

**ABSTRACT**

**DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF**

**COMPUTER-BASED COACHING FOR RELATIONAL EVANGELISM**

by

Jonathan David Bynum

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the impact of the application of the developed computer-based coaching on the cognitive and behavioral changes in the subjects' ability to participate in relational evangelism. The self-selected subjects utilized the researcher's coaching via DVD and document files for a sixty-day period. Evaluation was performed through subjects' completion of a pre- and post-application researcher-designed questionnaire.

The project demonstrated the potential for using computer technology to enhance relational skills and encourage the practice of evangelism.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled  
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Jonathan David Bynum

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DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF  
COMPUTER-BASED COACHING FOR RELATIONAL EVANGELISM

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of  
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by

Jonathan David Bynum

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **PROBLEM**

#### **Background**

I have been a part of the church from birth. I have been in leadership positions in the church since my youth. As a young adult, I served as the cochair of the Evangelism Committee for our congregation. When I was entering the pastorate, one of the psychological/vocational tests administered rated evangelism as a passion for me. While I have consistently encouraged evangelism in each church to which I have been appointed, I have rarely engaged evangelism in a deeply personal way. Many factors contribute this deficiency: introversion, fear of rejection, lack of skills, busyness, and lack of intentionality. These factors are the same reasons reported by congregants. I have also heard others concur with my feelings of guilt that result from being evangelistically inadequate. This personal evangelism deficit is exacerbated by the inherent difficulties experienced in cultivating relationships; relationships are challenging even before factoring in evangelism. The current social milieu of isolation and alienation has further complicated the complexities of relationships. Anecdotal evidence points to evangelism as an interest without means, a desire without satisfaction.

This project was an effort to find a better way to equip the church for its evangelistic imperative. Despite evangelistic sermons (persuading listeners to follow Jesus) and sermons preached about evangelism (teaching listeners how to persuade people to follow Jesus), in spite of how-to books written to equip evangelists, and even with training seminars widely available, evangelism still languishes. New means of training and motivating evangelism must be explored.

## Metropolitan Context

Houston is a bellwether, a city reflecting the growing ethnic population of the United States (Barna, Second Coming 52-53). According to Stephen L. Klineberg, the 2000 census counted 1.9 million people living in the city of Houston and 3.4 million living in Harris County (11). Overall, the population of metropolitan Houston exceeds four million, making it the fourth largest city in the United States (Greater Houston Partnership, “Current Population Estimates” 1). Projections indicate that by 2020, the total population will have grown by a staggering 37 percent and by 2030, 56 percent (“Demographics” 1).

The publication of Klineberg’s analysis in 2002 was newsworthy for its recognition of Houston as one of the most (if not the most) ethnically diverse cities in America. Table 1.1 indicates the seismic shift that has taken place, particularly among Anglos and Hispanics.

**Table 1.1. U. S. Census Figures for the City of Houston**

<b>Population</b>	<b>1960 %</b>	<b>2000 %</b>
Anglos	70.0	30.8
Asians	0.4	6.8
Blacks	22.7	25.0
Hispanics	6.7	37.4

Source: Klineberg 11.

Table 1.2 shows that even suburban sprawl did not escape the impact.

**Table 1.2. U. S. Census Figures for Harris County**

<b>Population</b>	<b>1960 %</b>	<b>2000 %</b>
Anglos	73.9	42.1
Asians	0.3	6.5
Blacks	19.8	18.2
Hispanics	6.0	32.9

Source: Klineberg 10.

Numbers are even more dramatic when broken down by age groups. Whereas 77.0 percent of those who are ages sixty to ninety-two are Anglos, 62.2 percent of those ages eighteen to twenty-nine are blacks and Hispanics, with Asians adding another 10.2 percent (Klineberg 20). Logic is not stretched to speculate that much of this change occurred “under the radar” because of the extreme socioeconomic variance among new community citizens. While U. S.-born populations and Asian immigrants show higher levels of education and professional skills, by comparison the massive influx of Hispanics shows significant educational deficiencies (21). This data is a monumental realization as Houston and the rest of America moves from energy/natural resource industries to a high-tech/high-knowledge economy (7).

First United Methodist Church Houston (First Methodist) is located in the center of this dynamic, changing urban sprawl. As a result, First Methodist must be equipped to meet the challenges ahead.

### **Congregational Context**

The history of First Methodist traces back to the early days of Houston, when the church was located in the middle of the community. In 1908, the church moved to its

present location at the corner of Main and Clay. (An amusing note in the transition: one trustee resigned because it was too far out of town.) The sanctuary was built in 1910, with the education building added on the eve of the Great Depression in 1928. Along the way First Methodist introduced many innovations. For example, the church took a leading role in setting up the Wesley Community Center, still ministering to children and their families one hundred years later. In addition, the congregation provided the impetus to begin Methodist Hospital, and it provided meeting space for Temple Beth Israel. The church also seized opportunities available through new communication technology. In 1924, it offered the first live radio broadcast of a worship service in Houston, and in 1956, it first began broadcasting on television, which it has done ever since. By the 1970s First Methodist was boasting a membership of over twelve thousand. The church's creativity in ministry points to a legacy of outreach—a base on which to build.

However, First Methodist is also a victim of its own success. The congregation has demanded and has been supplied strong preaching in the pulpit. As such, preachers have been renowned locally, nationally, and denominationally. Nevertheless, the subtle drawback is that the preacher can become the “crowd-puller,” tempting people in the pews to offer others a great communicator rather than the living Word. The incredible reach of television must be factored in, as well. For many years television broadcasts constituted the main evangelism efforts of the congregation. Viewers would be enticed by what they saw and heard and thus wanted to come downtown to experience the service in person. Over time effective preaching coupled with television allowed the laity to become passive, trusting that the church would grow not because of its efforts but because of the skills of the pastor. The effects were not immediately evident, though the



environment of the church location was changing even as the congregation grayed.

Viewership remained strong, but people were reluctant to make the effort to come to a deteriorating downtown perceived as dangerous. Decline came slowly as the evangelistic passion of the laity waned.

In the early 1980s, the church became aware that it needed to transform itself. Initially land was purchased downtown so that the facilities and ministries could expand. Unfortunately, the public opinion of downtown was very poor, and most of the other congregations had already relocated out of the area. As a result, First Methodist had to consider the possibility of relocation as well. Eventually, the congregation purchased property on the new beltway in the west part of the city in the Westchase business district, an area with both commercial and residential development potential. Heartfelt discussion and diligent discernment led to the adoption of the plan for a two-campus church. It was a bold, innovative move that included a kindergarten through eighth grade school and a recreation ministry. The strategy was seen as a means of reaching more people in a new way and as a source of revitalization in the church.

Concurrently, downtown was resuscitated with the completion of a new baseball stadium, the opening of a new sports arena, the renovation and expansion of the convention center and hotel, the opening of a light rail train that runs through downtown past First Methodist, and a burgeoning entertainment industry. As a result, a community is being formed in the downtown and midtown area. Positive evidence of growth is the need for additional housing—a need that has remained steady for ten years in downtown and midtown even as residential development has increased dramatically.

The opportunities for First Methodist are apparent. Downtown Houston is

revitalized and Westchase is a growth corridor. George Barna reports that at least one out of three adults in this country can be identified as unchurched (“Understanding the Unchurched” 6). In Houston these statistics translate into a minimum of 1.3 million people not experiencing the life Christ intends for them. As a congregation, four evangelistic pools are identifiable: those living near the campuses, those working near the campuses, those living in the neighborhoods of congregants, and those who participate in worship via television (a minimum of sixty thousand households each week). The radius of attenders reaches sixty miles.

In the whole study of the call to evangelism, perhaps no more haunting question is offered than Samuel Shoemaker’s: “Can your kind of church change this kind of world?” (qtd. in Hunter, Radical Outreach 74). In order for a congregation to become apostolic, evangelism must be taken personally by the members. To equip church members the leaders of First Methodist must follow its tradition of innovation and technology utilization so that each member takes the call to evangelism personally.

### **The Problem**

Challenges in the area of evangelism are not a problem local to Houston. Throughout the American church, evidence abounds of a lack of evangelism in practice, a lack of proficient relational skills, and a lack of contact with the prevailing culture. Yet, among the followers of the Lord of the gospel a lack of despair must be upheld.

### **Lack of Evangelism**

The American church is not an inviting body, evidenced by its lack of zeal for evangelism. Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce found that less than half of worshipers (46 percent) invited someone to church (much less into a discipling

relationship with Jesus Christ) in the last year (Field Guide 52). Thom Rainer's research yields different numbers, but the same result: only 21 percent of active churchgoers invite someone to church in the course of a year, and in that small group, only 2 percent invite an unchurched person (Unchurched Next Door 25). Research shows that no county in America has increased its church population in the last ten years. Data indicates that during the past ten years the population of the United States has increased by 11.4 percent (24,153,000 people) as the membership in all Protestant denominations has decreased by 9.5 percent (4,498,242 people; Behken 18). Of the growth found in congregations, 75 percent is attributed to transferring membership from other congregations or denominations, with another 18 percent drawn from the ranks of those who are returning to church after a prolonged absence. According to the data, only 7 percent of all new people in congregations are those who have never regularly attended anywhere (Woolever and Bruce, Field Guide 44-47). George G. Hunter, III, reports that less than 1 percent of all North American churches grow substantially from conversion (Radical Outreach 26), suggesting that churches function like a club operating for the benefit of its members (Jones 188). "In the year 2000, roughly half of all churches in America did not add one new person through conversion!" (Sjogren, Ping, and Pollock 46). Such sterility is hardly a formula for success, resulting in a nation that is the third largest mission field in the world, with 100 million unchurched Americans (Behken 18). "No faith tradition [Catholic, Mainline Protestant, conservative Protestant, historically black] is doing an outstanding job of attracting those who have never been part of a faith community" (Woolever and Bruce, Beyond the Ordinary 89).

In particular, the United Methodist Church has continued a nearly forty-year

decline (when accounting for the combined membership of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren). The decrease from 11.5 million members to 9.8 million members has been lessened only by overseas increases (Purdue). The Methodists are forsaking their own heritage as they “regard their parish as their world [rather] than the world as their parish!” (Hunter, Radical Outreach 109). The consequence is a secular culture in which “we can no longer graft a good evangelism program onto a traditional congregation and expect to reach and retain many secular people. Why? The Christians won’t invite, and the unchurched people won’t come” (Church for the Unchurched 25).

These conversion numbers are more alarming in light of the abundance of evangelism training resources. An online search of the Christian Books Distributors Web site identified 476 items, including books and materials that ranged from techniques to theologies (Christianbooks.com). Additionally, churches are regularly solicited to attend evangelism seminars hosted by numerically growing churches. Finally, the listing of resources should include sermons within local churches where preachers implore their congregations to reach out to those around them with the gospel. For a people so rich in resources, the return is minimal. “Statistics for the year 2001 placed the total cost of evangelistic outreach at an average \$330,000 for each and every newly baptized believer!” (Sjogren, Ping, and Pollock 46). John P. Bowen adds, “For Christians to talk about the gospel is a sign of health; to talk about evangelism is a sign that something is wrong” (136). An analogy of his conclusion is the fact that people tend to talk little about their bodies unless some physical malady captures their attention and, therefore, increasingly creeps into their conversation. The consequences of not applying the accessible resources are ample church members on the roll, but few evangelists in the

pews.

When questioning the lack of evangelism, the answers can be grouped into four categories. The first category concerns misconceptions. Many Christians are unmotivated by the thought of committing themselves to nothing more than increasing membership for the sake of the institution. Others are unmotivated, understanding evangelism as reserved for pastors and appropriate committees, or that it is best brought about by crusades, revivals, and parachurch groups. Still other Christians are turned off by “sheep rustling” among congregations and competing for resources within congregations. Some Christians see the effort as futile everywhere except in growing suburban areas. Next, are Christians who are unmoved because evangelism is perceived as optional or unnecessary (M. Green 4-6; Jones 186-88). Finally, some Christians are in the habit of viewing the unsaved “as enemies rather than victims of the Enemy” (Aldrich 19). Michael Green sums up the situation by describing evangelism as “institutionalized, ... atomized, ... fossilized, ... clericalized, ... secularized, ... [or] pasteurized” (6-7)—anything but realized.

The second broad category can be identified as rationalization by individuals. For one person evangelism seems too big a task, so the problem is never personalized or internalized. Such a person might claim that evangelism is not his or her problem. Another reported reason for lack of evangelism is social and cultural isolation, in that many Christians are cloistered in the Christian “ghetto,” lacking unchurched friends. Another contributing factor may be a lack of integrity, in which the Christian does not fully incarnate the professed faith. Included is unwillingness to commit the time and resources necessary to invest in the lives of lost persons. An additional element is the fear of rejection or of being seen as a fanatic by those encountered. This fear assures people

will not be interested in the gospel. The final rationalization is simply a lack of training (Aldrich 16-21; M. Green 12-17; McKay 5-8).

Other reasons for lack of evangelism fall into a third category, questionable motivation. As in the “misconceptions” category, preservation of the institution is met again here. Similarly, some Christians think of evangelism in jingoistic terms of preservation and expansion of national life—the civilizing function of religion. The most subtle driving force is the desire for the preservation of the soul, which utilizes either fear or hope of reward, or both. Each of these reasons has a positive facet; however, each is ultimately self-oriented rather than glorifying God (Fox and Morris 11-14).

The fourth category of evangelistic limitations revolves around poor techniques (Sjogren, Ping, and Pollock 28-38). Among the examples are would-be evangelists who practice what many unchurched people would consider schemes and evidence of a lack of authenticity by laying down tracts that look like hundred dollar bills or conducting phony religious surveys to begin conversations or holding events aimed at secular people with unadvertised altar calls. Other Christians are known to dehumanize unchurched people in their approach to evangelism by treating people like a trophy to be won or a project to be completed. Another tragic practice is making the good news sound like bad news by belittling the ideas or lifestyles of people who do not live up to Christian standards. Even well-intentioned Christians can take the persona of salespeople ready to make a pitch to potential customers. The unchurched must also deal with gospel stalkers who completely ignore social boundaries and do not give people space to make their decisions. Another flawed method is sermonizing, with the evangelist having all the answers even before anyone has a question. Finally, spectating is included though it is really no technique at

all as it mutes the would-be evangelists with fear, hiding behind convenient rationalization for doing little or nothing. All of these techniques are poorly conceived and pathetically executed, leaving non-Christians unaffected or negatively affected. “People *love* [original emphasis] the idea that Jesus is for them and that he cared enough to die for them. The big problem is the manipulative way in which the message is being delivered” (Sjorgren, Ping, and Pollock 21).

The preceding information is not intended to put total blame on those who are called to proclaim the gospel. People have their own reasons for not wanting to be evangelized. One reason may be that people do not see the gospel as relevant to their daily lives or they sense no need for a Savior. For many unchurched individuals the biggest obstacle is the church; the unchurched do not want to become one of the church people they have encountered. Perhaps the unchurched person carries the memories of a bad experience in the past. Conversely, people may think they would never want or be able to match the Christian image (McKay 9-11). Also to be considered are the many fears of the unchurched: fear of the unknown, fear of exposing ignorance, fear of being put on the spot, fear of commitment, fear of not belonging, fear of judgment, fear of change, fear of joining a cult, fear of wasting time and money, fear of confidentiality leaks, fear of rejection (Poole 81-87). Income levels play a significant role in the openness of people to the gospel—the greater the income, the greater the resistance (Rainer, Unchurched Next Door 30). Lastly, thought has to be given to whether a person is pre-Christian or post-Christian. The former has no clear understanding of Christianity while the latter has some level of encounter but has decided not to follow Jesus. The receptiveness of the post-Christian is often much less.

In all these ways, evangelism is handicapped. The gospel is neither being asserted nor heard; nevertheless, the circumstances of the church are not the only issues calling for attention.

### **Lack of Friends**

To complicate the situation, contemporary society is less conducive for developing and maintaining friendships than at previous times. The influence of Robert D. Putnam's work is foundational for Kathleen Brehony's emphasis on the significant decline for Americans in time spent in informal socializing with friends and the decreased frequency of social evenings spent with neighbors (55-89). She highlights diverse reasons: mobility and location, lack of time, use of television and other technology, breakdown of the traditional family, and women in the labor force. Putnam's book, Bowling Alone, reports that the number of Americans who spent time informally socializing with friends fell steadily from about 65 percent in 1965 to less than 39 percent in 1995 (107). From 1974 to 1998, the frequency with which Americans spent a social evening with neighbors fell by more than one-third (105). Putnam finds multifarious factors, with each factor a modest contributor. Modern work requirements have impacted people with financial pressure, women in the workplace, and the perceptions that less time is available or schedules cannot be effectively coordinated (though evidence of this assessment as fact is questionable). Associated with work is the mobility and sprawl that has brought about extensive commuting and frequent relocation. Another reason for decreased socializing is generational changes, most notably the shift from the extreme civic and public-minded Greatest Generation. A last reason to be considered is the development of technology and television, which results in more time alone (183-284).



Putnam is affirmed by Leonard Sweet, who states, “People are constantly talking with others on cell phones and the Internet, but most people are treating those around them as objects to get past, not as subjects to pass through” (Out of the Question 19). Sweet’s statement is corroborated by a number of Finnish conscripts who were dismissed from military service because they were addicted to the Internet, playing games obsessively, or lacking friends or hobbies (“A Few Good Nerds”). Additionally, many Christians live in isolation, having little association with non-Christians (Mittelberg 20). Lack of personal interaction greatly limits possibilities for gospel sharing.

Even when contact is made, other relational impediments come to the fore, such as the barriers cited by Terry Wardle: self-centeredness, busyness, jealousy, faultfinding, manipulateness, privacy, gossip, and unavailability (125-26). An often overlooked difficulty is the complexity of communication. Eugene A. Nida posits, “All too often people have attributed rejection of the Christian message to human perversity or Satanic influence, when in many cases it was due to sheer irrelevancy of the communication” (123). Then, too, one must counter the “shielding” wisdom of mothers: “Don’t talk to strangers”; “Wait to be properly introduced”; “Silence is golden”; and, “Good things come to those who wait” (Fine 6-12). When Les and Leslie Parrott read studies identifying the connection between close relationships and happiness and paralleled the data with their own anecdotal evidence of the complexity of relationships, they came to realize the need to train others in basic relationship skills (11).

These relational and communication issues adversely affect efforts to convey the gospel. If, as Paul asserts, “faith comes from hearing” (Rom. 10:17, NIV), current American evangelism habits issue interesting challenges; nevertheless, this need for

hearing points to yet one more quandary regarding evangelism.

### **Lack of Enculturation**

Contemporary culture has undergone a dramatic shift in its perception of truth as personal preference. This equal validation of all claims, even when such claims are contradictory, renders no claims as real; therefore, all claims are ultimately unsatisfying (Tabb 37-38). While he describes Generation X specifically, Ralph Moore's portrayal points to the generally devastating impact of "the most aborted, molested, abandoned and neglected (they were latchkey kids) generation in United States history" (33).

Consequently, "one of the biggest challenges the church faces today is rescuing people who have become orphans of truth, lost in the disorienting maze of relativism" (Sweet, Jesus Drives Me Crazy 93). Brad J. Kallenberg rightly defines the complicatedness of the situation:

In the heyday of evangelicalism (during the 1950s in America), the paradigm shift the evangelist sought was minimally disruptive for the listener because most Americans held nominally orthodox beliefs about the identity of God, the authority of Scripture, the life of Jesus as morally normative, and so on.... A typical nonbeliever who is invited to embrace Jesus today must make a wholesale trade of an enormous web of beliefs for those of Christian orthodoxy. (86)

What is left is less a culture of disbelief than one of "spiritual hungerings and hucksterings" (Sweet, SoulTsunami 409), becoming cynical of all claims to authority (Poe 85).

The church can no longer lean on organization, techniques, and clichés. Loyalty is not commitment to power structures, and authority is not acceptance of propositions. Instead, loyalty is committed to individuals and authority is personal (Poe 89). The church must cultivate its communication skills, nurture its relational skills, and change its attitude toward the world in which it finds itself.

## **Lack of Despair**

Even with all these negative facts and figures, the Church need not despair. In spite of the challenges, “‘good evangelism’ happens all the time. After all, everyone who follows Jesus has been evangelized” (Bowen 23). Christians are not without hope and should pay attention to what has been effective. Win and Charles Arn report research conducted by questioning over forty-two thousand church members: “What or who was responsible for your coming to Christ and your church?” (46). The results are plain: evangelistic crusade or television show, 0.5 percent; special need, 1-2 percent; visitation, 1-2 percent; walk-in, 2-3 percent; church program, 2-3 percent; Sunday school, 4-5 percent; pastor, 5-6 percent; and friend or relative, 75-90 percent (46). Similarly, Rainer found that for 57 percent of the formerly unchurched, relationships played a role in their choice of church (Surprising Insights 77). He also found that family members are the most influential (82), of which wives were the most effectual (83). Men were shown to be most impacted by relationships, being more reluctant to attend a church where they know no one (83). This connection between close relationships and evangelistic potency makes sense in light of data reporting that 59 percent of Christians “mostly feel at ease” to talk about their faith “if it comes up” as opposed to the 16 percent who “seek opportunities” (Woolever and Bruce, Field Guide 53). The more time spent with a person and the more secure the relationship, the more likely such conversation will arise.

Rainer’s comparison of the workweeks of “effective” leaders versus the comparison group indicates that the most significant differences between the two groups are that effective leaders invested heavily in sermon preparation (twenty-two hours) and personal evangelism (five hours)—the latter informing and sharpening the former

(Surprising Insights 184). Pastors and church leaders cannot live “in the laboratory,” speaking only of theories and good ideas. Seclusion is not the witness of the early Church, the Bible, or the nature of God. Evangelism has to be a contagion fed by constant exposure and not passed off as a committee responsibility. (The stereotype is that committees are notorious for killing such epidemics.) In short, evangelism is an essential spiritual discipline for all Christians. “Engaging in spiritual friendship will not only help others become Christians, it will help us become better Christians” (McLaren, More Ready Than You Realize 54).

Rather than clinging to the past or quailing in the present, Erwin Raphael McManus perceives the friction of current trends as potential sources of traction for the church to move into the future (38-61) by taking advantage of such trends as radical migration, urbanization, population explosion, technological revolution, information explosion, global mosaic, and hypermodernism. Likewise, Ravi Zacharias sees a positive opportunity to reach the present age because all authority claims stand on a level playing field, reason can still be effective when wisely employed, the church can fulfill the desire for community, the church can offer purpose to a people who have overdosed on pleasure and found themselves adrift in meaninglessness, and, above all, God is always sovereign (26-28). Harry Lee Poe agrees that where an ideological roadmap is lacking, Christians can offer the fruit of its ideology: community, purpose, identity (99-107).

Evidence of the problem is myriad and the evangelistic needs of the American Church are unquestionable. Nevertheless, the hope of the Church is unassailable because the good news endures.

### **Biblical and Theological Foundations**

The underpinnings for both the motivation for evangelism and the corrective for muted evangelism are found in the tenets of Scripture and the witness of the Church.

#### **Nature of God**

Humanity is created in the image of the triune (relational) God (Gen. 1:27), so God can express the divine loving nature. By its very nature, love must flow outward. This loving nature necessitated God to form relational creatures who were both independent and interdependent—beings who were genuinely “other.” Bestowing such freedom carries risk: God’s outpouring can be either received or rejected. The story of Eden is a description of the human condition, misunderstanding the temptation to “be like God” (Gen. 3:5), forgetting that “male and female” already are God’s image. The untruth of evil is that the “otherly” (rather than the godly) path of love becomes self-oriented. Brokenness, rather than godliness, results. Sin’s poison splashes onto everything and causes estrangement from God, alienation from others, and disaffection with all of Creation. Human pursuits in isolation from God always bring destruction, yet the nature of God cannot be tainted. “God is love” is unchangeable (1 John 4:16). Therefore, God’s love is unrestrained, continuing as the grace of “anyway.” To retain the relational context, the rest of the Bible can be described as the story of the jilted Lover (God) wooing the runaway Bride (humanity). With this imagery evangelism is less about pointing fingers at what is wrong in the world and more about pointing to what God is making right in the world, through the relationships of God’s people.

The immediacy of evangelism is the good news that God does not simply intend life after death but also life before death. Scripture finds that “to Paul the point of being

Christ's follower was not just to help people be absolutely certain they were going to heaven after they died. Paul's goal was to help them become fully formed, mature in Christ, here and now" (McLaren and Campolo 20)—living the divine intention of the God image. Salvation is far more wonderful than mere forgiveness (which most unchurched people are not sure is necessary for "good" people like them); salvation is entry into the kingdom of God. Given that the entire world was damaged by sin, this work of God is a whole-world project rather than an individualistic pursuit (pointing back to the first sin described in the Bible). Through the crucifixion of Jesus, sin is no longer the obstacle to heaven; instead, the cross is the obstacle to hell. Sadly, the value of the cross is unrecognized by unchurched people, so they detour around it. The church must proclaim that what Christ has done is of cosmic proportions; therefore, evangelism is from beginning to end God's initiative "while we were yet sinners" (Rom. 5:8). Any effort by the church to reach unchurched people trails the prevenient grace of God that touches every life—quietly sustaining, inviting, and drawing people to the heart of God. This grace points to the power of prayer in evangelism as people are drawn into conversation of the Word with the human spirit.

Ironically, growing churches have a high Christology and a conviction that the unchurched are separated from Christ and are lost. On the other hand, declining churches in practice have a low Christology and believe that people apart from Christ are acceptable before God (Jackson). As a result, "the local church is the hope of the world" (Hybels, "Building a Church") as it offers the world the only One who can speak into the chaos and bring about new creation. Moreover, the church is united in Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit in order to lead people to the very presence of the Father. Duly

commissioned, all Christians are called apostles and “sent out” (as indicated by the designation *αποστολος*) as agents of love, ambassadors of reconciliation, and messengers of hope. As apostles, Christians must change, “I go to church,” to the more biblically accurate, “I am the church on the go.” As such, the unchurched are not the seekers; Jesus’ parables describe them as the lost (Luke 15). The church embodies the apostolic mandate as the seekers (as opposed to “seekers” as the contemporary epithet for unchurched people), searching for those Jesus loved so much that he laid down his life for them. This sense of purpose requires a missionary mind-set, studying and appreciating the culture in order to redeem it by relating to others in meaningful ways.

### **Nature of the Church**

Every Christian is a messenger of God, whether through passionate intention or complete unawareness. All communicate a witness about the nature of God. Hunter recalls the old saying, “Shepherds don’t make new sheep; sheep make new sheep” (Radical Outreach 32). The body of Christ is bound together, each uniquely gifted to “re-present” Jesus (1 Cor. 12), the Incarnated Word who “became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood” (John 1:14, Message). Due to the indwelling of the Spirit, the Word has moved into the neighborhoods—wherever a Christian calls home. If evangelism is restricted to experts then the body is constrained, and the Word is muted, and the results are less than divine. Still, when the good news is freely shared, the work of God is miraculous. As Herb Miller says, “Evangelism is the only enterprise on earth where the ‘amateurs’ outperform the ‘professionals’ by two to one!” (qtd. in Hunter, Radical Outreach 31).

Made up of apostles, the church is not introducing people to the “what” of a belief

system but to the “who”—the living God. As humans who are created for relationships, any “gospeling” (the good news is not simply a noun but active as a verb) must be relational rather than merely presentational. This awareness requires a driving fervor that questions, “I want to be gung-ho about seekers—in general. But do I care enough to walk across the room for one?” (Hybels, “Lost People”). Understanding the relational character of evangelism is a matter of seeing others as valuable in themselves (recognizing God’s image no matter how disfigured it has become) and of infinite worth to God. Otherwise evangelism can become task-driven and people suffer commodification—the evangelist no longer sees a person but a project, a conquest to “win” one to Christ (McLaren, New Kind 104). Relational evangelism is akin to the invitation to a dance where partners enter into the joy of the music together (62) with the full knowledge that time and effort are necessary to learn the steps. A theology of evangelism must maintain such metaphors, remembering that evangelism is not about technique or successful salesmanship. Kallenberg points out that the gospel cannot be good news if any form of coercion is the means (49). For that reason Brian McLaren suggests counting genuine relationships rather than conversions (New Kind 109).

Elsewhere he points to the example of Jesus:

Jesus was short on sermons, long on conversations; short on answers, long on questions; short on abstractions and propositions, long on stories and parables; short on telling you what to think, long on challenging you to think for yourself; short on condemning the irreligious, long on confronting the religious. (More Ready Than You Realize 15)

As Jesus came as the personal Word, Christians share the Word in a personal way.

In order to train his followers, Jesus engaged them in an apprenticeship by investing himself in them. These disciples were able to get to know Jesus, to see how he



interacted with people, and to observe the transformation of lives as a result of such encounters. At the same time, Jesus equipped the disciples to minister in the same way. As a result, they were neither immediately capable nor fully empowered until the appropriate time. Still, Jesus left these twelve with the “impossible” (Matt. 19:26) charge to be his witnesses “in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8, NIV).

### **Nature of Relational Evangelism**

Scripture, tradition, reason, and the experience of contemporary culture all point to a practice of evangelism that is both intentional and personal:

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

Even the most cutting-edge technology is seen as a personalized form of communication and as a means to interaction.

Sweet prescribes, “To save the world we don’t need the courage of our convictions. We need the courage of our relationships” (Out of the Question 3). From this perspective, relationships are the sacrament of evangelism, the means of grace through which the love of Christ is made tangible. Every person enjoys diverse spheres of influence through relationships: family and relatives, friends, neighborhood, work and school, age-level groups, groups of origin (e.g., high school), ethnic groups, special interest groups, and trade and professional groups (Wardle 119). To be an evangelist is to impact these relationships “without discrimination and influencing [them] toward better

living, through good deeds and good conversations” (McLaren, More Ready Than You Realize 15). Long ago, the writer to the Colossians indicated the importance of all relationships: “Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity” (4:5).

The implication is that relational evangelism involves a commitment to listening and sincere heart sharing. People do not need formulaic answers; rather, they need a personal encounter, a personal apologetic that includes the rational but is not afraid to go beyond it. Simply voicing beliefs is not sufficient. Present-day evangelism also calls for celebrating the adventure of a relationship with God, acknowledging that God is beyond systematic theologies and trite quotes from the “Answer Book,” the Bible. The authority of the evangelist rests neither in the interpretation of Scripture nor in Scripture itself; authority rests in God alone whose heart’s desire is relationship (McLaren, New Kind 46-53). This relational hunger is the yearning of the soul that apostles are seeking to reach.

McLaren uses the example of a math book: “Is it valuable because it has the answers in the back? No, it’s valuable because by working through it, by doing the problems, by struggling with it, you become a wiser person, a person capable of solving problems” (New Kind 53). Again, the Bible is the story of God’s interaction, God’s relationship, with Creation. What the evangelist has to tell is his or her story within God’s story. The unchurched often stereotype Christians as “Bible-thumpers.” What they need to “read” are Christians on a journey with God being transformed by God and God’s people. Only then can the unchurched develop a trust of Scripture. As they come to know about Jesus and to know Jesus himself, they will become bonded to him. The point of discipleship is traveling with Jesus, not simply “accepting” him. The intention is not

membership but discipleship. Coming to Jesus is only the beginning point of a lasting metamorphosis. The church stands on shaky ground when it too neatly segments evangelism and nurture. In such a scenario, no one matures beyond the gospel, but all are in need of constant witness of the work of Christ, even as they share in the witness of Christ.

### **Summary**

Every Christian is called to be a witness. The outward movement of love, therefore the outward movement of the gospel, is the nature of God and of those who are being made new in that divine nature. Evangelism, then, is the word and deed witness offered to others in a way that stirs the longing of their souls and will find satisfaction only in the God who created them and has faithfully pursued them with love. Therefore, the Great Commission diagnostic questions are to be answered by each follower of Jesus:

Where is my Jerusalem? Where do I feel comfortable and useful and unthreatened?

Where is my Samaria? Who are the people who in my book are not quite kosher?

Who are my Gentiles? Who are those people with whom I feel I have nothing in common, around whom I would probably feel thoroughly uncomfortable? (Bowen 120-21)

The Christians' response to these questions must be both their affirmation and actions.

To complicate the challenge modern technology too often isolates and insulates individuals from the high-maintenance work of relationships. This project was an effort to redeem technology, using it to develop the skills of Jesus-centered relationships.

Utilizing computers to provide relational evangelism coaching is counter intuitive and ostensibly incongruous, yet the gospel itself is inherently paradoxical: God as man, grace for sin, and life through death. The ultimate goal of this project was to advance the

evangelistic abilities of Christians through training with the technological means that predominates the culture in which Christians live.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the impact of the application of the developed computer-based relational coaching on the cognitive and behavioral changes in the subjects' ability to participate in relational evangelism.

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent have cognitive changes in relational evangelism been realized by participants as the result of the computer-based coaching?
2. To what extent have behavioral changes in relational evangelism been realized by participants as the result of the computer-based coaching?
3. What aspects of the computer-based coaching appear to be associated with these changes?

### **Terms Defined**

For this project several terms must be defined for the sake of clarity.

#### **Relational Evangelism**

Relational evangelism was defined as the spiritual discipline of intentionally nurturing relationships with unchurched persons. These relationships afford opportunities to witness to the love of Jesus through word and action.

#### **Cognitive Changes**

Cognitive changes referred to modifications in an individual's theology or understanding of evangelism as a result of the coaching program as evidenced by comparison of the pre- and post-application survey instruments.

**Behavioral Changes**

Behavioral changes were defined as alterations in an individual's habits or practices of relational evangelism as a result of the coaching program as evidenced by comparison of the pre- and post-application survey instruments.

**Coaching**

Coaching has become a multifaceted term that ranges from general usage for any teaching to the particular parlance referring to an expert helping to train others to achieve their goals. For the purpose of this project, coaching was an informal connotation of equipping and training. Robert E. Logan and Sherilyn Carlton offer a broad definition that fit this project: "A coach is someone who comes alongside to help others find their focus" (13). Employing a computer rather than a person changed the dynamics of the conventional practice of coaching; however, the image was helpful.

**Project Description**

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the impact of the application of the developed relational coaching software on the cognitive and behavioral changes in the subjects' ability to participate in relational evangelism. The project was conducted through First United Methodist Church Houston, spanning October to December 2006. The objective was a sixty-day self-paced, self-defined learning process in which the participant would be able to choose the order of the lessons based on his or her perceived needs. A supposition was made that control of the process would better engage the participant. The curriculum was developed through historical research, identifying common themes and fundamental topics in both evangelism and relational skills. The lessons were scripted, digitally videoed, and produced in a DVD format. Prior to issuing

a DVD to the participants, each one was given the pre-application questionnaire and, upon completion of the coaching, the post-application questionnaire for individually comparative data analysis. Effectiveness in the training was determined by improved understanding, intentionality, and increased practice of evangelism as measured in the two questionnaire scores.

### **Methodology**

This project was a quasi-experimental, pretest-posttest design with no comparison group. The training curriculum for the development of computer-based coaching for relational evangelism skills was based on historical research in the evangelism field. The information was integrated in the software design and teaching script, produced as an asynchronous, off-line, individual self-study (Romiszowski 6). The software was then evaluated for effectiveness.

### **Population**

Twenty-one volunteers from the downtown campus of First United Methodist Church Houston served as project subjects. In order to be eligible, they were required to be teens or adults (16 years or older) who were regular attendees (at least twice per month), who used a computer on a regular basis (at least three times per week), who agreed to utilize the project software for a period of sixty days, and who were willing to share their experiences through the survey instrument.

### **Variables**

The independent variable of this project was the developed coaching software employed by the test population. While biblical text and relevant literature informed the content of the software curriculum, the design was intentionally structured to adjust for

personal temperament through the use of a nonlinear approach in which each subject determined the learning process path through the course. The expectation was that this option would address particular and immediate needs of the subjects.

The dependent variables of this project were the cognitive and behavioral changes in relation to the practice of relational evangelism.

Intervening variables that might have influenced or helped explain outcomes included gender, age, marital status, number of years as a Christian and initial influences, number of years as a church member and initial influences, personality, past experiences in evangelism, and the number of times the software was utilized.

### **Instrumentation and Data Collection**

A researcher-designed questionnaire was the primary instrument used to study the effectiveness of the curriculum. The questions included both objective and subjective measures, providing feedback for both the content and the design. The nature of the project necessitated a number of open-ended responses in order to allow individual reactions, experiences, and insights. The questionnaire was a single instrument with pre- and post-application versions. The pre-application survey was conducted to establish a baseline for understanding and practice of evangelism, in general, and relational evangelism, in particular. The post-application survey was administered sixty days later to determine consequential changes in both understanding and practice.

To assess the personality variable, the online Birkman Method instrument was completed by each participant before beginning the training.

Confidentiality in the reporting of the survey responses was assured by me and was built into the project's design.

**Delimitations and Generalizability**

The importance of this project was highlighted by troublesome evangelism data and personal experiences. The survey research evidenced the need for better understanding and practice of evangelism. Because this project was limited to a small sample size (twenty-one) of self-selected members of First United Methodist Church Houston, the results provide helpful insights for the congregation as a whole and might be suggestive of similar results for other members who share similar Christology and sense of calling and urgency about evangelism. Claims of generalizability demand further study; the unique qualities of the training have the potential for application in a broader Church spectrum, though such generalizability is not assumed. Survey research points to other formats for evangelism training (e.g., lectures, video series, workshops, books) that have been utilized in the past with apparent mixed results. Additional research is necessary to determine the most effective approach or combination of approaches. Finally, intervening variables were not controlled and were outside the scope of this project.

**Overview of the Dissertation**

Chapter 2 of this work reviews selected literature and applicable research. The theological and biblical foundations of relational evangelism are studied, along with contemporary inquiries into the subject.

Chapter 3 presents the research project, including details of the software design and the methods of beta testing.

Chapter 4 reports the findings of the study.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the project and conclusions drawn.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the impact of the application of the developed computer-based relational coaching on the cognitive and behavioral changes in the subjects' ability to participate in relational evangelism. The objective was increased skill in intentionally cultivating friendships that will offer opportunities to express the love of Jesus in both actions and words. In short, the aim is nurturing disciplined outreach of the body of Christ. To that end, this review of literature is intended to lay the foundation for that effort. By no means does this review claim to be comprehensive. This is a survey, a crystallization of far more extensive works already published.

#### **A Brief Theological Rationale for Relational Evangelism**

Any study of evangelism must begin with the nature of God, for “the heart of the gospel [is] to answer the question ‘What is God like?’ Everything else flows from that” (Bowen 104). All truth, theology, morality, values, and practices are derivative and dependent on the only absolute (Poe 151). In fact, truth must flow from that absolute. Any knowledge of God must be through revelation; while God is “Other,” God is known by humans through divine initiative. To know and to be known is to be in relationship. Relationship is the nature of God.

#### ***Imago Dei* as Relationship**

One of the foundational tenets of the Christian faith is an accurate understanding of the Trinity. While the word Trinity does not appear in the canon, the church recognized this reality very early. Much contemporary Trinitarian theology focuses on the perichoretic quality of the Godhead. The image implied by the Greek is that of a

“circle dance” (Cladis 4), with the three persons of the Trinity maintaining their identity while moving together in harmony. Minus any one of the three, the dance would no longer be as intended—three is the minimum number needed for a circle. While an all-inclusive study is beyond the scope of this review, a few model passages from Jesus’ final discourse in John where this image is most clearly supported are helpful for consideration. First, Jesus claims an intimacy with the Father: “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works” (John 14:10, NASB). Later, Jesus further claims an interrelationship with the Holy Spirit: “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears.... He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine” (John 16:13-15, NIV). In the revelation of God’s nature, Trinity is appreciated long before it is described: the mystery of Trinity is a delicately nuanced supposition avoiding the heresies of tritheism and modalism. The key in this understanding is the relational character of God: unity through community is intrinsic throughout. The only way such community can exist is by love expressed through intimacy, vulnerability, trust, and service.

The theological implications are significant when correlated with the human creation as the image of God (Gen. 1:27). If God is relational by nature, humanity is relational by nature and created for relationship with God and with others. Consequently, “[r]elationships are more than recreation. They are the very work of being human ... and divine” (Sweet, Out of the Question ix). Two supporting clues are found in context. First, the plural pronoun is used in the Creator’s monologue in verse 26. Even though this

passage cannot be construed as a definitive Trinitarian text, it suggests a complexity that is not readily apparent but cannot be easily dismissed. The second fact of note is the singular form of “image” and the plural form of humanity—“male and female” (v. 27). The connotation is that the image of God is not realized in the individual but in relationships. In the next chapter, the pristine ideal is portrayed through conversation with God and the absence of shame between Adam and Eve. A final substantiation is at the climax of salvation history, the Revelation, as John has a vision of the “holy city” (21:3). The implication of the text is that humanity is intended to live together in God’s *πολις*—in community with one another and with God. The city image clarifies the trajectory of God’s purpose: relationships.

### **Sin as Broken Relationship**

Unfortunately, both the scriptural and existential evidence shows that humanity is not on course. Many metaphors are employed to portray sin: crime deserving punishment, addiction that cannot be broken, disease, idolatry, and broken relationship (McKay 128-33). The latter is fundamental because the image of God is created for relationship. The Creator loves the creature but gives the creature the choice not to reciprocate. The image of God was endowed with a personal will that makes authentic relationship possible. Original sin was not and is not (as we perpetuate it) the rejection of a rule but the rejection of the Ruler. Sin is distrusting that God has the best interest of humanity in mind and desiring to take control for the benefit of self and to gain significance (“be like God” [Gen. 3:5]). Nevertheless, the consequence was diminishment of self experienced as hiding from God (3:8), separation instead of intimacy (v. 16), and even discord with creation (v. 17). The repercussions are immediate because sin fractures family as seen in

Cain's murder of Abel (Gen. 4). God's regret (6:6) was not assuaged by a new beginning through flood, for Noah's family is no sooner on dry land than sin and relational breach reenter the story (Gen. 9:21-25). At its lowest point, depravity attempted to reach divine heights by human ingenuity at Babel (Gen. 11). Again and again the image of God longs to be "like God" though independent from God.

### **Salvation as Restored Relationship**

God's nature is love (1 John 4:16) and nothing diminishes God's desire for relationship. In the immediate aftermath of the broken commandment in Eden that brought relational brokenness, the Creator took the initiative and called to the man (Gen. 3:9). While the terms of the relationship may have changed, God kept the conversation going throughout generations and even established a missional people—a people blessed in order to be a blessing to all the earth (Gen. 12:2-3). Although Israel was faltering in its faith, the relationship was divinely sustained.

Finally, to make tangible the love of God, the Word became flesh (John 1:14) in Jesus. This incarnational work of God was intensely personal in as much as Jesus touched people at their most profound need. For those on the margins of society, he was known as a "friend of sinners" (Matt. 11:19); for the untouchables he was the hand of God (Matt. 8:2-3); for the sick he was the healer (Mark 1:34); for the demonized he was the deliverer (Luke 8:26-33); for the unguided he was the authoritative teacher (Mark 1:22); for the sinner he was a new beginning (Luke 7:36-50). Jesus' pivotal act was the sacrifice of himself on the cross, an act that removed all barriers between humanity and God (Luke 23:45) and established a new intimacy between people and God (John 15:13-14). The transformation is from those self-alienated from God (Luke 15:11-31) to those who can

call out to the Father as a child (Rom. 8:15) in a maturing relationship (Phil. 3:12-14).

### **Church as Eternal Relationship**

One part of Jesus' agenda was the continuation of his ministry through his disciples. This plan was evident early in his ministry as he began to call followers to join him (e.g., Mark 1:14-20) in forming a nascent community. The Gospels show the holism evident in Jesus' life in communion with God (Mark 1:35-37) and with others. His example, his teaching, and his commissioning of the disciples indicated his intention for unity in a divinely empowered partnership (John 17:23). Paul reiterates this intimacy with the image of Jesus' people as the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12), as a contemporary incarnation. Building on this notion, Francis Schaeffer recognized community as the "final apologetic" (Myers 32). Nevertheless, the church is not an end in itself with a church-centered self-interest. Instead, the church is provisional (Kraemer 127) and "genetically" missionary (Snyder and Runyon 49) in its outpouring love. The nature of the community of Christ becomes clear in examining four descriptive and influential terms associated with the church.

*Εκκλησία του Θεου*. While *ἐκκλησία* ("those called out") could be understood as a general term for a public (Acts 19:32) or political (Acts 19:39) assembly, *ἐκκλησία του Θεου*, "church of God," became a very early self-designation in Christian usage (e.g., 1 Thess. 2:14; 1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:13; Balz and Schneider 1: 411-12). The phrase was used in various ways: as a geographic location (1 Cor. 1:2), in addressing home churches (1 Cor. 16:9), for the general church (1 Cor. 4:7), and in expressing its teleological nature (Heb. 2:12 in relation to Heb. 12:23). Consistent among the references is the collective gist of the term. Christians are called together as the church by God and

instructed not to live isolated or individualistic lives.

*Βασιλεια του θεου*. The principal theme of Jesus' proclamation was the kingdom of God (Metzger and Coogan 408), both future (e.g., Luke 6:20) and present (e.g., Luke 11:20). This phrase is rooted in the Hebrew Bible's witness of God's sovereignty (e.g., Judg. 8:23; Ps 145:13; Isa. 52:7) not only over the elect but over all Creation. Again, here is a dominant theme connoting concord—all people united under the rule of God.

*Κοινωνια*. In the modern church, fellowship, understood as mere congenial acquaintances, has often been the defining characteristic of congregations; however, the Greek word-group has a much more profound sense of the "reciprocity of community relationships" (Balz and Schneider 2: 304) that encompasses "participation," "partner," and "to have a share." This word indicates bondedness with Trinity and other Christians through Jesus (1 John 1:3; 2 Pet. 1:4; 2 Cor. 13:13; Phil. 1:5; Acts 2:42).

*Ευαγγελιον*. In secular Greek *ευαγγελιον* referred to "news of victory" (Balz and Schneider 2: 70). Christians stretched the word very little to utilize it for the good news of the triumph of God's grace, power, and judgment (1 Cor. 15:1-2; 1 Thes. 1:5; Rom. 2:16). "News" infers proclamation and sharing. Such news casting is not only an inherently communal activity but it also redefines the group's boundaries when it is overheard.

In sum, the nature and mission of the church has always been described in relational terms that reflect God who has called the church into being.

### **A Biblical Precedent for Relational Evangelism Training**

In order for this project to coach people to be evangelists for Jesus, an examination of Jesus' coaching model is helpful. Luke and Acts clearly describe this model in Jesus' own work and in the early Church, as indicated by an exegesis of Luke 9:1-6. In Luke's telling of the Gospel, Jesus drew followers to himself, but he also sent them out in ministry. This gathering and dispersing is the great forethought and intention of Jesus to multiply his ministry "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). His objective was not to draw all he personally encountered to himself. His purpose was and is to continue his ministry far beyond human constraint through human means. An initial step in this bold mission is found in the ninth chapter of Luke, as the twelve are sent to conduct ministry as an extension of Jesus' own ministry (9:1-6).

Luke and Acts are significant for this project in light of the contemporary American church in which the prevailing word to outsiders is, "Come," rather than the insiders' commission to, "Go" (explicitly stated in Matt. 28:19 and implied in Acts 1:8). To reorient the church and make the necessary cultural shift, pastors and other church leaders are called to emulate the coaching strategy of Jesus. Teaching in the secure laboratory environment of the gathered church is not enough. The sent church must meet the challenge and experience the adventure of stepping out in faith with "power and authority" to establish life-transforming relationships.

#### **Context**

Luke is a "located" gospel and can be loosely outlined according to setting. Luke's account begins with God's preparations for Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem

(particularly the Temple), Nazareth, Bethlehem, the Jordan River, and the wilderness (1:1-4:13). The story then moves from ministry in Galilee and the surrounding regions (4:14-9:50) to ministry in Judea (9:51-13:21), Perea (13:22-19:27), and Jerusalem (including the Passion and resurrection). This movement continues through Acts, beginning in Jerusalem, then spreading through the Roman Empire, and is seen most notably in Paul's itinerary that ends in Rome, the capital, the heart of the "civilized" world. The inference is that Jesus' ministry is universally localized, meaning Jesus does not come to the world in general; Jesus comes to the world and to individuals personally. Relationships are valuable as the eternal end and also as the divine means of fulfilling the divine mission. "God does not send books to men; He sends messengers" (Kittel 3: 712). The gospel message is not abstract; rather, the good news is that God has come as a real person, able to transform the real evils of the world.

In order for the ministry of Jesus to continue and expand, Jesus people are required. This necessity is evidenced by the immediate context of the sending of the twelve (Luke 9:1-6). After their calling by Jesus (6:12-16), the apostles watched Jesus do all they were being commissioned to do. Followers also have been informed by the instruction of Jesus, such as through the parable of the sower (8:1-15)—an apt description of the mission Jesus' disciples undertake. Their return from the mission indicates that Jesus is getting them ready for greater opportunities. At once they are challenged to feed the crowds: "*You* [emphasis mine] give them something to eat" (9:13). As Luke continues his telling, Peter makes his confession of Christ, and Jesus announces the ultimate plan is suffering that leads to new life. This suffering is reiterated in the healing of the boy with an evil spirit (9:37-45, esp. v. 44). The shadow of death is then contrasted with the glory



of Jesus in the transfiguration on the mountain (9:28-36). After the discussion of true greatness (9:46-50), the twelve are ready to move out and begin the journey that will finally lead to Jerusalem. The narrative in Acts describes the manner in which the apostles' story carries them to the far reaches of the "world" as the ministry of Jesus reverberates through time and place.

The company of Jesus offers one last perspective to consider. His ministry is initiated as he is alone (Luke 4:14-44), even rejected in his home village; however, hints are given that at the same time people are beginning to admire him and gather around him. For instance, Simon is mentioned in an offhand manner that presumes a known identity (4:38), though the first actual mention of Simon by name does not come until chapter 5. Chapter 5 also provides the first indication that Jesus is traveling in Galilee as he starts his group with the four fishermen and adding others (5:11, 27). Jesus is seen with all of the apostles (6:12-16) along with other supporters (8:1-3). In the text under consideration, Jesus travels alone for a time, after sending out the twelve. Nevertheless, the twelve are drawn back together before the seventy-two are sent. Jesus is preparing his followers to be leaders and expand his ministry. Seen in this framework, Jesus' ministry was a time of preparation and equipping as the twelve began to discover the costs and profits of following Jesus. An essential element of Jesus' tutelage is the experiential component, or the fieldwork.

### **Commissioning**

Following the ultimate display of power—power over death (Luke 8:49-56)—witnessed by three of the apostles, Luke tells of a momentous gathering of the twelve. Luke uses the designation "the Twelve" to differentiate the apostles from the larger group

of regular followers who traveled with Jesus. In the previous chapter (8:1-3), the text introduces an extraordinary group of women. The women were extraordinary in that they were identified despite their gender and had the resources to provide for Jesus' band. Crowds gathered around this assembly. As Jesus' ministry expanded its geographical area, it also expanded its reputation and devotion. Out of the crowds Jesus appointed further agents (10:1-17).

Once Jesus called his followers together, "he gave them power and authority" (Luke 9:1). The verb *εδωκεν* is an unremarkable word with an ordinary meaning for an extraordinary gift: *δυναμιν και εξουσιαν*. *Δυναμι* is typically used in Luke and Acts for divine effect, from the conception work of the Holy Spirit in Mary (Luke 1:35), to the healing capacity of Jesus (e.g., Luke 5:17; 6:19), to the promise of Pentecost (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Green, McKnight, and Marshall). Interestingly, the word used by Luke for demonic power is *εξουσια* (22:53; Acts 8:19; 26:18), while in the present context that same word denotes "authority." The nature of power that was clear to the earliest witnesses is no less evident to the modern: The exercise of force is not neutral but instead can flow from God with healing grace or it can oppose God with destructive consequence. The pairing of the same two words, *δυναμιν* and *εξουσιαν*, though in reverse order, are used earlier as the crowd spoke with awe after Jesus cast out an unclean spirit (Luke 4:36). The text seems to imply that power regards potential or ability, while authority concerns the right to exercise it (Pfeiffer and Harrison 1043). In Matthew (10:1-7) and Mark (6:7-13) only authority is granted. Throughout Luke's account, power—particularly with reference to the Holy Spirit—plays an explicit role in the kingdom purposes of God, especially through the signs and wonders that mark its advent.

Noteworthy is the way power and authority was given. A quick study of the preceding chapters indicates the dynamism of Jesus' spoken words. For example, Luke states that Jesus has already "rebuked" (ἐπιτιμαω) demons (4:35, 41), sickness (4:39), and nature (8:24). These passages suggest that the word of God prevails and conveys power in and of itself. When Jesus speaks, he imparts the work of God. In this case, this impartation is not a permanent endowment but a temporary charge for a particular task (Gäbelein). Accordingly, the presence and grace of God is meted out according to capacity and need. The apostles would not receive a full measure of the Holy Spirit until Pentecost, after the Ascension. This outpouring is significant in elucidating that whatever is good and godly is fundamentally a work of God, not humans. This comprehension is the same humility suggested by the prophet Isaiah's imagery of the potter and clay (Isa. 64:8), in which the human vessel is shaped with distinct dimensions for the Potter's holy purpose (see also 2 Cor. 12:9). Therefore, divine (ultimate) power can be given and received, but not grabbed. Jesus was investing himself in the twelve according to their capacity to prepare for later ministry.

What Jesus has given is not pedestrian or natural, but instead the power and authority is the capability to "drive out all demons and to cure diseases" (Luke 9:1). This gift of Jesus is the furtherance of his mission. The first announcement of Jesus' ministry (4:14-30) was in his home synagogue on the Sabbath when he read the Servant Song of Isaiah (Isa. 61:1-2a), the proclamation of freedom in the kingdom of God. Jesus claimed that text by declaring his first public word, "today," and indicating his anointed vocation of preaching, healing, and liberating. His actions that fulfilled the assignment inspired amazement and hostility alike (amazement: Luke 4:22, 36; 5:15, 26; 7:16, 49; 8:25, 56;

hostility: 4:28-30; 5:21, 30, 33; 6:1-10; 7:36-50). The very things that Jesus had done, he empowered his disciples to do. Having watched him for some time and having learned from him, the disciples were made ready to participate. Just as Jesus had power and authority over demons and disease, so would they. Luke emphasizes “all” demons, making clear that the disciples are fully commissioned, yet this gifting was only a step in their training. The disciples’ later impotence when encountering an exceptionally insidious evil spirit (9:37-45) reinforced their need for more apprenticing.

Gathered and given, the twelve are sent, ἀπεστέλιν: the title apostle indicates the mission. As Jesus was sent (Luke 4:18), he sends (9:2, 10:2). The outward trajectory of Luke’s account makes this word one of his favorites. In Luke and Acts the word (ἀποστελλω, πέμπω, ἐξαποστελλω) is used seventy-one times (Whitaker and Kohlenberger 552-53), with the primary sense of being sent for a purpose (e.g., Acts 15:22) or sent with a message (e.g., Acts 28:28). Here both are intended, in that the purpose *is* the message.

The purpose of linking the preaching and healing connects the mission and message and thereby points to the power of Jesus’ word. The twelve were instructed to announce, κηρυσσεῖν, giving both a regal and a religious overtone. Behind the word is the image of a herald (Kittel 3: 697). The parallel here is εὐαγγελιζόμενοι (Luke 9:6), bringing good news. Using these words synonymously defines the potency of the apostles’ preaching as the proclamation makes known a new world order. Rome’s authority was expansive but it was not comprehensive, as is the kingdom of God. The superiority of the kingdom of God is conspicuous in the two books authored by Luke’s hand, where he utilizes kingdom terminology fifty-two times. Only four such references

are to earthly realms, while thirty-eight are explicitly “the kingdom of God.” The βασιλειαν is the place of the King’s reign. It is proclaimed; it is not established by force. Undeniably, such a kingdom redefines politics, making earthly thrones unstable and rendering national borders futile. This kingdom is like none other, in that the rules have all changed. The radical nature of the kingdom was told when Jesus began to ask, “What is the kingdom of God like?” (Luke 13:18-21; 15:1-32). The kingdom’s radical nature was exposed by the company Jesus kept and by the infiltration of his followers throughout the Roman Empire and beyond.

Before the apostles left, Jesus gave the apostles simple, yet profound instruction for their journey. They were to take nothing—not a staff, (though in Mark 6:8 allowance is made for a staff) a bag, bread, money, or an extra tunic. Unlike Mark 6:7, which indicates they are to go out by twos, Luke suggests they were not even to go out with each other. This undertaking was going to be a faith-testing, spirit-refining experience for the twelve; through this experiment, the twelve acquired a clearer sense of identity and vocation. The empty-handed and open-handed apostles represented Jesus in a localized way: “It is perhaps fitting that those who come with good news for the poor should be identified with the poor by being made vulnerable in this way” (Metzger, Hubbard, and Barker). The apparent neediness of the twelve who were sent to share the riches of the kingdom of God indicates the oddity of that realm. The work of the kingdom requires faith, the currency of the kingdom. As a result, Jesus spoke of self-denial and cross-bearing (Luke 9:23-25) and relief from all earthly burdens as the way of discipleship. This liberation is an expression of complete dependence on God, echoing the confidence of the psalmist: “Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the

righteous fall” (55:22). This confidence reinforces the fact that life-changing relationships with others are possible only through relationship with God.

The apostles totally relied on God’s work through the hospitality of the villagers. Without bread or money (*αργυριον*, silver), the twelve received only from the generosity of others. In an age of convenient travel, the notion of hospitality is odd. Except for traders, people found little reason to venture from their ancestral homes. Additionally, travel was dangerous, with robbers being a real possibility. Hospitality was extended to strangers in three steps: (1) the stranger was placed under protection of the host; (2) the stranger was considered a temporary guest; and, (3) the two would, hopefully, part friends (Pilch 110). The early Church was acutely aware of the obligation of hospitality to serve as conduits of God’s providential grace.<sup>1</sup> Not to extend hospitality was a violation of honor. Again, Jesus sent them on a mission for relationships through relationships.

Little is said of the actual journey of the apostles, only that they obeyed, conducted ministry throughout the region, and opened the gates of the kingdom. Nolland notes, “The Twelve heal everywhere that they preach” (Metzger, Hubbard, and Barker). Further, no mention is made of their success, possibly because they were taking their first step into ministry, with the goal of recognizing their potential rather than realizing their potential. In the next chapter (Luke 10:17-18), more emphasis is placed on their success as the scope of the mission and their experience is expanding. The focus is on their obedient beginning. In their response to Jesus, they discovered new depths of divine empowerment by disclosing who Jesus is and who they are called to be. “Revelation is

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<sup>1</sup> For provision through others see Numbers 18:31 (for Levites), 1 Corinthians 9:3-14 (for apostles); and for hospitality of others, Romans 12:13, Titus 1:8, Hebrews 13:1-2, 1 Peter 4:9 (Craddock 121).

the companion of experience and the by-product of obedience” (Culpepper 197). Luke interposes Herod’s confusion in the account, affirming R. Alan Culpepper’s premise. Herod did not comprehend because he did not recognize the kingdom of God and, therefore, did not respond in obedience to it.

Thus, the ministry of Jesus began to ripple as those who were sent returned, ready for the next step in their development. While this commissioning may not have been “purely pedagogic” (Nicoll 528), the narrative is clearly a noteworthy growth experience for the twelve.

### **Claims**

In the gospel according to Luke, Jesus has power and authority over all the earth, including diseases and demons. This power and authority is transferable and effective through Jesus’ word and through the work of the Holy Spirit. By this means Jesus’ ministry and the infiltration of the kingdom of God permeates and increases (13:18-21) like a seismic movement radiating from the epicenter. God acts through human agency and so must multiply those duly charged. To reach “all the nations” (24:47), Jesus must commission people for each locality. This commissioning is the motif of the early Church moving out from Jerusalem across the Roman Empire and beyond.

The scene of the twelve signals Jesus’ objectives being achieved through the delegation of his work. Jesus is historically located. His work, too, must also be located in individuals in specific places at specific times; therefore, Jesus calls those he sends and shares what has been given to him. This tactic provides for an enduring ministry reaching beyond his temporal life, making a way for “preaching the gospel and healing people *everywhere* [emphasis mine]” (Luke 9:6).

The previous passage demonstrates that the work is for the benefit of the entire world, not merely for the advantage of the sent. The weight of earthly matters is not to hold them back—neither transient possessions (Luke 9:3) nor ephemeral duties (9:57-62). Nothing can hold back Jesus' ministry. Even reluctant disciples will not stop the advance of the kingdom. They will either be renewed (as was Peter who became the first leader of the church) or replaced (as was Judas by Matthias).

A worship pattern emerges here: gathering around Jesus → learning from Jesus → going out for Jesus. Being with Jesus compels those committed to him to go out on his behalf. Nevertheless, this mission can happen only as those who are sent are equipped, empowered, and instructed. Jesus constantly prepares his disciples for bigger things, hence Luke's recount of the parable of the minas: "everyone who has, more will be given" (19:11-27). Growth of the spirit's capacity is the intent. Sending them out and then drawing them back to himself is the method Jesus employs in order to help his followers learn and observe so they can instruct and carry out the relationship-based work of the kingdom.

Indisputable for Luke is the power communicated through Jesus' words. By that word the devil is stilled and the demons are quieted. In Jesus and in the lives of those claimed by Jesus, word and deed are inseparable in sharing the good news. God does not use force but waits for hospitable welcome and the desire for relationship. Where that response occurs, the kingdom comes. Chrysostom captured this idea well:

Christ had the power to set the human race free from all these evils—not only the Romans but also the Persians and simply every race of barbarians. He succeeded in doing this with no force of arms, nor expenditure of money, nor by starting wars of conquest, nor by inflaming men to battle. He had only eleven men to start with, men who were undistinguished, without learning, ill-informed, destitute, poorly clad,



without weapons, or sandals, men who had but a single tunic to wear. (Just 149)

In a world dominated by domination, Jesus' vision of the kingdom of God is beyond revolutionary. Tombs open, the dead come to life, and nobodies become citizens of *the* kingdom by which all other kingdoms are measured. "This is Luke's vision for the transformative power of the church: it turns the world upside down not through armed revolution but through the formation of the church as a counter-culture, an alternative witness-bearing community" (Hays 128). That community is the church that bears the gospel in the witness of word and action.

### **Implications**

The text and Jesus' example both suggest the paramount importance of the ministry of equipping and empowering. Whether the grantor is political, sociological, organizational, or divine, all power is derivative. Power and authority granted to the leader is not to be held but released. Workers for the mission are multiplied by entering into the lives of others and investing themselves in others. Every coach acknowledges the importance of clear instruction. The goals are stated, but so are the methods, techniques, and habits necessary for triumph. Even people with rare natural talents must learn to channel their skills in order to maximize their abilities. Still, no player learns merely by listening. Teaching comes through instruction and example. The leader's desires for the team must be illustrated in order for the team to emulate them.

Jesus knew his disciples were not truly educated until they embodied the knowledge; therefore, Jesus sent them out to practice and train by exploring their abilities and possibilities. This preparation was conducted in the familiar surroundings of Galilee in order to maximize the twelve's development. Classroom athletes do not exist; a player

must emerge on the field of competition and hone skills in real action. A coach appreciates the need for engagement against a foe; however, a coach is well aware that such perilous encounters are helped by a home field advantage, relieving anxiety in a secure environment for risk taking.

At a set time, Jesus drew his apostles back together. This opportunity to reconnect was his genius, to teach by experimentation and then review. Witnessing was not a “sink or swim” proposition. He set them up for a victory that would bolster their confidence. Inevitably they would face opposition and even defeat in their future. What Jesus helped them discover, most emphatically on the cross, was that defeat is never final. They were in the process of growing into their responsibilities. Jesus would never leave them fumbling in their inadequate abilities. He had big plans for them; therefore, he had to cultivate assured, field-tested faith.

This project attempted to follow Jesus’ example as a coach. Computer software was developed to coach participants by providing the necessary information and training to prompt them to experiment with their own relational evangelism. The encouragement to develop relationships with familiar people was the home-field risk for participants to build up the courage to test their self-imposed limitations and reach out to strangers to convert them to friends and, by the grace of God, convert them to friends of Jesus. Foundational is the establishment and cultivation of grace-filled relationships in a world where relationships are commodified, treated as merely a means, not an end (thus counter to the kingdom of God). This assignment is accomplished in partnership—in relationship—with Jesus.

### **Historical Precedence of Relational Evangelism Practice**

Hendrik Kraemer's words still ring true: "In current usage 'lay' means: unqualified to speak or judge in various fields of knowledge and science. So it has acquired the notion of 'ignorant'" (49). He shows "lay" to be a Greco-Roman legacy the church has never been able to escape (50-52). Nevertheless, this diminution was not always so as the evangelization of the Roman Empire was primarily through "nobodies": "The expansion of the faith and of the Church in the first centuries mainly happened through the unrecorded witness of the ordinary membership, i.e. the laity, by their word and their way of life" (20).

The recorded witnesses, the authors of the gospel, were also laity who shared Jesus through their personality (as with all biblical writers) according to the needs of their particular audiences. Luke's preface (1:1-4) and John's conclusion (21:25) both indicate a carefully crafted historical narrative driven by the requirements of their recipients. These four are "somebodies" not because of their credentials but simply because they were recorded and preserved. Another indicator of "anonymous" evangelists is found in the numerous individuals identified by Paul in his letter to the church in Rome (Rom. 16:3-16)—a city he had never visited.

To be more particular to this project, Methodism was a lay-driven movement in its most vital days, reaching out to and utilizing "ordinary" Christians. John Wesley depended on lay preachers to maintain early societies (Norwood 35) as "he had an uncommon confidence in the common man and he was also careful to keep his preachers constantly on the move, so that local Methodists rarely took their self-images from any individual preacher, not even Mr. Wesley" (Outler 24). In America the lay power of

Methodism was obvious in the unauthorized church plantings in New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia (Norwood 65-69). Even circuit riders—the traveling preachers—depended on lay leadership—especially the local preacher who functioned during the long periods between visits by those appointed to oversee the churches on a circuit. The absence of an “expert” necessitated the church members to be personally involved in evangelism. Their relational networks brought radical expansion across the frontier. D. Michael Henderson notes that Methodism was more than a message; Methodism was an embodied lifestyle, requiring behavioral modifications. The distinguishing characteristic of the Methodists was “that many church leaders were telling people what they ought to do, but the Methodists were telling each other what they *were* [original emphasis] doing” (131-32). The specialization and professionalization of ministry and the atomism of society have diminished the passion and practice of relational evangelism at the time when relationships are most tenuous.

### **Postmodernism and the Need for Relational Evangelism**

In recent decades the Church has suffered no shortage of resources aimed at reigniting the passion and skills for evangelism. Rick Richardson’s work is an example of a more classical, though contemporary, approach to evangelism as it describes four steps in the process of salvation: soul awakening, community, conversion, transformation (54-55). In addition, the typical church polity structurally separates evangelism, discipleship, and missions—separating love spoken, love nurtured, and love enacted. The focus has been “churching the unchurched, not connecting people to Jesus” (McNeal 9). While valid criticism can be raised that the results have tended to be formulaic church growth, the perception must be tempered by the fact that Jesus founded the Church and is still

found in and through the Church. Nevertheless, in this transitional era—christened postmodernism—evangelism is described in terms that are far too linear in thought and practice, communicating a gospel of institutional survival, as Reggie McNeal sounds the alarm that many “are leaving the church to preserve their faith” (4) because “the North American church culture is not spiritual enough to reach our culture” (27). Such sentiment has moved McLaren to reconsider how Christians look at non-Christians:

Sometimes I wonder if we would be wiser to apply the term “lost” to ourselves. After all, if you send a letter to someone and it never arrives, you say the letter is lost. Similarly, God has sent us into the world as ambassadors and agents of God’s love, and yet many of us have never really arrived at our destination. So, in that light, who is lost—them or us? (More Ready Than You Realize 58)

Postmodernism offers legitimate critique and the possibility for reappropriating evangelism.

Innovation is a continual process as “the church is always bicultural, conversant in the language and customs of the surrounding culture and living toward the language and ethics of the gospel” (Guder et al. 114). Insights such as Albert C. Outler’s are too easily taken for granted:

Evangelism’s secret of success has always lain in its vivid awareness of the actual sense of human existence in the current age, whenever that was, in its ability to translate the eternal verities of the perennial gospel into new idioms for new generations. (58)

The idiom of this present era is characterized by the Internet, “the epitome of speaking to the individual” (Slaughter and Bird 39), personalizing the messages communicated, even when those messages are addressed to a multitude. Therefore, the church must shift its thinking about evangelism “from an act of recruiting or co-opting those outside the church to an invitation of companionship” (Guder et al. 97). The operative word for postmoderns is “relationship.” Clearly, they are put off by church buildings, lectures, and

organizations (Poe 34), favoring personal involvement, acceptance, and a search for wholeness (27). Instead of rejecting “the biblical meaning of absolute truth ... as an intellectual concept”—an “it,” they want to be embraced by the Truth who is “a ‘he’ whose name is Jesus” (25).

Many useful analyses are available, but Kallenberg is helpful in condensing the contrast between modernity and postmodernity. He cites the three doctrines of modern philosophy: generic individualism (community is the sum of the individual members); representationalism (language is a neutral depiction of the world); and, propositionalism (beliefs are only assertions about the way things really are; 16). These doctrines are countered by postmodern concepts: metaphysical holism (humans are socially constituted beings); linguistic holism (humans are social beings whose language constitutes and shapes the world); and, epistemological holism (human beliefs about the world form a communal paradigm; 29). The good news is that the gospel can reach those people who are comfortable with ambiguity in their search for meaning. These people are characterized by perceiving the sacred in what is common, comprehending the power of one while recognizing that no one is isolated, assuming everything is connected and united by brokenness (symbolized by the cross), and that redemption is about loving and serving (McNeal 56-59).

While a genuine hunger for truth is evident, truth is understood to be a communal reality measured by the freedom of authenticity (rather than being guarded)—a safe place to be “me” (Scazzero 41-42). After all, “people who pretend have pretend relationships. But being real is a synonym for messy spirituality, because when we are real, our messiness is there for everyone to see” (Yaconelli 27). Disconcerting to the modern

mind-set is the vulnerability and uncertainty of such an approach: sharing without systematic discourse or the obligation of proving and justifying. The search for truth is more like exploring new horizons rather than analyzing known quantities. McLaren's trilogy (A New Kind of Christian; The Story We Find Ourselves In; The Final Word and the Word After That) best exemplifies a conversion conversation, even as the story form exemplifies the preferred postmodern teaching method. The main characters model friendship by being real, honest, and forgiving as they join in the journey of truth. They enjoy a sincere friendship as a nonhierarchical relationship (Werking 17)—a relationship of “equals.” An incisive comment by Neo, the mentor, illustrates:

I would say to stop counting conversions, because our whole approach to conversion is so, I don't know, mechanistic and consumeristic and individualistic and controlling. Instead, I'd encourage us to count conversations, because conversation implies real relationship, and if we make our goal to establish relationships and engage in authentic conversations, I know that conversions will happen. (qtd. in McClaren, New Kind 108-09)

What postmoderns advance are their salvation stories in light of the biblical witness of God's story, affirming that “evangelism is the practice of out-narrating the world by telling a much better story” (Sweet, Out of the Question 85). This relational power of the gospel is the power of Christian community (or, as early Methodists would phrase it, “conferencing” [Ruth 257]), which Francis Schaeffer went as far as to claim “is the final apologetic” (qtd. in Myers 32). In other words, an understanding people of God implies an understanding God (Hunter, Celtic Way 20). A subtle, but significant paradigm shift is happening as people seek a surrogate community that becomes their family; however, “you do not shop for family. You date to find family” (Myers 130). Family indicates a level of intimacy and commitment that has not always been demanded by the modern church. Table 2.1 is Dan Kimball's excellent summary of the changes at hand. The

challenge is being equipped to address the present age.

**Table 2.1. Shifting Values in Approach to Evangelism**

<b>Modern Church</b>	<b>Emerging Church</b>
Evangelism is an event to which you invite people.	Evangelism is a process that occurs through relationship, trust, and example.
Evangelism is primarily concerned with getting people into heaven.	Evangelism is concerned with people's experiencing the reality of living under the reign of his kingdom now.
Evangelism is focused on pre-Christians.	Evangelism is focused on post-Christians.
Evangelism is done by evangelists.	Evangelism is done by disciples.
Evangelism is something you do in addition to discipleship.	Evangelism is part of being a disciple.
Evangelism is a message.	Evangelism is a conversation.
Evangelism uses reason and proofs for apologetics.	Evangelism uses the church being the church as the primary apologetic.
Missions is a department of the church.	The church is a mission.

Source: Kimball 281

### **A Critical Evaluation of Sample Training Programs**

While “a cookie-cutter approach to evangelism is doomed” (Peel and Larimore 25), this criticism does not mitigate the need for evangelistic skill development in the church. Encouraging is a survey of the multitude of evangelism training programs presently marketed. Each one offers helpful information and clues for effective sharing of the Christian message and appeals to the diverse theological perspectives of adherents.

Many years ago H. Eddie Fox and George E. Morris identified three categories of evangelistic methods. The first was simple information transmission, which sought to



impart the necessary information to secure mental assent. The second approach was manipulative monologue, described as a sales approach that uses emotional appeal or a series of questions to which “yes” is the only answer. The final method they endorsed was a non-manipulative dialogue that used no “canned approach,” only a sharing relationship (79). According to their data, a 75 percent rejection rate was realized by information transmission. While manipulative monologue enjoyed an 81 percent acceptance rate, 85 percent of those would become inactive within a year. When the non-manipulative approach was used 99 percent would eventually say “yes” and 96 percent of them would stay active within the life of the church (80). Most evangelism programs available today tend to be most comparable to the non-manipulative method, but all are nuanced beyond such a simple classification and require a more detailed examination.

To understand the available resources, a sample of evangelism training programs was reviewed. A comprehensive evaluation is beyond the scope of this project. The five programs selected were Evangelism Explosion (Kennedy), Share Jesus without Fear (Fay and Shepherd), Caring Evangelism (Stephen Ministries), Becoming a Contagious Christian (Hybels and Mittelberg), and Witness (Crandall). They were chosen because of their wide distribution, popularity, recommendations, and sundry theological underpinnings. The authors of these programs represent various faith traditions: Presbyterian, Southern Baptist, mainline Protestant, Reformed, and United Methodist.

Ten factors for analysis were applied. The first two considered the time obligations required for the training, including both the number of sessions and the length of those sessions. These factors may seem superficial, not appropriately “spiritual,” but stewardship of time is highly significant, especially in this overscheduled, instant-results

culture. The next factor concerned the theological rationale for evangelism that defined the program. No value judgment of “rightness” is imposed on this factor as different emphases impel different people. The fourth factor looked at the approach, how contact was made. Many ways of presenting the gospel may be employed: street preaching, on-street confrontations, on television and other media, through crusades, and in concerts and events. In the five programs evaluated, the approaches fell into two categories: lifestyle (making evangelism a part of day-to-day conversations and actions) and visitation (whether “cold-calling” door-to-door or taking the initiative to call on a known “prospect”). Another factor was the instruction method for modeling evangelism—how participants practice witnessing. Related to the modeling was the sixth factor, the kind of assignments required outside the classroom setting. The seventh factor studied how evangelists are to develop relationships with unchurched people. The last three factors addressed the act of communicating the gospel. Factor eight considered the format of the gospel presentation. Programs may teach a concise, structured presentation of the gospel or encourage particular biblical illustrations to get the message across. Other programs offer no explicit patterns. Along with the gospel format is the ninth factor, how the individual is to draw in his or her own life’s story of transformation through Jesus. The intention of all evangelistic efforts is a commitment to follow Jesus as a disciple. The final factor considered is the motivation for the conversion because it shapes how the message of salvation is conveyed.

Table 2.2 provides a summary of my detailed analysis of sample evangelism training programs. The analysis is ordered based on the chronology of the development of the programs.

**Table 2.2. Evangelism Program Factors**

		<b>Caring Evangelism</b>	<b>Contagious Christian</b>	<b>Evangelism Explosion</b>	<b>Share Jesus</b>	<b>Witness</b>
Number sessions	of	16	8	16	4	25
Length sessions	of	1 hour	1 hour	45 minutes + “OJT”	1 hour	1-1½ hour
Theological rationale		God meets people at their needs	People matter to God	Great Commission obedience	Sin of silence/obedience	Grace/Love
Approach		Lifestyle	Lifestyle	Visitation	Lifestyle	Lifestyle
Instruction/Modeling		Skill practice	Video & role-play	Personal/mentoring	Video & role-play	Video & role-play
Homework		Reading & workbook	Workbook	Exercises/learning outline	Workbook	Journal
Relationship-building techniques		Other centered	Barbeque first	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal
Gospel models or illustrations		No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Personal story		Personal experiences	Direct/indirect/invitational	Personal or church	Not utilized	Auto-biography/bridge/confession
Primary conversion motivator		Powerlessness that needs a Savior	Forgiveness/relationship with God	Forgiveness/adoption/eternal life	Forgiveness	Holistic/relationship with God

### **Evangelism Explosion**

Of the five evangelism programs, Evangelism Explosion (EE) is the oldest. EE was developed at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. D. James Kennedy was committed to the church being obedient to the Great Commission, eternal life being the focus. To that end he notes that “the missing link of modern evangelistic training, which was so thoroughly provided by Christ, is ‘on-the-job’ training” (5). He conceived a visitation program in which individuals would be personally invited to join in sixteen sessions that incorporated three types of training: classroom instruction,

homework assignments, and on-the-job training with mentoring in actual witnessing experiences. The intention was to teach a method to present the gospel “logically and interestingly” (9) through an outline of the essentials of the gospel, Scripture verses, and illustrations (12).

Kennedy identifies and applies the “five great laws of selling or persuading” utilized by Jesus: attention, interest, desire, conviction, and the close (46). The evangelists he trains learn a rote outline of the gospel and personalize it with a three-minute presentation of their own story. The program also provides them with engaging illustrations and equips them to meet common objections and frequent questions.

Evangelists are then sent out in groups of three, one of whom is a mentor who models the process and subsequently gives feedback after the other evangelists take turns. The “prospects” for a visit are drawn from church visitors, relatives and friends, parents of children in Sunday school, new residents, or those who responded to a religious questionnaire (Kennedy 10-11). For an in-home visit, the approach includes standardized steps:

1. An introduction utilizing a series of questions to connect with the person moving toward two diagnostic questions regarding entrance into heaven;
2. The gospel presentation that addressed: grace, humankind, God, Jesus Christ, and faith;
3. A call to commitment; and,
4. Follow-up.

To his credit, Kennedy is clear that any faith sharing is a “trilogy,” a discussion with the person, the evangelist, and the Holy Spirit (45) that leads the listener to realize his or her

need for forgiveness and adoption by God for eternity. Report-back sessions follow the visitations to share the victories and the challenges.

Clarity of both structure and message is the obvious strength of EE. Especially for those who feel inadequate for the task, such basics are helpful. Another asset are the mentors and the continued support provided. The extended training period may also be assessed positively, requiring genuine commitment by the participant and enough participation to make evangelism a habit. It encourages lifestyle evangelism, prompting the evangelist to look for opportunities in all relationships; however, the negative side is that the on-the-job training is typically (door-to-door) based on a shallow relationship, with minimal training in furthering that relationship. Certainly, the individual will form relationships within the church, but an intentional effort for the evangelist to introduce the church to that individual should receive greater emphasis. Furthermore, pre-evangelism relationship-building skills are not taught.

### **Caring Evangelism**

William J. McKay is a primary mover behind Stephen Ministries' ChristCare Series who led the team that developed the program Caring Evangelism: How to Live and Share Christ's Love (CE) and authored the companion book Me, an Evangelist? The program is designed as a sixteen-hour course built on the premise that God meets people at their needs. With this commitment to being other centered, evangelists are taken through the sessions including instruction, skill practice, and development. In between sessions are workbook requirements and reading assignments.

CE bases its approach on the understanding that people come to believe in Jesus and continue to grow in faith in Jesus through a cycle:

1. God reaches out to us,
2. We experience failure of our false gods,
3. We admit our powerlessness, our need for a Savior,
4. We receive and believe in Jesus,
5. We grow in Christian community, and
6. We serve God and people. (McKay 28)

The image of a cycle is used because conversion is not a terminal point as much as a launching point. A relationship with Jesus is the intent of the evangelistic effort; however, this relationship is not prescribed or proscribed by cliché responses. CE's focus is keeping Christ at the center. The evangelists are guides who accompany others, utilize the skills of building relationships, listen, witness, and pray (35).

CE is, by its very nature, a process-oriented lifestyle approach, focusing on relationships rather than predetermined results. Table 2.3 summarizes the differences between the two foci, though arguably, a false dichotomy. Evangelism, by definition, is seeking a result. The dichotomy is more corrective than descriptive. In this relational orientation, the evangelists listen for the "God-sized questions" people are asking, ranging from issues such as identity, meaning, guilt, aging, broken relationships, death, or the many other existential concerns of life (McKay 118-19). These concerns are the "tender" places that expose the profound need for salvation. The diversity of needs suggests no single model presentation of the gospel can be taught. Instead, experiential, personal incidents are stressed that will immediately connect with the other person.

**Table 2.3. Contrasting Results-Oriented Evangelism and Process-Oriented Evangelism**

<b>Results-Oriented Evangelists</b>	<b>Process-Oriented Evangelists</b>
try to do for others what only God can do.	concentrate on what they themselves can do and leave the rest to God.
try to solve others' problems and impose "cures" on them.	concentrate on caring for others.
try to make decisions for others and decide what is best for them, which fosters dependency.	help others see their own needs and find their own solutions, which helps people relate to God independently of the evangelist's control.
use evangelizing to satisfy their own needs to feel successful, important, justified, or in control, which is self-centered.	focus their evangelizing on understanding and meeting the needs of others, which is other centered.
try to control the behavior of others.	try to control their own behavior.

Source: McKay 43.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes, "God will be constantly crossing our paths and canceling our plans by sending us people with claims and petitions" (99). Where other programs can be misconstrued as message focused, CE is superior in its relationship focus, refusing to objectify people. Evangelism is an intensely personal endeavor. People typically seek help only where they feel inadequate. CE looks for those avenues of need that Jesus can address and seeks to move the individual toward wholeness. The format is easily understood and unmistakably grace-filled, recognizing the effort as God's work and not about "me." This posture is most popularly reflected in Steve Sjorgren's effective "servant evangelism" (Sjorgren, Ping, and Pollock).

Two aspects of CE could be strengthened, however. First, insufficient training is offered on how to initiate relationships. A relational program such as CE cannot assume everyone has the foundational skill set necessary for relationship forming. Second, the

materials miss the opportunity to make use of visual media via television or computer. Due to its relational nature, the media would be effective for modeling. Still, in an age of so many communication tools and the recognition of diverse learning styles, more modes could be employed without compromising the integrity of CE.

### **Becoming a Contagious Christian**

Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg developed Becoming a Contagious Christian (CC) at Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois. Building on their conviction that “people matter to God,” Hybels and Mittelberg developed an uncomplicated formula: High Potency + Close Proximity + Clear Communication = Maximum Impact (47). Maximum Impact is realized when the lives of others are being transformed through the evangelist. This impact depends on three factors. First, evangelists must embody Christian character with a high potency that cannot be ignored. This potency has effect only if the evangelist enjoys the close proximity of friendships and kinship. Proximity indicates relational nearness rather than physical placement. Nevertheless, the good news must be shared in order to be received, and it cannot be received except through clear communication. While the formula is simple, to be impactful evangelists will pay a price as they invest time, energy, reading, study, and money, complicate their lives, and risk embarrassment, rejection, or persecution (36-38). With that caveat, this lifestyle evangelism training is taught in eight, one-hour sessions that strongly encourage role-playing based on video modeling. Additional exercises can be found in the participant’s workbook.

CC encourages evangelists to reach out to three groups: “people you know, people you used to know, and people you’d like to know” (Hybels and Mittelberg 108).



To build rapport, opening the relationship for gospel moments, CC promotes “barbeque first,” intentionally earning credibility as a friend. The principles for this evangelism are praying hard, talking to people individually, piquing curiosity, relying on reciprocal reflexes (asking about others’ interests or beliefs because they will answer and then reciprocate), seizing split-second opportunities, and not underestimating others’ degree of interest (146-47). Accordingly, evangelists use whatever personal style reflects their personality, whether it be confrontational, intellectual, testimonial, interpersonal, invitational, or service oriented (122-31). Regardless of style, the purpose of the evangelistic encounter is to follow a simple gospel outline, sharing the truth about “God,” “us,” “Christ,” and “you.” When those faith-sharing opportunities arise, evangelists will start the spiritual conversation with an appropriate method, whether direct, indirect, or simply an invitation to an event where the gospel will be lifted up (138-46). Interestingly, as contemporary as CC seeks to be, the language of conversion is centered on the traditional topics of forgiveness and a relationship with God.

CC is commendable for its call to a life of authenticity (Hybels and Mittelberg 56). Integrity in the messenger as well as the message are essential for a believable witness. Another strength is CC’s insistence on having irreligious friends. Christians easily isolate themselves socially by filling their calendar with good church events but limiting evangelistic opportunities. As McManus states, “You cannot wash the feet of a dirty world if you refuse to touch it” (23). A redeeming touch is necessary and transforming. “People matter to God,” but they discover that truth by knowing they matter to God’s people. Indeed, “uncaring Christianity does attract” (Hybels and Mittelberg 67). A final positive in CC is allowing different evangelistic styles to be

acceptable. While the content of the good news is universally good, no universally good means of communicating the good news can be circumscribed. Therefore, “unconventional approaches that strategically mix the spiritual haves and have-nots are not merely acceptable, they are essential to God’s redemptive efforts” (107).

The model encounters portrayed by CC make evangelism look easy; however, individuals who are “relationally challenged” may be intimidated by the vignettes. Instead of relieving fear, the ideal conversations may magnify the very shortcomings a program such as CC should help overcome. Building relationships is the core of CC: “It is vital that we help all the people in our churches build authentic, no-strings-attached friendships with the people around them” (Hybels and Mittelberg 70), yet friendship skills development is minimal in CC.

### **Share Jesus without Fear**

Share Jesus without Fear (SJ) is a Southern Baptist-sanctioned curriculum authored by William Fay and Ralph Hodge. While affirming that the Great Commission inspires the effort, it is coupled with the guilt-driven question, “Peter denied Jesus three times. How about you?” (Share Jesus: Leader’s Guide Cel 2). The great evangelistic sin is silence and the highest virtue obedience. Those who participate are taken through four group sessions lasting one hour each. In preparation for the gatherings, homework assignments are completed, as are daily readings and responses in the workbooks. In the meetings overheads and videotapes supplement the interaction.

Evangelists are taught that success in witnessing is living out the Christian life, sharing the gospel, and trusting God for the results (Share Jesus: Leader’s Guide Cel 3). Nevertheless, sharing the gospel has become more the exception than the rule, usually

because of common fears: being rejected, feeling inadequate because of a lack of knowledge, offending a friend or relative, or being ridiculed or persecuted (Share Jesus: Workbook 46-48). To counter those fears, SJ alliterates passion for God, prayer to God, partnership with God, power of God, and preparation in God (9).

The actual technique promotes a personal testimony that is clear and down-to-earth through a straight-forward, three step process:

1. Ask five questions to determine a person's spiritual condition:
  - Do you have any kind of spiritual belief?
  - To you, who is Jesus?
  - Do you think there is a heaven and a hell?
  - If you died right now, where would you go?
  - If what you believe were not true, would you want to know it?
2. Share seven verses to let the Bible speak:
  - Romans 3:23
  - Romans 6:23
  - John 3:3
  - John 14:6
  - Romans 10:9-11
  - 2 Corinthians 5:15
  - Revelation 3:20
3. Ask five questions to lead to the point of decision:
  - Are you a sinner?
  - Do you want forgiveness for your sins?
  - Do you believe Jesus died on the cross for you and rose again?
  - Are you willing to surrender your life to Christ?
  - Are you ready to invite Jesus into your life and into your heart?
 (Share Jesus: Leader's Guide Cels 5, 6, 8, 11)

A favorable response to the presentation is to be followed by a prayer with the individual confessing the desire to follow Jesus (commonly called the "sinner's prayer"). On the other hand, a negative reaction prompts the evangelist to ask why.

The best thing about SJ is its simplicity, equipping participants with easily remembered steps. When the questions and relevant Bible verses are supplied, anxiety about fumbling for words is relieved. Because fear is seen as a primary obstacle to

evangelism, such a mechanical approach is welcomed by many, realizing that sharing the gospel is something anyone is capable of doing. On the negative side, SJ may be perceived as far too perfunctory, confining self-expression and being ill-prepared for the contingencies of life. This drawback is exacerbated by the short training period. Another deficiency is that the teaching materials themselves seem anachronistic, by anticipating the use of overheads rather than providing computer-friendly media.

Two points of potential confusion must also be noted. First, SJ does not explicitly put forward lifestyle evangelism. Instead, its definition of success assumes as much. Statistics suggest the assumption can no longer be made; lifestyle evangelism must be unambiguously promoted. Interestingly, the companion book offers a corrective with a chapter discussing how to make and keep friendships with non-Christians (Fay and Shepherd 113-27), but the training materials have not been updated to reflect those helpful insights. Second, the climax of the evangelistic encounter is a stock sinner's prayer that is written on a tear out card in the workbook the evangelist can carry. No Christian should cast aspersions on the practice of praying such a prayer as a means for people to mark their new life with Jesus; nevertheless, a standardized response implies a regulatory transaction rather than an expression of freedom and new life. Such a prayer is not biblical though it has become common, if not orthodox. SJ affirms "trusting God with the results" (Share Jesus: Workbook 7) but insinuates that God cannot be trusted with inspiring the resulting response.

### **Witness**

Witness: Exploring and Sharing Your Christian Faith (W) is a United Methodist resource commissioned by the Foundation for Evangelism and the General Board of

Discipleship and authored by Ronald K. Crandall. W is the most extensive of the programs, requiring twenty-five group sessions, each 1½ hours long. These meetings are supplemented by a workbook and daily journaling. Learning is directed by video and reinforced through role-playing with participants held accountable by means of the communal setting. The theological foundation of W is the grace and love of God through Christ, encouraging conversion that enters into a relationship with God and a holistic discipleship. Evangelists present the basic elements of God's story by including God's purpose, our problem, God's provision, and our response (136-37). God's story can then be further illustrated through some common witnessing models (138-39). When eternal life is discussed, it is focused on quality of life, not mere quantity, for "eternal life is God's life" (16).

"True Christian witness flows from a contagious relationship with Christ" (Crandall 118). The program is designed around that disciple-making relationship. Crandall defines discipleship as "another way of talking about all the purposes of God for humanity rolled up into one image" (99). He identifies the marks of discipleship as love—serving; word—growing through Bible study, prayer, and public worship; cross—obediently living by kingdom priorities; and, fruit—evangelistically producing quantity and quality disciples (100-03). This discipleship is reflected in the "adventure" of the study that is built around a hiking motif along five "trails":

Trail 1: What is God's purpose in the world, and how can I be part of it?

Trail 2: Who is Jesus Christ, and how can I know him?

Trail 3: Who is the Holy Spirit, and how can I experience the Spirit's presence in my life?

Trail 4: What is the nature and purpose of Christ's church, and how can I contribute to its work?

Trail 5: Who am I as a Christian witness, and how is God calling me to respond?  
(7)

This motif moves W beyond mere evangelism training.

One of the distinctives of W is teaching three approaches to telling a personal story that helps the unchurched understand salvation. First, evangelists share their autobiography, telling about life before following Jesus, the divine encounter with Jesus, and what difference it made. A second approach is to build a bridge to the other person by focusing on one facet of the autobiography that connects with circumstances in the other person's life. Third, the personal story comes through confession, revealing one's own sin or shortcomings to show how God was present and transformed the evangelist (Crandall 132-33).

W is best described as catechetical. It seeks to be biblically and theologically grounded as it cultivates both spiritual disciplines and faith sharing. The most positive aspect of W is its length of commitment that infuses evangelism into lifestyle. For some the time commitment is also its greatest shortcoming, scaring some with such high expectations. Finally, as is common, the relational skills training is minimal.

### **Summary**

In reviewing the literature for this project, I wanted to discover what elements should be included in any effective training and what is lacking in existing evangelism training programs. The latter is addressed in the subsequent sections. This summary draws together the principles gained from the analysis:

- Evangelism training must be clear about the underlying theology for evangelism, including the motivation for conversion.
- Evangelism requires unchurched/irreligious friends.
- Evangelism must be seen as a life shared, not as a program implemented.
- Evangelism is inherently relational and intensely personal, touching others at their most profound needs.
- Daily reminders and journaling can be an effective means for instilling the habits of an evangelist.
- Time is necessary to develop the habits of an evangelist.
- Habits form by actual practice, not simply through study.
- Providing some basic outlines, words, and gospel models can be helpful if they allow for individuality.
- Evangelists must never express themselves as salespeople; evangelists are authentic and genuinely care about others.
- Conversion is not terminal; conversion is initiation into a whole new life that will include faith sharing.

### **The Missing Component: Initiating Relationships**

In reviewing the selected evangelism training programs, participants were consistently provided limited training in relational skills. This fault is problematic for an endeavor that is relational in its message and the delivery of that message, flowing “best through the establishing of significant relationships that are authentic and healthy” (McManus 15). Evangelism is not offered to people in general but to individuals—where evangelists care enough “to walk across the room for one” (Hybels, “Building a

Church”). As Joe Aldrich notes, “One million people become zero” (16). Evangelism must be less focused on drawing crowds and more intentionally address individuals.

If “friendship is the springboard to every other love” (McGinnis 9), McLaren is helpful by using the term “spiritual friends” to refer to the evangelist’s call. He identifies eight spiritual friendship factors to consider:

1. The Relational Factor: counting conversations, not just conversions;
2. The Narrative Factor: instead of merely passing on propositions or formulas, listening to the other’s story, sharing one’s own story, and sharing God’s story;
3. The Communal Factor: expecting conversion to occur normally in the context of authentic Christian community, not just in the context of information;
4. The Journey Factor: seeing disciple making as a holistic process and unending journey, not just a conversion event;
5. The Holy Spirit Factor: believing that God is at work “out there” in everyone (either working from the outside to get in or from the inside to get out), not just “in here” in the church;
6. The Learning Factor: seeing evangelism as part of each Christian’s discipleship;
7. The Missional Factor: seeing evangelism as recruiting people for God’s mission on earth, not just people for heaven; and,
8. The Service Factor: seeing evangelism as one facet of the Church’s identity as servants to all (More Ready Than You Realize 134-43).

While these factors are necessary, initiating and achieving friendship is not “natural” for everyone. Beverly Fehr points to the paradox that “everyone knows what friendship is—



until asked to define it. Then, it seems, no one knows” (5). While defying a narrow definition, the common threads among experts and laypersons describing these voluntary, personal relationships include intimacy, assistance, trust, loyalty, and self-disclosure (20). To this lack of clarity Fehr adds further factors involved in friendship formation: environmental factors (residential proximity, workplace and other social settings, and social networks), individual factors (exclusion and inclusion criteria that include physical attractiveness, social skills, responsiveness, shyness, and similarity), situational factors (probability of future interaction, frequency of exposure, outcome dependency, and availability), and dyadic factors (reciprocity of liking, self-disclosure). Added to these factors is the cultural context that includes changing, fractured, and dislocated families (Yager 7-8).

Of special mention are those who are introverted or shy. Research shows this disposition affects a significant number, about 15 percent of the population (Robinson 83). These individuals do not need friendships less nor should they be expected to change who they are, but they may need to work on their patterns of relating to others (McGinnis 13-14). With regards to evangelism, they are challenged at their greatest vulnerabilities as shyness tends to be related to lack of self-esteem and fear of rejection, assuming others will judge them harshly (Robinson 87).

Brehony is explicit in suggesting intentionality in friendships, including the identification of short and long-term goals. The action items recommended are necessary, though prosaic:

- Identifying how time is used;
- Analyzing behavior with regard to priorities, affirming the core values being

sought in friendships;

- Developing an action plan, scheduling immediate actions for short-term goals;
- Implementing the plan;
- Reevaluating use of time (226-36).

Ironically, this approach sounds emotionally detached and requires supplementation that trains for various conversation styles (Gabor 139-51) adapted for the different levels (Brehony 150) and types of friendships (Robinson 17-25), with specific traits for making and keeping friendships strong (Yager 105-26).

One final perspective on the issue of developing evangelistic friendships is Rainer's scale for categorizing the unchurched according to faith stages. His data shows the distribution of the responses as antagonistic (5 percent), resistant (21 percent), neutral (36 percent), friendly (27 percent), and very friendly (11 percent). This data equips the evangelist with reasonable expectations and appropriate ways to help individuals move to the next stage—in a “Christ-ward direction” (Bowen 83). The evangelist continues the relationship as an authentic conversation that encourages friends to exercise whatever faith they have (McLaren and Campolo 95-98), with the evangelist looking for “milestones” on a journey rather than “conversion events” only (McLaren, More Ready Than You Realize 110). No longer should Christians merely ask, “How can we persuade them that it's true?” The emerging question is, “How can we make them want to know more?” (Tomlin 13).

Clearly, relationships are complicated even if they are not studied. Every evangelist can further these skills. This project was conceived to equip evangelists better in this specific area.

### **The Missing Format: Computer-Delivered Instruction**

The format for the evangelism training programs was relatively consistent: group study, approximately one-hour sessions, instruction or modeling via either personal presentation or video, skill practice or role-play, and workbooks or journaling. These features are not bad, having been proven very effective by groups and congregations. At issue here is the need to address various learning styles, different levels of emotional intelligence, and the need to take advantage of advanced technologies. The only alternative to the existing programs is to purchase a kit or, at least, the accompanying book and conduct an independent study. This project explored using technology to deliver a more engaging product.

Conveying the work of Howard Gardner with accessible language, Thomas Armstrong names “seven kinds of smart”: word smart (linguistic), picture smart (spatial), music smart, body smart (bodily-kinesthetic), logic smart (logical-mathematical), people smart (interpersonal), and self-smart (intrapersonal; 9-11). To these multiple intelligences he also adds nature smart (naturalist) and existence smart (existential; 224-39). Each person tends to be more developed in one or two types of intelligences, though everyone possesses all seven to varying degrees (11). Most of the traditional approaches to evangelism focus on the coherence (words) and consistency (logic) of the message with a limited dose of some other intelligences. For example, EE’s on-the-job training aids the body element, while CE aids the interpersonal. W offers more intrapersonal reflection and, with the role-playing, some bodily-kinesthetic engagement. By limiting the approaches, the appeal to potential evangelists is restricted. This program also fails to equip the evangelists to use various avenues of communicating to the intelligences.

Computers, with their video and graphics capabilities, can offer interactive instruction that connects with a computer-driven world that must rediscover the relational world.

Associated with multiple intelligences has been the advent of (or, at least, the recognition of) emotional intelligence. Four dimensions of emotional intelligence are defined: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee 39). The communal nature of being human requires development of one's ability to interact and respond to others. Melvin D. Levine expands the point of social behavior by including

- Conflict resolution—the ability to resolve conflicts with other people without resorting to aggression;
- Monitoring—self-awareness while relating to or interacting with someone;
- Self-marketing and image development—the ability to maintain a good public image and sell oneself to others appropriately;
- Collaboration—the ability to cooperate and work with others as a partnership or team effort; and,
- Reading and acting on social information—the ability to interpret social incidents, people's actions, and gestures and to comprehend concepts such as friendship (237).

These characteristics are essential for the evangelist; however, Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee suggest that even relational skills development may require some self-directed learning that moves cyclically:

1. *The first discovery* is my ideal self—who the individual wants to be;
2. *The second discovery* is my real self—who the individual is, including

strengths and gaps;

3. *The third discovery* is the learning agenda—a plan to build strengths while reducing gaps;

4. *The fourth discovery* is experimenting with and practicing new behaviors, thoughts, and feelings to the point of mastery;

5. *The fifth discovery* is developing supportive and trusting relationships that make change possible (110).

Again, for a generation that has a standing “relationship” with computers, leveraging the technology can change their habits and, therefore, change their lives and the lives of others through evangelistic encounters.

Computer-assisted learning is still a young discipline that is developing faster than research can lead—signifying the dizzying potential, the seemingly endless inventiveness. The software is often divided into several categories though the nomenclature is regularly shifting:

- Tutorial—presents or extends the user’s knowledge base and can incorporate the other categories;
- Drill-and-practice—programs to develop further or master skills that have previously been presented;
- Games—competitive activities for entertainment or skill development;
- Simulation—approximations of reality that provide users with experiences without the expense or risks associated with some actions;
- Discovery—large databases of specific content that can be explored for the purpose of analyzing, comparing, inferring, and evaluating the information; and,

- Problem solving—software that teaches specific problem solving skills and strategies (Houghton).

Richard E. West and Charles R. Graham studied thirty-five cases of innovative teaching utilizing this technology in diverse departments at Brigham Young University. Their findings led them to analogize that “like biological enzymes, technology cannot create or facilitate learning by itself,” but it can be a catalyst (26). To that end they identified five ways computers can augment education:

1. Visualization—the student could see the content animatedly rather than by vague abstraction;
2. Interactions—communication between the student and teacher and among students can be promoted;
3. Reflection—technology can trigger self-assessment and encourage critical thinking based on the results of the program (e.g., dynamic simulations);
4. Authenticity and Engagement—students can experience applicable, real-life learning activities in a “safe” environment; and,
5. Practice—the quality and quantity of practice can be greatly enhanced (26).

For better or for worse, the computer and video game industry is pushing the margins of allowing the player to become an active participant rather than a passive “receiver.” In a sense these games are postmodern case studies that allow players to be involved in the narrative, bridging the gap between experiential learning and information learning, and writing a personal story through the interaction, with the potential to turn gamers into students (Dickey 67-83). Communicating indigenously requires a significant learning curve by all traditional institutes of learning, including the church.

R. E. Mayer's principles, based on a cognitive theory of multimedia learning, are particularly helpful for design and implementation:

- Multimedia principle—Students learn more deeply when the information is presented through animation and narration rather than narration alone;
- Temporal contiguity principle—Students learn more deeply when information is presented through animation and narration simultaneously, rather than successively;
- Coherence principle—Students learn more deeply when extraneous information (words, pictures, or sounds) is excluded rather than included;
- Modality principle—Students learn more deeply from animation and narration than animation and textual information on screen;
- Redundancy principle—Students learn more deeply from animation and narration than animation and narration and textual information on screen; and,
- Personalization principle—Students learn more deeply from animation and personalized narration than animation and narration not personalized (33-49).

These principles mean that software discussing relational evangelism cannot seem aloof to the user but must convey personal warmth. The goal is not the volume of information going out through the screen; the goal is the amount of information retained by the participant. Lifestyle evangelism, embodying the gospel, is the purpose of developing coaching software. A coach uses both practice and real-time experiences to increase the contenders' performance. The very best of coaching sees life as the "game," teaching those skills that transcend any particular arena and equipping each participant to become their own player-coach. Relational-evangelism coaching software must imbue those habits that encourage intentional relationship building. This objective can be achieved

through careful scripting, creative staging, quality production standards, and interactive controls that allow the user to define the learning in a nonlinear process. As relationship skills are put into daily life practice, they will become “second nature,” moving out of the virtual classroom and into everyday life—the way Jesus intended the gospel to be.

### **Conclusion**

The church is an evangelized people who are not evangelizing. Created in the image of the God who is Trinity, people are drawn into relationships. Christians have been drawn into a redeeming relationship with Jesus; they are called to extend that love to others. As Jesus incarnated the Word, so the Church is incarnational, continuing to express the Word in partnership with the Holy Spirit.

Such a great venture requires training, as exemplified by Jesus’ coaching of the apostles. Even in the efforts of the Messiah, the challenge was wearisome, trying to get his followers to be moved by the message so passionately that they would move out to take it to others. The task is certainly no less daunting today. A technological people who are used to programmed, instantaneous responses must be trained for the messy and unhurried nature of personal communication, prompting them to step away from virtual reality and into the actual lives of others.

Numerous evangelism training programs are available. This project was not an indictment against them. They have proved their effectiveness. Many may argue over which of the programs is the best. The answer is plain: the best program is the plan a person implements. This project was simply another approach, humbly exploring the possibilities that are emerging in a culture in need of spiritual friends. Undoubtedly, a kind of foolishness is exposed by this project. Using an inanimate computer to develop



relational skills is counterintuitive and untested. That pioneering quality is what made the project an adventure. Adventurers and explorers of old understood that going beyond the map was reserved for fools. Christianity is all about foolishness—the foolishness of a death-defying cross (1 Cor 1:18) inspiring fools for Christ (1 Cor 4:10). Embracing the foolishness is how a Christian becomes “a safe person with a dangerous message” (McRaney 66). This project is a small step in that direction.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The Church has been given “the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:18-19) to bring redeeming relationships that seek wholeness for a broken world. Created in the image of Trinity, whose nature is relational, the church (individually and collectively) is called to incarnate the gospel in all the world; however, something has gone tragically wrong. At worst the church has become muted; at best it is focused on the wrong message. Nearly a half century ago, Kraemer criticized the church, having noted that “the mind of the Churches is bent, above all, on its own increase and well-being. It is Church-centered. It is self-centered. The interest of the world is at best a side-issue” (127). Remarks such as this one are validated by the dearth of fruitful churches in the United States. At a time when resources for evangelism training have never been more available, the practice of evangelism is woeful. The lack of evangelism is exacerbated by inadequate relationship skills, with few options for intentionally developing them.

Still, the news is not all bad as the opportunities for evangelism are abundant. The church is living in an age of intense interest in spiritual matters. While rhetoric of significant disdain for “institutional” religion is heard, it is countered by the recognition of a longing for the divine. Postmoderns, especially, seek satisfaction for that pining through those who fill the “home” and friendship needs (Woolever and Bruce, Beyond the Ordinary 51-52). If the church is to “[stand] at the crossroads between God and the world” (Van Gelder 86), this intercession calls the church to be committed to intimate communion with God and literacy in the language of the world so Christians can communicate the good news. Kallenberg’s simile is apt: “If conversion involves the

acquisition of a new conceptual language, then evangelism must be akin to teaching a foreign language to people who do not yet speak it” (55). The church cannot speak to its neighbors by offering a sanitized and sanctified form of the gospel, “more of the same.” Instead, the church gains credibility that demands a hearing by working to be on speaking terms with the world (in terms of individuals and cultures), interactively proclaiming a different way of life.

With effective communication in mind, something must be done to ignite and equip the church to fulfill its calling. A practical, biblical approach is to train evangelists in a clear, theological understanding of its proclamation coupled with basic relationship skills. Such a program must be presented in a format that is common and will translate into action. Jesus utilized this model in his age in order to define the archetype for each age.

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the impact of the application of the developed computer-based relational coaching on the cognitive and behavioral changes in the subjects’ ability to participate in relational evangelism.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this project was clearly results oriented, desiring the participants to incorporate relational evangelism into their daily lives. Evangelism, like faith, is to become an expression of the Christian identity, not simply a Christian activity. That eventual outcome is the product of spiritual growth beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, the nascent habits that an evangelism program can encourage are measurable; therefore, the research questions focus on the practice of relational evangelism before and after taking part in the program and what elements of the training

were most influential.

### **Research Question 1**

To what extent have cognitive changes in relational evangelism been realized by participants as the result of the computer-based coaching?

This project was established on the premise that an evangelism program focusing on coaching participants in the basics of relationship initiation and development, as well as evangelistic essentials, can effect cognitive and behavioral changes. To the casual observer, the behavioral issues would seem to be of primary interest; however, with the gospel message and the “gospelizing” messenger (the evangelist) so closely related, attention was given to the foundational cognitive elements—for content, for motivation, and for equipping. This supposition was reflected in the questionnaires.

### **Research Question 2**

To what extent have behavioral changes in relational evangelism been realized by participants as the result of the computer-based coaching?

The coaching software was the independent variable introduced for study. The questionnaires provided the baseline of the participants’ practice of relational evangelism before beginning the training and compared to the responses at the end of the training. The questionnaire had to examine friendship patterns, in general, and evangelistic behavior, in particular. As the project sought to encourage the development of a unique relational skill set, the greatest portion of the instrument was developed to indicate effectiveness.

### **Research Question 3**

What aspects of the computer-based coaching appear to be associated with these

changes?

Beyond simply assessing behavioral and cognitive changes, finding what elements of the training contributed most to those changes was noteworthy. The participants were given maximum latitude in this research question through the use of open-ended questions, that provided space for both comments and personal narratives.

### **Population**

This project was a quasi-experimental, pre-training test/post-training test design with no comparison group. Twenty-one volunteers from the downtown campus of First United Methodist Church Houston served as project subjects. To be eligible the participants were required to be teens or adults (16 years or older) who were regular attendees (at least twice per month), used a computer on a regular basis (at least three times per week), agreed to utilize the project software for a period of sixty days, and were willing to share their experiences through the survey instrument.

The program administrator assigned a number to each participant as a control for the authenticity and accounting of the responses. The numbers also allowed for assessment of individual data as well as statistical analysis of the group.

### **Variables**

The independent variable of this project was the developed coaching software employed by the test population. The questionnaires provided the baseline of the participants' practice of relational evangelism before beginning the training and were compared to the responses at the end of the training. The questionnaire had to examine friendship patterns, in general, and evangelistic behavior, in particular. As the project sought to encourage the development of a unique relational skill set, the greatest portion

of the instrument was developed to indicate effectiveness. While biblical text and relevant literature informed the content of the software curriculum, the design was intentionally structured to adjust for personal temperament through the use of a nonlinear approach in which each subject determined the learning process path through the course. The expectation was that the freedom to choose would address particular and immediate needs of the subjects.

The dependent variables of this project were the cognitive and behavioral changes in relation to the practice of relational evangelism as reflected by the test instruments.

Possible intervening variables in this study included gender, age, past experiences in evangelism and training, number of years as a Christian and as a church member, and personality. The final variable was controlled by asking participants to complete the Birkman Method to assess their personality tendencies before beginning the program. The Birkman “is not merely a personality assessment tool” as it measures the “internal needs, motivations, occupational preferences and strengths” (“What is the Birkman Method<sup>®</sup>?”). The advantage is the Birkman Method is made up of over fifty-five scales that actually measure individual traits. It was utilized for three basic reasons: (1) its reliability and comprehensiveness, (2) its common use among the membership of First United Methodist Church Houston (the developer, Dr. Roger W. Birkman, is a church member), and (3) my familiarity with the instrument. All other variables were controlled by their inclusion in the initial questionnaire.

### **Instrumentation and Data Collection**

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the impact of the application of the developed computer-based relational coaching on the cognitive and behavioral changes in

the subjects' ability to participate in relational evangelism. This project used a quasi-experimental, pretest/posttest design with no comparison group. The training curriculum for the development of software-based coaching of relational evangelism skills was based on historical research in the evangelism field. The information was integrated in the software design and teaching script, produced as an asynchronous, off-line, individual self-study. The software was then evaluated for effectiveness.

### **Instrument Design**

A researcher-designed questionnaire was the primary instrument to study the effectiveness of the curriculum. The questions included objective and subjective measures, providing feedback for both the content and the design. The objective questions were a selected response design using a five-point Likert scale (Wiersma 171). The nature of the project also necessitated a number of open-ended responses, allowing individual reactions, experiences, and insights. A pre-application survey (see Appendix A) was conducted to establish a baseline for understanding and practice of evangelism, in general, and relational evangelism, in particular. A post-application survey (see Appendix B) was administered sixty days later to determine consequential changes in both understanding and practice.

For the pre-application questionnaire, the first fifteen questions provided basic information about the participants, specifically addressing qualifications and intervening variables. Unlike the objective scaled responses, these questions were not intended to correlate to questions 1-15 of the post-application questionnaire. The post-application required subjective responses about the experience, addressing Research Question 3. Engaging in relational evangelism (RQ 2) was indicated by post-application questions 9-

14, as well as question 76 on the pre-application questionnaire (comparable to question 14 on the post-application questionnaire). The effective elements of the program (RQ 3) are related to questions 1-8 and 15.

The instrument was further designed to consider two basic aspects of relational evangelism: cognitive understanding and evangelistic behaviors. Evangelism is multifaceted in motivation and practice; therefore, several perspectives were considered in each. The questions were designed so that each component contained two positive statements and one negative statement (based on my value judgment in defining “positive” and “negative”), which was reverse scored.

While this project looked to the behavioral results, what cognitively drives those results had to be considered, as indicated by Research Question 1. The participant’s understanding of evangelism was measured in four areas, as shown in Table 3.1 (with the numbers included from the questionnaires). Personal motivation addressed the foundational desire for making the effort in evangelism. Participation of the Holy Spirit concerned the evangelist’s role as a partner in this work of God. Reasons to be a Christian gave consideration to what the evangelist desires for the unchurched individual, and goal of evangelistic relationships attempted to define the endpoint or “success” in evangelistic encounters. Many people practice an unreflected faith, not examining the underpinnings of either beliefs or practices; therefore, the training was expected to bring about some greater depth of understanding.



**Table 3.1. Measures for Cognitive Understanding of Relational Evangelism**

Area of Study	Questionnaire Statements
Personal motives	16. God's grace and love in my life compels me to share my faith. 36. Evangelism is essential for spiritual growth. 56. I tell others about Jesus because God orders us to; not telling others is a sin.
Participation of the Holy Spirit	17. I am relaxed about introducing others to Jesus because the Holy Spirit has been at work ahead of me. 37. I play the primary role in evangelism; the Holy Spirit is in a supporting role. 57. As I consider my faith-sharing, I look for where the Holy Spirit is already making a difference.
Reason to be a Christian	18. I want people to be converted so they won't go to hell. 38. I want people to know Jesus so they can be whole. 58. The primary reason I want people to come to my church is to make my church grow.
Goal of evangelistic relationships	19. Having someone pray the "Sinner's Prayer" is crossing the evangelism finish line. 39. Evangelism is simply helping another person take the next step in their spiritual journey toward new life in Christ. 59. Leading a friend toward Jesus is just as important as leading them to Jesus.

With regards to behavior, the concern of Research Question 2, two parts of relational evangelism were considered: relationship skills and evangelistic practices. Table 3.2 identifies the various perceptions, skills, and practices of relationships with others. Friendships measured how the participants invested themselves in their closest acquaintances. Listening skills assessed their ability to focus attention on others; conversely, communication skills addressed the abilities in self-expression. How well participants connected with those in close proximity was evaluated by both relationships with neighbors and relationships at work or school. Habits of kindness were included

because the gospel is a witness of words and actions. Their capacity to initiate relationships was identified through comfort with strangers, and, by its nature, evangelism requires unchurched friends and acquaintances. One of the foundational premises of this project was that people need to be taught or need refinement of basic relational skills if they are to become effective evangelists. The program was expected to improve relational competence through the practices of the software.

**Table 3.2. Measures for General Relationship Skills**

Area of Study	Questionnaire Statements
Friendships	<p>20. I am a good friend.</p> <p>40. I have close friends, but my busy schedule limits how often I spend time with them.</p> <p>60. Friends are so important to me I make sure to go out of my way to spend time with them weekly.</p>
Listening skills	<p>21. I am easily distracted when others are talking to me.</p> <p>41. Others have expressed appreciation for my ability to listen.</p> <p>61. I am a good listener.</p>
Communication skills	<p>22. I am an effective communicator.</p> <p>42. If I have something to say, I can get the message across.</p> <p>62. I have trouble expressing my heart and mind.</p>
Relationships with neighbors	<p>23. I count my immediate neighbors as friends.</p> <p>43. I rarely invite neighbors to my home or visit theirs.</p> <p>63. I know my neighbors' names and the names of their children.</p>
Relationships at work or school	<p>24. I rarely have close friends at work (or school); I like to keep that part of life separate.</p> <p>44. I like to spend time with my coworkers (or fellow students) outside of work (school) hours.</p> <p>64. Those I work with (or go to school with) I think of as friends.</p>

**Table 3.2. Measures for General Relationship Skills, cont.**

Area of Study	Questionnaire Statements
Habits of kindness	25. I go out of my way to help others. 45. I look for the needs of others and try to meet those needs. 65. I help only when others ask.
Comfort with strangers	26. I am intentional about introducing myself to people I don't know. 46. I try to avoid making eye contact or conversing with strangers. 66. I am comfortable in unfamiliar settings and around unfamiliar people.
Unchurched friends and acquaintances	27. All my friends are Christians. 47. I deliberately make friends with those who do not follow Jesus. 67. I have many friends who are not Christians or who do not regularly attend church.

As the data and literature evidenced, evangelism is uncharted territory for most Christians. Stereotypes and aversions abound. Therefore, care was taken in developing questions that lowered anxiety but addressed the basic skills for active evangelism. Table 3.3 groups those questions in the many dimensions. Identity as an evangelist had to be measured—if the participants did not see themselves as evangelists they would be unlikely to fulfill that role. Perceived obstacles addresses the question, “What’s stopping me?” Invitational proficiency evaluates the least demanding approach to evangelism—inviting someone to a church event. The comfort in discussing spiritual issues is assessed by openness to spiritual conversations. An often overlooked component of evangelism is the evangelistic prayers of intercession on behalf of others. Personal testimony gave consideration to how well the participants translated their faith experiences to others. Along with a personal testimony, the evangelist must consider preparedness and willingness to share a Gospel presentation, explaining the significance of Jesus, and

calling for commitment referred to the ability to encourage others to become followers of Jesus. These areas of study were the most “foreign” elements; therefore, effective training was expected to bring about significant changes.

The post-application questionnaire included these measures but also allowed feedback regarding how the software was experienced. Included were sharing personal experiences, strengths, and weaknesses of the program and whether they perceived an improvement in their practice of relational evangelism. This freedom provided additional insights beyond the scope of simple objective questions.

**Table 3.3. Measures for Evangelistic Skills**

Areas of Study	Questionnaire Statements
Identity as an evangelist	<p>28. I am an evangelist.</p> <p>48. I look for opportunities to tell people about Jesus.</p> <p>68. I leave evangelism to the preacher and that committee.</p>
Perceived obstacles	<p>29. I am willing to risk negative reactions when I tell people about Jesus.</p> <p>49. I am reluctant to share my faith because I don't want to offend others.</p> <p>69. The gospel is too important to let anything—even my own fears—stop me.</p>
Invitational proficiency	<p>30. I'm not comfortable asking my friends to join me on Sundays.</p> <p>50. I regularly ask people if they would be willing to go with me to church.</p> <p>70. I invite people to church or special church events.</p>
Openness to spiritual conversations	<p>31. Having conversations about spiritual matters with unchurched friends feels natural.</p> <p>51. When others have questions about spiritual matters, I am willing to talk with them.</p> <p>71. I follow that old advice of avoiding talking about politics and religion.</p>

**Table 3.3. Measures for Evangelistic Skills, cont.**

Areas of Study	Questionnaire Statements
Evangelistic prayers	32. I pray with unchurched friends. 52. I forget to pray for friends' conversions. 72. I pray for the unchurched.
Personal testimony	33. My life is my testimony, so I share my faith only when others ask me questions. 53. My friends know how I came to know Jesus and how much joy following him brings. 73. I initiate conversations about what a difference Jesus has made in my life.
Gospel presentation	34. If someone asks, I can share the gospel in a clear, concise way. 54. I have a simple way of explaining why Jesus came into the world. 74. I know Jesus died for my sins, but explaining his sacrifice to other people is very hard.
Calling for commitment	35. I challenge people to make a decision about following Jesus. 55. I can imagine few situations where I would be bold enough to ask someone if they are ready to follow Jesus. 75. I am not afraid to ask people if they want to have a relationship with Jesus.

### Validity

I piloted the questionnaire on 17 August 2005. It was given to the project's Research Reflection Team—a group that was representative of the congregation. The five people filled out the questionnaire, completing it in approximately fifteen minutes or less. Suggestions were made that a few of the questions/statements be reworded for clarity. Also, a few punctuation and typographical errors were noted. These changes were minor and did not require a second pilot.

### Data Collection

A staff member of the First United Methodist Church Houston (who was also a

member of the Research Reflection Team) was identified to act as the program administrator. This individual was the point of contact for the participants. Copies of the coaching materials were available beginning 17 October 2006. Each participant was required to complete the Birkman and the pre-application questionnaire prior to receiving the project software from the program administrator. The volunteers were church members and regular attendees; therefore, the questionnaires were completed on-site rather than being mailed. The program administrator (as a trained Birkman consultant) then reported the “foundation colors” of each participant’s Birkman results (using the “Name Tag” Report that shows the relative measures of the trait/colors) and returned the questionnaires to me. At the end of the sixty-day application, the program administrator contacted the participants to have them complete the post-application questionnaire. Again, the results were returned to me.

**Confidentiality**

To promote frankness from the participants, I assured them confidentiality in the reporting of the survey responses in the cover letter that accompanied the pre-application survey. To assure anonymity the program administrator was used for all communication and data gathering. Moreover, each pre-application questionnaire was numbered by the program administrator and assigned to individual participants and recorded so the same numbered post-application questionnaire was given to each. I received only the numbered questionnaires with no identities revealed by the program administrator. This procedure allowed me to track changes in the individuals’ responses and perform appropriate data analysis comparing pre- and post-application questionnaires.

### **Delimitations and Generalizability**

The importance of this project was highlighted by troublesome evangelism data and personal experiences. The survey research evidenced the need for better understanding and practice of evangelism. Because this project was limited to a small sample size (twenty-one) of self-selected members of First United Methodist Church Houston, the results provide helpful insights for the congregation as a whole and might be suggestive of similar results for other members who share similar Christology and sense of calling and urgency about evangelism. Claims of generalizability demand further study; the unique qualities of the training have the potential for application in a broader Church spectrum, though such generalizability is not assumed. Survey research points to other formats for evangelism training (e.g., lectures, video series, workshops, books) that have been utilized in the past with apparent mixed results. Additional research is necessary to determine the most effective approach or combination of approaches. Finally, intervening variables were not controlled and were outside the scope of this project.

### **Data Analysis**

The key statistical evaluations of the data gathered in the pre- and post-application questionnaires were t-tests and analysis of variance, comparing pre- and post-application responses. In addition to the quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis was applied to the open-ended responses, looking for trends among respondents.

### **Computer-Based Training Description**

Based on the review of literature (Chapter 2), the curriculum for the project reflected the subject matter needed to nurture disciplined outreach of the body of Christ.

The training intended to bring about cognitive and behavioral changes in the subjects' ability to participate in relational evangelism. Increasing skills in cultivating friendships that can present opportunities to share the love of Jesus in words and actions received special emphasis in the training.

### **Curriculum**

Thirty-two lessons, including an introduction and conclusion, were developed to increase cognitive understanding and encourage behavioral changes in the subjects (Appendix C). The scope of the project, the length of the training period, and the goal of brevity for each lesson were factors in determining the number of lessons. Thirty-two lessons in a sixty-day period prompted the subjects to stay engaged in the training by using it approximately every two days. The targeted time limit for each lesson was less than five minutes. The expectation was that minimal time would eliminate squeezed schedules as an excuse for not participating in the training. Additionally, I assumed that focused content would be more memorable. The topics encompassed theological rationales and both relational and evangelistic skills. Included in each lesson was a task to perform that day to reinforce simple evangelistic habits in ordinary encounters.

### **Format**

I recorded a digital video of each lesson. I employed creative shots and angles to reinforce the themes, to keep the subjects interested, and to avoid the impression of a virtual classroom lecture. Video production software was used to edit and render the lessons.

A choice had to be made weighing the potential of the many media format options available to deliver the video content. A set of MPEG files on a storage medium and a



digital media player (e.g., Windows Media Player or Real Player) is the simplest alternative; however, this method burdens the user with finding the right file. An Internet Web site with the lessons available on it is the most efficient solution. The negative for this mode is the technical complexity of setting up a Web site and the possibility of technical difficulties downloading the files. The chosen option utilized DVD architecture software. DVDs provide mass storage, straightforward presentation, less likelihood of technical problems, familiarity, and the ability to use a regular DVD player on a television to view the lessons.

The result was a set of three training discs: two DVDs and one CD. The storage space required by the lessons exceeded the capacity of a single DVD. Consequently, I divided the lessons under two broad categories for the DVDs: People Skills and Evangelism Skills. Participants had the freedom to choose the order of the lessons. That self-determination necessitated each DVD having a copy of the introductory and concluding lessons. Also, both DVDs included a slide show of JPEG pictures to serve as a visual review of all the lessons. A CD of PDF files was included in the set for those individuals who preferred printed aids and to provide information that was not compatible with the DVD architecture.

### **Conclusion**

This project ambitiously attempted to provide computer-based coaching that resulted in active relational evangelism. The differences in this training material and other evangelism training were the inclusion of instruction for fundamental relationship initiation and utilization of the computer by individuals. The project was counter-intuitive, using technology to advance relationship skills. Nonetheless, in a world of

technological flux and a religion of extraordinary grace, counter-intuition is reasonable.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

Too many factors are beyond the control of the evangelist to measure effectiveness by simply counting the number of converts; nonetheless, the lack of new Christians is an indicator of ineffectiveness or the lack of evangelistic efforts. The assignment of spreading the gospel is discounted while current electronic conveniences may be an unintentional collateral cause. Technology can be a useful ally, however. In a culture of increasing depersonalization due to technology, the Church must redeem that technology to develop relational and evangelistic skills. The purpose of this project was to evaluate the impact of the application of the developed computer-based relational coaching on the cognitive and behavioral changes in the subjects' ability to participate in relational evangelism.

Three research questions guided this project: To what extent have cognitive changes in relational evangelism been realized by participants as the result of computer-based coaching? To what extent have behavioral changes in relational evangelism been realized by participants as the result of the computer-based coaching? What aspects of the computer-based coaching appear to be associated with these changes?

#### **Profile of Subjects**

At least twenty members of the downtown campus of First United Methodist Church Houston were required for this project. Twenty-one individuals self-selected to begin the training (see Appendix D). Thirteen (61.9 percent) completed the training. The basic profile of the group shows exceptional homogeneity. The mean age of the participants who completed the study was 58.8 years, with the oldest 75 and the youngest

32. Only two were under the age of 50. Even the eight non-finishers had a mean age of 52.1. Eleven of the thirteen (84.6 percent) who completed the program were female. Ten of the thirteen (76.9 percent) were married, with two others previously married. Educationally they were evenly spread: four graduated high school, four college, and five graduate school.

Even the personality profiles of the subjects were similar as indicated by their Birkman coloration. The Birkman instrument measures the individual's work orientation, encompassing behavior and personality tendencies. The results of the instrument provide a profile of the person using a relative scale of four basic tendencies. Colors are used for quick, visual reference. Blue represents planning. These idea and vision people are creative and think concepts through to conceive designs and strategies. Green is the color of communicating. A high green factor indicates an influencer who communicates actively with others, focusing on sales and marketing efforts. Yellow identifies those who are inclined to administrative functions. They desire a plan and are sticklers for detail. The word associated with red is "expediting." These individuals are action oriented, making quick decisions for the sake of tangible results. Everyone has some measure of each area. The relative combinations of these tendencies account for human complexity and uniqueness; however, each person has a primary orientation with a secondary complement.

In this project, every participant indicated blue or yellow as either their primary or secondary color. Ten of thirteen had yellow primary or secondary and ten had blue—seven (53.8 percent) had both. All eight who did not finish the coaching had blue as their primary or secondary color and four showed yellow. The proportions are surprising

though the reasoning is sound. The blue planners would be attracted to this project by the lure of knowledge and the novelty of the approach. Knowing the project was part of an academic pursuit was also appealing. Yellow administrators want the structure of programs such as Adding Life and may have wanted to help me complete the prescribed steps of this dissertation. Green communicators are less inclined because they are confident they already know how to get a message across. Finally, red expeditors see themselves as too busy to sit down when they could actually accomplish something.

Faith and membership data was similar among the subjects. Attendance patterns were strong as twelve (92.3 percent) attended church four times each month and eleven (84.6 percent) were active in Sunday school. The reported numbers of years the subjects who completed the program have been Christians ranged from four to seventy-five, with a mean of forty-six years. The fact that only three (23.1 percent) of the subjects have been a Christian thirty years or less skewed the average. On the other hand, only three were members of First Methodist for more than twenty years. The mean for the participants was 11.4 years. While a parent was the primary faith influence for nine of the thirteen (69.2 percent), the subjects reported greater diversity regarding who influenced them to visit the church. Previous evangelism or relationship training was limited to four of each.

### **Reliability**

The questionnaire used for this study was a researcher designed instrument that considered essential areas of evangelism: cognitive understanding, general relationship skills, and evangelism skills (see Appendixes A and B). These areas were based on the reported research in Chapter 2. The subjects rated the objective questions on a five-point Likert scale. Negatively worded items were reverse scored to correspond with the

positively worded questions in the instrument. A Cronbach's Alpha test was used to measure internal reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha is a correlation with better reliability indicator by results that are closer to 1.0. The internal reliability of the instrument was good with a value of 0.84.

### **Descriptive Data**

The descriptive data is a summary of the statistics indicating the subjects' self-perception in the areas of a cognitive understanding of evangelism, general relationship skills, and evangelism skills prior to participating in the Adding Life training. This information was the baseline for comparison of the cognitive and behavioral changes that resulted from the computer-based coaching. The results of the comparison will answer the first two research questions.

Prior to the computer-based coaching, the subjects scored 3.78 (on a five-point Likert scale) on the cognitive understanding scale. The result of the general relationship skills subset of the behavior scale was 3.62 and the evangelistic skills subset was 3.60. The composite of the behavior scale was 3.61. These scores were registered on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The data indicated that the subjects entered the project with a generally positive mind-set about evangelism.

### **Changes in Relational Evangelism**

The post-application questionnaires included objective and subjective questions addressing the overall perceptions of the computer-based coaching. All thirteen considered the experience a positive one. Only one subject thought the program was not easy. No further explanation was given so no assessment was made whether the ease related to the technology or to the subject matter. Weekly utilization of Adding Life

ranged from once per week to five times per week. The mean use was 2.80 times each week (standard deviation 1.23). The length of the program seemed to be appropriate, with eleven agreeing the length should remain the same. The other two subjects disagreed: one reported the program needed to be longer and the other shorter. The data indicated the time investment of the program was appropriate.

The subjects realized beneficial results as twelve reported higher confidence initiating relationships and all thirteen were more confident as evangelists. All thirteen subjects also reported changing personal habits because of the coaching. The results were apparent to several subjects. The majority (eight subjects—61.5 percent) reported that the people to whom they were “Adding Life” were closer to Jesus as a result. Another three were unsure and only two saw no change in others. Of ten who reported evangelistic opportunities each month, six noted an increase. Finally, the subjects’ assessment was encouraging: All would recommend Adding Life for others.

### **Cognitive Understanding**

Subject scores for cognitive understanding changed significantly (see Table 4.1) between pre-application and the post-application responses ( $p \leq .012$ ). The mean changed from 3.78 to 3.96 with an increase in the standard deviation by .06. The data suggests that understanding the participation of the Holy Spirit in evangelism was the source of greatest change.

### **Behavioral Changes**

The composite behavior score changed significantly between the pre-application and post-application measures ( $p \leq .001$ ). The mean changed from 3.61 to 3.93 while the standard deviation decreased by .09. Breaking the composite down into its component

parts evidences significance as well. General relationship skills changed .27. The standard deviation decreased .05. A notable contributor to the differences was in the area of comfort with strangers. The change in the evangelistic skills was .38 with a change in standard deviation of .12. The data suggests the greatest changes resulted from the participants' identity as evangelists and developing their gospel presentations.

**Table 4.1. Pre- and Post-Application Changes in Participants (N = 13)**

		Pre-Application		Post-Application		t	p≤.05
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<b>Cognitive</b>							
	Understanding	3.78	1.06	3.96	1.12	2.62	0.012
<b>Behavior</b>							
	General relationship skills	3.62	0.96	3.89	0.91	5.90	0.001
	Evangelistic skills	3.60	0.96	3.98	0.84	7.45	0.013
	Composite	3.61	0.96	3.93	0.87	9.48	0.001

### **Sources of Change**

Open-ended questions gave subjects the opportunity to express freely their experience of the coaching. When questioned about the most important insight of Adding Life, three responses were given by three subjects each: new self-perceptions as evangelists, the encouragement of telling “my” story as a part of the gospel story, and evangelism is simply forming friendships. On the question of how their own faith journey has been impacted by Adding Life, three subjects used the word “open,” receptive to



other people. One person wrote, “I have learned to show more kindness to others to reflect my relationship with Jesus. When you show more love and kindness to others you in turn feel more love and kindness.”

The significant questions to help answer Research Question 3 were those that gave the subjects space to write about the strengths and weaknesses of Adding Life. The common theme for strengths centered on the presentation style, describing it with repeated words such as “easy, non-threatening, casual.” One said, “Anyone can incorporate these habits into their life so that evangelism becomes a lifestyle.” That statement was reinforced by another individual with an expressed anxiety about meeting new people: “This has helped relax me. It is an encouraging program.” Another person summed up Adding Life with a tone of challenge: “It’s up to you to make it a success.” Only two subjects responded substantively to the question about weaknesses. Both concerned production quality. For one the lack of quality of the videos was a distraction while another found the menus hard to read.

Descriptions of life changes in others because of Adding Life are particularly gratifying. Two noted helping friends find the churches they now attend (interestingly, neither one of the friends attend First Methodist). One person discovered how easily she can speak about her faith with coworkers who ask pointed questions. Another subject found victory in small steps, “My Jewish employee and my non-Christian friends have gone from being repulsed by Jesus to tolerant and accepting of facts and testimonies.” The most poignant story started with a conversation with a homeless drug addict that gave the evangelist an opportunity to present the gospel. That addict became clean and sober and has enrolled in a Bible college.

### **Intervening Variables**

Findings were examined to determine if the intervening variables of gender, age, past experiences in evangelism and training, number of years as a Christian and as a church member, and personality impacted the outcomes. In this data group of limited size and diversity no significant differences were observed based on the intervening variables.

### **Summary of Significant Findings**

Significant positive change following the completion of the computer-based relational evangelism coaching was observed in the measure of cognitive understanding.

Significant positive change following the completion of the computer-based coaching was observed in the composite measure of behavior. Significant positive change was also observed in the two subscales of general relationship skills and evangelistic skills.

The intervening variables of gender, age, past experiences in evangelism and relationship training, number of years as a Christian and as a church member, and personality do not account for the observed changes.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

The motivation for this research project was a concern for a lack of evangelism personally, the struggles of a local congregation to grow, the decline of a mainline denomination, and the evangelistic atrophy of the church in the United States. Research provided further impetus as a fundamental weakness was exposed: poor relational skills. I knew of numerous evangelism training programs readily available, but no program seized on technology nor did any offer basic training in instigating relationships. This computer-based relational evangelism coaching attempted to address these concerns. The findings of this project are encouraging indicators that further development is warranted. Significant positive change was observed in the measure of both cognitive understanding and behavior. Within the behavior measures, significant positive change was also observed in the two subscales of general relationship skills and evangelistic skills. The intervening variables of gender, age, past experiences in evangelism and relationship training, number of years as a Christian and as a church member, and personality do not account for the observed changes.

#### **Greater Cognitive Understanding**

Within the church are many presumptions and assumptions about evangelism but little unction for evangelism. This reality is suggested by the low number of participants and the responses of the project subjects. One participant wrote, "I gained an entirely new understanding of what evangelism really is.... I am not afraid of the term evangelism any more." Seemingly, the church must detoxify its members of evangelism so it can focus on the good news again. The relational evangelism training had to give substantial thought

and time to passing on a meaningful appreciation for *εὐαγγέλιον*, placing it within the communing nature of the *imago dei*. Beyond a systematic theology, a supremely practical theology of evangelism must be posited for the purpose of equipping God's people.

The project instrument and the Adding Life curriculum considered cognitive dimensions of evangelism. The subjects had to examine their motivations for sharing the gospel, learning to let the message flow from a heart of love. Thought was given to the divine partner for evangelism, the Holy Spirit. I also wanted the participants to ponder the reasons for being a Christian and the goal of evangelistic relationships. These elements may seem basic because they are basic, fundamental, and necessary. As Mark Tabb notes, "No one in Oz asks what is true. What is *real* [original emphasis] is the question" (46). Modern theology focuses on discerning truth. Effective evangelists in a postmodern culture must address mind and soul, thus fulfilling the Great Commandment for wholeness of love for the sake of the wholeness of people (Matt. 22:36-40). Poe speaks to relationship:

The average American today who embraces the postmodern attitudes toward values, spirituality, truth, and consistency has not rejected the biblical meaning of absolute truth. Modern theology speaks of absolute truth as an intellectual concept, when 'it' is actually a 'he' whose name is Jesus (25).

The significant positive change in the measure of cognitive understanding encourages further rumination and refinement for better coaching.

### **Improved Relational Skills**

The witness of the Bible attests a relational God and humans created in the image of that God. Tragedy strikes early in the story as that image becomes sin-stained and shatters the relationships among humans, between humans and God, and between humans

and Creation. The job of the evangelist is to help uncover or rediscover that identity through a partnership with God and the person in need of the gospel. McLaren removes the fear of evangelism by removing the burden of creating converts *ex nihilo*: “Our job as spiritual friends is seldom to get a fire started from scratch. Usually, we come into lives where there is already a candle burning—a flicker of prayer, a glow of faith, a flame of spiritual desire” (More Ready Than You Realize 44).

The bad news is that sin breaks relationships. The good news is that relationships break sin. That truth was manifested in the Incarnation—the Word made flesh (John 1:14). Jesus lived out the relational example by calling together a band of disciples and actively reaching across social boundaries that would otherwise limit expressions of love and kindness.

If relationships play such a pivotal role in the kingdom of God, then the Church must do whatever it can to coach people for relationship skills development. Particularly in a high-tech world of instant and universal communication, people are becoming more isolated and less able to interact. In no evangelism training program did I find sufficient guidance in the area of basic relationship proficiency. Finding this void I wanted to invest a sizable amount of the coaching on relationships. This focus included the meaning of friendship and how to interact with those people who are close by at home, in the neighborhood, at work or play, how to reach out to strangers, and how to develop habits of kindness. The significant positive change observed in the relational subscale of general relationship skills indicates that even those individuals who are active in a church can still learn how to interact with others more effectively.

### **Improved Evangelistic Skills.**

Computer-based relational evangelism training is not new in purpose or content; computers are simply the latest means of delivery. Since the day Jesus issued the invitation, “Come, be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people!” (Matt. 4:19, NLT), followers have looked for ways to hone their abilities to reach out to others through words and deeds with the love of Christ. This endeavor is always indigenous, speaking in a way people can hear and receive. Kallenberg reminds Christians of the need to learn to be students of the culture—what missiologists call “contextualization” (13). Like Paul addressing the Athenians with a discussion of their altar inscribed, “To an Unknown God,” evangelists creatively employ effective means: John Wesley by horseback, Billy Graham through crusades, Robert Schuller with television.

The significant positive change observed in the behavior subscale of evangelistic skills points to the continuing need for coaching that reminds Christians of their identity as evangelists, that encourages them to engage in spiritual conversations, and helps them to tell their story in the context of God’s story. The computer-based lessons were my initial attempt at storytelling through a vivid medium. I tried to engage disciples in various settings, taking them on a journey even as they sat observing. Then they could take the journey themselves, as the data suggests they did.

Kent and Davidene Humphreys attribute to William Garrison a colorful illustration of evangelism:

Have you ever noticed how differently frogs and lizards acquire their food? The frog sits and waits for the food to come to him, and when an unlucky insect happens to come by, he simply sticks out his tongue and reels it in. If the lizard sat around like the frog, however, he’d starve to

death. And so he goes into his world and he hunts.... I think the main problem today in the world of evangelization is the under-utilization of lizards. (27-28)

Computers afford the church the opportunity to go “hunting”—not only for converts but for evangelists. For Christians who remain uncomfortable with the notion of using computers for evangelistic training I am reminded of the familiar words of Wesley when he describes his first efforts of preaching outside the walls of a sanctuary: “I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation” (qtd in Henderson 28). The computer and Internet are nothing more than the information highway available to God’s people now.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The computer-based coaching for relational evangelism, *Adding Life*, was an effective means of training. Nonetheless, changes can make the study stronger.

### **Format and Data Collection**

The DVD/CD sets were adequate. While an Internet-based format was beyond my abilities, it may have been better. The DVD architecture software prevented copying discs on any other devices than the computer used in production; consequently, I had the time-consuming chore of making the three discs for each participant. An online format would make all the files available together, including the printable materials alongside the video lessons. Lastly, I could deal with technical difficulties at the source rather than the potential for glitches in particular copies of the DVD.

A major limitation in this project was data collection. The information provided by the subjects was based largely on perceptions of use and application, which are not always accurate. An Internet version allows participants to login and has built-in counters to gauge their usage. This format generates specific data. Counters reveal which lessons

subjects viewed most often and which lessons they viewed least. The order in which the subjects viewed the lesson may yield other important insights. Many other research options are available through an online format. For instance, an evaluation of each lesson (both objective and subjective) could provide immediate feedback. The pre- and post-application questionnaires could be completed online, simplifying the data's return. One explanation for only thirteen of twenty-one participants completing the training may have nothing to do with the training and merely be a failure in completing the questionnaires. Overall, the Internet provides ease and power in data collection, though it demands Web page expertise.

### **Personal Interviews**

With regard to data collection, personal interviews of the subjects would strengthen the information. I maintained confidentiality based on the concern that my personal relationship with the subjects could influence or constrict their responses. That concern may be valid but it forces a trade-off. Confidentiality encourages openness; interviews provide depth. Researcher-subject interviews ensure all the questions are answered and allow for probing or clarifying questions. Many of the subjective responses triggered questions, confusion, and curiosity.

### **Study Group**

The size and homogeneity of the self-selected study group suggest the need for more evaluation to confirm generalizability, translating in full diversity of ages, gender, races, personality types, theological perspectives, and denominations. The simplest solution is a larger group within the congregation, raising the likelihood for diversity. Another approach is to select the subjects based on factors other than interest in



evangelism, assuring a wide spectrum. Inviting other congregations to participate in the study would work, as well.

### **Production Quality**

In this digital age of lifelike special effects, virtual reality, and computer-generated imagery, people's expectations of video quality are high. Marginal production quality can be a distraction. At least one subject noted the quality as a weakness, though discounting it as "expected." My skills and the camera's features may have been an impediment for others to receive the lessons of Adding Life.

### **Follow-Up Study**

The post-application instrument was an immediate response to the program. The significant measure of success for this coaching is the long-term impact. Sixty days is a limited "laboratory" period that may not reflect true cognitive or behavioral changes. A longitudinal study of continuing evangelistic efforts more accurately reflects the project's effectiveness. This study would question the software's continue utilization, continued employment of relational and evangelistic skills, the number of evangelistic opportunities presented in a given month, and perceived lifechanges in others because of Adding Life habits. The collected information would provide a clearer picture of how long and how intense the training should be.

Another follow-up analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of Adding Life is a questionnaire for those evangelized, whether converted by the relationship or not. Only those individuals impacted by Adding Life can explain what words or actions best communicated the gospel of Jesus to them or why it failed to communicate to them. This study could consider other influences beyond Adding Life that may have shaped the

reception of the gospel. Such follow-up studies offer insights that otherwise will be researchers' assumptions and conjectures.

### **Serendipitous Observations**

The project questionnaires provided surprising data about the subject group: the subject matter and the computer-based coaching attracted a self-selected homogenous group. Having designed this project with a postmodern technological proclivity, I anticipated generating interest among young adults. I was shocked that the average age of the subjects who completed the coaching process was nearly 59 years with one subject being 75.

The positive observation here is that age is no longer a barrier to technology. In true postmodern fashion, labels do not fit. The church must not stereotype senior adults and unnecessarily limit the means of communication to those who are time-honored. Technology offers great opportunity to young and old alike.

The negative observation here is that younger adults are not easily impressed and are loath to get involved with anything that smacks of insincerity. Unfortunately, the word "evangelism" carries a lot of emotional baggage for people. The postmodern mind-set tends toward both skepticism and cynicism. The word "evangelism"—even if it is relational evangelism—may stir negative images that incite reluctance.

The issue of having a disproportionate number of women who self-selected themselves is curious. This number may be related to the data showing women are responsible for over two-thirds of all book purchases (Poyntor). In addition, women in the churches are more involved than men in both discipleship and evangelism (Barna, "Women Are the Backbone"). Though the reasons for this disparity are uncertain, the

consequence is a need for churches to make more targeted efforts at reaching men to bring them into the church and to involve them in the work of the church. For this project, specifically, Adding Life could have been marketed in a way that was more appealing to men.

A final observation comes to mind: no pastor at First Methodist (other than me) participated in the coaching. Few pastors receive substantial evangelism training, even in seminary. Nevertheless, parishioners assume pastors are evangelism experts. Fully equipped pastors are a rare commodity, as are ordained practitioners of evangelism. When a pastor leads any effort, the congregation tends to respond to that authority of living as an example. I wonder if a pastor had taken up the mantle of Adding Life whether more people would have volunteered to participate. If pastors want an evangelistic church, the pastor must be evangelistic.

### **Recommendations**

As with all new endeavors, several refinements can make Adding Life a more effective tool. The concept and model are sound. These suggested modifications are intended to expand its use and promote more human interaction.

#### **Delivery**

For the initial testing of computer-based training for relational evangelism the DVD format was deemed preferable. Subsequent development suggests an Internet-based program would be better. The Internet provides easier distribution of the lessons and allows flexibility for the user to determine which digital media player to employ. Many more people can avail themselves of the training as they discover it while exploring the Internet. Additionally, editing and enhancements of the lessons are dynamic with the

materials constantly under supervision. If technical problems appear, they can be addressed more readily. Finally, an Internet-based format streamlines communication between users and the designer.

### **Interaction**

Essential to the effectiveness of computer-based relational training is implementing the learned skills. Keeping in mind that the physical separation furthered by technology must be offset by proximal interaction, Adding Life's objective is growing social capital. Caution must be sustained in the computer's (including the Internet's) function as a communication device. It is "neuroanatomically" inadequate for providing the feedback necessary for proper social interaction (Goleman 63-75). The Internet is a powerful tool that can connect people around the world, but not without dangers and limitations. Putnam asserts that "anonymity and the absence of social cues inhibit social control" that frees opinion that "may lead not to deliberation, but to din" (173). Computers can promote forming virtual communities (digitally and socially) that potentially become "cyberbalkanization" (177-78) where individuals choose to participate in hyperspecialized interest groups while losing interest in those outside the group. This seclusion runs counter to evangelism. Even if those within any particular interest group were evangelized, part of their response to following Jesus demands breaking away from the group to reach others.

One way of dealing with this reality is group accountability. Being responsible to others online is an option, though it will find limited success. The preferable alternative is actually meeting with other Christians who are passionate about evangelism. These

groups can be formed through a local congregation or by organizing the meeting through an Internet site (e.g., meetup.com).

### **Expanding Technology**

While recognizing the limitations of technology, the church must be creative in expanding ways to exploit technology. An ever-widening array of electronic devices is available: portable DVDs and laptop computers, iPods and MP3 players, cell phones and video tombstones. Training programs such as Adding Life can be formatted to work with these various gadgets. Such adaptability and transportability allow training opportunities to increase appreciably.

### **Spiritual Formation**

Regardless of the quality or effectiveness of any evangelism training program, the local church must provide engaging and impacting spiritual formation. Woolever and Bruce rightly note, “Most people visit a congregation for the first time because someone they know invited them. However, these visitors need a reason to return a second and third time. A congregation grows because something of value is offered to newcomers” (Beyond the Ordinary 77). The final recommendation for any evangelistic effort is a complementary discipleship program.

### **Further Study**

This project is a small step in developing a more helpful evangelism training. Nevertheless, research provokes research. Several threads of inquiry are worthy of consideration.

**Comparative value.** Another gauge of the usefulness of Adding Life is its relative effectiveness in comparison to other evangelism training programs. This grading

requires a comprehensive study to establish a measure of effectiveness and set up a rank order. Studies of evangelism programs have assessed pre- and post-training results, but none developed an instrument for valuation. The purpose of an experimental design for objective comparison is improvement of church evangelism not denigrating any training program.

**The stacking effect.** A related study should examine the efficacy of “stacking” evangelism training programs—using multiple training programs in a series over time to capitalize on both the redundancy of common concepts shared by the training programs and the unique insights each one offers. The cumulative effect may bring about a cultural change within a congregation due to regular reinforcement of the evangelistic imperative and associated skills.

**Combining contagious types.** Malcom Gladwell’s work on “tipping points” raises interesting questions requiring further study with regard to evangelism training. The first area of concern is how to provide coaching and coordination for the various types of individuals who make social epidemics of ideas, products, or messages possible. Gladwell identifies Connectors, Mavens, and Salesmen (30-88). Connectors are people with an exceptional ability to know people across diverse groups and subgroups. Individuals classified as Mavens combine social skills with knowledge. The Salesmen are the persuaders in the group. Each type offers unique talents in communication. No single person is strong in all areas. Rather than frustrate people with what is perceived as extraneous information, a targeted training may be far more helpful. Assessment instruments to recognize each type and training materials to leverage their skills must be developed and evaluated. Then the church can intentionally harmonize their efforts.

**Stickier messages.** Additional study also must be conducted on how the church can make its information “stickier” (Gladwell 89-132)—both the training information and the gospel information. This stickiness factor refers to how unshakably memorable a message is. Sticky communication grabs attention and holds it. Chip Heath and Dan Heath have explored this concept for a business context and defined the acronym SUCCEsS to keep in mind the six principles of successful ideas: Simplicity, Unexpectedness, Concreteness, Credibility, Emotions, and Stories (14-19). As the Church serves an information economy and culture, it competes against a cacophony of voices crying for attention. Computer-based training will become more and more prevalent, requiring better and better communication skills.

### **Postscript**

This project impacted more than my understanding of evangelism; it reshaped my theology. I now have a conviction that Christian theology is inherently relational theology. The relational nature of Christian faith is rooted in the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—living as a perfect union in the midst of distinctiveness: three in one. Creation provides the earthly paradigm, including both the image of God and the divinely fashioned partnership in the Garden of Eden. The Law reinforces that relational nature, as evidenced in the Ten Commandments where the first four commandments address the God-human connection while the last six speak to human bonds. Jesus emphasized relationships by his example and through his teachings that made love of God and love of neighbors the top priority. The Church lives out that love as a tangible witness of God’s intention for relationships. Finally, the consummation of Creation as the New Jerusalem

indicates eternal community. While God seeks to touch each person's heart, no isolated or individualistic Christianity is possible.

This relational nature is the elemental drive for evangelism: love compels Christians. I do not sense that the Church has emphasized the dynamics of this aspect of theology. Lots of literature about evangelism with little practice of evangelism suggests as much. Knowledge and training are not in themselves sufficient. Neither this project nor any other training program is the cure for the evangelistic woes of the American church. These efforts are prompts and props; therefore, the church must see technology for what it is: a tool. Similarly, the church must use insights from the growing fields of emotional and social intelligence. Research from these areas of expertise makes clear that people are complex and formula resistant. People want people; people are looking for friends. Ultimately, Christians must be humble in allowing the Holy Spirit to work within them and through them to make everlasting relationships for God's sake.



## APPENDIX A

### PRE-APPLICATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Jonathan Bynum  
1101 Pine Tree Road  
Longview, Texas 75604

October 3, 2006

Dear Friend,

You may be aware that I have been working on a dissertation for a Doctor of Ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary. I have been researching, studying, and writing to complete the approval process of my dissertation proposal. That accomplished, I have been developing, scripting, and creating an evangelism coaching program I have entitled, "Adding Life." Now I need people like you to evaluate its effectiveness. I appreciate your willingness to volunteer.

Here is what I am asking you to do:

1. If you have not done so previously, complete online The Birkman Method.
2. Take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire on the next page.
3. When you return the questionnaire to Ann Spears she will give you a set of Adding Life discs: 2 DVDs and 1 CD. The CD contains printable files that may be helpful to you as you move forward in Adding Life.
4. When you insert the DVD into your computer, a menu should come up on your screen. (Actually, the DVDs will work in DVD players, as well. But the computer gives you access to the printable materials.) The first time you view it please watch the "Introduction" (found on both DVDs). The "People" DVD is focused on general "people skills," while the "Gospel" DVD directly addresses telling people about Jesus. If you have any problems contact Ann Spears who will contact me.
5. For the next sixty days I invite you to explore the training program and apply it. Please note: there is no particular order to the lessons. You get to choose your learning path.
6. At the end of sixty days you will be given another questionnaire to complete.

Here is my commitment to you:

1. I will not make any attempt to match the questionnaires to the individuals taking part in the training.
2. Because the responses are vital to this research, your full participation is appreciated and your responses will be included in the study results.

Thank you for your participation in this project. More than that, thank you for your desire to share the gospel.

Adding Life with you,

Jonathan Bynum

**To be completed by Program Administrator only:**

Participant Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Birkman Method—Primary color: \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary color: \_\_\_\_\_

## Pre-Training Questionnaire

*For the sole purpose of matching pre-training and post-training responses, you are assigned a number that will be unique to you but unknown to me:*

1. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ (at least 16 to participate)
3. Marital status: ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced
4. Education: ☐ High school ☐ College ☐ Graduate
5. How long have you been a Christian? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Who was most influential in bringing you to faith?
   
☐ Parent ☐ Child ☐ Friend ☐ Coworker ☐ Teacher/Coach
   
☐ Stranger ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
7. How long a member of Houston First United Methodist Church? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What influenced you to come to First Methodist the very first time?
   
☐ Parent ☐ Child ☐ Friend ☐ Drive-by ☐ Special programming
   
☐ Advertising ☐ Television/Radio Ministry ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many times per month do you attend worship? \_\_\_\_\_ (at least 2 times to participate )
10. Are you an active member of a Sunday school class? ☐ Yes ☐ No
11. Have you ever participated in faith-sharing training? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   
If yes, what was the name of the training program? \_\_\_\_\_
   
Did you find it helpful? ☐ Yes ☐ No
12. Have you ever participated in a class on relationships? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   
If yes, please provide a short description. \_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
13. How many times per week do you use a computer? \_\_\_\_\_ (at least 3 to participate)
14. What are your expectations from a program like this one? \_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
15. Are you committing to participate in Adding Life for the next 60 days? ☐ Yes ☐ No

*On the other side of the sheet are a series of statements. Please circle one number to the right of each statement that most closely reflects your view.*

**Turn the page**

Participant Number: _____	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16. God's grace and love in my life compels me to share my faith.	5	4	3	2	1
17. I am relaxed about introducing others to Jesus because the Holy Spirit has been at work ahead of me.	5	4	3	2	1
18. I want people to be converted so they won't go to hell.	5	4	3	2	1
19. Having someone pray the "Sinner's Prayer" is crossing the evangelism finish line.	5	4	3	2	1
20. I am a good friend.	5	4	3	2	1
21. I am easily distracted when others are talking to me.	5	4	3	2	1
22. I am an effective communicator.	5	4	3	2	1
23. I count my immediate neighbors as friends.	5	4	3	2	1
24. I rarely have close friends at work (or school); I like to keep that part of life separate.	5	4	3	2	1
25. I go out of my way to help others.	5	4	3	2	1
26. I am intentional about introducing myself to people I don't know.	5	4	3	2	1
27. All my friends are Christians.	5	4	3	2	1
28. I am an evangelist.	5	4	3	2	1
29. I am willing to risk negative reactions when I tell people about Jesus.	5	4	3	2	1
30. I'm not comfortable asking my friends to join me on Sundays.	5	4	3	2	1
31. Having conversations about spiritual matters with unchurched friends feels natural.	5	4	3	2	1
32. I pray with unchurched friends.	5	4	3	2	1
33. My life is my testimony, so I share my faith only when others ask me questions.	5	4	3	2	1
34. If someone asks, I can share the gospel in a clear, concise way.	5	4	3	2	1
35. I challenge people to make a decision about following Jesus.	5	4	3	2	1
36. Evangelism is essential for spiritual growth.	5	4	3	2	1
37. I play the primary role in evangelism; the Holy Spirit is in a supporting role.	5	4	3	2	1
38. I want people to know Jesus so they can be whole.	5	4	3	2	1
39. Evangelism is simply helping another person take the next step in their spiritual journey toward new life in Christ.	5	4	3	2	1
40. I have close friends, but my busy schedule limits how often I spend time with them.	5	4	3	2	1
41. Others have expressed appreciation for my ability to listen.	5	4	3	2	1
42. If I have something to say, I can get the message across.	5	4	3	2	1
43. I rarely invite neighbors to my home or visit theirs.	5	4	3	2	1
44. I like to spend time with my coworkers (or fellow students) outside of work (school) hours.	5	4	3	2	1
45. I look for the needs of others and try to meet those needs.	5	4	3	2	1
46. I try to avoid making eye contact or conversing with strangers, even in "safe" environs.	5	4	3	2	1
47. I deliberately make friends with those who do not follow Jesus.	5	4	3	2	1
48. I look for opportunities to tell people about Jesus.	5	4	3	2	1

Participant Number: _____	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49. I am reluctant to share my faith because I don't want to offend others.	5	4	3	2	1
50. I regularly ask people if they would be willing to go with me to church.	5	4	3	2	1
51. When others have questions about spiritual matters, I am willing to talk with them.	5	4	3	2	1
52. I forget to pray for friends' conversions.	5	4	3	2	1
53. My friends know how I came to know Jesus and how much joy following him brings.	5	4	3	2	1
54. I have a simple way of explaining why Jesus came into the world.	5	4	3	2	1
55. I can imagine few situations where I would be bold enough to ask someone if they are ready to follow Jesus.	5	4	3	2	1
56. I tell others about Jesus because God orders us to; not telling others is a sin.	5	4	3	2	1
57. As I consider my faith-sharing, I look for where the Holy Spirit is already making a difference.	5	4	3	2	1
58. The primary reason I want people to come to my church is to make my church grow.	5	4	3	2	1
59. Leading a friend toward Jesus is just as important as leading them to Jesus.	5	4	3	2	1
60. Friends are so important to me I make sure to go out of my way to spend time with them weekly.	5	4	3	2	1
61. I am a good listener.	5	4	3	2	1
62. I have trouble expressing my heart and mind.	5	4	3	2	1
63. I know my neighbors' names and the names of their children.	5	4	3	2	1
64. Those I work with (or go to school with) I think of as friends.	5	4	3	2	1
65. I help only when others ask.	5	4	3	2	1
66. I am comfortable in unfamiliar settings and around unfamiliar people.	5	4	3	2	1
67. I have many friends who are not Christians or who do not regularly attend church.	5	4	3	2	1
68. I leave evangelism to the preacher and that committee.	5	4	3	2	1
69. The gospel is too important to let anything—even my own fears—stop me.	5	4	3	2	1
70. I invite people to church or special church events.	5	4	3	2	1
71. I follow that old advice of avoiding talking about politics or religion.	5	4	3	2	1
72. I pray for the unchurched.	5	4	3	2	1
73. I initiate conversations about what a difference Jesus has made in my life.	5	4	3	2	1
74. I know Jesus died for my sins, but explaining his sacrifice to other people is very hard.	5	4	3	2	1
75. I am not afraid to ask people if they want to have a relationship with Jesus.	5	4	3	2	1

76. On average, how many evangelistic opportunities do you experience in a month? \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B**  
**POST-APPLICATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

Jonathan Bynum  
1101 Pine Tree Road  
Longview, Texas 75604

December 2, 2006

Dear Friend,

I cannot thank you enough for your participation in my dissertation project, "Adding Life." This questionnaire is the last step in completing your involvement. Here is all you have to do:

1. Take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire on the next page.
2. Immediately return the questionnaire to Ann Spears. She will forward all the questionnaires to me and I will gratefully receive them.

I pray you have been blessed through your efforts. You have certainly blessed me.

Please know that my prayer has been that this project is only the beginning of developing effective evangelism training. Your responses will play a significant role not only in the study results but also in refining the project for use beyond this study.

If you are interested in the results of this research, a final copy of the dissertation will be given to the First United Methodist Church Theological Library.

Continue Adding Life,

Jonathan Bynum

## Post-Training Questionnaire

Participant Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please share your evaluation of Adding Life. Your comments are essential for assessing the usefulness of this training in the future. Feel free to add other pages, if necessary.**

1. Was this a positive experience for you? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. On average, how many times a week did you use the program? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Was the program easy to use? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. As you reflect on your experience, what was the most important insight you gained through participation in Adding Life? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
5. How has your faith journey been impacted by Adding Life? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
6. What are the strengths of the program? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
7. What are the weaknesses of the program? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
8. The length of the program should be: ☐ Shorter ☐ Longer ☐ Same
9. Are you more confident initiating relationships? ☐ Yes ☐ No
10. Do you think your personal relationship habits have changed as a result of Adding Life? ☐ Yes ☐ No
11. Are you more confident as an evangelist? ☐ Yes ☐ No
12. Are the people you committed to Adding Life closer to Jesus as a result of your efforts? ☐ Yes ☐ No
13. Please tell about an incident where you believe someone made a life change because of your Adding Life habits. Attach other pages, if necessary.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
14. On average, how many evangelistic opportunities do you experience in a month? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Would you recommend Adding Life for others? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Participant Number: _____	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16. God's grace and love in my life compels me to share my faith.	5	4	3	2	1
17. I am relaxed about introducing others to Jesus because the Holy Spirit has been at work ahead of me.	5	4	3	2	1
18. I want people to be converted so they won't go to hell.	5	4	3	2	1
19. Having someone pray the "Sinner's Prayer" is crossing the evangelism finish line.	5	4	3	2	1
20. I am a good friend.	5	4	3	2	1
21. I am easily distracted when others are talking to me.	5	4	3	2	1
22. I am an effective communicator.	5	4	3	2	1
23. I count my immediate neighbors as friends.	5	4	3	2	1
24. I rarely have close friends at work (or school); I like to keep that part of life separate.	5	4	3	2	1
25. I go out of my way to help others.	5	4	3	2	1
26. I am intentional about introducing myself to people I don't know.	5	4	3	2	1
27. All my friends are Christians.	5	4	3	2	1
28. I am an evangelist.	5	4	3	2	1
29. I am willing to risk negative reactions when I tell people about Jesus.	5	4	3	2	1
30. I'm not comfortable asking my friends to join me on Sundays.	5	4	3	2	1
31. Having conversations about spiritual matters with unchurched friends feels natural.	5	4	3	2	1
32. I pray with unchurched friends.	5	4	3	2	1
33. My life is my testimony, so I share my faith only when others ask me questions.	5	4	3	2	1
34. If someone asks, I can share the gospel in a clear, concise way.	5	4	3	2	1
35. I challenge people to make a decision about following Jesus.	5	4	3	2	1
36. Evangelism is essential for spiritual growth.	5	4	3	2	1
37. I play the primary role in evangelism; the Holy Spirit is in a supporting role.	5	4	3	2	1
38. I want people to know Jesus so they can be whole.	5	4	3	2	1
39. Evangelism is simply helping another person take the next step in their spiritual journey toward new life in Christ.	5	4	3	2	1
40. I have close friends, but my busy schedule limits how often I spend time with them.	5	4	3	2	1
41. Others have expressed appreciation for my ability to listen.	5	4	3	2	1
42. If I have something to say, I can get the message across.	5	4	3	2	1
43. I rarely invite neighbors to my home or visit theirs.	5	4	3	2	1
44. I like to spend time with my coworkers (or fellow students) outside of work (school) hours.	5	4	3	2	1
45. I look for the needs of others and try to meet those needs.	5	4	3	2	1
46. I try to avoid making eye contact or conversing with strangers, even in "safe" environs.	5	4	3	2	1
47. I deliberately make friends with those who do not follow Jesus.	5	4	3	2	1
48. I look for opportunities to tell people about Jesus.	5	4	3	2	1



Participant Number: _____	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49. I am reluctant to share my faith because I don't want to offend others.	5	4	3	2	1
50. I regularly ask people if they would be willing to go with me to church.	5	4	3	2	1
51. When others have questions about spiritual matters, I am willing to talk with them.	5	4	3	2	1
52. I forget to pray for friends' conversions.	5	4	3	2	1
53. My friends know how I came to know Jesus and how much joy following him brings.	5	4	3	2	1
54. I have a simple way of explaining why Jesus came into the world.	5	4	3	2	1
55. I can imagine few situations where I would be bold enough to ask someone if they are ready to follow Jesus.	5	4	3	2	1
56. I tell others about Jesus because God orders us to; not telling others is a sin.	5	4	3	2	1
57. As I consider my faith-sharing, I look for where the Holy Spirit is already making a difference.	5	4	3	2	1
58. The primary reason I want people to come to my church is to make my church grow.	5	4	3	2	1
59. Leading a friend toward Jesus is just as important as leading them to Jesus.	5	4	3	2	1
60. Friends are so important to me I make sure to go out of my way to spend time with them weekly.	5	4	3	2	1
61. I am a good listener.	5	4	3	2	1
62. I have trouble expressing my heart and mind.	5	4	3	2	1
63. I know my neighbors' names and the names of their children.	5	4	3	2	1
64. Those I work with (or go to school with) I think of as friends.	5	4	3	2	1
65. I help only when others ask.	5	4	3	2	1
66. I am comfortable in unfamiliar settings and around unfamiliar people.	5	4	3	2	1
67. I have many friends who are not Christians or who do not regularly attend church.	5	4	3	2	1
68. I leave evangelism to the preacher and that committee.	5	4	3	2	1
69. The gospel is too important to let anything—even my own fears—stop me.	5	4	3	2	1
70. I invite people to church or special church events.	5	4	3	2	1
71. I follow that old advice of avoiding talking about politics or religion.	5	4	3	2	1
72. I pray for the unchurched.	5	4	3	2	1
73. I initiate conversations about what a difference Jesus has made in my life.	5	4	3	2	1
74. I know Jesus died for my sins, but explaining his sacrifice to other people is very hard.	5	4	3	2	1
75. I am not afraid to ask people if they want to have a relationship with Jesus.	5	4	3	2	1

*Thank you for your completion of Adding Life and for your willingness to share your experiences.*

## APPENDIX C

### ADDING LIFE

#### SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Title:</b>	Introduction
<b>Theme:</b>	Evangelism is simply Adding Life
<b>Key point(s):</b>	Evangelism means “bringing good news,” bring news of victory
<b>Task:</b>	Pray, complete a module every day or two, keep it simple.
<b>Title:</b>	The Original
<b>Theme:</b>	Friendship with God
<b>Key point(s):</b>	Friendship is God’s idea because it is God’s nature.
<b>Task:</b>	Think about your two closest friends and how those friendships developed.
<b>Title:</b>	It’s a Love Thing
<b>Theme:</b>	Love is our motivation
<b>Key point(s):</b>	We are reaching people, not fulfilling a project. There is no way to draw close to God without drawing closer to others.
<b>Task:</b>	Pray for a loving motivation
<b>Title:</b>	This Ain’t Natural
<b>Theme:</b>	The Holy Spirit is essential for Adding Life
<b>Key point(s):</b>	Evangelism is a supernatural work of God. The Holy Spirit is the “advance team.”
<b>Task:</b>	Ask the Holy Spirit to be in partnership in Adding Life
<b>Title:</b>	You’ve Got an Image to Keep
<b>Theme:</b>	Reasons for being a Christian
<b>Key point(s):</b>	To be effective in Adding Life you have to understand why it matters.
<b>Task:</b>	List your top ten reasons for being a Christian
<b>Title:</b>	Friends Are Good for Nothing
<b>Theme:</b>	One anothering
<b>Key point(s):</b>	Friends are good for nothing. But what are friends for if you can’t use them. The New Testament calls us to give ourselves to one another
<b>Task:</b>	Smile

**Title:** Intentional Friends  
**Theme:** Making friends  
**Key point(s):** We must stay intentionally receptive of others so we can make new friends.  
**Task:** Ask name of anyone you can't call by name

**Title:** When Good Friendships Go Bad  
**Theme:** Using conflict to build trust  
**Key point(s):** Struggles in relationships are to be expected.  
 We must care for one another enough to speak the truth—in love.  
 This is hard work.  
 We must take the initiative.  
**Task:** Think through and script the steps of reconciliation

**Title:** What You Are *Really* Saying  
**Theme:** Body language  
**Key point(s):** Words are only a small part of our communication with others.  
 Jesus is God's body language.  
 We communicate better when we complete the message physically.  
**Task:** Practice your body language in front of a mirror

**Title:** A New Way of Life  
**Theme:** The goal of evangelistic relationship  
**Key point(s):** We seek shalom.  
 You can help your friend take the next step in his or her spiritual journey.  
**Task:** Answer the question: What do I want for my friend?

**Title:** Talk with Your Ears  
**Theme:** We must become good listeners to be good communicators  
**Key point(s):** A good listener is a special blessing.  
 By listening we better understand how to share the gospel with our friend.  
 Listening takes practice.  
**Task:** Have a listening conversation

**Title:** Small Talk's Big Role  
**Theme:** Small talk is essential conversation  
**Key point(s):** Small talk helps us establish connections with others.  
**Task:** Make some small talk

**Title:** Take Time to Make Sound Investments  
**Theme:** Time  
**Key point(s):** Building relationships takes time.  
**Task:** Schedule time with someone you want to know better

**Title:** Finding the Right Words  
**Theme:** Communication styles and barriers  
**Key point(s):** You have a primary conversation style.  
 Use your style to maximize your effectiveness.  
 Be aware of the obstacles you are prone to put in the way of conversations.  
**Task:** Identify your conversational strengths and weaknesses.

**Title:** Lighten Up  
**Theme:** Humor  
**Key point(s):** Adding Life should bring joy.  
 Humor opens up conversations.  
 Learn to laugh and to make others laugh.  
**Task:** Learn two new jokes that make you laugh—and then pass them on

**Title:** Questions Anyone?  
**Theme:** Asking questions builds rapport  
**Key point(s):** Asking simple questions and listening are necessary skills to get to know another person.  
**Task:** Have a conversation by only asking questions

**Title:** Adding to the Confusion  
**Theme:** Misconceptions about evangelism  
**Key point(s):** Our culture is ripe for Adding Life because people are open to conversations about spirituality.  
**Task:** Ask someone: What do you think of Christians?

**Title:** Generational Shift  
**Theme:** Postmodernism  
**Key point(s):** The mind set of today's young people comes from a very different perspective on truth, reason, and relationships.  
 We don't have to "fix" people who are different from us.  
**Task:** Identify your perspective and listen for people who differ from you

**Title:** What Are They Afraid Of?  
**Theme:** Fears of the unchurched  
**Key point(s):** Church can be scary for those who have never been.  
 We can help people confront their fears.  
**Task:** Ask an unchurched friend: What is the scariest thing about the church?

**Title:** A Foreigner Does Not Live Next Door  
**Theme:** Getting to know the people around us  
**Key point(s):** Can you answer the question, "Who is my neighbor?"  
 We are called to be social butterflies.  
 We need to develop neighbor-friendly habits.  
**Task:** Introduce yourself to a neighbor

**Title:** It's Kind of Like This  
**Theme:** Kindness  
**Key point(s):** To be kind is to have a Jesus encounter.  
**Task:** Go out of your way for one person

**Title:** Strange People Make the Most Interesting Friends  
**Theme:** Strangers  
**Key point(s):** Adding Life calls us to initiate conversations with strangers.  
**Task:** Introduce yourself to someone you've never seen before today

**Title:** Take a Walk on the Wild Side  
**Theme:** We need unchurched friends  
**Key point(s):** Christian friends and the Christian ghetto can be obstacles to Adding Life.  
 Jesus commissions us to "Go."  
 We can influence unchurched people when we are in relationship with them.  
**Task:** Make an inventory of your friends and count the number who are unchurched

**Title:** Don't Change Your Hairstyle  
**Theme:** Adding Lifestyles  
**Key point(s):** You are an evangelist.  
 Friends are most effective in drawing people to church.  
 The Adding Lifestyles are in-your-face, in-your-head, in-your-story, in-your-life, in-your invitation, in-your-service.  
 One size does not fit all when it comes to Adding Life.  
**Task:** Identify your Adding Lifestyle

**Title:** Come Out from Behind the Obstacles  
**Theme:** Overcoming obstacles people throw in the way of Adding Life  
**Key point(s):** People will have doubts, questions, and challenges.  
 Don't get frustrated that they are trying to comprehend what it means to follow Jesus.  
**Task:** Talk to the biggest doubter you know

**Title:** The Easiest Thing  
**Theme:** Making invitations  
**Key point(s):** A simple invitation is a powerful tool.  
 Make personal, simple, specific invitations.  
**Task:** Invite someone to your home or to your church

**Title:** Don't Be Afraid of What Matters Most  
**Theme:** Spiritual conversations  
**Key point(s):** People want to talk about God, but they need a person who is "safe" to talk to.  
 Easy answers are not satisfying for sincere inquiries.  
**Task:** Listen for spiritual conversation opportunities and be open to engaging in them

**Title:** The Quiet Conversation  
**Theme:** Prayer  
**Key point(s):** This is a partnership—the Lord has chosen from the beginning to work through people like you and me.  
 Before you talk to people about God, talk to God about people.  
**Task:** At a restaurant, before you pray for your meal ask the person waiting on you if there is anything they need prayer for?

**Title:** Getting Personal  
**Theme:** Your own story  
**Key point(s):** People love stories and connect with our personal gospel stories, our stories of Jesus encounters.  
**Task:** Practice telling your story

**Title:** Good News Travels Fast  
**Theme:** Summarizing the gospel  
**Key point(s):** Initially, people are content with a simple description of the gospel.  
 Jesus is attractive—you don't have to dress him up.  
 Use a model that is meaningful to you.  
**Task:** Practice explaining the gospel in a clear, concise way

**Title:** What? Huh? Umm?  
**Theme:** Dealing with the tough questions  
**Key point(s):** Questions about God show an interest in God.  
You don't have to have all the answers—just be honest and work on it.  
**Task:** Write down the questions you have struggled with or you have heard

**Title:** Putting It All Together  
**Theme:** Summarizing Adding Life  
**Key point(s):** You will be Adding Life when you are yourself.  
Jesus will use anyone anytime anywhere with anybody as long as you make yourself available to him.  
**Task:** Don't stop

## APPENDIX D

## PARTICIPANTS' GENERAL DATA

Participant*	Birkman primary color	Birkman secondary color	Gender	Age	Marital status	Education	Years as Christian	Faith influencer	Years as FUMC member	Church visit influencer	Completed training
1	Blue	Green	F	59	Married	College	45	Other: Pastor	5	Child	Yes
2	Red	Yellow	F	63	Married	College	50	Other: Grandparent	12	Parent	Yes
3	Yellow	Blue	M	69	Married	Graduate	65	Parent	12	Parent	Yes
4	Blue	Yellow	F	57	Widowed	High school	4	Other: Lawn man	2	Drive-by	Yes
5	Yellow	Blue	M	48	Married	Graduate	30	Parent	7	Friend	Yes
6	Red	Yellow	F	60	Divorced	High school	55	Parent	2	Parent	Yes
7	Blue	Yellow	F	63	Married	Graduate	56	Parent	2	Friend	Yes
8	Red	Blue	F	57	Married	Graduate	45	Parent	16	TV/Radio	Yes
9	Yellow	Blue	F	65	Married	Graduate	50	Parent	8	Drive-by	Yes
10	Yellow	Blue	F	75	Married	College	75	Parent	54	Friend	Yes
11	Red	Yellow	F	58	Single	High school	52	Parent	3	Drive-by	Yes
12	Yellow	Blue	F	32	Married	High school	12	Other: Pastor	12	Parent	Yes
13	Green	Blue	F	59	Married	College	59	Parent	13	Friend	Yes
14	Blue	Yellow	F		Single	College	22	Friend	5	Parent	No
15	Yellow	Blue	F	19	Single	College	11	Other: Grandparent	3	Aunt	No
16	Blue	Yellow	M	67	Single	College	56	Parent	7	TV/Radio	No
17	Yellow	Blue	F	56	Single	High School	56	Parent	22	Parent	No
18	Green	Blue	M	69	Married		31	Friend	19	TV/Radio	No
19	Green	Blue	F	69	Single	College	67	Parent	35	Spouse	No
20	Red	Blue	M	34	Married	College	20	Other: Grandparent	12	Other: Girlfriend	No
21	Red	Blue	F	51	Divorced	Graduate	42	Parent	2	Friend	No

\*The numbers here do not correspond with the numbers assigned for the training.



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