

Evangelize Thru Christian Education, The Evangelical Teacher
Training Association; 1971

Great Soul Winning Churches, Sword of the Lord Publishers, Mur-
freesboro, Tenn.; 1973

How to Grow an Effective Sunday School, Accent Books, Denver,
CO; 1979

Say-It-Faith, Tyndale House, Wheaton, Ill.; 1983

Stepping Out On Faith, Tyndale House, Wheaton, Ill.; 1984

The Complete Book of Church Growth, Tyndale House, Wheaton,
Ill.; 1981

The Successful Christian Life, Accent Books, Denver, CO; 1980

The Successful Sunday School and Teachers Guidebook, Creation
House, Carol Stream, Ill.; 1975

RESOURCE PACKET

There is a resource packet available to help you to teach Friendship Evangelism to church leaders and organize your church for outreach.

1. *Resource Packet* includes lesson plans, student handout sheets, cassette mini-lessons, transparency masters, advertising ideas, and a final exam that leads to credit. Teach the exciting lessons and involve believers in evangelistic outreach. Challenge them to meet the standards, qualify themselves, and receive a certificate upon successful completion of the final exam.

2. *Video Tapes*. These 12 mini-lessons are available on video tape. After showing they can be the basis for student discussion. Or if viewing in the class room is not practical, the teacher can expand his teaching skills by studying these video tapes before going to the class room.

3. *Delivery System*. This resource packet contains the forms, flow charts, job descriptions and instructions of how to install the program of Friendship Evangelism in your church.

Church Leadership institute

P.O. Box 4618

Lynchburg, VA 24502

(804) 237-5155