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ABSTRACT

USING ILLUSTRATIONS AND STORYTELLING VIA
INCARNATIONAL MINISTRY TO REACH
POST-CHRISTIAN YOUNG ADULTS

by

David J. Resendes

Adviser: Jeffrey Potts

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: USING ILLUSTRATIONS AND STORYTELLING VIA INCARNATIONAL
MINISTRY TO REACH POST-CHRISTIAN YOUNG ADULTS

Name of researcher: David J. Resendes

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Jeffrey Potts, DMin

Date completed: October 2016

Problem

Post-Christian young adults are generally not interested in Christianity and therefore are unlikely to attend church or hear preaching. Therefore, a preaching strategy must be developed and implemented to reach post-Christian young adults in their setting.

Method

The subjects of the study were 24 young adult males from the community who attended the weekly open-gym basketball outreach. They ranged in age from 16 to 34 and were of various races and some of mixed race. All were born and raised in the United States and spoke English. Of these subjects only two were from the church I pastor. One was the youth leader and the other a recently baptized former post-Christian who first

started coming to church via the basketball outreach. There were four groups among the subjects: post-Christians, Christians, individualized Christians who practice their spirituality on a regular basis but only attend church occasionally or never, and non-practicing Christians who do not practice their spirituality on a regular basis, even if they attend church. A comparison group from my church was used for part of the study.

The intervention began by being incarnational with the target group at the basketball outreach. I played basketball, socialized, and ministered to their needs. Then I invited participants to the project talks, which were based on felt needs, to further build relationships and trust. Next came follow-up talks to present Christ and spirituality. Three surveys and a focus group evaluated the effectiveness of my intervention, which consisted of 15 talks over almost five months: November 3, 2015 to March 22, 2016.

Results

There were six post-Christian young adults in the basketball group and all responded positively to my project talks, including the illustrations and storytelling, and all were interested in follow-up talks. They were also more favorable to all questions on the post-presentation survey than any young adult or adult from the comparison church group, except the post-Christian young adult church group, which was able to imagine the stories more. Also, all the young adults from the basketball group marked “strongly agree” on the post-presentation survey at a higher rate for all questions than all young adults or adults from the church group. In addition, 98% of the basketball group was interested in follow-up talks, but only 78% of church adults and 65% of church young adults were.

The pre-presentation survey revealed that post-Christian young adults from the basketball group preferred face-to-face communication and opening up to an adult female slightly above an adult male, as well as someone not their parent/legal guardian. Also, the majority of participants from the basketball group, including post-Christians, reported watching TV/movies and using internet and a cell phone every day. Thus, participants were likely to be visual with shorter attention spans, comfortable with story as a teaching medium, and used to having things at their fingertips, including a vast amount of information.

The focus group feedback from all participants in the basketball group, including post-Christians, was almost all positive, except for a few minor dislikes.

After attending the follow-up talks, during which I presented Christ, all post-Christians from the basketball group made spiritual decisions, including one who did not attend any project talks and only one follow-up talk. However, the three post-Christians who made the most spiritual decisions attended the most. They also attended the most project talks. One of these participants attended the majority of the project talks, but only one follow-up talk and the review. Although he made many spiritual decisions, he did not accept Christ. In addition, after attending the follow-up talks and filling out the follow-up survey, even though all six expressed belief in God's love and four believe in Jesus, that God will help them, and that God created them, only three confessed their sins and asked God for forgiveness and are involved in prayer and Bible study, and only two accepted Christ. These two who accepted Christ also attended the most follow-up talks. Of these two, one only attended two project talks and the other only three.

Conclusions

My talks were specifically geared for the post-Christian young adults in the basketball group. The results reveal that my project talks appealed to this group. This seems related to their being visual and comfortable with story as a teaching medium. The small group format, face-to-face communication, participant involvement in illustrations, and shorter talks seem to have helped reach them. Had I been an older female, they may have had a slightly easier time opening up.

The results also reveal that my follow-up talks were effective in leading all post-Christian young adults from the basketball group to make spiritual decisions, even though Christian belief did not necessarily translate into Christian practice for some. In addition, the more they attended the project and follow-up talks, the more likely they were to make more spiritual decisions. Also, the more follow-up talks they came to, the more likely they were to accept Christ, even if they only came to two or three project talks. In fact, the two post-Christians who accepted Christ were ready for spiritual things with less project talks. Thus, although building up during the project talks was important before sharing Christ, ample time to hear about Christ during the follow-up talks was more important and an indicator of whether or not they would accept Christ.

Therefore, it may be more productive in the future to begin with less project talks and then go into the follow-up talks and present Christ. This will also shorten the overall length of the series and may help more participants attend more follow-up talks, rather than just more project talks. Furthermore, I used teaching methods that connect with today's post-Christian young adults. However, culture changes and in the future other teaching methods may be better suited.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

USING ILLUSTRATIONS AND STORYTELLING VIA
INCARNATIONAL MINISTRY TO REACH
POST-CHRISTIAN YOUNG ADULTS

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

by

David J. Resendes

October 2016

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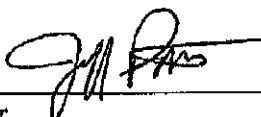
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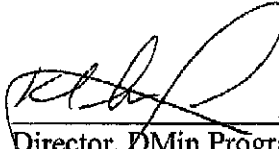
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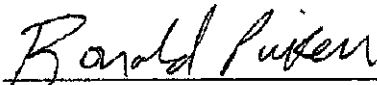
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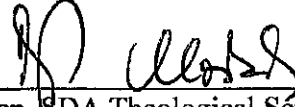
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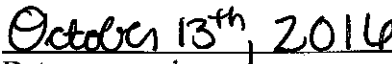
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Date approved

To my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ whom God the Father sent in the flesh to fill us with the knowledge of salvation and the power of the Holy Spirit. Thank you for guiding me to and through this Doctor of Ministry preaching concentration!

May You grant me the ear of the learned that I may have the tongue of the learned.

May You grant me power to study Your Word that I may share Your Word.

May I preach with the filling and not just the feeling.

May the word of my mouth reach the heart, may the Word of your Spirit reach the soul.

May I be a powerhouse for good by being a powerhouse for God.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Besides being thankful to God, I would like to give special thanks to the following people for being instrumental in this project. I am truly grateful for each one. Ana Resendes, my wife, for her prayers, love, support, help, companionship, and patience while I was studying instead of being with her or taking care of other things; Carlos and Mary Lou Resendes, my parents, for their prayers, guidance, love, and always encouraging me to go to school ever since I was little; Daniel Resendes, my brother, for making me laugh, being my friend, and being someone I can always talk to about life and guitars; Dr. Hyveth Williams for organizing a great preaching cohort and program, lining up great professors, and challenging, encouraging, and motivating us to excel and be great; Each professor during the four years of intensives for their knowledge and teaching; Dr. Bill Knott for mentoring me early on in my doctoral studies, encouraging me with my project title, and taking the time to offer advice and support amidst his busy schedule; Dr. David Penno for answering many e-mails, offering much advice, and helping with editing early on; Oklahoma Conference for allowing me to take time to do my course work and study during the first two years; Northern California Conference for doing the same and also sponsoring me during the final years of my studies; Ardmore, Oklahoma Church for being supportive during my first two years of study; Stockton Central Church, Stockton, California for being supportive during my last years of study, giving me a great place to implement my project, and all the encouragement and prayers; Each doctoral student in my cohort for encouraging and supporting one another,

especially those in my work group: Bertrum McGregor, Jacqueline Peart, Dan Schiffbauer, and Dan Towar, thank you; Samuel and Angelica Villamizar and their two children, family friends, for hosting me in their home, transportation, and feeding me during my first intensive; Daniel and Isabel Verduzco, my brother-in-law and sister-in-law, for transportation to and from the airport, driving me places, feeding me, and hosting me during my second intensive and for arranging accommodations for me for my last two intensives; Matt Belonio for allowing me to room at his place for my last two intensives; Dr. Paul Brantley for giving me a reference list of valuable resources and studies; Dr. Jeffrey Potts, my adviser, for advising me, reading over my work, making recommendations, encouraging me, giving me insights, and visiting with me and praying with me; Dr. Ronald Pickell, my mentor and second reader, for mentoring me, talking with me over the phone, planning, encouraging me, meeting together to think and pray, and reading over my work and making recommendations; Heather Robinson, Counselor at San Joaquin Delta Community College, for giving me great insights into areas that are of interest to young adults and recommending a number of topics along with Dr. Ronald Pickell from which I chose four to be the topics for my first four project talks; Dan Baker, Heather Robinson's colleague, for helping me brainstorm on my project over lunch; Dr. Scott Ward for allowing me to do ministry with him as I looked for a place to conduct my project and for putting me in touch with Heather Robinson; Context support group: Steve Allred, Dr. Del Dunavant, Walter Groff, Dr. Ronald Pickell, Ana Resendes, and Dr. Scott Ward, for helping me think through my project and offering valuable insights; Michael Eddens, our church's youth leader, for running the basketball outreach at church, doing a great job ministering to the guys, lending his support by being present

during many of my talks and setting an example and participating, and for the many conversations with one of the post-Christians who ended up accepting Christ as a result of Michael's influence and my project; Louie Varela, for his presence, participation, and feedback at my talks as a recently baptized former post-Christian and for befriending one of the post-Christians who ended up accepting Christ; Linda Bauer for her expertise in editing my project manuscript and the needed final touches; Each participant in my project from the basketball group and the comparison church group: for being willing to participate and offering the feedback needed to conduct my project. Thank you!

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Description of the Ministry Context

I conducted my project in the fellowship hall of the Stockton Central Seventh-day Adventist Church in Stockton, CA. The participants were primarily comprised of those attending a weekly basketball outreach for young adults run by the youth leader. This outreach is possible because the fellowship hall has a basketball court. The young adults who play basketball there are from the surrounding community of Stockton.

Stockton's population is about 300,000 and the city is located about 50 miles south of Sacramento and about 72 miles east of Oakland. There are a diversity of cultures, races, and ethnicities. There are two universities and a few colleges, and plenty of high schools, meaning plenty of young adults to minister to.

In addition to conducting my project in the fellowship hall, I included a comparison group consisting of the church's congregation to provide data to compare the young adult group to. The congregation is English speaking, multi-cultural, and comprised of professional and working class backgrounds. The church has many skilled and willing leaders and is located in a city in need of community service and evangelism. Furthermore, the church is located in an inner-city neighborhood, which brings these needs into clearer view. Because of this, the church has a large community service program providing groceries and clothing to those in need, as well as a homeless feeding

ministry. The members are also involved in evangelism. The church is comprised of a well-maintained church building and fellowship hall. A Cambodian group, which has its own pastor, meets for Sabbath School and church service; a lay-led Chinese group meets for the church service only; and a lay-led Spanish group meets occasionally for Sabbath School only. I consider it a blessing to be pastoring this church since January of 2013.

Statement of the Problem

Concerning American young adults, in 1960 more than 90% identified as Christian, but now that number has dropped to 62% (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011, p. 171). Since the early 1970s, neither mainstream Protestantism nor Evangelicals in America have been increasing in number, especially among young adults (Wuthnow, as cited in Allred, 2011, pp. 2-3). Those between the ages of 18 to 29 are missing from most American congregations (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011, p. 22).

Furthermore, despite the fact that the majority of today's young adults attended a Christian church during their high school years, fewer than one out of ten mention faith as their top priority and they are less likely to return to church later when they become parents, as compared to previous generations (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, p. 23). In addition, the vast majority of those outside the Christian church are *de-churched* young people, meaning they left the church (p. 74).

Research has also been conducted specifically on American Adventist young people. The North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists commissioned a study by Barna Group, which found that Adventist Millennials hold six perceptual grievances (see page 51) against the Adventist church to an even greater extent when compared to national norms (Jenkin & Martin, 2014, p. 6). It is estimated that at least 40 to 50% of

Adventist teenagers in the U.S. are essentially leaving the church by their mid-20s (Dudley, 2000, as cited in Jacobs et al., n.d., p. 4).

Paas (2011) explains, “Where many people used to invoke Christian teachings to motivate their own behaviour and decisions, but they do no longer so, a post-Christian society is in the making” (p. 11) even if they do not formally leave the church.

In terms of reaching post-Christian young adults, there is a cultural gap even between them and those who lead youth oriented worship services (Krum, 2005, p. 27). In general, contemporary worship will not work in drawing this group to church (Dick & Dick, 2001, p. 157; Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, p. 144), neither will flashy and cutting edge Christian promotions, such as websites, advertisements, programs, flyers, posters, and radio spots (Hill, 2011, p. 29). However, as Johnston (2009) emphasizes, this does not mean today’s young adults are not interested in spirituality, but that the Christian church is not the first place they are turning to for spiritual guidance (p. 5).

From secular business to the Christian church, people are wondering how best to engage with the Millennial generation (Jenkin & Martin, 2014, p. 6). Considering that “only six percent of even the most youthful congregations have something for single adults” (Wuthnow, 2007, as cited in Lindsey, 2013, p. 77), there is an enormous need to develop a strategy to reach, not simply single young adults, but post-Christian young adults in general. This is especially true, considering it is between the ages of 18 and 29, young adult years, that people are more likely to switch faiths (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011, p. 32).

Therefore, although the “why” of preaching remains the same—to present Christ and His gospel to the hearers—because post-Christian young adults are unlikely to be

found weekly in church listening to the traditional preacher with the traditional preaching of the Bible, the “who,” “what,” “when,” “where,” and “how” of traditional preaching is rendered ineffective. However, my research seeks to present evidence for effectively reaching post-Christian young adults who do not attend church by using illustrations and storytelling via incarnational ministry.

Statement of the Task

The task of this project was to develop and implement a preaching strategy using illustrations and storytelling via incarnational ministry to reach post-Christian young adults in their setting, because they are unlikely to attend church. Therefore, this preaching strategy was implemented in the church fellowship hall where Christian, backslidden Christian, and post-Christian young adults play basketball on a weekly basis. This was achieved via a series of talks geared toward post-Christian young adults. The effectiveness of this strategy was determined by having the audience participate in a pre-presentation survey, post-presentation survey, a focus group, and a follow-up survey. A church’s fellowship hall generally will not work to reach post-Christian young adults, but in this context it did.

Delimitations

The number of subjects recruited was limited so I could have about eight per talk. This number was based on available funding to offer a twenty-dollar incentive per participant per talk. The need for this incentive was based on the difficulty in finding post-Christian young adults willing to participate, the fact that they were recruited from people I came in contact with, and time constraints.

The research was limited to seven project talks, seven follow-up talks, and a review the following week. It was conducted weekly after the basketball outreach, as this time would work well, especially for those playing basketball. Those playing basketball made up the majority of participants.

Description of the Project Process

This introductory chapter is followed by Chapter 2, which presents a study of the biblical and theological foundations for using illustrations and storytelling via incarnational ministry to reach post-Christian young adults. It draws insights from the earthly sanctuary, Christ's use of parables, Christ's incarnation, Christ's method in converting Paul, and Paul's theology and evangelism methodology.

Chapter 3 is a review of select literature dealing with the project topic. It begins by explaining the mindset of post-Christian young adults, which sets the stage for why incarnational ministry is a must, as well as the effectiveness of using storytelling and illustrations in reaching this group.

Chapter 4 outlines the intervention used in the project and follow-up, as well as that of the pre-work leading up to the project. In order to accomplish this, the chapter is divided into six sections, each answering a different question. Chapter 5 then recounts how this intervention was implemented step-by-step.

Chapter 6 presents findings from the pre-presentation survey, post-presentation survey, focus group, and follow-up survey. It also relates my personal development as a result of the project process and offers recommendations based on the research findings.

Definition of Terms

Imaginative storytelling. Storytelling is the preservation and communication of ideas, images, motives, and emotions that are universal (Cassady, 1990, p. 5). Storytelling is a regular form of daily communication, but also an advanced method of communicating both publicly and one-on-one (Walsh, 2014, pp. 13-14). *Imaginative storytelling* refers to the ability to engage the hearer's imagination during the storytelling by the way the story is told. This requires the teller to first "see the story" and then descriptively tell what was seen, thus also engaging the imagination of the listener (Arthurs, 2007, pp. 51, 77, 98; Galli & Larson, 1994, p. 86; Lewis, 2009; Lischer, 2002, pp. 405, 407; Walsh, 2014, p. 142). Considering the parable was Jesus' predominant teaching form (Dillard & Longman, 1994, as cited in Greidanus, 1999, p. 265), Jesus' use of parables is the key example of imaginative storytelling as preaching.

Incarnational ministry. It is based on the model and method of ministry found in Christ's incarnation (Iselin & Meteyard, 2010, p. 36), where Jesus gave up His privileged position in heaven to come to this earth and live among the poor with a message of hope and salvation (Tapia, 1994, p. 50). In Christ's incarnation, we find God's love manifested up close in a culturally particular, person-to-person way (Billings, 2004, p. 188). Implementing this model today, one would reach a target group by living among them and adopting some similar habits. These similar habits may be adopted from such areas as appearance, language, social environment, learning style, or some other area of culture. However, incarnational ministry's goal is not to become completely *one* with the target audience, but to be *with* them and *for* them (Billings, 2004, p. 188) and develop relationships, which helps break down walls, in order to share the gospel (Frost, as cited

in Robertson, 2008, p. 249). This approach facilitates the communication of the gospel to those who would likely reject the message if they did not first accept the messenger.

Parable. A short and simple story or figure of speech that illustrates truth by comparison or example from daily life (Youngblood, 1995, p. 943). Some parables function as analogies or allegories (Stiller, 2005, pp. 10-12). Nichol explains that in literary form, it has been defined as an extended metaphor (1980, vol. 5, p. 204).

Post-Christian. A time period *after* Christianity, meaning a time period following the decline of the importance of Christianity in a region or society (Meacham, 2009, para. 9). A post-Christian society is in the making when people no longer base their behavior and decisions on Christian teachings (Paas, 2011, p. 11). The term post-Christian is used by many writers to describe an increasingly multi-religious Western society (Murray, 2009, p. 205). Therefore, post-Christians are apt to have a “pick-and-mix-religion” (Hamilton, as cited in Houtman & Aupers, 2007, p. 306). The main tenet of post-Christian spirituality is the belief that in the deepest layers of the self the “divine spark” is there waiting to be stirred up and succeed the socialized self (Houtman & Aupers, 2007, p. 307).

Postmodern. A new time period that has moved away from modern philosophical underpinnings to ideas that fundamentally alter how one thinks about what is true (Stiller, 2005, p. 1). This does not mean that what we have known as modern no longer exists, but that we are flowing from one movement into another (pp. 1-2). Instead of holding to a single, universal worldview and moral standard, postmoderns see all religions as equal (Center for Secular and Postmodern Studies, n.d.a, para. 1). They are relativists or pluralists (McGrath, 2013, p. 191). Postmodernity’s leading general feature is the deliberate and systematic abandonment of centralizing narratives (p. 190).

Sensory engaging andragogies. When communicating information in a way that

multiple senses are engaged, people learn more than if just the hearing is engaged (Arthurs, 2007, p. 167; Dwyer, 1978, as cited in Arthurs, 2007, p. 167; Hussein, 2010, p. 27; Magennis & Farrell, 2007, table 1, para. 34). In the Old Testament, God designed Israelite worship to engage all five senses for the purpose of learning (Kidder, 2009, p. 85). Andragogies are teaching methods geared towards adults, whereas pedagogies are teaching methods geared toward children. Sensory engaging andragogies are teaching methods designed for adults that engage the senses for learning purposes. Sensory engaging andragogies function as illustrations.

Young Adults. Those roughly between the ages of 16 and 35 years (The Barna Group, 2007, para. 1; Dixit, Dixit, & Stiemsma, 2016, p. 13; Johnston, 2009, p. 9; Kimball, 2003, p. 40; Leung, 2009, para. 3).

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Today, in the Western world of the 2010s, post-Christianity is affecting America and its young adults (Mohler, as cited in Meacham, 2009, para. 2; The Barna Group, 2007, para. 1). A post-Christian young adult is a young adult raised in a culture or environment that has forsaken Christianity, and as a result, his or her perspective of Christ and Christianity is generally negative. Although one would not classify anyone as post-Christian during the time of early Christianity, there were also young adults with a negative perspective of Christ and Christianity. Likely, the most well-known was the apostle Paul, before his conversion. How did Jesus reach him? Jesus used sensory engaging andragogies and imaginative storytelling in the context of incarnational ministry.

This chapter begins by laying a biblical and theological foundation for sensory engaging andragogies, imaginative storytelling, and incarnational ministry. It then ties these three areas into how Jesus reached Paul. It concludes by examining Paul's theology and methodology, which resulted from the impact of his conversion experience, as well as later revelations through Jesus Christ.

Sensory Engaging Andragogies

Sensory engaging andragogies are teaching methods designed for adults that engage the senses for learning purposes. Sensory engaging andragogies function as illustrations. An examination of biblical sensory engaging andragogies will be presented based upon a study of the Garden of Eden and subsequent earthly sanctuaries.

The Divine Orchard

God's created works teach us about God (Ps 19:1; Rom 1:19-20). This was especially true concerning God's created works of nature in a sinless world (Gen 1-2). In this description of the earth in its sinless state is found a garden specially planted by God in Eden (Gen 2:8). Both the man and the woman were placed in this garden (Gen 2:8, 22; 3:1-6). Although other vegetation would have grown in the garden, Genesis 2:9 only mentions trees. The description is that of a Divine orchard. It is a garden of trees.

Genesis 2:9 and 3:3 mention that both the Tree of Life and Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil were in the *midst* of the garden. By design, the Divine orchard centered around two trees. Although the command was given not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen 2:17), it was placed in the garden to offer the man and the woman the freedom of choice to obey or disobey God's command. It was placed in the *midst* of the garden, because at the center of man's relationship with God is the freedom to choose or reject that relationship. Furthermore, it was placed in the midst of the garden with the Tree of Life. Revelation 22:14-15 explains that the right to eat from the Tree of Life is directly related to obedience to God's commandments and those who are disobedient are not given access to the Tree of Life. This is the same scenario that Genesis 3:23-24 describes as having taken place with Adam and Eve.

The phrase *tree of life* is only found in the books of Genesis, Proverbs, and Revelation. The Bible presents the Tree of Life as being both literal and symbolic. Although referred to in the books of Genesis and Revelation, the overt symbolism is brought out in the book of Proverbs. The term *tree of life* is used to represent the fruit of righteousness (11:30), the fulfillment of a desired hope (13:12), and a wholesome tongue (15:4). However, the first representation given to the term is that of wisdom (3:18). In the first three chapters of Proverbs, wisdom is associated with the fear of the Lord (1:7), instruction (v. 7), and commands (2:1-2). The Tree of Life also relates to *life*, which in the book of Proverbs is associated with obedience to law and commands (3:1-2).

Scripture does not offer any overt examples of the symbolism behind the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, as it does with the Tree of Life. However, what is clear upon the study of Scripture is the much deeper symbolism behind both trees and their juxtaposition one against the other.

The Tree of Life offers eternal life (Gen 3:22). Jesus offers eternal life (John 3:14-16, 36; 4:14; 5:21, 24, 40; 6:27, 40, 47; 10:10, 28; 11:25; 14:6; 17:2). The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil offers the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 3:5). Satan offers the knowledge of good and evil, but even the knowledge of good is used for evil (Matt 4:3-10; 2 Cor 11:13-15; 2 Thess 2:9). Both trees were in the midst of the Divine orchard. Both Jesus and Satan had access to the man and the woman there. It was also at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil that Satan spoke to Eve through the serpent (Gen 3:1-5). However, it was not enough for the man and the woman *not* to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. In order to have eternal life, they also had to eat from the Tree of Life (Gen 3:22). These two trees provided two different relationship

options. One option was to acquire the knowledge of both good and evil through a relationship with Satan. The other option was to acquire life through a relationship with Jesus.

In the beginning, the Tree of Life served as a representation of Christ and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil as a representation of Satan (John 1:1-3). These spiritual truths were taught using sensory engaging andragogies. The Bible says that all of the trees in the garden were “pleasant to the sight and good for food” (Gen 2:9) (all Scripture quotations are from the NKJV unless otherwise noted). The trees themselves and the fruit they bore engaged all the senses. This also included the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

It was possible for the man and the woman to see the trees and the fruit, smell their fragrance, and touch them. It was possible for them to hear the leaves rustle in the breeze, hear the crisp fruit crunch with each bite, as well as taste the flavor of the fruit. However, the only tree God forbade the man to eat from was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen 2:16-17). Thus, God taught Adam and Eve about Christ and Satan through two trees using sensory engaging andragogies.

The Eden Sanctuary

After the first sin, Genesis 3:23 tells us God drove out the man from the Garden of Eden. The Hebrew word used here for garden means an area of ground “protected by a wall or a hedge,” as Harris, Gleason, and Waltke point out (1980, vol. 1, 73). Genesis 3:24 teaches that this walled garden had a guarded entrance on the eastside. Scripture mentions no other entrance to the Garden of Eden.

This entrance was guarded by cherubim (Gen 3:24). Cherubim is the plural form

of the word cherub. A cherub was the name given to various representations of angelic beings (Harris, Gleason, & Waltke, 1980, vol. 1, כְּרֻבִים). Genesis 3:24 says there were cherubim. This means more than one angel was guarding the entrance, yet the verse mentions only one flaming sword. Why would only one angel have a sword? Would the other angel somehow be defenseless if Adam and Eve tried to force themselves into the garden? No. Angels do not need swords to defend themselves against human beings. The Bible tells us angels excel in strength (Ps 103:20).

To understand this verse one must understand the symbolism behind the sword. The word of God is symbolized by a sword (Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12). The sword of God's word protects His people from the devil and his followers. Also, in some cultures a machete is similar to a sword. It clears the path, so one can see the path and not stray. Not only does the sword of God's word protect His people and clear a path for them, it is also a lamp to one's feet and a light to one's path (Ps 119:105).

In addition, the written word is a revelation of the Living Word, Jesus Christ (John 1:1). The sword in Genesis 3:24 burns with fire, but is not consumed. This is reminiscent of Exodus 3:2 where God manifests Himself in a bush that burns with fire, but is not consumed. Exodus 3:13-14 and John 8:58 explain that it was Jesus who spoke to Moses out of the midst of the burning bush. Consequently, Jesus was the one who led the children of Israel in a pillar of fire by night. Jesus was the one who gave the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai. Jesus was the one who manifested His Shekinah glory between the cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant. Similarly, Jesus was the one who manifested His Shekinah glory between the cherubim at the entrance to the Garden of Eden, which looked like a flaming sword turning every way (Nichol, 1953, vol. 1, p. 236;

White, 1890/2002, pp. 62, 83-84). The Garden of Eden was the first earthly sanctuary.

The comparison between the wilderness Sanctuary and the Garden of Eden is striking. Just as sacrifice for sin was offered outside the Holy Places of the wilderness Sanctuary in the outer court, so too, outside the Garden of Eden, Abel brought his offering for sin (Gen 4:4). The only entrance to both the wilderness Sanctuary and the Garden of Eden was on the east. Just as inside the Ark of the Covenant there was God's Law: you shall not kill, you shall not commit adultery, etc., so too, inside the garden there was God's Law: You shall not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Inside the Ark of the Covenant was the bowl of manna and inside the garden was the fruit of the Tree of Life. In both the wilderness Sanctuary and the Garden of Eden, those who offered sacrifice understood it pointed forward to the Messiah. The flaming sword of Genesis is Jesus Christ manifesting Himself as the Word of God. The Garden of Eden was the first earthly sanctuary.

Also, before driving them out of the garden, Genesis 3:21 tells us that God made tunics of skin and clothed them. These animal skin garments imply that a sacrifice was made and that the sacrificial system, pointing forward to Christ, was inaugurated by God Himself. These animal skin garments represented the righteousness of Christ that had been given to Adam and Eve. Before driving them out, the Lord gave them the hope and assurance that they had been forgiven and that their relationship with God had been restored. This restoration was not because of anything they had done or even because they themselves had asked, but because of God's great love for His children.

After driving them out, Christ, who is the way (John 14:6) and the door (John 10:9), manifested His divine presence at the entrance of the garden, not to keep Adam

and Eve from the Tree of Life, in terms of a punishment, but to keep them from eating its fruit and perpetuating an existence of sin and misery (White, 1890/2002, p. 60). Christ's presence at the entrance to the garden was also symbolic, showing that the only way to the *literal* Tree of Life was through the *symbolic* Tree of Life—Jesus Christ. Thus Christ's presence at the door to the garden was to ensure they would be able to partake of the literal Tree of Life after the resurrection by first partaking of the symbolic Tree of Life before the resurrection.

Before sin, as well as after sin when it functioned as the first earthly sanctuary, the Garden of Eden taught truth through sensory engaging andragogies. This is also true of subsequent sanctuaries.

Subsequent Earthly Sanctuaries

Through the wilderness Sanctuary, God taught truth through what was seen by such things as the furniture, colors, sacrifices, and priest's garments. The hearing was engaged with such sounds as the sacrifice of animals, the confession of sin, the tinkling of the bells on the high priest's robe, and the teaching of the priests. The sense of smell took in the burnt offerings, the showbread, as well as the burning olive oil and incense, for example. The sense of touch felt such things as the sacrifice as it was held or led to the sanctuary. One could also hold on to the horns of the altar for refuge. The taste was engaged when eating part of the offering.

The subsequent Temple of Solomon, and later Zerubbabel, was also built to worship God and carry on the sacrificial system. As before, truth was taught using sensory engaging andragogies.

In John 2:19-21, Jesus describes His body as a temple. Jesus' whole life was one

continual act of worshipping God, and Jesus Himself was the sacrifice to which all the sacrifices in the sacrificial system pointed. Like all the other sanctuaries or temples, Jesus also taught truth using sensory engaging andragogies. Examples of this are Jesus' use of a fig tree (Matt 21:18-22), bread and wine (26:26-29), a child (18:2), fishing (4:18-19), water (John 4:10), water turned to wine (John 2:6-11), money (Matt 22:19-22), the Temple (Matt 24:1-2; John 2:19-21), a rooster (Matt 26:34, 74-75), foot washing (John 13:4-17), and His own body (20:27).

All of the sanctuaries or temples for God's dwelling since the beginning taught truth using sensory engaging andragogies. This is also true of Jesus Christ, who was God manifest in a temple of flesh. Considering this, as well as the fact that we are also called the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16), the church today should teach truth in the same way.

Imaginative Storytelling

Imaginative storytelling refers to the telling of stories in a way that calls forth the listener's imagination. This can be seen in the telling of parables. A parable has been defined as a short and simple story, or figure of speech, which illustrates truth by comparison or example from daily life (Youngblood, 1995, p. 943). It is an analogy or allegorical story (Stiller, 2005, pp. 10-12). Nichol explains that in literary form, it has been defined as an extended metaphor (1980, vol. 5, p. 204).

Imaginative Storytelling and Jesus

In the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Nichol (1980, vol. 5, pp. 205-207) lists 40 of Jesus' parables based on the modern understanding of the English word for parable: "a narrative whose primary purpose is to teach truth" (pp. 203-204). I did an

analysis and comparison of these 40 parables. The remainder of this section is based upon this study, providing insights into Jesus' use of parabolic storytelling. Parabolic storytelling will be the fruition and focus of imaginative storytelling in this presentation.

Jesus' Use of Parabolic Storytelling

In Mark 4:30, Jesus says, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we *picture* it?" The parable is a picture painted with words that sets before the hearer's imagination truth embodied in an image. However, this image is not a still image, but a moving image, or moving picture—much like moving pictures, or *movies* today. This engagement of the imagination is brought about through the use of story.

However, although Jesus' parables include story elements such as characters, action, dialogue, an introduction, conflict, and resolution, they are short stories resembling more an elongated analogy in story form. When compared to the traditional short story, the short story is typically longer. The approximate time to read Jesus' parables ranges from several seconds to a few minutes at most. This brevity is due to the importance of keeping short a story meant to be told, so it is not forgotten, whereas a story meant to be read can be longer, considering it can be reread. Because Jesus' parables were short and simple, unlike a movie, the central point (Youngblood, 1995, p. 943) was easier to discern and remember.

Furthermore, Jesus introduces one of His parables with the following words, "What is the kingdom of God *like*? And to what shall I *compare* it?" (Luke 13:18). This *likening* of the spiritual world to the physical world is the function of the parable. The

parable is not told simply to entertain or to convey history, but to teach spiritual truths by way of comparison (Youngblood, 1995, p. 943).

In addition, Jesus drew His comparisons from daily life, enabling the Holy Spirit to remind the hearer of truth via familiar surroundings long after the parables were told. Also, because parables engage the imagination through story, yet are short and simple, the hearer was able to easily recall Jesus' stories and therefore the lessons they embodied.

However, although based on factual happenings from daily life, Jesus also included fictional aspects, such as in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). This parable includes such fictional aspects as: (a) the rich man in hell being able to see Abraham in heaven with Lazarus in his bosom, (b) the rich man crying out and communicating with Abraham to send Lazarus from heaven to hell, and (c) the rich man requesting that Lazarus be sent to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool the rich man's tongue, because the rich man is being tormented by a flame. However, will a drop of water quench the rich man's thirst? Will the saved communicate with those in hell, being able to see and hear them? Will the saved then not have to endure the torture of seeing and hearing their loved ones burn in hell? The answer to these questions is "no," because this parable is fictional, yet intended to relay truth.

Also, in the majority of cases, Jesus makes His point by comparison. However, contrast is also used, as in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. This is especially true when two characters or groups within a parable are contrasted in order to make a comparison to the contrast that exists between two different types of people in real life.

In these 40 parables only one has Satan as the antagonist (Matt 13:24-30). The rest deal with the relationship between God and humans or between humans and each

other. This reveals that Jesus' parables do not focus on the relationship of rivalry between God and Satan, but on how to mend the broken relationship between God and humans, and between humans and each other.

There are three basic parts to these 40 parables: (a) introduction, (b) conflict, and (c) resolution. The introduction generally portrays the setting and the main character(s), which are not always people, but at times things. For example, in Luke 13:6-9 a fig tree plays a central role in the story. The conflict presents the problem that needs to be fixed. In other words, it provides the thoughts or story matter needed to explore a better option than the status quo. The resolution discloses the point of the parable or prepares the listener to investigate the point afterward.

Sometimes Jesus taught and then used parabolic storytelling to illustrate His point, as in Matthew 7:24-27; 18:21-25; 20:1-16. At other times, Jesus told the parable first and then explained its meaning afterward, as in Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23; 13:24-30, 36-43; 13:47-50.

Of the 40 parables studied, two are presented deductively by Jesus with the solution to the problem at the beginning: Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 14:28-33. There are two where Jesus presents the solution at different points in the parable: Mark 13:34-37 and Luke 12:35-40. In the remaining 36 parables, Jesus presents His stories inductively, thus heightening the listener's suspense and enabling often unexpected endings.

Jesus did not limit Himself to one parable per teaching session. In Matthew 13 He uses eight. In Matthew 24-25, He presents several, with a number of them one right after the other. In Luke 14:28-33, He uses two parables back to back that explain the same principle. They are basically the same parable, but with different details.

Jesus presented parables to counsel those seeking to do right and to confront those seeking to do wrong. Sometimes Jesus presented both of these positive and negative elements within one parable. In the 40 parables examined, half end on a positive note and half on a negative note.

In the majority of parables, Jesus offers an interpretation. Concerning the parables where He offers no interpretation, a few of them would have been understood based on the interpretation He gave of the previous parable(s) or because they were simple enough to understand with no explanation. Concerning those that were difficult to interpret, they would have required further inquiry from the listener, like in Matthew 13:36.

All the parables contain action and the majority contain dialogue between characters. Although there are times when Jesus begins His parable by addressing the audience in the second person, He then switches to the third person. The use of the third person is common. There are also times when He weaves His dialogue with His audience into the parable. Even though there are examples of parables written in the first person in the Old Testament, as in 2 Samuel 14:5-7, Jesus never tells a parable in the first person.

Just over half of His parables contain questions. Some questions are rhetorical, some are part of the story line, and others are asked of the audience. Although some questions are left unanswered, those that are answered are answered: (a) in the story line, (b) by the audience, or (c) by Jesus the storyteller. Also, the parable is always brought to its conclusion by Jesus the storyteller. This is true even when Jesus ends by asking for an answer from His audience, which brings the resolution to the parable.

In these 40 parables, Jesus addresses a number of different audiences made up of one or more of the following groups: chief priests, elders, scribes, Pharisees, lawyer,

multitudes, tax collectors, sinners, man with dropsy, those invited to a meal, former blind man, John the Baptist's disciples, and Jesus' disciples. Jesus told His parables in public as well as in private. Parabolic storytelling is therefore appropriate to teach truth to those who are and are not disciples of Jesus, as well as in public and private settings.

In order to reach the spectrum of listeners, Jesus presented parables suitable for the average listener, as well as specific target groups. Therefore, Jesus included within his parables different genders, socio-economic situations, and occupations, for example.

Jesus' parables explain past, present, and future realities. Some also function as prophecies, such as Jesus' parable of the fig tree (Luke 13:6-9) or His parable of the wicked vinedressers (Matt 21:33-44). Also, at times Jesus uses parables to teach general truths concerning the kingdom of heaven/God. At other times, Jesus uses them to present specific insights to a particular person or group.

Jesus' parables concerning the kingdom of heaven/God make evident that those in His day did not have a correct comprehension of the kingdom of heaven/God. Two passages demonstrate this clearly: Luke 14:15 and Luke 17:20-21.

In Luke 14:15, someone says to Jesus, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" This person was ignorant of Jesus feeding many with spiritual bread since He began His ministry and announced the coming of God's kingdom on earth.

Luke 17:20-21 says, "Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, 'The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, "See here!" or "See there!" For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.'" They thought the kingdom of God was confined to a specific place, but Jesus taught that the kingdom of God was bigger than a geographical

location in heaven. Jesus taught it was in their midst and related to how people thought, acted, and lived—right here on *this* earth. Furthermore, Jesus as the Messianic king was the literal and visible expression of the kingdom of God.

This means the kingdom of God has no territorial borders and is not about a place, but about citizens, regardless of where they may be currently living. The angels of God also belong to the kingdom of God and are not always in heaven, but often watching over humans on earth. Therefore, although Jesus' parables relate to future realities, they deal with what is tangible and available now or soon, not with what is abstract and available only in the afterlife. Furthermore, Jesus reveals that the key to be ready for His return is to be a citizen of His kingdom now and His parables offer practical instruction on how this transpires. Consequently, contemporary parables should also be practical.

Jesus also used His parables to teach truth progressively. Speaking of the parable of the sower and the four types of soil, Jesus says in Mark 4:13, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?” This parable contained foundational truths that were key to understanding the rest of His parables. This means that Jesus' parables come in steps. There must be an order in presenting truth. The truth about Jesus must be taught incrementally, beginning with foundational teachings first.

Incarnational Ministry

The term *incarnational ministry* is based on Jesus' incarnation, which serves as a model and method of ministry (Iselin & Meteyard, 2010, p. 36). It calls Christians to be active missionaries to the culture, immerse themselves in that culture (Kinnaman and Lyons, 2007, pp. 132-134), and adopt some similar habits of that culture (Billings, 2004,

p. 188). This approach facilitates the communication of the gospel to those who would likely reject the message if they did not first accept the messenger (White, 1905, p. 143).

Jesus—the New Testament Sanctuary

The study of the Sanctuary or Tabernacle proclaims in symbol the ministry of Jesus and the material of its coverings foretells the incarnation of Jesus.

In Exodus 25:8-9, God tells Moses, “And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.” God specifically told Moses to make the Sanctuary exactly as He showed it to him. The book of Hebrews explains why. Hebrews 9:9 tells us that “it was symbolic.” It revealed the life and ministry of Christ through symbolism.

Understanding the symbolism behind the Sanctuary, as it relates to the incarnation of Jesus, is simplified when understanding the meaning of the original words used to describe the Sanctuary. The word *sanctuary* comes from the Hebrew word *mikdash*, which means a *sacred place* (Brown, Driver, & Briggs, 1959, p. 874). The Sanctuary is also referred to as the *tabernacle* or the *mishkan* in Hebrew, which means *dwelling place* (Brown, Driver, & Briggs, 1959, p. 1015). The Sanctuary or the Tabernacle was the sacred dwelling place of God upon earth. It was set up at the center of the Israelite camp specifically so God could dwell among, or in the midst, of His people.

When looking toward the Holy Places of the wilderness Sanctuary, the onlooker could not help but notice the glory of God (Exod 40:34-35). However, neither could they help but notice the animal skin. The Holy Places were covered with animal skin and it was beneath this cover that the glory of God was veiled. Yet it could not be fully hidden,

because God came to earth not to conceal Himself, but to reveal Himself.

Exodus 26 lists the material used in the construction of the Holy Places, which were called the Tabernacle. Besides the boards overlaid with gold, the Tabernacle or Holy Places, were made of curtains of white, blue, purple, and scarlet. There were also designs of cherubim, which are angels, on the curtains. This was the first covering (Exod 26:1). The second covering was made of goat's hair, which was to be a *tent* over the curtains of white, blue, purple, scarlet and cherubim (v. 7). The third covering was made of ram skins died red and the fourth covering was made of badger skins, or what some translations render skins of the sea cow, or porpoise, or seal (Exod 26:14). Nevertheless, there was another layer of *skin* on top of the previous layer of skin.

The Holy Places had an external covering of skin. There was nothing outwardly attractive about this skin. It was common looking skin, but it was this common, yet holy skin that veiled the glory of God. There is a counterpart in John 1:14, which says, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Jesus, the second person of the Godhead, covered Himself with common looking skin, but it was this common, yet holy skin that veiled the glory of God.

In Exodus 25:8 God tells Moses, "And let them make Me a sanctuary (tabernacle, tent), that I may dwell among them." John 1:14 echoes back, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The word *dwell* in John 1:14 is the Greek verb *skenoo*. It literally means to dwell in a tabernacle or tent. Jesus made Himself a tabernacle of flesh, His body, in order to dwell among humanity (White, 1940, pp. 23-24).

In the Old Testament, God's glory was veiled in a wilderness temple called the

Sanctuary. In the New Testament, God's glory was veiled in a body temple called Jesus Christ (John 2:19-21). However, although Jesus' glory was veiled, it could not be fully hidden, because God came to earth not to conceal Himself, but to reveal Himself.

Jesus—the Light of the World

Although God came to this earth to reveal Himself, this revelation had to be a gradual one, much like the work of the sun in shedding its light on planet earth.

The sun never changes. It does not stop shining in its brightness. It blazes at full glory all the time. In the creation, God arranged for the proper distance between the sun and earth, so the earth would not be consumed (Nasa, n.d.). So too in the incarnation, Jesus becoming flesh not only served to bridge the distance between God and man, it also served to create the proper distance between God and man. This enabled Jesus and humanity to interact without humanity being consumed by God's physical glory. Incarnational ministry must maintain a proper balance between coming close enough to the target audience to reach them, yet not so close that the living out of the Christian life overpowers the target audience and destroys the relationship.

God also arranged for the light of the sun to fall upon humanity incrementally from sunrise until its full glory at noon. Thus, the revelation of God through Jesus was a process by which God revealed spiritual light into this dark world incrementally (White, 1911/1952, p. 564). Midnight is not followed by noon. Bright light to eyes accustomed to darkness causes those in darkness to close their eyes and turn their head away. Proverbs 4:18 says, "The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day."

Jesus followed this principle in revealing truth to others. Just a few days before

going to the cross, Jesus told His disciples in John 16:12-13, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth.” Consequently, those engaged in incarnational ministry must present biblical truth one small piece at a time, as the eyesight of those in darkness is able to bear it (Nichol, 1956, vol. 5, p. 1048). Some people will choose to love darkness rather than light, but let it not be because of the way light is presented. Rather, let truth be presented following Jesus’ method and many more will be receptive.

Furthermore, the sun always faces the earth and causes its light to shine upon it, but it is only as the earth turns toward the sun that it is able to receive light and then greater light. Thus, it was only those who truly wanted to follow Jesus and do the will of God that were able to receive the light that Jesus had within Himself. Incarnational ministry respects the choice of those in the target group who are not truly open to God’s leading. It also requires wisdom from God to discern who is.

Christians—the Light of the World

John 8:12 describes Jesus as the light of the world. Matthew 5:14-15 also describes Jesus’ followers as the light of the world. Just like the common bystander looking at the wilderness Sanctuary could not see beyond the animal skin into the beauty of the tabernacle, neither can many today see beyond the *man* Jesus Christ. Many cannot see beyond a *book* called the Bible. They cannot recognize the voice of God in the Word of God. They can only see the outward ordinariness of it all. They need someone who has seen the glory within the Holy Places to reveal this light to them by being this light to them, not just talking about it.

In terms of the Christian following Jesus' incarnational approach, John 1:14 would read: "And the Christian became similar in certain cultural aspects to the target audience and dwelt among them, and they beheld the Christian's character, the character as of a true child of the Father, expressing grace and truth." This is what the apostle Paul did in ministering to different target groups (1 Cor 9:19-22). This is what he had others do who worked with him (Acts 16:1-3). Those involved in soul winning must do the same.

This approach to ministry allows the target audience to behold the character of the Christian. Matthew 5:16 explains that being the light of the world results in tangible evidence seen by others. When lightning strikes, light is seen before it is heard. The target audience should be able to see the witness of the Christian, before hearing it. The Christian's behavior, filled with the fruit of the Spirit, is the greatest witness that what the Christian says is of any value. The majority will make a decision for Christ, not based on what they hear the Christian say, but based on what they see the Christian do. If there is no evidence of Christ's present power in the Christian's life, then no evidence is given to the unbeliever of Christ's future power for their own life. Also, a disagreeable Christian will have difficulty convincing others the gospel is something that can be agreed with.

Reaching Post-Christian Young Adults

A post-Christian young adult is a young adult raised in a culture or environment that has forsaken Christianity, and as a result, his or her perspective of Christ and Christianity is generally negative. In early Christianity a young adult called Paul is found. Although he would not be labeled post-Christian, he still had a negative perspective of

Christ and Christianity before his conversion. Therefore, an examination of how Jesus reached him offers insights into reaching post-Christian young adults today.

Eclectic Philosophies and Early Christianity

During Jesus' trial, Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). This was a contextually relevant question. Hellenistic-Roman philosophies had led to eclecticism, which refers to picking and choosing elements from different philosophical schools and integrating them into one's own system of thought, due to the belief that at bottom all philosophy is in agreement (Ferguson, 1993, p. 356). Thus, with so many philosophies abounding, it was hard to know what truth really was.

This eclectic philosophical mindset within which the early church developed is much like the postmodern mindset of the Western world, which has led to post-Christianity. Therefore, gaining an understanding of how Jesus reached the young adult called Paul back then is valuable for ministry today.

Jesus Reaching the Young Adult Called Paul

Paul is likely the best known young adult with an aversion to Christ and Christianity whom Jesus later saved. When the Jews stoned Stephen, "the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a *young man* named Saul" (Acts 7:58). Saul was also called Paul (13:9). Paul was a young man or *young adult* who grew up within the context of the eclectic philosophical mindset of Hellenistic-Roman society. Although Paul did not have an eclectic mentality concerning religious belief like others during his time and like post-Christians today, nonetheless, like post-Christians, he had a negative perspective of Christ and Christianity.

Paul had heard the witness of Stephen concerning Jesus being the Christ (Acts 7:2-53), but had rejected Stephen's witness and instead consented to Stephen's death (8:1). Furthermore, as Nichol comments, there were thousands of other Jewish Christians, including some among Paul's own relatives (1957, vol. 6, p. 438). However, even though Paul lived among these witnesses for Christ, he chose to reject Christ and Christianity, and instead actively persecute the church (Acts 8:3; 9:1-2). This aversion to Christianity is often displayed by post-Christians today, although not always to the same extent.

So how did Jesus reach Paul? He used sensory engaging andragogies and imaginative storytelling in the context of incarnational ministry.

Speaking of Paul's journey to Damascus, Acts 9:3-5 says, "As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a *light shone* around him from heaven. ⁴Then he *fell to the ground*, and *heard a voice* saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' ⁵And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. *It is hard for you to kick against the goads.*'"

In appearing to Paul, Jesus engaged Paul's sense of sight. Acts 22:14 explains that Paul not only saw light shining around him, but Jesus Himself. In Acts 26:16, Jesus told Paul, "I have appeared to you." In verse 19, Paul called it a heavenly vision. Jesus also engaged Paul's sense of touch by allowing the manifestation of His power to cause Paul to fall to the ground. Jesus used the manifestation of His light to reveal to Paul his inner darkness. He used the manifestation of His power to reveal to Paul his weakness and inability to stand before God in his own righteousness. Before speaking, Jesus began the teaching moment with sensory engaging andragogies that arrested Paul's attention.

Once Paul's attention was gained, Jesus then engaged his sense of hearing and said, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" Jesus began with a question, not a statement, thus inviting Paul to respond and begin a dialogue. Paul responded by saying, "Who are You, Lord?" This response from Paul shows that Jesus had gained not only Paul's attention, but also his willingness to enter into dialogue. As a result, Jesus reveals to Paul who He is, because up to this point, Paul does not know who has appeared to him. Coupled with Jesus' verbal declaration of who He is and who Paul is, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," Jesus says the following words, "It is hard for you to kick against the goads." This is a parable (White, 1883/1974, p. 24), also recorded in Acts 26:14.

A goad is a point fashioned from metal at the end of a long pole used by farmers to prod their animals to move forward (Youngblood, 1995, p. 1264). Nichol states that the scene of a farmer prodding his animals may have been taking place along the Damascus road and Jesus used it as an illustration to reach Paul (1957, vol. 6, p. 438). Nichol continues to observe that Jesus' illustration describes Paul as resisting the appeals of the Holy Spirit for him to accept Jesus as the Messiah (vol. 6, p. 438). This parable also describes Paul's persecution of Christ's followers as more injurious to himself than to them, as well as the impossibility of holding back the onward progress of the truth of Christ (White, 1883/1974, p. 24). Not only did Jesus use sensory engaging andragogies, but also imaginative storytelling to reach Paul.

In addition, notice Jesus' use of the incarnational approach to ministry. Jesus met Paul where he was (Acts 9:3) and did not wait for Paul to come to Him. Furthermore, when Jesus met him, not only did He reveal Himself in power and glory, but also verbally

as Jesus *of Nazareth* (22:8). In doing this, Jesus emphasized the duality of His divinity and humanity, which was made possible through His incarnation.

Jesus spoke to Paul in the Hebrew language (Acts 26:14). He did not speak to Paul in a language Paul did not understand, whether heavenly or earthly. Also, Jesus did not speak to Paul in Greek, which Paul also spoke (21:37). Jesus chose the *Hebrew* language, which by that time referred to *Aramaic* (Nichol, 1953, vol. 1, p. 25, 30). This was significant and gained Paul's attention in a way that no other language would have. For example, when Paul spoke to the mob in Hebrew (Aramaic), they "kept all the more silent" (21:40-22:2) (Nichol, 1957, vol. 6, p. 407, 409). It was in this language, a culturally relevant language, that Jesus spoke to Paul.

Furthermore, in choosing an illustration upon which to base His parable, Jesus chose an illustration from a scene Paul would have been well acquainted with, considering he had grown up in an agricultural society (Acts 9:5; 26:14).

All this manifests that Jesus reached the young adult called Paul using sensory engaging andragogies and imaginative storytelling in the context of incarnational ministry.

There is another important aspect to Jesus' revelation of Himself to Paul, which entails the theology behind what Jesus did. When Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus, the immediate result was that Paul fell to the ground, not that he went blind. Only after the vision was Paul left blind for three days (Acts 9:9). In appearing to Paul, Jesus revealed to Paul his inner darkness, by first causing him to fall to the ground. Falling to the ground before the presence of Christ revealed to Paul his inability to stand before God in his own righteousness. In appearing to Paul, Jesus revealed to Paul his

inner darkness, by first revealing to him his self-righteousness. This revelation of Paul's self-righteousness prepared Paul to instead receive Christ's righteousness and therefore true spiritual eyesight.

Consequently, in reaching others, Paul dwelt largely upon Christ's righteousness received by faith apart from the works of the law. This message of righteousness by faith was given to Paul directly through the revelation of Jesus (Gal 1:11-12). To better understand how to reach post-Christians, it is important to understand the connection between Paul's teaching on righteousness by faith alone and Paul's method of leading others to Christ, which he learned from Jesus' incarnational approach.

Paul's Unchanging Theology Yet Changing Methodology

This section seeks to explain the connection between Paul's theology on righteousness by faith and his methodology for reaching people with it.

Paul's Unchanging Theology: Righteousness by Faith

In Galatians 1:6, Paul warns the churches of Galatia, composed of Gentiles, that they have accepted a false gospel. In Galatians 2:16, Paul begins explaining the gospel by saying, "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."

What law is Paul speaking of? There are two layers to this answer. The first layer is the Mosaic or ceremonial law, which Paul identifies when he talks about circumcision (Gal 2:3; 5:2-3; 6:12-13) and observing days, months, seasons, and years (4:10).

What is the second layer? In Romans 1 and 2, Paul clarifies this question. He explains that both Gentile and Jew have broken the Ten Commandments, which he calls the *law* (Rom 2:12, 17-23; 7:7). He then explains that no one is justified by keeping the Ten Commandments, but by exercising faith in Jesus (Rom 3:19-28). Consequently, White (1958) remarks, “I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments” (p. 233). Nichol also includes the moral law in his definition (1957, vol. 6, p. 933). The second layer of the law referred to in Gal 2:16 is the Ten Commandments. No one is justified by keeping the ceremonial law or the Ten Commandments, but only through faith in Christ and Him crucified (3:1).

Now, *after* presenting justification by faith, Paul brings the Ten Commandments back into his presentation, because it is only *then* that the Ten Commandments can be properly understood. Paul now speaks about the importance of keeping the Ten Commandments, not to be saved, but because the Christian is saved.

As shown in Table 1, Galatians 5:6 says that faith “works” through love. This is almost identical to Galatians 6:15, which adds “a new creation.” The person who becomes a new creation in Christ has faith that works through love. In 1 Corinthians 7:19, Paul further describes these works as “keeping the commandments of God.” Therefore, those who have truly become a new creation have faith in Christ given them of God, and it is through this faith that God both justifies *and* empowers them through love for God and one another to keep the commandments. This sanctification is by faith (Acts 26:18) through the indwelling Holy Spirit (Gal 5:13-26; Phil 2:12-13)

Table 1

Faith Works Through Love

Gal 5:6	For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but	faith working through love.
Gal 6:15	For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but	a new creation.
1 Cor 7:19	Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but	keeping the commandments of God is what matters.

In Galatians 5:16-24, Paul contrasts those who keep God’s commandments (those in the Spirit), with those who break them (those in the flesh) (see Table 2). Nevertheless, caution is needed. Nichol warns that just as in Paul’s day people did not understand the sacrificial system pointed to Christ, so too today, it is possible for people not to understand the Ten Commandments are more than keeping the letter of the law, but also entering into its spirit (1957, vol. 6, p. 934).

Also, dwelling on the law without presenting Christ and justification by faith is dangerous and keeps people from joining the church (White, 1979, p. 18). The imputed righteousness of Christ should be the subject of nearly every discourse and talk (p. 18). It should be the first subject presented to unbelievers and it should be presented constantly (Gal 3:1; 6:14; 1 Cor 1:23; 2:2). However, although Paul’s theology was unchanging, his methodology changed depending on whether he was reaching Jew or Gentile

Table 2

Those in the Flesh Versus Those in the Spirit

In the Flesh	“fulfill the lust of the flesh” v. 16	(Under the law)	“works of the flesh” v. 19	“adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like;” vs. 19-21 (Ten Commandment breakers)	“will not inherit the kingdom of God” v. 21
In the Spirit	“have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” v. 24	“not under the law” v. 18 “Against such there is no law” v. 23	“fruit of the Spirit” v. 22	“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” vs. 22-23 (Ten Commandment keepers)	(Will inherit the kingdom of God)

**Paul’s Changing Methodology:
Incarnational Ministry**

Paul’s methodology for reaching Jew and Gentile is best summarized by his own words in 1 Corinthians 9:20-22, “and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; ²¹to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; ²²to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” Paul’s methodology was based on an incarnational approach to ministry.

As stated before, keeping the Mosaic Law cannot justify anyone. It does not cause anyone to merit salvation. This the Jerusalem Council clearly stated (Acts 15:1-29), but only in regards to Gentiles, not Jews (Acts 15:19, 23; 21:25). Jews who had accepted Christ as the Messiah were zealous for the Mosaic Law (Acts 21:20) like other Jews.

This is why Paul had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:1-3), not because Paul believed it necessary to be saved, but in order to reach the Jews incarnationally with the message of righteousness by faith. This is why Paul participated in ceremonial purification and intended to make an offering (21:20-26), not for salvation, but because thereby he hoped to win the Jews. However, in this particular case, Paul was misled by the elders of the church and went too far in his incarnational approach, which ended in his imprisonment (White, 1883/1974, pp. 211-214). The Jews and the Jewish Christians were zealous for the Mosaic Law. This is why Paul kept feast days (Acts 18:21), not for the sake of salvation, but because he knew it was the perfect opportunity to witness to Jews. This is revealed in how Paul lived. Although Paul himself lived like a Jew among Jews, as Nichol comments (1957, vol. 6, p. 403), he did not do so among Gentiles. For three years and then for another fourteen, Paul did not go to Jerusalem (Gal 1:18; 2:1). Therefore, he did not participate in the three annual feasts (Exod 23:17). Paul's observance of the Mosaic Law was not for himself, but in order to reach the Jews.

Nichol explains that Paul allowed Jewish Christians to continue to practice the Mosaic Law, but insisted that Gentile converts be free (1957, vol. 6, p. 403). However, Nichol later states, if a Jew inquired why they should keep the Mosaic Law, Paul would say for no reason, in Christ, but only for the sake of their fellow Jews who did not yet understand (p. 404).

When reaching these unbelieving Jews, Paul began with the law, and then, when the spirit was softened, he led the Jew to accept the righteousness of Christ (White, 1901/1966, p. 77). When reaching the Gentile, Paul began by presenting Christ and His righteousness, but did not say anything definite about the law. Then, when the spirit was softened, he led the Gentile to accept the Ten Commandments as the test of their obedience (p. 77). But always, Paul kept the cross of Calvary before his Gentile hearers (White, 1911/1952, p. 208). Paul adapted his methodology to the group he intended to reach and his skillful handling of the word of God resulted in winning souls (1901/1966, p. 77). This came about due to a correct understanding of faith and law.

Revelation 14:12 explains that in the last days, God's people will have this same correct understanding of faith and law. They will maintain the correct balance between keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Paul explains this balance in the book of Galatians. This balance will be realized by all who accept the message of justification by faith, which does not do away with the Ten Commandments, but places them in their proper perspective. There is no danger in dwelling too much on the topic of justification by faith, rather, special attention must be called to it (White, 1958, p. 372).

Conclusion

In reaching post-Christian young adults, the theology that must be presented is justification or righteousness by faith in Christ. This means presenting Christ and His cross and the great love of God in giving His Son to die for a world that did not love Him. Studies on the Ten Commandments and doctrinal beliefs come afterwards. However, in order to be effective in leading others to Christ, the Christian must discern whether it is better to present Christ and His cross first, or whether something else will

better resonate with the target audience, leading up to Christ and His cross. This can only be determined by being present incarnationally with the target audience.

Once this is determined, the Christian will teach the truths of Scripture using sensory engaging andragogies, which have always been God's way of imparting truth since the beginning of human history. The Christian will also use imaginative storytelling, which finds its culmination in Jesus' use of parables. Jesus Himself used both of these methods in reaching the young adult called Paul.

Not only that, Jesus used both of these methods incarnationally. The Christian therefore, must also present the truth incarnationally and not use incarnational ministry only to determine what truths to present first.

Once the righteousness of Christ has been accepted by faith, it must continue to be constantly presented to the target audience. This does not mean other topics will not be presented, but that these topics will find their center, meaning, and balance in Christ.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Post-Christianity is affecting America (Mohler, as cited in Meacham, 2009, para. 2) and its young adults (The Barna Group, 2007, para. 1)—those roughly between the ages of 16 and 35 (The Barna Group, 2007, para. 1; Dixit, Dixit, & Stiemsma, 2016, p. 13; Johnston, 2009, p. 9; Kimball, 2003, p. 40; Leung, 2009, para. 3). This has resulted in the significant collapse of the influence of the church in American culture (McNeal, 2006, p. 102). Consequently, many have not heard the Christian message before, making America a mission field (Arthurs, 2007, p. 174; Greidanus, 1999, p. 13).

McNeal (2006) explains that to determine the real issues underlying any situation, spiritual leaders need to ask the right questions and can only do so if they spend more time thinking beyond superficial problems (pp. 101-104). Thus, to better understand how to reach post-Christian young adults it is important to better understand postmodernism and its adverse affects on post-Christian young adults' perception of Christianity. The first main section in this chapter seeks to do this.

The second main section presents the need for incarnational ministry as a missionary approach (Frost & Hirsch, as cited in Iselin & Meteyard, 2010, p. 36). The third main section explains that imaginative storytelling is a viable means of reaching this

group (Steffen, 2010, p. 153), because postmoderns prefer story over proposition (MacDonald, 1993, p. 550). The fourth and final main section outlines how sensory engaging andragogies are also a viable means of reaching this group, because postmoderns value experience as the basis for faith (Kimball, 2003, p. 44).

Postmodernism

Today, America is described as postmodern (Lee, 2004, p. 221)—even the current president, Barack Obama, is described as such (L. Miller, 2008), but what does the term mean? Although traceable to Martin Heidegger’s book *Being and Time* (1927), which pioneered the philosophical change called postmodernity, there is no unanimously accepted understanding of what postmodernity means (Canale, 2001, p. 260; Stiller, 2005, p. 1). Nonetheless, there is substantial information to arrive at a workable understanding.

Postmodern is made up of two words: (a) post and (b) modern. Kimball (2003) defines modern as the time period known as modernism: “pure modernism held to a single, universal worldview and moral standard, a belief that all knowledge is good and certain, truth is absolute, individualism is valued, and thinking, learning, and beliefs should be determined systematically and logically” (p. 49). He defines the term *post* as *after*, meaning a time period *after* modernism, but not one that completely rejects modernism, considering many aspects are retained (p. 49). This new time period is a shift away from modern philosophical underpinnings to ideas that fundamentally alter how we think about truth (Stiller, 2005, p. 1). This does not mean what we have known as modern no longer exists, but that we are flowing from one movement into another (pp. 1-2).

Instead of holding to a single, universal worldview and moral standard,

postmoderns see all religions as equal (Center for Secular and Postmodern Studies, n.d.a, para. 1). They are relativists or pluralists (McGrath, 2013, p. 191). Therefore, titles beginning with “the truth” immediately come under suspicion (Childers & Schmit, 2008, p. 19). However, “most agree on some absolutes, such as the wrongness of excessive violence, murder, or evil like the September 11th tragedy” (Kimball, 2003, p. 60).

Postmodernity’s leading general feature is the deliberate and systematic abandonment of centralizing narratives (McGrath, 2013, p. 190). However, the postmodern rejection of centralizing narratives or metanarratives is itself a metanarrative (Childers & Schmit, 2008, p. 218). Another ironic feature of postmodernism is that although community is valued over individualism (Kimball, 2003, p. 49), in terms of truths and beliefs, individualism is valued over community—another example of the acceptance of contradiction (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, pp. 22-23).

Postmodernism and Christianity

This acceptance of contradiction has been facilitated by a nonlinear approach that determines thinking, learning and beliefs, not systematically and logically, but based on feeling and personal experiences (Kimball, 2003, pp. 44, 49-50). More of the unchurched than the churchd have had a sudden religious experience outside the church and do not feel there is enough emphasis on spiritual experiences in the church (Rutz, 1992, as cited in Kidder, 2011, pp. 67-68). This is what Adler (2005, para. 3) calls, “a passion for an immediate, transcendent experience of God,” what Das (as cited in Adler, para. 13) defines as a “transformative experience,” and what Marty (as cited in Adler) means when he says:

Young people got tired of hearing that once upon a time people experienced God

directly. They want it to happen for themselves. They don't want to hear that Joan of Arc had a vision. They want to have a vision. (para. 16)

All of this, coupled with a distrust of institutions, hierarchies, centralized bureaucracies, and male dominated organizations, a preference for networks and local grassroots activities over large scale structures and grand designs (Tomlinson, 2003, as cited in Kimball, 2003, p. 54), a desire for spirituality but not religiosity, and often a complete lack of experience with Christianity in general or a negative experience with Christianity in particular (Center for Secular and Postmodern Studies, n.d.a, para. 1) has led to relegating the Bible to one among many religious books open to multiple interpretations (Kimball, p. 44) and has made traditional Christianity contemptible (McNeal, 2011, p. 87).

Disdain for Christianity in non-Christian countries might be expected, but the development of this mentality in the United States is troubling, as is the fact that it has been gathering support since it surfaced in the 1960s (Kimball, 2003, p. 50).

The rise of this anti-Christian mentality in America began with postmodern ideas originally affecting primarily non-moral areas such as the style of art, architecture, and literature, but with the embrace of these ideas by culture, has now come to affect moral areas such as human sexuality, religion, and spirituality (Kimball, 2003, pp. 50-52). It would be difficult to argue for a right or wrong way when it comes to style in art, architecture and literature. As long as the artwork expresses the author's intent, the architecture is functional, and the literature communicates well, then style is simply personal preference. However, postmodernism poses a dilemma in moral areas for the Christian, because Christianity has a King, Jesus Christ, who rules over a monarchy made up of His citizens, called Christians. In this monarchy, the chief governmental attribute is

love as described in the Bible, not by some other book or by some other religion or by some other person's feelings and experiences; and the Bible provides clear explanations of right and wrong. Therefore, whereas postmodernism poses no moral dilemma in the non-moral areas mentioned above and can be legitimately accepted there, it certainly does in moral areas and must consequently be rejected there.

Unfortunately, many Christians have not made this rejection, but have instead transferred the postmodern mentality from non-moral to moral areas, thus rejecting the Bible as the standard of truth, yet claiming to be Christian. Canale (2001) refers to the process of reworking philosophy under the new rubric of postmodernity as "deconstruction," after which, there is a need to build new philosophical constructions (p. 263). Thus, Europe and its advanced structures of pluralism, syncretism and high negativism toward Christianity (Power, 1999, para. 6) provide a window into the same structures that are currently being built in America, and what they will likely look like when they reach greater maturity in the future.

Although widespread syncretism and resentment of Christianity are not yet a reality in the United States, Cauley (2010) observes that the environment within which the Christian church is working in the 21st century is a pluralist environment (p. 37). Gibbs (as cited in Cauley, p. 37) observes that the Christian church began as a movement within a pluralist environment. Eventually however, the early Christian church itself also became pluralist (White, 1911, pp. 49-50). This is happening again in the 21st century.

In the United States this pluralistic mindset has been promoted as far back as 1893 when the World's Parliament of Religions met in Chicago (G. Miller, 1997, p. 290). It has been recently accelerated due to an instant global communication via the internet and

other media (pp. 285, 290).

Contrary to what one might expect, the greater threat to Christianity is not found in external, but internal sources of pluralism. An example of this pluralistic mindset among Christians in America can be found in the Socialist Party of America. Between 1900 and 1934, Christians and post-Christian members of the Socialist Party of America articulated a distinctive theology of socialism called the Social Gospel, which they believed was at the basis of an emerging universal religion that would supersede conventional Christianity (McKanan, 2010, p. 750).

In 1887, Ellen White made a statement that has been reprinted in one of the compilations of her writings entitled *Selected Messages, Book One*: “We have far more to fear from within than from without. The hindrances to strength and success are far greater from the church itself than from the world” (White, 1958, p. 122). Thus, it is not surprising that Christian leaders are distorting the teachings of Scripture by promoting postmodern ideas (Adler, 2005, para. 1; Meacham, 2009, para. 10).

Consequently, “according to the NEWSWEEK/Beliefnet Poll, eight in 10 Americans--including 68 percent of evangelicals--believe that more than one faith can be a path to salvation” (Adler, 2005, para. 8). It is no wonder that pluralism within the Church has led to syncretism within the Church (Adler, para. 13). This amalgamation of Christianity with other spiritualities is more destructive to true Christianity than the non-Christian spiritualities by themselves. White (1911) warns of one of the mechanisms behind this syncretism: “As Spiritualism more closely imitates the nominal Christianity of the day, it has greater power to deceive and ensnare” (p. 588).

Kimball (2003) presents some striking examples of the destructive deception of

syncretism when he refers to music stars Britney Spears, Destiny's Child, and Jessica Simpson as "young women who are vocal about their Christian beliefs but send hypersexual messages through their appearance and lyrics" (p. 53). These music stars are not only sending an amalgamated Christian and non-Christian message to young adults within the general public, but especially to Christian young adults who are still forming their belief system. This results in the acceptability of claiming spiritual belief in Christianity without living out that faith in any genuine way (Kimball, 2003, p. 53). In the modern era this would be called hypocrisy. Today, it is accepted as normal (p. 53). This postmodern mentality has set the groundwork for post-Christianity.

Postmodernism and Post-Christianity

The term *post-Christian* has meant different things at different times (Meacham, 2009, para. 9). As early as 1886 it was used by the *Atlantic Monthly* to describe George Eliot as atheist or agnostic and later in 1929 it appeared in the book *America Set Free* by the German philosopher Hermann Keyserling to describe a time period after Christianity, meaning a time period following the decline of the importance of Christianity in a region or society (para. 9). The term was later popularized in the mid-1960s during what scholars call the "death of God" movement (para. 9). "This is not to say that the Christian God is dead, but that he is less of a force in American politics and culture than at any other time in recent memory" (para. 3). Eaton (as cited in Paape, 2012, p. 104) describes American society as no longer seeing value in objective truth, especially biblical truth.

In a study conducted by Houtman and Aupers (2007), the following was said by a trainer in a New Age center: "Whereas the old religions say 'We possess the absolute truth' and 'This is the only way to God,' we argue: 'There are ten thousand ways' and

‘There are as many ways as there are people’” (p. 306). Therefore truth is defined as relative. This means post-Christians are apt to have what Hamilton (as cited in Houtman & Aupers, 2007, p. 306) calls a “pick-and-mix religion.” Houtman and Aupers explain the main tenet of post-Christian spirituality by saying it is “the belief that in the deepest layers of the self the ‘divine spark’—to borrow a term from ancient Gnosticism—is still smoldering, waiting to be stirred up, and succeed the socialized self” (Houtman & Aupers, 2007, p. 307).

Speaking of post-Christianity, Mohler (as cited in Meacham, 2009, para. 10) says, “It is based on an understanding of history that presumes a less tolerant past and a more tolerant future, with the present as an important transitional step.” As important and as peaceful as this transitional step may be, Mohler insightfully uses the word “presumes.” In her work, *The Great Controversy*, White (1911) foresees not a more tolerant future for the U.S. when the syncretism of so-called Christianity and other spiritualities takes place, but a less tolerant one, where the rights of conscience will be trampled on (p. 588).

Meacham (2009) speaks of America saying, “Being *less* Christian does not necessarily mean that America is *post-Christian*” (para. 6). Pass (2011) agrees with Meacham’s statement, but also says, “Where many people used to invoke Christian teachings to motivate their own behaviour and decisions, but they do no longer so, a post-Christian society is in the making” (p. 11), even if they do not formally leave the church. Kinnaman and Hawkins (2011) give evidence of what Pass says when explaining that nearly eight out of ten American adults identify as Christian, but only about half of that number attend church at least once a month and say their faith is very important to them (p. 50). So it would seem from Pass’s own definition, that although he does not classify

the United States as being post-Christian, it is in the making.

Meacham is not willing to call America post-Christian, but says, “The present . . . is less about the death of God and more about the birth of many gods” (Meacham, 2009, para. 11). Ironically, this is the same definition Murray (2009) refers to in explaining that the term post-Christian is used by many writers to describe an increasingly multi-religious Western society (p. 205), which is a society comprised of many gods.

Of note, these “many gods” are not limited to official gods of various religions, but as has been evidenced in Europe, can simply be the gods of secularism, such as art, rock music, drugs, festivals, sports, and even interactive video games, all of which provide ecstasy or a transcendent experience for those who seek them (Armstrong, 1999, para. 7), including post-Christian young adults.

Post-Christian Young Adults

Power (1999) notes views of a European aged 24: “He’s felt glimmers of the infinite at raves but not at the couple of Christian meetings he went to during college. For many of his generation ‘the E scene was a good substitute for weekend worship’” (para. 17).

In a post-Christian society like Europe, Christianity and God have a mixed rapport among young adults. Some believe God is still around, although they are not practicing their faith (Power, 1999, para. 17), while others no longer believe in a Christian God at all (para. 9). Some hold both Christian and pop-culture figures with fairly equal respect (para. 5), while others think Christianity is a total fantasy (para. 11). Some still go to church, but for reasons of culture, not faith (para. 13), while others have a very negative view of Christianity (para. 19). Some create an eclectic blend of various

faiths (para. 7, 18), while others have no interest in any religion whatsoever (para. 11).

These European footsteps are being followed by America. A demographic study by the Barna Group (2007, para. 1) reveals the declining reputation of Christianity, especially among contemporary American young adults. Putnam and Campbell (as cited in “The Young ‘Nones,’” 2010, p. 7), in a recent landmark study on American religion, found that between the years 1970 to 1990 those who checked “none” when asked about their religious affiliation stayed at about 7%, but from the years 1990 to 2010, that number rose to 17%. However, in the same study, when compared to young adults between the ages of 18 to 29 during the years of 1990 to 2010, they found that the numbers rose steadily from 12-27%. Putnam and Campbell (as cited in “The Young ‘Nones,’” 2010, p. 7) note that young people are deeply interested in spiritual topics, but not in religious organizations.

Considering the views of young adults in America are becoming like the views of young adults in Europe regarding Christianity, the post-Christian sentiment found in Europe is likely to become more pronounced in America. This is evidenced by changes in American culture over time.

For example, over the last 300 years, public institutions of higher education, many of which were founded as religious training grounds for clergy, have shifted philosophically to more secularized institutions (Speck, as cited in Anthony, 2013, p. 1). This has remained a current trend in Christian colleges (Marinho, Kijai, Mngo, & Smith, 2010, pp. 12-13). A study in 1999 administered to college chaplains found a 74% increase in religious diversity among students (Anthony, 2013, p. 12).

In 1960 more than 90% of young adults identified as Christian, but now that

number has dropped to 62% (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011, p. 171). Since the early 1970s, neither mainstream Protestantism nor Evangelicals have been increasing in number, especially among young adults (Wuthnow, as cited in Allred, 2011). Before the 1960s, 25 year-olds and 65 year-olds were just as likely to attend church weekly, but during the 1960s, young adults began to show significant disengagement when compared to older adults and the trend has continued until today (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011, pp. 45-46). Those between the ages of 18 to 29 are missing from most congregations (p. 22)

Furthermore, despite the fact that the majority of today's young adults attended a Christian church during their high school years, fewer than one out of ten mention faith as their top priority and they are less likely to return to church later when they become parents, as compared to previous generations (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, p. 23). In addition, the vast majority of those outside the Christian church are *de-churched* young people, meaning they left the church (p. 74).

This shift away from Christianity has resulted in a shift away from Christian views. For example, today's young people are more skeptical of the role of the Bible in public life (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, p. 163). In addition, whereas nearly three-fifths of those over forty believe humans are superior to other living things, and whereas this is true for half of those in their thirties, this is only true for one-third of those in their twenties (p. 163).

Accompanying this shift away from Christian views is a shift away from Christian behaviors. For example, there is an increase in the use of profanity among today's young adults (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, p. 127). Young people today are more likely to seek revenge and say mean things behind someone's back (p. 128). Millennials are much more

likely to engage in casual sex, resort to violence, and abuse drugs and alcohol when compared to their predecessors (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, p. 122).

Today's young adults are more likely to view sexually explicit magazines, movies, or websites when compared with the Boomer generation (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, p. 127). At the end of the 1950s, 30% of young people approved of premarital sex, compared to 75% now (p. 127). In the late 1960s the average age a girl lost her virginity was 18, but in the late 1990s it was 15 (p. 127). The Buster generation is twice as likely as the Boomers to have had multiple sex partners by age 18 (p. 127). In 1960, 5% of births in America were to unwed mothers, but in 2011 that number jumped to 42% (p. 171).

In terms of postmodernity's effect on Seventh-day Adventist young adults, a study among students on Seventh-day Adventist campuses in the U.S. and Brazil, found that when compared to the national sample from the U.S., the Adventist sample scored about 20% higher when asked to describe how they see their current views on spiritual and religious matters (Marinho et al., 2010, p. 11). However, when the U.S. and Brazilian Adventist sample was compared, Brazilian Adventist students indicated higher pursuance of values, spiritual, and religious matters, as well as more security in religious views (p. 12). The researchers state that these differences relate to cultural differences and societal influences on higher educational institutions, including Christian institutions (p. 12). It may be that this difference in the U.S. Adventist sample is related to the effects of postmodernism, as the postmodern move away from Christian values among the younger generation has also been observed on Seventh-day Adventist university campuses, although the older generation may not be aware of its pervasiveness (Allred, 2011, p.

212).

Research has also been conducted specifically on American Adventist young people. The North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists commissioned a study by Barna Group, which found that Adventist Millennials hold six perceptual grievances against the Adventist church to an even greater extent when compared to national norms (Jenkin & Martin, 2014, p. 6). These six perceptual grievances are: the church is intolerant of doubt, elitist in its relationships, anti-science in its beliefs, overprotective of its members, shallow in its teachings, and repressive of differences (Kinnaman, 2011, as cited in Jenkin & Martin, 2014, p. 6).

When comparing attrition rates between Christians in general in America and Adventists in specific, similarities emerge. The attrition rate in the U.S. across denominations for young people leaving the church was found to be 70% (Rainer & Rainer, 2008, as cited in Jacobs et al., n.d., p. 3). Similarly, young people raised in the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists had an approximate 68% attrition rate, even though there is an active youth ministry there (Rainer, 2009, as cited in Jacobs et al., n.d., p. 3). Although this one particular Adventist church does not represent all Adventist churches, it is estimated that at least 40-50% of Adventist teenagers in the U.S. are essentially leaving the church by their mid-20s (Dudley, 2000, as cited in Jacobs et al., n.d., p. 4). No evidence exists that even half of young adults in general, who leave the Christian church, return at a later date with their families (Wuthnow, 2007, as cited in Allred, 2011, p. 266).

This raises concerns for the viability, not only of Christianity in general in America, but of Adventism in particular (Cross, 2011, as cited in Jacobs et al., n.d., p. 3).

In addition, a study confirms there is over-reporting of church involvement in this area, because researchers depend on respondents to self-report attendance habits (Hadaway & Marler, 1998, as cited in Jacobs et al., n.d., p. 3). This means the attrition rate is likely higher than reported in these types of studies.

As can be seen from the previously cited research, each generation in America contains more people opposed to Christianity, which explains their growing influence (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, p. 18). Allred (2011) reports that this generation of youth is 100 million in number, making up 50% of the adult American population and that there is concern for Christianity's future in America (p. 1). Lindsey (2013) reports that according to the 2012 U.S. Census Bureau, there are about 80 million Millennials living in America, making up 25% of the adult population (p. 65). Either way, young adults make up a large share of the adult population and therefore, there is concern for Christianity's future in America.

Moreover, it is possible to identify oneself as Christian, yet be moving in a post-Christian direction. For example, a national sample found that approximately 80% of college students in America believe in God and attend religious services, but only 40% follow religious teachings in everyday life (Marinho et al., 2010, p. 9). This may be due to the fact that many young adults who participate regularly in a Christian church, share some of the same negative perceptions of Christianity as do those outside the church (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, pp. 33-34).

Based on the foregoing information, the phrase "post-Christian young adults" will be used in this study to refer to young adults who have grown up in a society where post-Christian views are gaining ground, specifically the U.S., *and* who have accepted those

post-Christian views. As Kimball points out, not all young adults growing up in a post-Christian society have accepted post-Christian views and therefore should not be considered post-Christian simply based on their age (Kimball, 2003, pp. 61-62). However, the reverse is also true. A young adult can have accepted post-Christian views, even if the society lived in has not itself become fully post-Christian. After all, a post-Christian society can only be made once there are enough post-Christians in it. Therefore, post-Christians as individuals come before the formation of a post-Christian society as a collective unit.

If the church is going to minister to these post-Christian young adults it must offer true Christianity (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, p. 144) and testify of the true spiritual experiences of its own members (McNeal, 2011, p. 81). This approach must include relating answers to prayer, because postmoderns recognize prayer as a legitimate part of one's life (Stiller, 2005, p. 89) and post-Christians tend to be postmodern. If it can be seen that true spirituality resides with Christians, postmoderns will be one step closer to beginning a relationship with Christ (McNeal, 2011, p. 90), and in time can be led to understand there is no other way of salvation (Greidanus, 1999, p. 13). But how does one motivate a post-Christian young adult to even want to attend church?

In terms of reaching post-Christian young adults, there is a cultural gap even between them and those who lead youth oriented worship services (Krum, 2005, p. 27). In general, contemporary worship will not work in drawing this group to church (Dick & Dick, 2001, p. 157; Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, p. 144). More than this, flashy and cutting edge Christian promotions, such as websites, advertisements, programs, flyers, posters, and radio spots, will not succeed in even drawing this group to desire to attend church

(Hill, 2011, p. 29). However, as Johnston emphasizes, this does not mean today's young adults are not interested in spirituality, but that the Christian church is not the first place they are turning to for spiritual guidance (Johnston, 2009, p. 5).

From secular business to the Christian church, people are wondering how best to engage with the Millennial generation (Jenkin & Martin, 2014, p. 6). Considering that “only six percent of even the most youthful congregations have something for single adults” (Wuthnow, 2007, as cited in Lindsey, 2013, p. 77), there is an enormous need to develop a strategy to reach, not simply single young adults, but post-Christian young adults in general. This is especially true, considering it is between the ages of 18 and 29, young adult years, that people are more likely to switch faiths (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011, p. 32).

Today the church is dealing with an increasingly non-Christian culture similar to the one the early Christian church dealt with and must therefore draw on the leadership practices and principles of the initial leaders of the Christian movement (Greidanus, 1999, p. 13; McNeal, 2011, p. 102). Gibbs (as cited in Cauley, 2010, p. 37) states that the most helpful models to reach this type of society might be drawn from the first 150 years of the Christian church. We must also use the time-tested practices of disciples through the ages (Willard, 1997, p. 371).

In addition, preachers need to consider different ways to reach postmoderns (Stiller, 2005, p. 25), including the appropriate use of technology in order to be relevant to younger generations who do end up coming to church (McNeal, 2011, p. 86). However, nothing can supplant the basic mode of proclamation called preaching

(Childers & Schmit, 2008, p. 174), but preaching must be packaged to reach those influenced by postmodernism (Greidanus, 1999, p. 149).

Therefore, although the “why” of preaching remains the same—to present Christ and His gospel to the hearers—because post-Christian young adults are unlikely to be found weekly in church listening to the traditional preacher with the traditional preaching of the Bible, the “who,” “what,” “when,” “where,” and “how” of traditional preaching is rendered ineffective. However, there is evidence for effectively reaching post-Christian young adults who do not attend church by using illustrations and storytelling via incarnational ministry.

Incarnational Ministry

Incarnational ministry derives its title from the incarnation of Jesus: Him becoming human. Frost and Hirsch (as cited in Iselin & Meteyard, 2010, p. 36) refer to the incarnation as an absolute foundational doctrine and the theological prism through which we view our entire missional task in the world. Iselin & Meteyard (2010) contend that the incarnation fundamentally provides a model and method for ministry (p. 36). We imitate the incarnation of Jesus through our service to those in need (Henreckson, 2010, p. 175). Kinnaman and Lyons (2007) state “Christ calls his followers to be active missionaries to the culture” (p. 132). Iselin and Meteyard (2010) observe “incarnational ministry posits itself as an antithesis to the fragmented, reductionist, individualised, compartmentalised and highly competitive assumptions that underpin Western rationalism and post-Enlightenment academia” (p. 37).

Incarnational ministry is about what Jesus did while being human and what He left in order to do so. As Tapia (1994) mentions, “Incarnational ministry is modeled after

Jesus' giving up his privileged position in heaven to live among the poor with a message of hope and salvation" (p. 50). Finley adds that although Jesus ministered to the poor, marginalized, and disadvantaged, He also ministered to the educated, sophisticated, and wealthy (Finley, 2011, p. 31). In other words, Jesus ministered to the marginalized, yet He did not marginalize. Furthermore, there is a dynamic and inseparable relationship between the sacred and the secular (Connolly & Brondo, 2010, p. 38), meaning Jesus ministered to all of humanity's needs, not just their spiritual ones.

Unpacking Tapia's comment above, we notice when Jesus left heaven to come to earth, He left where He was to come where humans were. Jesus was proactive in reaching the lost (Hill, 2011, p. 31), even living among them. When Jesus set aside being only fully God to also become fully human, He partly set aside who He was and became like His target group. He also adopted such things as their culture, appearance, language, social environment, and teaching strategies. Jesus made Himself similar externally, to make the lost different internally. Jesus' incarnational approach to ministry resulted in effective evangelism.

Speaking of incarnational ministry, Billings (2004) says, "God's love is not love from a distance, but love up close, love made manifest in a culturally particular, person-to-person way" (p. 188). Frost (as cited in Robertson, 2008, p. 249) describes incarnational ministry as providing a deep and sacrificial relationship with others, which helps break down walls in order to share the gospel of love with those in need.

Kidder (2011) says one biblical sign of a healthy church is that it is incarnational (p. 22). McNeal explains that ministering in a pre-Christian culture, which can also be a postmodern culture, is different than ministering in a Christianized culture. A pre-

Christian culture calls for a missionary strategy, which means going where the people are and proactively engaging with them (McNeal, 2011, p. 87). First-century church leaders adopted this missionary approach when faced with a similar challenge (McNeal, 2011, p. 81). A similar approach must be taken in reaching post-Christian young adults.

Incarnational Ministry and Post Christian Young Adults

Jesus' incarnation has practical implications for reaching post-Christian young adults. This means making a shift from fishing *for* the fish to swimming *with* the fish (Center for Secular and Postmodern Studies, n.d.b, para. 7). In order to reach post-Christian young adults, today's church must value community (McNeal, 2011, p. 136), and incarnational ministry is one way to implement this value.

Christians are to follow Jesus' example and come close to assist those in need by becoming one with them (Billings, 2004, p. 188). However, Costas (as cited in Billings, p. 189) clarifies that when Jesus became incarnate and one with humanity, He was still God and remained true to Himself. This means getting close to influence outsiders while still living in a way that is pure and honors God (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, p. 133). An example of this is the biblical prophet Daniel (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011, p. 110). As Billings (2004) relates, the goal of incarnational ministry is not to become completely one with the target audience, but to be with them and for them (p. 188).

In her book, *The Ministry of Healing*, White (1905) explains how to do this:

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me." (p. 143)

Krause (2011) notes that White summarizes the incarnational ministry of Jesus in

five steps (p. 27). Krause gives examples of how people have led others to Christ through this five-step process (pp. 27-30), as does Padderatz (2010, pp. 22-25). These five steps are: (a) mingle, (b) sympathize, (c) minister to needs, (d) win confidence, and (e) then lead people to follow Jesus. This delineates how to build a relationship with post-Christian young adults in order to present Jesus to them.

Commenting on White's statement, Sahlin (2003) cautions:

“Then” suggests that it is inappropriate and unchristlike to attempt to communicate the Gospel message prior to winning the confidence of individuals or groups in the unreached community. “Then” means that Christ waited until certain conditions prevailed, in the understanding of Ellen White, and at that time the Savior felt free to begin to talk about spiritual things. (pp. 13-14)

White (1905) says this approach “will give true success in reaching the people” (p. 143). Why is this so? Sahlin (2003) explains that proclamation alone will immediately draw the marginalized, but they become a barrier making it impossible for most of the community to hear the message (p. 14). However, when incarnational ministry is implemented, although it does not have the same immediate results, over time it will reach more people with the message of the gospel (Sahlin, 2003, p. 14). Tan (2004) also advocates an approach that focuses not only on evangelism, but also compassion ministry and the life and needs of the unreached (p. 286). Johnston (2009) expresses the need for this combination in the context of ministering to young adults (pp. 36-41).

Thus, winning someone's confidence through incarnational ministry requires more time than proclamation by itself, because “deep relationship happens only by spending time, and big chunks of it, in shared experiences” (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011, p. 205). Firsthand experiences and conversations are the primary means young people outside the church have acquired their perception of Christianity (Kinnaman & Lyons,

2007, p. 31), which has not generally been positive (p. 26). Thus, the most effective way to undue these negative views is also through conversations and firsthand experiences in the context of meaningful, trusting relationships (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, pp. 209, 226). Maxson (2015) says those in a pre-Christ stage, meaning those who have not accepted Christ, need “a safe relationship with an authentic Christian” (p. 7).

Many studies demonstrate that social relationships have an enormous influence on the thinking and decision-making processes of children, teenagers, and young adults (Gordon, Browne, & Cruz; Petr; Roman; Wkerle & Wall, as cited in Allred, 2011, p. 48). However, although this decision-making process can be facilitated by adults or the youth’s peer group, it is the peer group that wields tremendous influence in shaping values, attitudes, and behaviors (Delgado, as cited in Allred, 2011, p. 48). Therefore, although post-Christian young adults can be reached incarnationally by Christian adults, it is Christian *young* adults who will be most effective.

Research done by Barna Group offers a few reasons why an incarnational approach to ministry is a must: (a) in all the interviews Barna Group did, “street witnessing,” where Christians intercept unknown passers-by to witness, was not perceived favorably (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, p. 69); (b) it is a myth that people embrace Christianity because of logical arguments (p. 72); (c) about one-quarter of non-Christians describe Christians as using special words and phrases they cannot understand (p. 123). An incarnational approach to ministry allows the one ministering to present the gospel in a contextual manner, thus solving these types of problems.

Incarnational ministry can be as simple as making bread for the neighbors, which affords the opportunity to begin a friendship and later share Jesus with them (Hinkle,

2011, p. 6). Jackson (2011) mentions it can be connecting with others at social gatherings, walking clubs, in one's own home or by planning community outreach projects, or conducting health seminars (pp. 13-14). It can even be as simple as developing friendships with co-workers to then later lead them to Christ (Kidder, 2011, pp. 116-117). It can also be more radical. In the early 1990s, according to the Christian Community Development Association, 5,500 evangelicals moved into inner cities as incarnational ministers (Tapia, 1994, p. 50).

Belonging Before Believing and Behaving

Bond (2011) recounts an incident from her life that helps illustrate some of the principles behind incarnational ministry (pp. 13-14). She was an indifferent Mac computer user, who one morning had a need to fix her Mac. Not only did the Apple rep meet her need by fixing her problem, in the process, by relating to her, being friendly, offering hope and good news, and not scolding her for her problem, he gave her a new perspective of who he represented—Apple. “My job isn’t to repair your Mac,” he said. “My job is to repair your relationship with Apple.” From that day forward, her perspective of Apple was transformed.

What resulted from the relationship between Apple, the rep, and Bond is similar to what results from the relationship between God, the incarnational worker, and the lost. However, this approach to ministry goes against the way many newcomers are often accepted into Christianity: by believing, behaving, belonging. What Bond experienced and what Green (2011) advocates puts the three-step progression in a different order: belonging, believing, behaving (p. 26). Johnston (2009) says it this way: belonging, believing, becoming (p. 12). It is also possible for the progression to play out in this

order: belonging, behaving, believing. Either way, recognizing the need for belonging, meaning the need for relationship before believing and behaving, is crucial. This was Jesus' method and post-Christian young adults value relationship (Hill, 2011, p. 29; Krum, 2005, p. 29).

Because young adulthood is a period when many begin searching for an understanding of the bigger picture of life on this planet (Des Jarlais, 2013, p. 102) and critically examine their personal beliefs with a lens separate from their upbringing (Anthony, 2013, p. 13), the way to reach them is to be with them and allow the friendship to naturally progress toward sharing Christ (Hill, 2011, p. 31). Living truth with our lives makes telling truth with our lips effective (Lischer, 2002, p. 16).

Imaginative Storytelling

If living truth with our lives makes telling truth with our lips effective (Lischer, 2002, p. 16), is there also a way of telling truth with our lips that makes receiving truth with the ears effective? In terms of reaching post-Christian young adults, is there a way of communicating that resonates with them, making it easier for them to receive truth?

It is crucial to determine, as soon as possible, the most effective teaching methods for communicating spiritual concepts to this group, because in the case of Adventist youth, many appear to be struggling spiritually and are leaving the church in large numbers (Allred, 2011, p. 159). Therefore, a way must be found to present the truths of salvation in the most attractive package possible (p. 175) and draw back those who have left and keep those who remain from leaving.

The relevance of sermons for U.S. Adventist young adults is the most important aspect attracting them to church (Jacobs et al., n.d., p. 11). In Europe, a study of

Adventists between the ages of 14 to 25 found that those who heard preaching at church that was helpful to their daily lives were 450 times more likely to want to remain active in their faith than those who did not identify with weekly sermons (Oliver, 2010, para. 5, 22). Other important aspects found among U.S. Adventist young adults were having people their age that attend and the personality of the pastor (Jacobs et al., n.d., p. 11).

This means to have a church Adventist young adults are attracted to, the pastor plays a large role in terms of preaching and relating. In fact, the larger the church, the more likely respondents were to choose sermon style, sermon relevance, and the personality of the pastor as points of connection (Jacobs et al., n.d., p. 15). Considering most Adventist young adults attend larger churches with full-time pastors (Jacobs et al., n.d., p. 16), this underscores the importance of sermon style, sermon relevance, and the personality of the pastor in attracting Adventist young adults to church.

The personality of the pastor relates to incarnational ministry, discussed above, as well as to how the pastor comes across in preaching, which is discussed in the next chapter on methodologies. Sermon relevance relates to content, which is also discussed in the next chapter. Sermon style relates to the teaching methods chosen to communicate the content, which is discussed in this section and the next.

Although these three points of connection have been found to attract *Adventist* young adults to church, by extension, these points of connection, in the context of incarnational ministry, may also reach post-Christian young adults who have left the Adventist church, as well as other post-Christian young adults.

Considering the importance of sermon style, the lecture method is not the most effective teaching method with any age group (Prosser, McCullar, & Quails, as cited in

Allred, 2011, p. 160). However, among those Adventist students interviewed, a lecture, sermon, or worship talk can be effective if it is clearly presented under the power of the Holy Spirit (Allred, 2011, p. 179), but for postmodern young people, this must be done in a small group format and allow for small group discussion (pp. 178-179). “Small groups are the preferred settings for the postmodern generation” (Allred, 2011, p. 179). This is especially true when doing evangelism among postmodern young people, because the dialogue that ensues can foster greater understanding and remove many roadblocks to faith (Carson, as cited in Allred, 2011, p. 173).

Furthermore, repeating what the Bible teaches is not considered valid or compelling evidence for most of today’s young adults (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, p. 212). Young people are drawn to creative expressions of the gospel and to connect with them one must find new ways of telling the timeless truths of the Bible (p. 211). This is why today’s pastors are experimenting with methods of communication in order to express the gospel in a way that catches the attention of a skeptical and disinterested audience (p. 211). This therefore introduces the need for imaginative storytelling in preaching.

Cassady (1990) defines storytelling as an “oral art form that provides a means of preserving and transmitting ideas, images, motives, and emotions that are universal”

(p. 5). She further defines it by saying: “A commonality of experiences concerned with the human being is pointed up, talked about, presented from generation to generation, from century to century. This is storytelling” (p. 13).

It is a universal and indispensable human means of symbolic communication that is built into human nature so that people tell their lives and plot their identities in stories

(Graves & Schlafer, 2008, pp. 8, 100). Walsh (2014) says storytelling is how people communicate all day, every day, but also an advanced method of communicating both publicly and one-on-one (pp. 13-14).

Although it is an oral tradition, existing before written language (Cassady, 1990, p. 6), Middle Eastern societies imprinted stories on clay tablets as far back as nearly 4,000 years ago (MacDonald, 1993, p. 13). Another example of ancient written stories is found in the Bible.

Much of the Bible is story and the writers of Scripture were good storytellers (Bray, 1996, p. 485). Walsh (2014) states there are over 525 stories in Scripture (p. 12). In the Old Testament, narrative is the primary literary form (Wilder, 1969, as cited in Graves & Schlafer, 2008, p. 9). In the New Testament, the gospels are the prime example of story as a natural speech-form and serve as the model for preaching as storytelling (pp. 9-10). Considering that the parable was Jesus' predominant teaching form (Dillard & Longman, 1994, as cited in Greidanus, 1999, p. 265), Jesus' use of parables is the key example of storytelling as preaching. The special genius of parables is they teach wisdom in everyday life, as well as challenge the inadequacies of normal human behavior and rebuke them (Bray, 1996, pp. 501-502).

Stories are still used today. Many of today's stories are simply contemporary adaptations of those used by ancient civilizations (Cassady, 1990, p. 7).

Imaginative storytelling refers to the ability to engage the hearer's imagination during the storytelling by the way the story is told. This requires the teller to first "see the story" and then descriptively tell what was seen, thus also engaging the imagination of the listener (Arthurs, 2007, pp. 51, 77, 98; Galli & Larson, 1994, p. 86; Lischer, 2002, pp.

405, 407; Walsh, 2014, p. 142). Therefore, one must appeal to the five senses (Arthurs, 2007, p. 51; Galli & Larson, 1994, p. 86). This is important in preaching narrative or story (Carter, Duvall, & Hays, 2005, p. 192). The famous storyteller, Mark Lewis, in a segment from the documentary, *Faire: An American Renaissance*, explains:

The secret to being a storyteller is you have to make it real. If you as the storyteller can see it, touch it, taste it, smell it and feel it—if you can make it real to you, then your audience will see it. (Lewis, 2009)

In order for the preacher to communicate using sensory images, story, and dialogue about competing truth claims, the imagination of the listener must be engaged (Schlafer, 1994, p. 2). Once the imagination of the listener is engaged, the story will impact the listener by creating an experience in the imagination (Arthurs, 2007, p. 96; Craddock, 1987, as cited in Aden & Hughes, 2002, p. 82). Wright (2011) explains that “imagery is a real sensory experience that occurs in the mind” (p. 44). The only kind of learning that significantly influences behavior is assimilated in experience (Rogers, as cited in Arthurs, 2007, p. 30). This is the purpose of being descriptive in storytelling: to get people into the story where they will experience the heart of it (Walsh, 2014, p. 73).

Once an experience has been created in the imagination, the listener is challenged to make a decision (Arthurs, 2007, p. 50; Childers & Schmit, 2008, pp. 59, 112, 117; Long, 1989, p. 76). This is the type of learning the gospel provides and calls for in preaching (Graves & Schlafer, 2008, p. 10; Tisdale, 1997, p. 132).

Imaginative Storytelling and Post-Christian Young Adults

This section is presented based on the following premise: imaginative storytelling has been found to be an effective means of reaching postmoderns, as explained below;

post-Christians tend to be postmodern; therefore imaginative storytelling will also be found to be an effective means of reaching post-Christians.

To better understand how imaginative storytelling applies to reaching post-Christian young adults, the relationship between postmodernism and narrative must be considered. Postmodernism has rejected *metanarrative*, which gave western culture its coherence and sense of purpose (Larkin, 2000, p. 405). However, although postmodernity has rejected *metanarrative* in the sense of universal truth (Hill, 2011, p. 31), it has not rejected narrative (Steffen, 2006, p. 421). Consequently, narrative can be used to restore metanarrative. Bash remarks that all social change begins with the construction of alternative stories of what is possible, where an alternative reality filled with hope, expectation and possibility is presented (as cited in Kok & Niemandt, 2009, p. 502). Bash explains that the need for these alternative stories often arises in the context of loss, crisis, and disorientation (p. 502).

Steffen (2010) sites examples of how narrative or story is being used to evangelize postmoderns (p. 153) and Lee (2004) comments on the increased interest in narrative in the area of theology due to postmodern ideas (p. 221). Considering postmoderns have been conditioned by television and media and therefore have a short attention span, it has been suggested that narrative sermons should be shorter and more concise, taking less than twenty-five minutes (Carter, Duvall, & Hays, 2005, pp. 166-167).

However, the imaginative aspect of storytelling must not be pitted against logic, as they are complementary (Wilson, 1992, as cited in Schlafer, 1994, p. 3). In harmony with this balance between imagination and logic, Long (2009) points out that narrative

preaching must be accompanied by an explanation of the ideas and ethical implications of the stories so as not to be missed by the hearers (p. 15). However, Stiller (2005) explains that current generations know how to interpret stories and apply their lessons to life

(p. 30). This means today's listeners know how to balance imagination and logic themselves. Arthurs (2007) argues for a two-sided approach where sometimes you explain and sometimes you leave things open-ended based on the needs of the listeners (Arthurs, 2007, p. 122). After all, postmoderns value mystery, imagination, narrative, and silence (p. 122). Therefore, although some explanation may be appropriate, listeners must be given the opportunity to draw out the stories' lessons for themselves.

To put this process of evangelization in context however, it must be remembered that it generally takes much longer to lead a postmodern or post-Christian to Christ. In post-Christian Europe it takes up to seven years (Morris & Hucks, 2011, p. 8). This should not discourage the evangelization of postmoderns, but bring perspective and the realization that the use of story may not produce immediate results.

Contrary to what some may think, the postmodern preference for stories over propositions is not related to the secularization of society or advancements in contemporary civilization or a negative attitude toward the Bible. Not only did ancient religious civilizations like Israel in the Bible have the same preference, but so do contemporary uncivilized religious people groups (Steffen, 2010, p. 144). Furthermore, stories make up 55-65% of the Bible (Steffen, 2005; as cited in Steffen, 2010, p. 150). Peterson (as cited in Steffen, 2010, p. 150) remarks, "The Holy Spirit's literary genre of choice is story." Wilder (as cited in Rice, 1976, p. 189) "suggests that the models for preaching as storytelling are in the gospels themselves" and Rice states, "Jesus—it goes

without saying—was a storyteller” (p. 188). The preference for story is nothing new or unbiblical (Ammerman, Carroll, Dudley, & McKinney, 1998, p. 27).

Considering the gospel is a story and must therefore be told as a story, rather than a set of laws or propositions, poses a challenge to many of today’s evangelism models (Steffen, 2010, pp. 149-150). This challenge has arisen because classic evangelical hermeneutics has lost biblical narrative as the source of normative teaching (Larkin, 2000, p. 405). As Steffen (2010) contends, personal preferences for communicating the gospel must give way to the host culture’s preference for learning (p. 156).

Taking into account postmoderns prefer story over proposition, stories are appropriate for any age (MacDonald, 1993, p. 55), and “storytelling can play a significant role in the development of a new culture” (Agelidou, 2010, p. 361), imaginative storytelling is well-suited to communicate Jesus and His teachings to post-Christian young adults. This calls for an examination of the greatest storyteller—Jesus.

Jesus the Storyteller and Post-Christian Young Adults

Storytellers make sense of their observations and share what they learn, interpreting life for others (Cassady, 1990, p. 9). They take listeners into other worlds, lives and situations that may never otherwise have been encountered (p. 5) and help listeners make discoveries about themselves and their thinking (p. 11). This is what Jesus did and Jesus is the prime example of a storyteller. However, Jesus was the master teacher, not because of His use of stories, but because He knew His audience and adapted His message to their mindset (Walsh, 2014, p. 20).

In her book *Christ’s Object Lessons*, White offers a number of reasons why Jesus

used parables or stories. One reason was because it was popular among believers *and* unbelievers (White, 1900, p. 21)—today referred to as the unchurched, of which post-Christians make up a part. Considering story is still popular with this segment of the population, preachers should do the same today.

White (1900) also says that Jesus' stories were taken from scenes of daily life, experiences of His hearers, and nature (White, 1900, p. 21)—these same things appeal to postmoderns today. The importance of personal and acquired experiences for the storyteller has been expressed (Rice, 1976, p. 194). However, although Jesus had personal experiences and at times shared them (Luke 10:18; John 7:28-29; 8:23, 42, 58; 18:36-37), Jesus' storytelling did not convey truth through the use of *His* experiences, but as White previously clarified, through the experiences of His target audience.

Jesus connected *their* stories with biblical truths that He might have analogies with which to take His listeners from the familiar to the unfamiliar (White, 1900, p. 17). Analogy creates this bridge by taking that which is unobservable and imagining it, so it can be referred to (Deeley, 2004, p. 249).

In a postmodern approach to the role of imagination, Buttrick (1987, as cited in Eslinger, 1994, p. 8) arrives at the same conclusion as White. He points out that images, examples, and illustrations must be taken out of the lived experience of the hearers. He argues that they must not be used to simply support the argument of the sermon, but are woven into the very content, providing an underlying image grid for the entire sermon, thus enabling the hearer to see what was said. Buttrick also explains that they must serve as analogy in order to bring about meaning.

In addition, Jesus knew how to take biblical truths and speak to the direct needs of

the people. Sahlin (2004) underscores the importance of this by saying, “The skill of the preacher in relating the target group needs to the Bible will determine whether or not these people come back to hear more of the gospel” (p. 72).

Jesus packaged His teachings in stories from His listener’s daily life. As they went about their daily life they would recall Jesus’ stories and the Holy Spirit would further unfold the significance of Jesus’ teachings (White, 1900, p. 21). Thus, people’s daily lives were transformed into a constant encounter with God and spiritual realities (pp. 26-27). Story will reach postmoderns today in the same way.

White gives another reason for Jesus’ use of parabolic story: it clothed truth in figurative language (White, 1900, p. 21) or as Rice (1976) puts it, “storytelling tends to secularize the content of sermons” (p. 184). This is crucial in reaching post-Christians. They are not open to Christianity and the Bible, but they are open to secular stories. Miller (as cited in Carter, Duvall, & Hays, 2005, p. 228) explains that narrative seems less “preachy” to today’s postmodern audience and thus a little less threatening than traditional preaching.

Furthermore, in using story, Jesus prevented His enemies from having something with which to accuse and condemn and murder Him (White, 1900, p. 21). The use of story allows for the teaching of controversial subject matter without eliciting resistance—or at least immediate resistance. MacDonald (1993) notices that stories “can carry a burden of political message, sometimes without breaking” (p. 10). An example of this is George Orwell’s books, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

The use of story also allows for the teaching of subject matter that goes against intuitive cultural expectations, some of which may or may not be controversial. In a

cross-cultural study by Boyer and Ramble (as cited in Deeley, 2004, pp. 251-252), storytelling that included situations or items that went against intuitive cultural expectations, such as “a breach of relevant domain expectations or a transfer of expectations from one domain to another” produced better recall of those situations and items by the listeners. However, familiarity with such violations of expectations can markedly reduce this effect (Deeley, 2004, p. 253). Better recall with such methods may be due to the emotional arousal produced (Strauss & Quinn, 1997, as cited in Deeley, p. 254). Examples of this method of storytelling as used by Jesus can be found in such parables as the *Good Samaritan*, the *Prodigal Son*, and the *Rich Man and Lazarus*.

In a compilation of her writings, Ellen White emphasizes the need to model Jesus’ manner and form of discourses (1988, pp. 110-111), which include storytelling. She counsels against set, formal phrases and merely argumentative subjects (p. 115). Rather, she was in favor of simplicity and solemnity (p. 111). However, she does not mean by solemnity that Jesus did not smile and was gloomy or morose, because she explains that “wherever He went He carried rest and peace, joy and gladness” and that He was cheerful (White, 1892, pp. 120-121). Brooks (as cited in Rice, 1976, p. 194) believed it was “an undue sense of solemnity, and the habits of ‘mechanism’ and ‘criticism,’ which squelched the personal element in preaching.” In connection with a cheerful and personable disposition in preaching, the main theme must be Christ crucified, which White (1988) says, “will break and win hearts” (p. 115).

Therefore, in a personable manner, the preacher must use stories from the daily life of post-Christian young adults as analogies that will lead them to understand God’s great love for them in sending His Son Jesus to die on the cross. This is best

accomplished by following Jesus' example of living among His target group. Not only did this facilitate a shared common experience, resulting in the contextual communication of the gospel (Buechner, 1966, as cited in Graves & Schlafer, 2008, p. 17), but it did this through relationship building. As Steffen (2010) points out, story is important in cross-cultural work, but what cannot be overlooked is the need to build deep relationships, which enables the story to be communicated to friends instead of strangers (Steffen, 2010, p. 149). This is why imaginative storytelling must come in the context of incarnational ministry.

Furthermore, imaginative storytelling cannot be the only approach, because different occasions call for different forms of preaching and because postmoderns prize diversity and pluralism (Graves & Schlafer, 2008, p. 40). Therefore, preachers must also consider other teaching forms such as sensory engaging andragogies.

Sensory Engaging Andragogies

Sensory engaging andragogies are teaching methods that function as illustrations and utilize the five senses as avenues through which to educate. For example, visuals engage sight, sounds engage hearing, objects engage touch, foods engage taste, and scents engage smell. Thus learning is imparted experientially, which is important to postmoderns.

Sensory Engaging Andragogies and Increased Learning

Due to training or past experience, it is possible for either one's auditory or visual acuity to be stronger than the other (Woo, 2009, p. 214). It is also possible for one of the other five senses to be stronger. Therefore, sensory engaging teaching methods increase

the likelihood that learning will take place.

Arthurs says, “Many studies have confirmed what we know intuitively, that the combination of visual with aural communication greatly enhances impact and retention” (2007, p. 167). Dwyer (1978) found that telling alone had a 70% recall three hours later and a 10% recall three days later; *Showing* alone had a 72% recall three hours later and a 22% recall three days later; However, showing *and* telling had an 85% recall three hours later and a 65% recall three days later (as cited in Arthurs, 2007, p. 167).

Not only are sensory engaging andragogies valuable for teacher-student instruction, but also for education through the learning environment. Both indoor and outdoor multi-sensory learning environments have been designed for this purpose (Hussein, 2010, p. 26). It has been observed that when special needs pupils in multi-sensory learning environments are involved in *doing* activities rather than academic learning, they are most likely to succeed (p. 27).

This improvement in learning by engaging the senses is not limited to special needs students. Qualitative observation of group learning among normal individuals found that one’s retention rate increased from 5% when learning only by hearing (lecturing), to 30% when learning by hearing and seeing (reading, audio-visual, demonstration), and when practice by doing was incorporated, the rate rose to 75% (Magennis & Farrell, 2007, table 1, para. 34). Today’s preaching needs to be not only biblically based, but also multisensory and participatory (Childers & Schmit, 2008, p. 65).

Sensory Engaging Andragogies and Post-Christian Young Adults

Traditional models of teaching instruct the “middle-of-the-class” youth, but fail to challenge the brighter ones and ignore the less able (Wright, 2011, p. 40). For example, youth who tend to be technologically over-stimulated and struggle to maintain meaningful relationships through the adolescent years are increasingly prone to become depressed and suffer from suicidal ideation (Blumenthal & Kupfer, 1990, Joiner & Lonigan, 2000, as cited in Wright, 2011, p. 41). Wright suggests designing experiential opportunities for growth and development as a proactive means of confronting this challenge (p. 41).

One such example of this teaching method is that used by Linda Sines (Center for Secular and Postmodern Studies, n.d.c, para. 3-4). As a youth leader, she uses art to explore a concept, parable or Scripture, creating an experience from which to learn. Although this may seem very alternative, it is based on Jesus’ example of using ordinary things around Him to reveal the mysteries of God (Center for Secular and Postmodern Studies, n.d.c, para. 3-4). Furthermore, in the Old Testament, God designed Israelite worship to engage the senses for the purpose of learning (Kidder, 2009, p. 85).

When the importance that post-Christians place on experiential learning, as mentioned earlier, is combined with the importance of properly educating young people, it becomes apparent that sensory engaging andragogies are a must for reaching post-Christian young adults. As Magennis and Farrell (2007) note, “Different activities are appropriate to different objectives and to different learning styles” (para. 19). Consequently, those interested in evangelizing this segment of the population must consider learning to preach differently than they were taught (Walsh, 2014, p. 137).

Conclusion

Today's young people are unlikely to enter a Christian church (Krum, 2005, p. 28). There is a cultural gap even between them and those who lead youth oriented worship services (p. 27). Therefore, because post-Christian young adults value relationship, as well as experience and narrative as learning methods, illustrations and storytelling via incarnational ministry are effective media to reach post-Christian young adults who do not attend church.

Nonetheless, some questions remain unanswered. How much of the post-Christian culture can one adopt while maintaining integrity to the teachings of the Bible? Because there are subcultures within the post-Christian young adult group, is it better to attempt to reach the entire group or a subculture? Are there certain sensory engaging andragogies that work better with this group? What stories are most appropriate to reach them? I believe these questions, and others like them, can best be answered only once involved incarnationally with the target group.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

Introduction

Are everyday environments within reach conducive to building relationships with post-Christian young adults? Is incarnational ministry simple or complicated in these environments? Why should we converse with specialists who understand young adult needs? Is it difficult to schedule time to minister to this group? Can anything of value be conveyed to a post-Christian young adult in a short time frame? What of value can be said in that short time frame that will build trust and credibility to later lead them to Christ? This chapter answers these questions and others by describing the methodology used in the pre-work leading up to the project, the project talks, and the follow-up talks. In order to accomplish this, the chapter is divided into six sections, each answering a different question. These six questions are: where, who, what, when, how, and why. Each section is then broken down into three subsections, which explain how the methodology in the section applies to the pre-work, project, and follow-up.

Where? Selecting Environment and Location

Application to Pre-Work

At the beginning of my Doctor of Ministry program, I chose to reach post-Christian young adults. I then began researching how best to reach them, as others have (Jenkin & Martin, 2014, p. 6). As I began planning my project, it was obvious I needed to go where post-Christian young adults were, but where—what environment should I select? This question was answered by the suggestion made by my context support group to reach post-Christian young adults in the environment of San Joaquin Delta College in Stockton, CA (hereafter referred to as “Delta”). Delta is a two-year community college and students attending are from the surrounding area. This makes it possible to invest time in building long-term relationships (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011, p. 205) that will positively influence them (Gordon, Browne, & Cruz; Petr; Roman; Wkerle & Wall, all as cited in Allred, 2011, p. 48). It also allows for a follow-up strategy.

There are many ways to connect with others (Jackson, 2011, pp. 13-14). My context support group encouraged me to reach out to students by taking a class. I therefore sat in on a class during the Fall 2013 semester. I also attended a couple of campus events. During the Spring 2015 semester, I again sat in on a class and built relationships. However, students in the second class were not the same students in the first class. Thus there was no continuity in relationship building. Nonetheless, I formed relationships in the Spring 2015 class, especially with one particular post-Christian young adult. Positive first hand experiences and conversations are imperative for post-Christian young adults to form a healthy perception of Christianity (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, p. 31).

However, due to the challenges of forming enough meaningful relationships during two separate semesters and attempting to conduct a ministry project on a secular campus, I broadened my participant pool to include more than just Delta students. This included conducting my project off campus. But what location would be suitable and close enough to Delta to also invite Delta students to participate?

Upon considering this matter, I chose our church's fellowship hall, which is in a separate building behind the church. It is a straight shot from Delta and only 2 ½ miles away. Not only was this a good location, it also proved a good environment to reach more post-Christian young adults, because a number of local young adults attend the weekly open gym basketball night there. Furthermore, I had been playing basketball in this environment for a number of weeks by this time and was already ministering incarnationally. I did this, even though at the time I did not know my project would be in the fellowship hall and that I would invite some of these young adults to participate.

The basketball ministry provided an existing "well" to connect with post-Christian young adults, like Jacob's well provided Jesus with a place to connect with the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42). These types of "wells" already exist in many churches or can be created. They are such things as ministries, outreaches, events, and social gatherings that people from the community attend. I simply plugged in to a ministry that was already taking place and used it to bring about more ministry.

Application to Project

The specific location for my project was a separate room in the fellowship hall used by the Cambodian group for services. This allowed me to organize the room for the presentations without disrupting the basketball games. However, because the room was

not used exclusively for my project, I could not plan such things as lighting, colors, and stage design and incorporate principles from a multi-sensory learning environment (Hussein, 2010, p. 26). Nonetheless, the room was sufficient for the presentations.

I used the back of the room and had participants face the back. I did this so it would not feel so churchy, considering young adults are not turning to the Christian church as a first option for spirituality (Johnston, 2009, p. 5). I also did this to have free center space without the pulpit interfering. I used a small stand on the side to place my notes, a chair for the surveys and consent forms, and a table for my props. I placed pens on a table off to the side and had them place completed surveys there. I also provided water bottles on the table for those thirsty after basketball. Chairs were arranged in an arched manner, which kept the focus on me and allowed them to see each other by turning their heads.

Conducting my project in the fellowship hall provided participants with a familiar location within which to feel comfortable. It also allowed me to reach the majority where they already were and not expect them to come to me, which is important in incarnational ministry (Tapia, 1994, p. 50).

Application to Follow-Up

I conducted the follow-up sessions in the same room as the project talks. However, instead of using the back of the room, I used the front of the room and had them face the front. This allowed me to use the projector to project my presentation from my computer, which now included Scripture verses. Since they were already accustomed to being in that room, and since I was transitioning them to begin focusing on spirituality and Christ, I was no longer concerned that the room had a churchy feel to it.

Who? The Incarnational Minister

Incarnational ministry required time and effort, but was simple to implement. White (1905) describes Christ's method of incarnational ministry in five steps: (a) mingle, (b) sympathize, (c) minister to needs, (d) win confidence, and (e) then lead people to follow Jesus (p. 143). All five steps are spiritual. My pre-work and project talks focused on the first four steps. This built to step five during the follow-up sessions when I led people to follow Jesus.

Application to Pre-Work

I implemented a project centered around a series of talks. Therefore, the message must be well received. But for the message to be well received, the messenger must first be well received (Frost, as cited in Robertson, 2008, p. 249). Thus I chose an incarnational approach. Since I grew up around similar people in a similar environment, I found incarnational ministry to this group natural in many respects.

Besides being in the same place at the same time and involved in the same thing (Center for Secular and Postmodern Studies, n.d.b, para. 7), my incarnational approach included dressing in a culturally particular way (Billings, 2004, p. 188). At Delta, I dressed like the typical student, with casual clothing. At the weekly basketball night, I wore gym clothes on nights I played basketball and casual clothing on nights I did not. I did not dress like a pastor on Sabbath morning at either location.

My incarnational approach to ministry also included using language in a culturally particular way (Billings, 2004, p. 188), which for this target audience was everyday speech and slang. What people see and hear are both important. The language we choose must help them better understand us and us better understand them. However, we cannot go too far in our incarnational approach (White, 1883/1974, pp. 211-214). We cannot step outside of biblical

principles and use such things as foul language just because they do, and some of the young adults I spoke with did use foul language.

Besides using everyday speech, I talked about everyday things we had a mutual interest in (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, pp. 209, 226). This was simple at Delta because I sat in on classes I had a genuine interest in, as it was at the weekly basketball night, because I also like basketball. In these settings, I also had opportunity to talk about other common interests. This does not mean we should step outside of biblical principles and engage in inappropriate conversations just because they do, and some of the young adults I spoke with did start talking about inappropriate things (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007,

p. 133). Yet, we should seek to meet them where they are at, develop a relationship, and at some point lead them higher (Maxson, 2015, p. 7). Therefore, I did my best to be friendly and begin building relationships (Hill, 2011, p. 29; Krum, 2005, p. 29). This allowed me to minister to their needs (Billings, 2004, p. 188).

One example of ministering to people's needs at Delta was giving someone a ride one day. One example of this at the weekly basketball night was helping one of the guys who sprained his ankle. I ministered to needs in other ways as well. I also did my best in character and manner of address to be palatable by exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit. Thus, I sought to be well received first, before implementing my project.

Application to Project

I was unsuccessful in drawing students from Delta, because I was no longer sitting in on a class when I began my project. However, I was successful in drawing young adults from the weekly basketball night. I invited some of them by word of mouth and texting and mentioned the twenty-dollar incentive. For one of the guys that came,

since I did not have his contact information, I asked another young adult to invite him and mention the incentive.

I also invited young adults who no longer attended church and who also did not attend the open gym night. I invited them via phone and texting and mentioned the incentive. Two accepted. In addition, I invited by word of mouth two other young adults not associated with any church. They did not come, even with the incentive.

During my project talks, I continued ministering incarnationally to those coming to the open gym night. This allowed me to recruit a few more participants.

I recruited 14 participants for this segment of my research. Without the twenty-dollar incentive, I might have drawn six of those who came (two post-Christians, two Christians, and two non-practicing Christians), but I am not sure how many more. All 14 were not present at every talk. I used a small group format and discussion, which are important in reaching postmodern young adults (Allred, 2011, pp. 178-179).

Moreover, presenting the seven project talks allowed me to further mingle, sympathize, minister to needs, and win confidence with those participating. I believe a messenger full of sugar helps the message go down.

Application to Follow-Up

I continued the same incarnational approach during the follow-up sessions. The project talks were designed to build relationships of trust and credibility with the target audience. The follow-up sessions were designed to introduce spirituality and Christ to those I had built those relationships with. However, I knew there were a number of young adults coming to the open gym night who were Christians or backslidden Christians and were also interested in spiritual things. Because they were already interested in spiritual

things, the follow-up sessions would be appropriate for them, even though they had not participated in the initial project talks. Therefore, at the commencement of the follow-up sessions, I began to invite everyone at the open gym night to attend. However, I only continued giving the twenty-dollar incentive to those who had participated in the project talks, since this was the particular group under study.

What? Consulting Specialists and Seminar Content

The words “Babylon” and “Babel” are not separate words in biblical Hebrew, but one and the same. However, they have been translated differently into English. For instance, the translators could have translated the Tower of “Babel” as the Tower of “Babylon” (Gen 11:9). This understanding lays the background for this section.

Application to Pre-Work

I refer to post-Christian young adults figuratively as “Babylon” or “Babel” in this section because they have not yet come to Christ. I was able to “babble” with Babylon about things that were of interest to them, as well as me. However, it was not my conversations with college students at Delta or those playing basketball that allowed me to see their deeper needs and obtain the appropriate content for my seminar. This would have taken more time and in-depth interaction than a couple classes at Delta or a number of weeks of basketball could provide. Rather, it was my conversations with specialists.

The first specialist I spoke with was a student counselor at Delta. Because of this counselor’s purposeful babbling with Babylon she had an in-depth understanding of Babel’s practical needs. We might call her interactions with and understanding of young adults a “Babel study”—meaning she had studied them, their culture, their needs, their

mindset, etc. This type of study is important for effective ministry to a target group. A colleague of this counselor, who is a professor at Delta, also helped here, as did my Doctor of Ministry mentor.

As a result of consulting these specialists, especially the counselor and my mentor, I chose seven topics for the content of my talks, which were also the title of my talks: “Stress,” “Relationships,” “Depression and Suicide,” “Anger,” “What’s the Purpose of My Life?” “How to Bring Purpose to My Life,” and “Setting Goals and Focusing.” Thus, like the messenger, the initial message was also designed to be palatable and well received (Walsh, 2014, p. 20).

In addition to the suggestions of the counselor and my mentor, I chose and fashioned the final three topics based on biblical concepts. I did this to help young adults think through their life and attain desired goals. This included presenting the need for a daily time of solitude and reflection to evaluate their life and choices. These final three topics introduced the concepts behind a devotional life and laid the groundwork to then explain the need for a daily devotional life during the follow-up sessions.

After selecting the topics, I prepared the seven talks and made sure they were also biblically sound. However, I did not present any Scripture until the follow-up sessions.

Application to Project

My seven project talks were the fruition of much more time spent in pre-work. Because of this, when it came time to present my project talks, I simply implemented what I had learned and prepared during my pre-work.

Application to Follow-Up

The follow-up talks presented the same seven topics used for the project talks and in the same order. However, this time, each talk began with the practical, but soon moved to and focused on the spiritual, which included Bible verses and Bible stories, and introduced Christ and the gospel. Babel study had provided the appropriate content for my project talks, which became the foundation for the Bible study that took place during the follow-up sessions (Sahlin, 2004. p. 72). A good Babel study led to a good Bible study. Babel study also provided the best time to schedule the seminar.

When? Ministry and Seminar Scheduling

Application to Pre-Work

In order to minister to young adults during my pre-work and be with them and for them (Billings, 2004, p. 188), I had to rearrange my schedule, but this was not difficult. When I attended Delta during Fall 2013, I sat in on a one-hour class, twice a week on Monday and Wednesday during the early afternoon. During Spring 2015, I sat in on a one-hour class, three days a week on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday towards the later afternoon. When I started playing basketball in the fellowship hall in September 2015, open gym night ran from 5 to 7 p.m. on Tuesday and some weeks on Thursday instead.

Additionally, there were two young adults who did not come to open gym night that attended my project. Neither attends church anymore. When I first met them, I did not think they would be part of my project. Nonetheless, I also ministered to them incarnationally previous to the project. This also involved rearranging my schedule at times. However, this was not difficult.

As can be seen from the cases mentioned, ministry scheduling varied. It could have varied more had I chosen earlier or later classes, selected another environment instead of the open gym basketball night, or invited more young adults not related to the open gym night. There was no fixed rule that said, “In order to minister to post-Christian young adults you must be an early bird or a night owl.” Rather, there was flexibility and therefore, I also made myself flexible. The same was true in planning my project.

Application to Project

Upon brainstorming with the same Delta counselor and professor mentioned above, the initial conclusion was to schedule my presentations on Thursdays during lunch at Delta, because campus wide, there were no classes at that time. In addition, many students take classes in the morning and leave in the afternoon. The counselor had scheduled similar presentations during this time in the past and it had worked well. Furthermore, it was suggested I do my presentations over a number of weeks with one presentation per week. The rationale was that students were more likely to attend a seminar once a week for a number of weeks, than one that ran seven days in succession.

I used this rationale in scheduling my talks in the church’s fellowship hall instead. Because the majority of those who responded to my invitation to participate played basketball at open gym night, I chose to do the talks over a number of weeks following open gym night, which ended around 7 p.m. and sometimes later.

If I were to do this project with another group of young adults in a different context that context would determine seminar scheduling. Seminar scheduling was found to be similar to ministry scheduling—it was not difficult to rearrange my schedule and there was no fixed rule. Instead, there was flexibility and so I also made myself flexible.

Application to Follow-Up

I used the same scheduling for the follow-up sessions as I used for the project talks. In addition, not only was contextualization important for scheduling ministry and the talks, it was also important for identifying teaching methods and time frames that connect with post-Christian young adults. This is what will be discussed next.

How? Andragogies and Time Frames

Due to the invention of video, we live in an age where people are used to visual learning, as well as fast changing screen shots. We also live in an age where the internet and cell phones have accustomed people to have everything at their fingertips. This means people are ready visual learners used to things moving quickly. This also means they have less of an attention span (Carter, Duvall, & Hays, 2005, pp. 166-167).

As a result, this section addresses the style of andragogies implemented. It also addresses time frames, which were designed to last long enough to implement the project talks and follow-up talks, yet short enough to keep their attention.

Application to Pre-Work

I did not specifically apply any andragogies or time frames to my pre-work.

Application to Project

In order to present each project talk and include other components, I planned on about 50 minutes. In light of shorter attention spans, I broke up that time into five shorter segments and planned for about 15 minutes for the actual talk (Carter, Duvall, & Hays, 2005, pp. 166-167). I video recorded the entire presentation in order to analyze my performance and remember feedback given.

In addition to presenting the project talks to the group of young adults, I presented them to the congregation I pastor. Whichever talk I presented to the young adult group that week, I also presented Sabbath morning during the worship service. Once the talk at church was finished, I administered at the same time both the pre-presentation and post-presentation surveys. This gave me a comparison group with which to compare data from the young adult group. The surveys for the congregation were distributed and collected by helpers. Once the surveys were collected, I followed these talks with a biblical sermon on the same topic. I did not conduct a focus group for the congregation.

Below is the structure of each project presentation given to the young adult group.

1. Pre-Presentation Survey (5 min.)
(Appendix A)

I briefly explained the survey before they filled it out. Attendance at the presentation and completion of the pre-presentation survey functioned as implied consent, except for one young adult. Because he was 16 years of age, one of his parents signed a parental informed consent form (Appendix B) before he participated.

2. Talk (15 min.)

The seven topics mentioned earlier: “Stress,” “Relationships,” “Depression and Suicide,” “Anger,” “What’s the Purpose of My Life?” “How to Bring Purpose to My Life,” and “Setting Goals and Focusing,” were the content and titles of my project talks. I covered one topic per talk for seven talks with one talk per week.

The style of andragogies used was twofold: sensory engaging andragogies and imaginative storytelling. I used such things as facts and examples to supplement these two methods. Because I would be speaking to inner city young adults, I chose sensory engaging andragogies, imaginative storytelling, and supplemental material I believed

they could relate to. Because I would be speaking to a particular subgroup of inner city young adults, the majority of which played basketball, I included some connections to basketball as well. Also, some of the talks called for volunteer participation in one or more sensory engaging andragogies. In addition, there were times I asked questions of the participants, the participants asked questions of me, the participants made comments, and/or we entered into a dialogue. The creativity in this segment of the research was specifically designed to connect with the audience (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007, p. 211) based on their preferences for learning (Steffen, 2010, p. 156).

3. Question and Answer Time (10 min.)

This segment was placed after the talk, so I could move from dealing with the issue in general, to dealing with the listeners' issues in particular. I began this time by asking if there were any questions or comments. I ended this time by announcing I had a referral for a counselor should they desire further help related to the topic. I also announced I was available if someone needed more time to talk with me. It would have been unethical to bring up these topics and not offer further help if someone needed it.

4. Post-Presentation Survey (5 min.) (Appendix A)

The post-presentation survey came before the focus group, so Christians would not influence post-Christians in their responses. I answered related questions as they arose.

5. Focus Group (15 min.)

A focus group informed consent form was explained and signed (Appendix B). They only needed to fill out this form once. The focus group questions were then asked

(see Appendix C). At the conclusion of the focus group, I gave the twenty-dollar incentive.

Application to Follow-Up

The follow-up talks were geared to last about 25 minutes (Carter, Duvall, & Hays, 2005, pp. 166-167) and also included sensory engaging andragogies and imaginative storytelling; however, I expanded the type of sensory engaging andragogies and imaginative storytelling used for the follow-up sessions to focus primarily on the spiritual. The sensory engaging andragogies now also included images, video, and Bible verses which could be projected from my computer (McNeal, 2011, p. 86). The imaginative storytelling now also included personal experiences that recounted God's power displayed in my life or someone's life that I knew (McNeal, 2011, p. 81; Rice, 1976, p. 194; Stiller, 2005, p. 89).

Each follow-up talk began with small talk. Then the same pre-presentation survey used for the project talks was given to those who had not attended the project talks. Because the pre-presentation survey asks for demographic information and I did not administer the post-presentation survey, which asks for direct feedback on the talk, there was less likelihood that a new attendee would feel uncomfortable writing their name on the survey. I asked if they felt comfortable writing their name so I could compare their demographics with the follow-up survey to be given at the end of the follow-up sessions.

I did not administer a pre- or post-presentation survey to those who had also attended the project talks. I already had their demographic information and the purpose of the follow-up talks was not to receive feedback on the post-presentation survey, but to introduce them to spiritual things and Christ.

The pre-presentation survey was followed by a prayer, the talk, and then questions and comments. Questions and comments were also welcomed during the talk. I usually concluded each talk with a prayer. Considering there was no focus group at the end of these talks, no video recording was necessary to remember feedback given. Beginning with talk 3, such things as tracts and Bibles were made available free of charge.

Once the follow-up talks were over, the following week I did a review and administered the follow-up survey (Appendix A). Those who had attended at least one follow-up talk, but were not present at this review, were given the follow-up survey at a later date if I was able to see them. The follow-up survey revealed what spiritual decisions had been made as a result of attending the follow-up talks. I had them place their names on this survey for further follow-up. Once the follow-up talks concluded, I continued presenting spiritual talks to them after the open gym night, because my goal in ministering to them was larger than the scope of this project and required more time.

I did not do the follow-up talks with the congregation, because sermons and Bible studies are provided for them on a regular basis.

Why? Laying the Groundwork for Absolute Truth With Practical Truth

Besides the goal of evaluating the effectiveness of two teaching methods used in the project talks, there was an underlying goal. This goal was greater and based on the understanding that a relevant word can help a relative world, because sharing practical truth now, prepares the way for sharing the absolute truth of Jesus Christ later. This was done incrementally (White, 1911/1952, p. 564).

Although sharing practical truth first is the approach I followed, I do not believe it

is the only approach. Miracles, answered prayers, dreams, visions, and other things can also prepare someone to receive the absolute truth of Jesus Christ. For example, we see this when Christ appeared to Saul (Acts 9), when an angel appeared to Cornelius (Acts 10), when the Philippian jailor witnessed a miracle (Acts 16:25-34), and when the Ephesians witnessed miracles (Acts 19:11-20).

Application to Pre-Work

In my pre-work, I spoke with post-Christian young adults about relevant things and shared practical suggestions, but it was my project talks that emphasized this.

Application to Project

My project talks focused specifically on presenting practical truth. This was an important step in further ministering incarnationally to their needs. In addition, because absolute truth is communicated as a message, I first wanted to present an introductory message they would receive as valuable and credible. This would also build trust and credibility with me as a messenger. Having built this trust and credibility, it was more likely my main message about the absolute truth of Jesus Christ would also be received as valuable and credible (Sahlin, 2003, pp. 13-14). In this way, practical truth laid the groundwork for absolute truth to be built on during the follow-up talks.

Application to Follow-Up

The follow-up sessions began by presenting practical truth on the same seven topics in the same order. Then, part way into the talk, I began presenting the absolute truth of what the Bible says about that particular topic and how it relates to Christ and the gospel (White, 1900, p. 17; White, 1988, p. 115).

I chose to do my project talks and follow-up talks with a group of young adults in a structured setting in order to get the feedback needed for my research. However, I believe presenting the same talks to individuals in everyday informal settings would work just as well for ministry in general aside from this project.

Conclusion

The overall steps in my pre-work, project talks, and follow-up talks can be summarized as follows: (a) I chose the target audience, (b) I began my research in Chapters 2 and 3 on how best to reach them, (c) I began planning the project, (d) I selected the environment within which to reach them, (e) I rearranged my schedule with little difficulty to minister incarnationally, (f) I discovered needs-based content relevant to the target audience by consulting specialists and biblical concepts, (g) I presented that content via project talks at a location and time and within a time frame suitable for the target audience using suitable teaching methods, and (h) having built trust and credibility, I held follow-up talks to introduce spiritual concepts and lead them to Christ. Each step in my intervention built on the previous step and in the end, the whole was greater than the sum of its parts.

CHAPTER 5

NARRATIVE OF INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

I conducted 15 talks over almost five months: November 3, 2015 to March 22, 2016. This allowed me to further interact, build relationships, and present my talks without overwhelming them and gave them time to digest the content. This was especially beneficial during the follow-up talks where I introduced the spiritual aspect of each topic, which was unfamiliar to some. At the last talk, I reviewed all the topics and administered the follow-up survey to determine spiritual decisions made. Some weeks there was no talk due to scheduling conflicts. During the talks, I asked for feedback and allowed participants to bring out the meaning of the illustrations and stories before I made further comments. Participants responded and dialogued throughout. The manuscripts and notes for my talks are in Appendix D. At times I added something to my talks during the talk itself and therefore it is not included in my manuscripts and notes.

Project Talk 1 Narrative

Pre-Presentation Survey

I explained the survey and answered questions. Because the survey was anonymous, I had participants make a unique mark on it, so I could pair it with the post-presentation survey, on which they made the same mark.

Talk

I explained my project and its purpose. I then announced the topic, “Stress,” as well as future topics. In response to the topics, a participant said, “Those are good.”

I began the talk with a modern parable I composed, which included a visual aid. Participants offered feedback before I finished the parable. Next, I used a sensory engaging andragogy, which called for a volunteer. I unpacked the illustration’s meaning via questions. I then read a list of causes of stress and statistics. I asked if anyone had ever been stressed. Every hand went up. I then did the same illustration again myself, further unpacking its meaning. Afterwards, I told another modern parable I composed. It was humorous, so they started laughing. It introduced how exercise, including basketball, helps deal with stress. I concluded the talk by mentioning ways to reduce stress. I then handed out a tract on reducing stress, because the majority of the information was not presented from a biblical standpoint.

Question and Answer Time

This time was designed to move from dealing with the topic of stress to dealing with the stress in their lives. However, no one had questions. I ended this segment with a

referral for a counselor for help related to any of the topics we would be covering. Right away, a participant asked, “Can I get one of those?”

Post-Presentation Survey

I passed out the survey and asked for honest answers.

Focus Group

I handed out the focus group informed consent form, read it, and explained it. Participants only had to fill out this form once. I then asked the focus group questions and obtained feedback. Specific focus group feedback is included in Chapter 6.

Next I had them lay their surveys face down in individual stacks on a table. I then made myself available if they wanted to talk about something in more detail. I concluded by giving each participant the twenty-dollar incentive. One of the participants stayed behind to speak with me. We talked for over 40 minutes about the stress in his life. Because he mentioned he was reading the Bible and made references to God, I dialogued and counseled with him based on Scripture, prayed for him, and encouraged him.

The total presentation, beginning with the pre-presentation survey and finishing with the incentive, took 33 minutes. The actual talk took just over 11 minutes.

Project Talk 2 Narrative

Pre-Presentation Survey

I had participants retrieve their surveys from last week and passed out the survey to new participants. I then briefly explained the survey.

Talk

I thanked them for coming and stated I was conducting my doctoral study. I mentioned last time's topic, the current topic of "Relationships," and asked if there were questions. I briefly covered the individual segments of the presentation.

The talk began with two modern parables I composed. Part way through the second parable, I explained a euphemism I was using, because some of the guys did not seem to understand it. Once the euphemism was explained, I finished the story. Next I used a sensory engaging andragogy, which called for a volunteer. I asked for comments, asked questions, and dialogued with participants. Then I told another modern parable I had composed, which led into the next sensory engaging andragogy. I asked questions to unpack its meaning. A participant commented how the illustration related to his life.

Question and Answer Time

A participant explained the relationship he was in and asked for advice. I offered suggestions. Another guy talked about his relationship. A few participants offered suggestions. Starting with this talk, I was able to move from dealing with the issue in general, to dealing with the listeners' issues in particular. I thanked them for sharing and announced the counselor referral should they desire it.

Post-Presentation Survey

As they filled out the survey, the aforementioned participant talked about his relationship situations. Some guys asked questions and gave feedback. Then they wrote their unique mark on the survey and stacked them on a table.

Focus Group

I gave the new guys the focus group informed consent form and explained it. During the questions, participants began talking about relationships again. They also commented how they liked one of the illustrations, before I asked that question. At the end, a participant said, “Good presentation.” I then gave the incentive.

The total presentation took about 42 minutes. The talk took about 12 ½ minutes.

Project Talk 3 Narrative

Pre-Presentation Survey

I added a question to the original survey, which became question 6: “About how often do you attend religious/spiritual meetings or worship services?” Even though they may have stated they were “Christian” in question 4 and they “practice” their religion/spirituality on a regular basis in question 5, this “practice” of Christianity can be a very broad definition. This added question determined to what extent those who labeled themselves as “Christian” participate at the local church level. It helped differentiate between active and inactive Christians. This is important, because inactive Christians may subscribe to a postmodern view of Christianity, which borders on a post-Christian view, even though they still label themselves as “Christian.” It is also possible for active Christians to have this same view. Beginning with talk three, I had participants fill out this updated survey.

Talk

I announced the topic of “Depression and Suicide” and went into a sensory engaging andragogy and followed it with two questions: “Have you ever felt depressed?”

and “Have you ever felt like you wanted to kill yourself?” I then mentioned a time I had been depressed and had suicidal thoughts. Next came a modern parable I composed. Then I mentioned a famous person who recently committed suicide. After this, I read a list of famous people who attempted suicide, but lived to tell about it. I then read the testimony of a young man who had been extremely depressed, addicted to drugs, homeless, and attempted suicide, but survived and was grateful for the couple who came to his aid. Next, I recounted a personal testimony on self-forgiveness. This was followed by a list of failures made by people who later made a come-back and became famous. I concluded the talk with the same sensory engaging andragogy used to begin the talk.

Question and Answer Time

There were no questions.

Post-Presentation Survey

I passed out the survey and had the participants put it with their pre-presentation survey face down on the table when they finished.

Focus Group

I purchased a cake, candles, and card to celebrate a participant’s birthday and arranged for the youth leader, who was also a participant, to surprise him during the focus group. This happened after asking the first focus group question. Then, while participants were eating cake, we finished the focus group questions. After this, one of the Christian participants started talking about God and the devil. This led to a conversation about spiritual things, which ended by explaining how to ask God to come into our life. Before leaving, I handed out the twenty-dollar incentive.

The total presentation took almost 56 minutes due to the birthday celebration and the talk on spiritual things after the focus group. The talk itself took about 13 ½ minutes.

Project Talk 4 Narrative

Pre-Presentation Survey

Since all but one person had already filled out the pre-presentation survey, I combined this segment with the post-presentation survey segment.

Talk

I began with a sensory engaging andragogy, requiring two volunteers. Then I announced the topic of “Anger.” I followed this with two personal stories and a number of examples of anger. Then came another personal story. Next I distributed a handout with six questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how. We covered these questions as they applied to the last story told. Then we applied the questions to our lives to better understand anger. Afterwards came another sensory engaging andragogy. Four volunteers helped. We unpacked the meaning. Next came a story on anger, followed by healthy ways to release anger. I concluded by further developing the first illustration and used the same two volunteers. Also, a couple guys opened up about anger in their lives.

Question and Answer Time

There were no questions.

Post-Presentation Survey

There was a new young adult attending. I did not know if he wanted to participate in my project or if he was just stopping in. I asked him this after the talk. He said he

would come back next week. Therefore, I had him fill out the pre-presentation survey and briefly explained it and mentioned I was doing my doctoral project. He also filled out the focus group consent form at this time. In addition, I had another participant fill out the updated pre-presentation survey. Participants then filled out the post-presentation survey. Next, I announced the counselor referral.

Focus Group

After participants answered the questions, I gave the incentive. The total presentation took 37 ½ minutes. The talk took almost 26 minutes.

Project Talk 5 Narrative

Pre-Presentation Survey

Participants that had not attended since talk 2 filled out the updated pre-presentation survey. A participant had a question regarding question number 4 on religious/spiritual background. He said he believes in God, but is not into any particular religion and wanted to know why “Christian” was marked on his survey. However, he was the only one who filled out his survey. A number of us dialogued with him to help him answer the question based on his preference. As a result of this participant’s negative attitude towards Christianity, another participant shared a testimony of how God answered a prayer request of his. The aforementioned participant downplayed the answer to prayer. The strange thing is that this participant self-identified as “Christian” again on the updated survey he filled out at the next talk.

Talk

The talk was entitled, “What’s the Purpose of My Life?” I began by asking what the purpose of our life was and how we know this purpose. We then dialogued. Next came a sensory engaging andragogy, staged with a nonparticipant. She walked in front, faced me, and acted and spoke frustrated and threw down the wrapped baby in her arms (it was a doll). This caught participants by surprise. After dialoguing, I read a list of famous people who had either been abandoned or grew up without a father or mother. Next I told a modern parable, which resulted in a participant opening up about his life. Then I told a story about someone from Stockton, California who had surmounted great odds to become a brain surgeon. A participant began dialoguing with me based on this story. Then came the second sensory engaging andragogy, which called for two volunteers. The rest of the talk was spent unpacking this illustration.

Question and Answer Time

After asking if they had any questions, I asked if they ever had time to think about their strengths. A participant began talking about his life, which allowed me to delve deeper into the topic. I concluded by asking if they knew their purpose in life and if it mattered. One participant mentioned the purpose of his life. The rest were silent. One participant said he was still working on it. Except for talk 2, there were no questions or comments during this time for the previous talks.

Post-Presentation Survey

I handed out the survey and answered questions.

Focus Group

Replies showed the talk made them think. Then I gave the incentive. The total presentation took 40 ½ minutes. The talk lasted almost 15 ½ minutes.

Project Talk 6 Narrative

Pre-Presentation Survey

A participant filled out the updated survey. A new participant also filled it out, along with the focus group informed consent form. I briefly explained my project to him. I answered a few questions from participants.

Talk

We reviewed the last talk. Then I announced the topic, “How to Bring Purpose to My Life,” and how it related to the last topic. I began with a modern parable I composed. This was followed by two sensory engaging andragogies. The second one called for everyone’s participation. Next came a supporting example. I then referred to an illustration from the last talk, because the last talk and this talk were connected. I also mentioned how all the previous talks related to the current topic. Then I took a minute of silence to give them a feel for taking personal quiet time to reflect on their life in order to help bring purpose to their life. We dialoged and I offered related examples. I asked a participant, who said he took quiet time every day, to tell us about it. Next I passed out a sheet with the days of the week broken down by half hours so they could schedule in quiet time. A participant said he had too much quiet time, so we talked about balance. Following this, I gave examples of what to think about during quiet time. When the participant that had daily quiet time heard these examples, he kept shaking his head and

said, “Sounds about right.” I then used a basketball example to help them understand better. Next, a participant talked about how the topic related to his life. Finally, I explained how the last talk, this talk, and the following talk related to each other.

Question and Answer Time

A participant asked, “If you weren’t a pastor what do you think you’re meaning would be?” We talked about this for a couple minutes.

Post-Presentation Survey

I handed out the survey and answered questions.

Focus Group

Participants responded to the questions. Then I gave the incentive.

The total presentation took just over 40 minutes. The talk itself took 18 ½ minutes.

Project Talk 7 Narrative

Pre-Presentation Survey

There were two new participants. I explained my project and had them fill out the survey and the focus group informed consent form. Then I mentioned the counselor referral. Because the majority continually checked the post-presentation survey box on being interested in follow-up talks, I asked if they would like to cover the same seven topics in more depth for follow-up sessions. They agreed.

Talk

I reviewed the last two talks. Then I announced the topic, “Setting Goals and Focusing,” and related it to the last two talks. I began the talk with a modern parable I composed. As part of the imaginative storytelling, I passed around a picture of what I was describing. This resulted in many comments. Then I finished the storytelling. Next came a sensory engaging andragogy, which called for a volunteer. During the illustration, I asked questions and used examples from basketball to unpack the meaning. Afterwards, I gave out a sheet with an acronym that explained how to move from our current situation to our goal. I illustrated it on a white board by using the goal of becoming a professional basketball player and explained how to break large goals down into smaller goals. Then I used a basketball and how the game of basketball is played to explain that ups and downs are a part of moving forward in life, keeping our eyes focused on the goal is a must, and we need assistance from others in order to achieve goals. Next came two stories of young people from very difficult backgrounds who set goals and achieved them. I then went back to the white board and used the stories as examples of setting goals and tied them in with what I had written on the white board earlier. After this I passed out the same sheet I passed out at the last talk, which had each day of the week broken down by half hours, but this time for the purpose of scheduling time to accomplish their goals in practical ways. I also explained the difference between a real value and a perceived value. Then I went back to the white board and explained how large goals are made up of small goals and that we reach our large goals by reaching each individual small goal. I related this to basketball. I concluded by encouraging them that no matter what difficult situation they

had come from, if they had goals, and put in the time and energy, they could reach those goals.

Question and Answer Time

There was one question. Also, a participant said he made his own weekly schedule on his phone as a result of the last talk.

Post-Presentation Survey

I handed out the survey and answered questions.

Focus Group

After the questions, a participant asked to do a sensory engaging andragogy that another participant had done earlier. Then I gave out the incentive.

The total presentation lasted almost 49 minutes. The talk lasted almost 27 minutes.

Follow-Up Talk 1 Narrative

The general format for the follow-up sessions is outlined in Chapter 4. Because this is the same basic format I followed for each session, I have only explained the talks themselves below and other pertinent details. I read all Bible verses from the screen using my computer. Also, follow-up talks generally took longer than expected, because participants had more feedback than expected. Because I did not video record the follow-up sessions, I do not have the exact length of time for all the follow-up talks.

My first follow-up talk was on “Stress” and began by showing a slide on the screen of a stressed out person. I referred back to the first talk on stress and asked,

“Anyone remember ways we can deal with stress?” Then I showed pictures of a terrible car wreck and asked what would happen if someone was in the following situation as it relates to stress. Next, I revealed that those pictures were of the wreck I had been in five years earlier. Then I shared my testimony. Following this, I showed pictures of athletes exercising and how we had talked about exercise and other things that help release stress. However, in a terrible car wreck like the one I was in, exercise and other natural means, could not help release stress, because I could not do any of them. Then I explained how I prayed, confessed my sins, and how God gave me perfect peace. This led into reading Mark 4:35-41 and explaining the story of Jesus bringing peace to the storm-tossed sea. I conclude with a short testimony as an appeal.

During the talk, a participant said he was glad I had not died, because I had helped him through my talks. After I concluded the talk, three new participants shared testimonies of how God had worked in their lives.

Follow-Up Talk 2 Narrative

This talk was on “Relationships.” I began by showing pictures from various cultures around the world from different time periods that demonstrated their definition of beauty. Then I explained how things like experiences, environment, and socialization condition us to be attracted to a certain type of person and that the definition of beauty changes with time. Next came a personal testimony introducing the most important relationship: God and us. I followed this with John 3:16-17. Then using various graphics on the screen, I explained how Christ’s death on the cross connects us with God and with one another. I used more graphics to help them see that the closer a man and woman each

move toward God, the closer they move towards one another. I explained this is true of any type of relationship. Then I appealed to them based on the talk.

One of the participants thanked me for the talk and said it was helpful. This same participant called me on the phone afterwards and thanked me again for the talk. He said that for him it was the best one so far. He also wanted to know how to accept God into his life. I asked him if he had ever prayed before. He said maybe a small prayer, but not really. So I explained how to pray and led him in a prayer. I prayed first and then had him pray. After the talk was over, another participant also thanked me and said he was not a very spiritual person, but that these talks had helped him in the area of spirituality.

Follow-Up Talk 3 Narrative

This talk was on “Depression and Suicide.” I began by showing pictures of people and asked what they had in common. I said they were all suicide survivors. Then I listed resources on depression and suicide: three websites and the national suicide prevention lifeline. I also shared two personal stories on depression. Afterwards, I read Matthew 26:37-38 and explained that Jesus dealt with depression. Then I read Matthew 4:5-7 and explained that Jesus also dealt with suicide. Next, I put up a graphic I had drawn and explained that if the devil cannot convince us to commit suicide, he will try to convince us to kill ourselves in other ways, and even attempt to kill us directly himself. I also shared two personal testimonies when unseen hands choked me. I then read Proverbs 17:22 and how God will bring joy into our life and appealed to them to let Him in. Next, I read Hebrews 12:2. I explained that the joy set before Jesus when he endured the cross was being able to save us. I stated that in the midst of our tough times, Christ will give us strength to endure and bring us to a place of joy. I closed by encouraging them.

After the talk, I gave each participant the Glow tract: “The Promise of Peace.” I said I had other tracts and put them on the pulpit. A participant came and took two more Glow tracts: “Evolution Impossible” and “Breaking Addictions.” This meant he was interested. Beginning with this talk, I made free tracts and Bibles available.

Follow-Up Talk 4 Narrative

This talk was on “Anger.” I began by showing pictures of faces and asked them to identify the emotion. Then I used magnets and pens as an illustration for how we are tempted, which also applied to anger. I had a volunteer help. Next, I went through the meaning behind the magnet illustration: (a) creation of the magnet (entrance of sin into the world through Satan), (b) magnet (evil), (c) pull of the magnet (temptation), (d) metal in the pen (desire for evil), (e) metal stuck to the magnet (committing the act of sin), and (f) metal staying stuck to the magnet (a lifestyle of unrepentant sin leads to death in every aspect: emotional, social, mental, spiritual, physical). Then I told a modern parable to explain how some people are attracted to the same magnets, while others are attracted to different ones. I read John 14:30 and explained that Jesus had no sin in Him. Next, I went through the six steps in reverse order to explain what Christ came to do: (f) disconnect us from the magnet, (e) help us when we find ourselves going back to the same magnet, (d) God’s desire to take the metal out so we are no longer attracted to that particular magnet, but how we resist His work (I shared a personal testimony on demon possession at this time); then I commented that once we no longer want a particular sin, not just in our mind, but also with our feelings, God will take that bondage away, (c) after being delivered from that particular magnet, that particular magnet will pull at us and we may feel it to some extent, but we no longer respond the same way, (b) now that we have been

delivered from the pull of that particular magnet, we can help others being pulled by that magnet (then I read Rev 21:1-4), and (a) someday soon, God will destroy the magnet and Satan who created it. I read Matthew 25:41, followed by Revelation 6:16, which describes God's anger as that of a lamb. For my last illustration, I had someone blow up a balloon and then I popped it with a needle. I said that even though we may know all these things, we still make mistakes and sin. I concluded by appealing for us to allow God to help us not want evil, not just in our mind, but also with our feelings. In addition, I explained there are times we need to apologize for something we have done.

The talk lasted 45 minutes because they kept asking questions and making comments. Three participants each took a free Bible. Also, one of the Christian participants texted me the next day and said, "Ur talk was amazing last night. I really enjoyed it. Opened up my eyes and my heart to a lot of things. Thanks again brotha."

Follow-Up Talk 5 Narrative

This talk was entitled, "What's the Purpose of My Life?" I began by showing a picture and telling the story of a former mafia member who became Christian and lived to tell about it. Then I showed a picture and told the story of a former international fashion model and what led him to become a Christian. They were both in a situation they needed help out of and they called out to God and God helped them. Accepting God into their lives turned their lives around and God then helped them make different choices that led to purpose in their lives. Next, I read two verses that are especially encouraging to inner city young people: Isaiah 49:15-16 and Psalm 27:10. I tied this into John 1:12 and how it does not matter if someone's mother was the prostitute on the corner and their father the drug addict that visited her. When we accept Christ we receive a new birth, a new

parentage, a new environment—a new start on life. I encouraged them with other words too. Then I shared a personal testimony from someone I know and one from my life. Both testimonies explained how making different choices allows God to bring a greater purpose to our lives. After this, I read Romans 8:28-30 and explained the five steps in the verses by using the example of parents preparing for a baby before the baby is born. I concluded by handing a crumbled piece of paper to each participant. I explained the crumbled paper represented our life and asked one participant to open the hand holding the crumbled paper. Then I said, when we give God our life, He straightens it out. I took the paper, opened it, and had him read Jeremiah 29:11, which was written on it. I had each one open their crumbled paper and had another one read Jeremiah 29:11 again.

At the end of the talk, a participant took a Bible, but I did not include his feedback in my study, because he was under the young adult age. Another participant told me thank you and that he needed to hear this. A different participant said he liked the talk. This same participant called me the next day to ask questions related to last week's talk and this talk. He also wanted to know church service times. He wants to bring his family.

Follow-Up Talk 6 Narrative

This talk was entitled, "How to Bring Purpose to My Life." I began with a picture of comic superheroes. The picture had so many superheroes that there was no central character. This represented too much going on in our lives. Therefore, we cannot focus on ourselves and figure ourselves out, so how can we bring purpose to our lives? I then talked about the need for daily quiet time. A post-Christian explained how he did this. I used what he said to explain the principles of a Christian devotional life. Another participant commented on how he reads during his quiet time. Next, I explained my

nominal church experience growing up and built into when I started having consistent and regular devotions. I explained a devotional life is like taking someone on a date. We get to know God better and God gets to know us better (so to speak). Then I shared a personal testimony when I stopped having morning devotionals for a few days and how I started slipping back into my old ways. After that, I made sure to have a consistent and regular devotional life. I explained that a devotional life allows us to understand God's purpose for our life and gives us power to accomplish that purpose. I read Isaiah 50:4-6, explaining how Christ's purpose was tied in with His devotional life. Then I talked about overall goals being made up of daily specific goals. Next, a volunteer helped with two illustrations. Afterwards, I handed out a weekly schedule with days of the week broken down by half hour, so they could schedule in devotional time. Then I read four motivational quotes and reiterated how a devotional life brings purpose. I then held up my Bible and summarized some of its content, what reading it does for us, and how Bible stories are windows we see through, which end up becoming mirrors in which we see ourselves. I concluded by passing out and explaining a simple devotional guide I made on the closing scenes of Christ's life.

When I gave out the weekly schedule, one participant asked for two and put them in a notebook with the devotional guide. Also, I had made plans to eat supper with a participant and before the talk he asked if the aforementioned participant could also come. Therefore, the next day the three of us ate supper together at a local restaurant.

Follow-Up Talk 7 Narrative

This talk was on "Setting Goals and Focusing." I began with an illustration using a basketball, which called for a volunteer to show me how he shot the ball. The point was

to show that just like someone uses strength to pick up the ball and put it in the hoop, Christ is the strength of God that gets us where we need to go. We then talked about how to get from our present situation to where we want to go, especially as it relates to salvation. I read John 14:1-6 and explained that Jesus is how God takes us from our present situation to being saved. Next, I told a modern parable I wrote on someone stuck on the side of the road, but unwilling to open the gas tank for someone who wanted to give him free gas. I related this to how Christ is the gas that gets us where we need to go, but we need to be willing to open our hearts. Then, while showing corresponding pictures, I said that Christ is the gas that enables the car to get home, but we need to open the gas tank. Christ is the fuel that propels the plane to its destination, but we need to be willing to receive the fuel. Christ is the bow that moves the arrow to the target, but we need to be willing to be moved by the bow. Christ is the arm that shoots the basketball into the hoop, but we need to allow the arm of the Lord to save us. Next, I stated, "Christ is the strength of God that enables me to be saved." Then I recounted a personal testimony when God spoke to me by a voice. This was followed by John 3:5. Next, I recounted another personal testimony when God spoke to me by a voice. Then I motivated them to give their lives to Jesus and be baptized or re-baptized. I asked if anyone had been baptized before. Out of the five present, two raised their hands. One had been baptized when little and wanted to be baptized, but wandered away from the Lord at an early age. Another did not want to, but his father made him. I also mentioned how I had unseen hands around my neck before. One of the post-Christians said the same thing happened to him a while ago. He did not know what it was and prayed to God and then it went away. He said that next he called the youth leader from our church to find out what

was going on. He said he had goose bumps just telling the story. Next, I asked if he was living a “holy” life when God answered his prayer. He said “no.” So I asked why then did God answer his prayer. Then we talked about how God does not answer our prayers because we are good, but because He is good and that there are certain prayers that God will always answer with a “yes”: requesting forgiveness, help in overcoming sin, deliverance from Satan, etc. I mentioned another testimony I had shared at an earlier talk on demon possession. When I mentioned I had shared it earlier, one of the participants said he wanted to hear it again. Next, I read through Isaiah 53 and showed accompanying pictures on the screen. They became very reflective and quiet. I could see that the chapter and pictures touched their hearts. Then I announced a time of silence and gave each of them time to reflect and pray. Afterwards, I appealed to them based on what we had covered. Next, I knelt down and earnestly prayed for each one of them by name. I then made available the devotional guide I had handed out at the last talk.

I gave a couple guys a ride home. This allowed me to know them better, especially one participant. This was his first time at my talks, even though he had played basketball with us for a while. Also, after the talk, I offered this new participant a free Bible and he took one. He was the person baptized when young, but then wandered away from God.

Review and Follow-Up Survey Narrative

Before the talk, during basketball, a participant brought beans he made for everyone, but especially for the youth leader and me. He also usually brought oranges for everyone to replenish their energy when playing basketball. The youth leader and I have also brought food for the guys. This is a great way to build relationships and socialize.

The purpose of this talk was to review the follow-up talks. I included something from the practical side, but the goal was to reiterate the spiritual aspect of each talk. Then I again made available the devotional guide from the previous two talks, which a participant had missed. He wanted the guide. He said he needed to pray more and was appreciative of the guide. Next, I passed out the follow-up survey (Appendix A), on which they marked spiritual decisions made as a result of attending my talks.

After the talk I asked if they wanted to have more talks after basketball, and if so, what topics they wanted to cover. They mentioned: sex, self-control, attitude, and forgiveness. In addition, a number of weeks ago, someone asked if we could cover resentment and bitterness at a future talk. Also, a participant spoke with me that evening and said that last week's talk did something to him and after that talk, he did not want to talk to anyone, but wanted to leave and be alone. I believe God touched his heart as I read through Isaiah 53 and showed the accompanying pictures. Presenting Christ and Him crucified "will break and win hearts" (White, 1988, p. 115).

CHAPTER 6

EVALUATION AND LEARNINGS

Summary

This project was birthed out of the desire to reach post-Christian young adults, as they are generally not interested in Christianity or preaching and do not attend church (Chapter 1). The research of relevant biblical (Chapter 2) and non-biblical literature (Chapter 3) showed the viability of using sensory engaging andragogies and imaginative storytelling in the context of incarnational ministry to reach post-Christian young adults. This resulted in a strategy to reach post-Christian young adults (Chapter 4), which when implemented (Chapter 5), provided feedback revealing its effectiveness (Chapter 6).

This strategy involved project and follow-up talks and four evaluation methods: pre-presentation surveys (Appendix A), post-presentation surveys (Appendix A), a focus group (Appendix C), and follow-up surveys (Appendix A). The pre-presentation survey determined who was a post-Christian young adult. The project talks were evaluated using a post-presentation survey and focus group after each talk. The follow-up talks were evaluated using a follow-up survey. Each evaluation method is examined below.

Pre-Presentation Survey Demographics

There were 24 participants. I was able to administer 21 surveys. Unless noted, all responded to the questions. Questions 10, 12, and 13 were categorized by group from greatest to least, using raw numbers and percentages to interpret the data. The questions by number are below with the accompanying findings.

1. *Age.* The age range was 16 to 34. The average and median age was 24.

2. *Sex.* All participants were male.

3. *Race.* There were a variety of races and some were a mix of races.

4. *Religious/Spiritual Background:*

5. *Do you practice your religion/spirituality on a regular basis?*

6. *About how often do you attend religious/spiritual meetings or worship services?*

Studying the data for questions 4, 5 and 6, I found four groups: Post-Christian (P), Christian (C), Individualized Christian (I), and Non-practicing Christian (N).

The Ps grew up in the U.S. and did not self-identify as Christian. The basketball group Ps self-identified as “no religious/spiritual background” or “Other.” There were six Ps.

The Cs self-identified as Christian, practiced their religion/spirituality on a regular basis, and attended religious/spiritual meetings or worship services at least once a month. The basketball group Cs did not attend less than two to three times per month. A C stated unchristian beliefs, but self-identified as a C, thus was labeled C. There were six Cs.

The Is self-identified as Christian, practiced their religion/spirituality on a regular basis, but only attended religious/spiritual meetings or worship services occasionally or never. There were three Is.

The Ns self-identified as Christian, but did not practice their religion/spirituality on a regular basis, even if they attended church. An N marked “Other” and “Christian” and another N marked “no religious/spiritual preference” and “Christian.” Since both also self-identified as “Christian,” I have included them as Ns. There were six Ns.

7. Were you born in the USA?

8. Where did you grow up?

9. Do you speak another language besides English?

Questions 7, 8 and 9 show all were born and raised in the U.S. and speak English. Three speak another language. These three also self-identified as Christian.

10. How many hours on average do you spend on the following per day? For “TV/Movies,” all responded except for one N. For “Internet on a Computer,” all responded except one N and P. For “Cell Phone (calls, text, internet, music, etc.),” all responded. The majority from all groups reported watching TV/movies and using internet and a cell phone every day. Thus, Ps were likely to be visual with shorter attention spans, comfortable with story as a teaching medium, and used to having things at their fingertips, including a vast amount of information.

11. This presentation uses illustrations involving at least one of the five senses (seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting). This is designed to help you understand the topic better. Do you have any disabilities or impairments of any of your five senses that

would prevent you from experiencing these illustrations?” All said “no.” One did not reply, but from my observations he did not have disabilities or impairments.

12. *Which ways do you prefer to communicate?* Common to all groups was face-to-face, texting, and talking on a cell phone. The preferred method for Ps and Cs was face-to-face, with texting and talking on a cell phone the only other options chosen. Considering 100 percent of Ps preferred face-to-face communication, my talks should have appealed to this group.

13. *To which of the following do you feel most comfortable opening up to?* All responded except one N who wrote “military.” For categories ranking 50% or above, “An adult,” was common to all. Ps favored an adult female slightly above an adult male and someone not their parent/legal guardian. Cs favored an adult male with the same religious/spiritual beliefs, but were more comfortable than Ps with either sex. Is favored an adult of either sex with the same religious/spiritual beliefs. Ns favored an adult of either sex and a parent/legal guardian. This does not mean Ps relate best to female adults, but prefer them slightly over male adults when opening up. Thus Ps would have opened up easier had I been female and older than my age of 38.

Post-Presentation Survey Feedback

The comparison church group was only used for this section. This survey used a Likert scale. I organized responses by groups P, C, I, and N and divided the church group between young adults and adults. For only church project talk 1, I did not yet have the updated pre-presentation survey and could not distinguish Cs from Is. Thus data for these groups remained combined. I did not do a question and answer time at church due to time. Some pre-presentation surveys from church were incomplete. If I could not

determine group belonging, I excluded them. I organized data from the post-presentation survey by group and percentages (Appendix E) and interpreted it.

The P basketball group feedback was positive (Appendix E) and Ps and Cs liked my talks about the same with 100% of Ps and Cs interested in follow-up talks.

In the basketball group, N scores were higher than P scores, except only 94% of Ns wanted follow-up talks. The basketball group only had Is for the follow-up talks.

The P basketball group was more favorable to all questions than any adult or young adult church group, except the P young adult church group imagined the story more.

The basketball group marked “strongly agree” at a higher rate for all questions than church young adults and adults. In comparing the young adult and adult church groups, they scored higher in different areas. Also, 98% of the basketball group was interested in follow-up talks, but only 78% of church adults and 65% of church young adults were. The basketball group’s higher scores may be due to the small group format and partaking in illustrations, while church volunteers were mostly kids.

Focus Group Feedback

Focus group feedback was reviewed from the video I recorded. There were a few times comments were unintelligible. I wrote down all comments by the focus group question and by talk, then grouped them by theme and summarized them.

Four times the presentation was said to be good and once that they looked forward to the next one. Three times they said the topic was good and once that they liked it.

In terms of what they did not like, for talk 2 I stated that maybe they liked the stories except that a few did not understand an unfamiliar euphemism. They agreed.

However, someone said this particular story was clear. For talk 3, they wished more people had come. In terms of illustrations, those who ate bitter chocolate did not like how it tasted. However, another participant said, “I still like how you did that.” They also did not like how I staged for a church member to pretend she was holding a baby and to throw down the baby doll to illustrate rejection. These two illustrations were designed to produce negative feelings to engage them in the topic and it did just that.

Three times they said they liked the story, but did not explain why. Six times they explained the reason was the content. One time they said the story made sense in explaining the topic and that the effect of the stories was positive. Five times the stories were described as motivating. For example, someone said, “The brother story was good. You can make whatever out of your situation, no matter what it is. It’s about how you let it affect you.” A participant also explained in detail how he imagined one of the stories.

Twelve times they said they liked the illustrations and two times that they were good, but without saying why. Three times they liked the illustrations because they were visual; a participant said, “You don’t get that all the time with lectures.” Three times they mentioned they liked the illustrations because they made sense and two times because of content. Four times the illustrations affected them positively. For example, someone said he liked the props because “you see it from a different perspective—from a third person view.” Five times they said the illustrations helped them think about the topic. Someone said, “It made me think in a different way, because I never really thought about that like that. It kind of gave me another option of how to think.”

During talk 5, three participants commented that illustrations as teaching methods were easy to understand, simple, hands-on, and the best way to teach. One of them said, “I’m a visual learner. I don’t do audio. Once you show me, I got it.”

Four times they said the presentation was relatable, because it talked about everyday life. For example, someone said, “I think it was good when you allowed people to speak, because you’re talking about some real life situations. I’m pretty sure a lot of us are going through some stuff.” Another stated, “I’m actually on one of these missions right now, so this is pretty cool.” He was referring to his mission to set goals and focus.

Five times they related personally to the stories. For example, one participant said, “They came from the same place I came from,” and another said, “I can relate to them.” Two times they related to the stories because they knew someone with a similar story. This is another reason why a participant said the story was good. One time, a participant related due to similarities with the story, but did not say if he related personally or not.

Three times an illustration was relatable because it talked about everyday life. One participant said it “really illustrates the reality of relationships and how they really work...” Two times they related personally to the illustrations. One time someone related to an illustration because he saw what was being described in someone else’s life.

In addition, participants drew out lessons conveyed through the stories four times and through the illustrations six times. Three times they stated a concept I was teaching and that they liked it. Someone also said he liked the ways to deal with stress.

There were times participants agreed with those making comments or they began talking in general about the topic, story, or illustration and how it related to their life.

Follow-Up Survey Decisions

Responses from greatest to least are in Appendix E. I grouped follow-up surveys and previous surveys because participants felt comfortable revealing the mark they placed on their previous surveys. Thus, I organized participants by group, attendance, and follow-up survey responses (Appendix E). However, findings below are only of the P group (Appendix E), as this is the particular group under study.

All six Ps expressed belief in God's love and four expressed belief in Jesus. However, only two accepted Christ. One accepted Christ, confessed his sins, and asked God to forgive him for the first time. He attended the last two project talks, all but one follow-up talk, and the review. He marked 20 boxes on the follow-up survey. That is more than the other Ps. This shows this P was ready for spiritual things with less introductory talks. The other P accepted Christ back into his life, confessed his sins, and asked God to forgive him again. He attended three project talks, four follow-up talks, and the review. He marked 19 boxes. Both of these Ps attended more follow-up talks than other Ps. This seems to be related to why they accepted Christ.

The P that came to the most project talks only came to the last follow-up talk and the review. He did not accept Christ, even though he believes Jesus came to save us and died on the cross for him and his sins. However, he is interested in learning more about the Bible and having more talks after basketball. He marked a total of 16 boxes.

The other two Ps that came to the project talks only attended one project talk each. One only came to the first follow-up talk. He marked three boxes, including wanting to learn more about the Bible. The other P came to the last project talk and two

follow-up talks. He marked five boxes, including being interested in more talks after basketball.

One P attended follow-up talk 4 only. He marked he believed that Jesus died for him and his sins and that he had already accepted God/Christ into his life. This may mean he walked away from Christianity in the past. He marked a total of 10 boxes, including he confessed his sins and asked God to forgive him again, he started praying and reading the Bible again, and he is interested in learning more about the Bible. This P did not attend any introductory talks and still made spiritual decisions. It may have helped that he had some type of Christian background.

Even though six expressed belief in God's love and four believe in Jesus, that God will help them, and that God created them, only three confessed their sins and asked God for forgiveness and are involved in prayer and Bible study, and only two accepted Christ. Thus Christian belief does not necessarily translate into Christian practice. However, five told someone something from the talks and want to learn more about the Bible and four desire more talks after basketball. One wanted to talk one-on-one. He is the P that accepted Christ for the first time. I have spoken with him a number of times.

The three Ps who made the most spiritual decisions attended the most. They also attended the most project talks. Of these three, the two who made the most spiritual decisions attended the most follow-up talks. Thus, building up during the project talks was important before sharing Christ, but ample time to hear about Christ during the follow-up talks was more important. However, all Ps made spiritual decisions.

Conclusions

Chapter 1 stated how young adults are not interested in Christianity, many Christian young adults are leaving the church, and the church has been unsuccessful in reaching this group. Thus there is a need to develop a strategy to reach post-Christian young adults.

Chapter 2 presented biblical and theological foundations for reaching this group. The Garden of Eden and subsequent earthly sanctuaries showed God's teaching method incorporated sensory engaging andragogies. Jesus' parabolic storytelling and incarnation as the New Testament sanctuary provided a model for teaching and incarnational ministry. Jesus' method in reaching the young adult Paul, demonstrated Jesus' use of sensory engaging andragogies and imaginative storytelling in the context of incarnational ministry. Also, Paul's unchanging theology of righteousness by faith and his changing methodology to reach different people was examined as a model.

Chapter 3 looked at postmodernism in America, its negative affect on Christianity, including Adventist young adults, how postmodernism set the groundwork for post-Christianity, and its adverse affect on post-Christian young adults and their perception of Christianity. It was noted that to reach post-Christian young adults true spirituality must be presented via incarnational ministry. Research also showed postmoderns value narrative, narrative is one of the main styles of Scripture, and Jesus' predominant teaching form was parabolic storytelling. Therefore, narrative can be used to restore metanarrative among post-Christian young adults who tend to be postmodern. Jesus as the prime example of a storyteller was examined, along with the need to present Him and Him crucified as the main theme. Also, the benefits of sensory engaging

andragogies as a teaching method were confirmed via the research studied. This calls for today's preachers to adapt their preaching style to reach post-Christian young adults.

Chapter 4 described the intervention designed based on Chapters 2 and 3. This intervention involved being incarnationally with the target group, further building relationships and trust through project talks based on felt needs, and concluding with follow-up talks to present Christ. A final review was held the following week. Three surveys and a focus group evaluated the effectiveness of my intervention.

Chapter 5 detailed the narrative of my intervention. My project took almost five months. Taking an ample period of time allowed me to further interact and build relationships. It also allowed me to present my talks without overwhelming them and gave them time to digest the content. This was especially beneficial during the follow-up talks where I introduced the spiritual aspect of each topic, which was unfamiliar to some. Asking for feedback during the talks and allowing participants to bring out the meaning of the illustrations and stories before I made further comments was beneficial in generating participation and feedback.

Chapter 6 presented the results of my project. Two Ps accepted Christ and all Ps made spiritual decisions. Furthermore, the Ps liked my project talks, including the sensory engaging andragogies and imaginative storytelling. This seems related to their being visual and comfortable with story as a teaching medium. The small group format, face-to-face communication, participant involvement in illustrations, and shorter talks seem to have helped reach them. Had I been an older female, they may have had a slightly easier time opening up. Also, the more follow-up talks the Ps came to, the more likely they were to accept Christ, even if they only came to two or three project talks.

Thus, the final overarching conclusions of my project based on the foregoing chapters are as follows: Being incarnationally with post-Christian young adults over an ample period of time, and during that time presenting short talks on felt needs followed by short talks on Christ and His cross, getting post-Christian young adults to attend as many spiritual talks as possible, using illustrations and storytelling as teaching methods, and asking for feedback and encouraging participation in a small group format was found to be an effective strategy in reaching post-Christian young adults and helping them make spiritual decisions, which included accepting Christ.

Professional Transformation

As a result of this project, I see a greater value in incarnational ministry and using illustrations and storytelling in preaching. I see from experience the willingness of post-Christian young adults to learn spiritual things if presented in a gradual and appealing way. I am now also able to compose parables, I am a better storyteller, better at creating illustrations, and a better preacher. Ministering incarnationally has built relationships with the young adults that attended my talks and with others who attend the basketball ministry and has allowed me to gain a better understanding of their needs and perspectives and how to better minister to them. I have better realized the importance of team work in teaming up with the youth leader at the basketball outreach in order to conduct my project. This has also made me more aware of the potential for soul winning in other existing ministries at church. In addition, I have gained an understanding of the theology behind this project and how it is supported by research. The amount of reading developed my reading ability. It has also spawned a desire to continue to improve in preaching. All this has given me a broader foundation to build on for future ministry.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on my learnings. Considering the Ps that accepted Christ only attended two or three project talks but more follow-up sessions than others, that another P attended the majority of the project talks but only one follow-up session and the review, a study needs to be designed that begins with less project talks and then goes into the follow-up talks so attendees do not feel the series is too long. This may help more attend the follow-up talks and accept Christ. A series needs to be developed that uses storytelling and illustrations to communicate our 28 fundamental beliefs to post-Christian young adults who do accept Christ. A study using other teaching methods that connect with post-Christian young adults needs to be conducted, as this will enrich our understanding of effective ways to reach this group. Also, a study needs to be conducted in which an adult female does the talks, since post-Christian young adults in my study were slightly more comfortable opening up to an adult female.

An evaluation instrument needs to be created that can assess post-Christian young adult's spiritual lives at the outset of the project and again at the end. This instrument must be crafted so they are not turned off to spiritual questions at the outset. Comparing results from the outset and end will make clear the spiritual decisions made as a result of attending the project. Incarnational ministry in a different setting must be undertaken, as post-Christian young adults are found in many settings. This will provide more research on how to better minister to this group. A multi-sensory learning environment needs to be created within which to conduct a similar project. This will better engage participants' learning modalities and may prove more effective in reaching them. Also, sponsored evangelism was effective in my context, meaning I paid participants to attend my talks

and evaluate them. It was relatively cheap, \$1,400.00, compared to other ways of recruiting for evangelism. Perhaps it should be used more frequently in other settings.

Further research needs to be done which includes females, as all participants in my study were males, as well as those with a college education, as the vast majority of my participants did not have a college education, and a greater number of post-Christian young adults must be studied, considering there were only six in my project. Research also needs to be conducted on the various groups within post-Christian young adults, seeing there is a range from those who do not believe in God at all to those who believe in God or gods that are at variance with Christianity.

APPENDIX A
SURVEYS

PRE-PRESENTATION SURVEY

(You can choose to omit any question if you wish to do so for any reason)

- 1. Age:** _____
2. Sex: Male Female
3. Race: White Black Hispanic Native American Asian Other: _____

- 4. Religious/Spiritual Background:** New Age Buddhist Hindu Jewish
 Christian Muslim Other: _____ No religious/spiritual preference

5. Do you practice your religion/spirituality on a regular basis? Y N

6. About how often do you attend religious/spiritual meetings or worship services?
 Once a week or more 2 to 3 times a month Once a month Occasionally Never

- 7. Were you born in the USA?** Y N
8. Where did you grow up? U.S.A. Another Country Both

9. Do you speak another language besides English? Y N

10. How many hours on average do you spend on the following *per day*?
 (check one box for each row category; check the box closest to describing you)

	0 hrs.	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+
TV/Movies					
Internet on a Computer					
Cell Phone (calls, text, internet, music, etc.)					

11. This presentation uses illustrations involving at least one of the five senses (seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting). This is designed to help you understand the topic better. Do you have any disabilities or impairments of any of your five senses that would prevent you from experiencing these illustrations?

Yes No If so, which one(s): _____

12. Which ways do you prefer to communicate? (mark all that apply)

- Texting Social Media Talking on cell phone Instant Messaging
 Video calls Face-to-face Other: _____

13. To which of the following do you feel most comfortable opening up to?
 (you may feel comfortable with all of the following categories; check all that apply)

- An adult Someone from same race
 Someone more or less my age Someone from different race
 Male Parent/legal guardian
 Female Someone who is not my parent/legal guardian
 Someone with same religious/spiritual beliefs
 Someone with different religious/spiritual beliefs

POST-PRESENTATION SURVEY

(You can choose to omit any question if you wish to do so for any reason)

1. The speaker did a good job in speaking and presenting.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

2. I found the topic itself interesting.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

3. When the speaker told a story, I was able to imagine what was being described.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

4. The story/stories helped me understand the presentation better.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

5. The visual aides, props, illustrations, audio, etc. (if any were used) helped me understand the presentation better.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

6. The question and answer time was helpful to me.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

7. I would recommend that one of my friends attend a presentation like this.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

8. I am interested in learning more about this topic in a follow-up session.

Yes No

Follow-up Survey Questions

As a result of these talks, the following has happened in my life (check all boxes that apply):

- I understand that God loves all people no matter what they've done.
- I understand that God loves all people, even though He may not love what they've done.
- I understand that God loves me.

- I believe that Jesus came to save us.
- I believe that God sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross.
- I believe Jesus died on the cross for me and my sins.

- I accepted God/Christ into my life for the first time.
- I accepted God/Christ back into my life again.
- I have already accepted God/Christ into my life.

- I confessed my sins and asked God to forgive me for the first time.
- I confessed my sins and asked God to forgive me again.
- I confess my sins and ask God to forgive me on a regular basis.

- I trust that God will help me with any problems going on in my life.
- I trust that God is able to help me in areas I can't help myself.
- I trust that God will help me overcome sin in my life.

- I started praying for the first time.
- I started praying again.
- I started praying more.

- I started reading the Bible for the first time.
- I started reading the Bible again.
- I started reading the Bible more.

- I told somebody about something I learned from these talks.
- I told somebody about something I read in the Bible.
- I told somebody about something God did for me.

- I believe that God created this world.
- I believe that Jesus is coming back to take me to Heaven with Him.
- I believe that God created me and that my life on this earth has a purpose.

- I'm interested in learning more about the Bible.
- I'm interested in having more of these talks after basketball.
- I'm interested in talking one-on-one with Pastor David about something in my life.

Name: _____

Phone #: _____

E-mail: _____

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

PARENTAL INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Hi, my name is David Resendes and I am conducting a research study as part of my DMin dissertation project at Andrews University. This study is entitled: “Using Sensory Engaging Andragogies and Imaginative Storytelling in the Context of Incarnational Ministry to Reach Post-Christian Young Adults.” It consists of seven talks beginning Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2015 at 7pm in Baskin Hall. The seven topics are: 1) Stress, 2) Relationships, 3) Depression and Suicide, 4) Anger, 5) What’s the Purpose of My Life?, 6) How to Bring Purpose and Meaning to My Life, and 7) Setting Goals and Focusing. The purpose of this study is to better understand which methods of communication are more effective in reaching young adults.

Participants will be asked to simply listen to the talks. They may choose to participate in an illustration and/or hands-on object lesson, as well as provide comments or questions. Two surveys will be given, the first for background information and the second for feedback. There will be a focus group (discussion group) after each presentation.

The talks and focus group will be video recorded so I can evaluate my talks and recall what was said during the focus group. All personal information will be kept private and confidential, and will be coded and not included in the study’s results.

Participants will receive 20 dollars per talk for their time. This study involves no more than minimal risk, meaning no risks greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. The results of this study may benefit those attempting to better communicate with young adults.

Participation is voluntary. Besides this consent form, your child will be asked for their verbal assent. After consenting, participants can choose not to participate at any time during the process. Thank you so much. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

If you would like to contact me concerning this study, please call (916) 316-5335. To reach my research advisor Jeffrey Potts in Canada, please call (204) 669-0956. Your signature on this form means you understand the information presented and hereby give your voluntary consent for your child to participate in this study.

Name of Child (please print)

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian (please print)

Signature (Parent/Legal Guardian)

Date

Contact information for David Resendes (researcher):
Phone: (916) 316-5335

Contact information for Jeffrey Potts (research advisor):
Phone: (306) 241-5138 (Canada)

Andrews University

FOCUS GROUP: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I am conducting a research study as part of my dissertation project, in partial fulfillment for my doctoral studies at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. Your participation in this focus group is greatly appreciated.

Purpose of Study: To learn if the teaching methods used in the study are effective.

Benefits: Opportunity to comment and participate if so desired.

Risks: No more risks to the subjects than those typically encountered in everyday life.

Voluntary Participation: I have been informed that participation in this focus group is completely voluntary. I am aware there will be no penalty or loss of benefits I'm entitled to if I decide to cancel my participation, and that there will be no cost for participating.

Confidentiality: I understand my identity in this focus group will not be disclosed in any published document, and that the researcher will keep the records in a file cabinet for at least 3 years in a safe place in his home, before properly discarding them.

Contact: I am aware that I can contact the supervisor of this research: Jeffrey Potts in Canada (306) 241-5138 / pottsj@live.ca, or the researcher: David Resendes (916) 316-5335 / svntsvndr@gmail.com for answers to questions related to this study. I can also contact the Institutional Review Board at Andrews University (269) 471-6361 / irb@andrews.edu.

I have read the contents of this Consent and received verbal explanations to my questions. My questions concerning this focus group have been answered satisfactorily. I hereby give my voluntary consent to participate in this focus group. I am fully aware that if I have any additional questions I can contact David Resendes: (916) 316-5335 / svntsvndr@gmail.com or Jeffrey Potts in Canada: (306) 241-5138 / pottsj@live.ca.

Signature (Subject) _____
Date

I also give permission to be videoed during the focus group:

Signature (Subject) _____
Date

Researcher Signature _____
Phone _____
Date

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What did you like *most* about today's talk?
2. What did you like *least* about today's talk?
3. How did the story/stories in today's talk affect you?
4. Was there anything about the story/stories that you liked most?
5. How did the visual aids/props in today's talk affect you?
6. Was there anything about the visual aids/props that you liked most?

APPENDIX D

MANUSCRIPTS AND NOTES FOR TALKS

Project Talk 1: “Stress”

(Imaginative Storytelling with Sensory Engaging Andragogy; act it out): Stress is like a guy who’s working two jobs, dating three girls, and studying for four classes. He’s exhausted and it’s late. So he sits down on his bed to take a break and a spider bites his finger (Hold a plastic spider in my hand and take a long pause and look at it). He gets up to throw the spider off his finger and smashes his toes on the dresser. Aghhhh! He starts bouncing around on one foot and loses his balance and starts falling backwards. He tries reaching for something to hold him up, but knocks over the lit candles by the bed and falls backwards and crashes through the window and lands in the front yard. The candles land on the bed and the bed catches on fire. Then the bedroom catches on fire. Then he watches as his whole house burns down (Pause like I did earlier and look at the plastic spider I’m holding in my hand). Talk about stress! And it all started with a little spider!

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: use a board with nails hammered into it at various places; take a rubber band and stretch it over the nails so it touches each nail without breaking the rubber band; ask a volunteer to do this). The rubber band stretched over a few nails without breaking represents our life. Some stress is normal and good. Some stress is unavoidable. For example, my job, financial issues, maintaining a car, parents, school, drug addiction related issues, girlfriend/boyfriend, food, rent, clothes, etc.

(Stretch rubber band to a couple more nails now and read the following from <http://www.webmd.com/balance/guide/causes-of-stress>):

Sometimes stress comes from inside, rather than outside. You can stress yourself out just by worrying about things:

- Fear and uncertainty; Attitudes and perceptions; Unrealistic expectations.

Life stresses:

- Death of a loved one; Divorce; Loss of job; Increase in financial obligations; Getting married; Moving.

- Chronic illness or injury; Emotional problems (depression, anxiety, anger, grief, guilt, low self-esteem).

- Taking care of an elderly or sick family member.

- Traumatic event, such as a natural disaster, theft, rape, or violence against you or a loved one (Stretch rubber band to a couple more nails).

(Read the following from officevibe.com):

1. \$300 billion a year are spent in stress related health care costs.
2. 77% of people in offices across the country are regularly experiencing physical malfunctions caused by stress.
3. 73% are dealing with psychological issues that are caused by stress.
4. 33% of employees say that they’re dealing with extreme stress.
5. 48% Feel as if their stress has increased over the past 5 years.
6. 76% of people cite money and work as the leading cause of their stress.
7. 48% reported lying awake at night due to stress.
8. 54% said stress has caused them to fight with people close to them.
9. 60% of 26,000 workers were so unhappy that they would prefer to choose a new career.
10. 87% of workers are emotionally disconnected from their workplaces.
11. Unhappy workers are 10% less productive. (Stretch rubber band to more nails)

How many things are pulling us? How much more till you snap? (Stretch rubber band till it snaps) So how do we release some of the tension on our rubber band so we don't snap?

1. Don't say, "Yes" to something else.
2. Get rid of unnecessary stressors (some people, places, things, situations). What might those stressors be?
3. Can't get rid of everything stressful, but we can learn how to better deal with stress:

Imaginative Storytelling with Sensory Engaging Andragogy: The other day I was driving and had to go to the bathroom. When I got home I ran into the bathroom, but before I went, I did the "Pee Dance." (Show the Pee Dance: how you dance around when you really need to go pee). You know what I'm talking about? Have you ever done the Pee Dance? Why do we do the Pee Dance? Because you have tension in your body and physical movement helps you deal with that tension. The Pee Dance is what we call a form of *exercise*. Exercise is a good way to deal with stress. For example, going to the gym, playing basketball, jogging, walking, etc. Exercise isn't the only thing, but it's *one* thing that helps us deal with stress.

(Handout *Vibrant Life Tract*: "16 Ways to Reduce Stress During the Workday"; read through, but abbreviate the 16 steps; leave out the Christian aspect at this time; then give one tract to each person).

Project Talk 2: “Relationships”

We’re talking about relationships today. And in a relationship you need to have things in common. We learn this from Don Juan.

(Imaginative Storytelling): Don Juan took this girl out on a date. They came out of the restaurant that evening and stood on the sidewalk under a tall lamp. Don Juan turns and says to the girl, “You know, we have a lot in common. You like me. And I like me. You think I’m smart. And I think I’m smart. You think I’m good-looking. And I think I’m good-looking.”

Is that what we mean when we talk about having things in common? No. So let’s forget about Don Juan. Let’s talk about Mr. John.

(Imaginative Storytelling): Mr. John was driving 65... in a 35. And traffic lights meant nothing to him. At this point he was like a bull: red meant GO! And little Miss Cutie in the passenger’s seat was like fuel on fire. All she said was: “Push the pedal to the metal!” They zipped and dipped until the car came to a screeching halt in front of the house. They made a mad dash for the door. They dived over the bushes, trampled on the flowers, and leaped over the front steps. They were running from the “birds and the bees.” They were just married! A.K.A.: “Man on a Mission.” They barely closed the front door and all of a sudden his medical training kicked in: mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. During the night they had sex to die for, but during the day they had fights you could die from.

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: use two disc-shaped magnets; show one at a time): Anyone know what this is? (Ask for volunteer to figure it out): Tell us how these magnets are like Mr. John and little Miss Cutie? One way the magnets attract (sex); the other way the magnets repel (fights). The same magnets do *both*. How do you move from *making* love to *staying* in love?

(Imaginative Storytelling): Sally went grocery shopping. She grabbed a cart, went through the doors, and made her way up and down the aisles. Then all of a sudden, as she was rounding one of the aisles, she found herself face to face with the most handsome, well-shaped... *apple* she had ever seen (eyes widened). She instantly forgot all about her other groceries and what was going on around her. She reached out and grabbed the apple and quickly sunk her teeth into it. Man did that apple taste good! But after a few bites she found out that the apple at its core was rotten! Agghhh! She spit out what she had in her mouth and chucked the rest of the apple in the trash. But guess what? The grocery store still made her pay for that apple.

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: need an apple, knife, paper towel): Relationships are like apples:

1. Outer aspect: the apple’s skin / the person’s looks. This is the first part we see.
 2. Middle aspect: the apple’s meat / the person’s personality. It doesn’t take long to see this part.
 3. Inner aspect: the apple’s core / the person’s character, values, the way they think. It takes longer to see this part. This is the most important part, yet it is often overlooked.
- (Now cut the apple in half) Sometimes the relationship works out OK. But sometimes the core of the “apple” is rotten. In relationships, we need to find out about the core of the apple before we decide to “eat” it (have sex).

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: need an orange; cut the orange in half; pair one half of the orange with one half of the apple): Does my core match the other person's core? Or is it more like comparing apples and oranges? Are they someone totally different than me in their mentality or lifestyle? We need to look for an "apple," but not just one that looks good on the outside and tastes good when you first bite it. Take your time and find out about the *core* of the apple before you decide to eat it.

Question: What if you're already invested in a relationship and you find out the core is rotten? Well, how rotten is it? We know a rotten apple can't change, but people can if they're willing. We need to dialogue. Maybe do some counseling. Another thing we have to do is work on ourselves.

(Dialogue now with audience based on illustration of magnets and apple)

Project Talk 3: “Depression and Suicide”

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: need mirror and cap gun; look into mirror and fire shots, “killing” myself)

My life wasn’t going the way I planned, specifically in the area of relationships. I was depressed. I was sleeping 12 hours a night. I had low motivation. I was tired and negative. And I had... suicidal thoughts.

(Imaginative Storytelling): There was a certain cat. He crouched, inched forward, ready to pounce. He waited. He lunged. Boom. He rammed into the wall headfirst. (Rub my head) “me-OW!” He missed Mickey Mouse *again!* He felt like a total failure. That’s it! He reached for the rat poison. “This will solve my problems.” He quickly downed it all. Agghhhhh... (Put hands on stomach and chest and gag) “Maybe I shouldn’t have taken the rat poison. Oh no. What was I thinking? Now it’s too late!” He turned green. Boom. He fell dead to the floor. A little bit later he came to. (Take a deep breath) He was so thankful cats have 9 lives. ... But humans don’t!

On August 11, 2014, Robin Williams committed suicide. How can someone who made so many laugh, be so depressed? What would he have said if he had had 9 lives and came back like the cat? We don’t know, because he didn’t live to tell about it. But other people have survived a suicide attempt. Famous People who survived suicide:

1. Mike Tyson
2. Oprah Winfrey
3. Drew Carey
4. Walt Disney
5. Halle Barry
6. Elton John
7. Drew Barrymore
8. Princess Diana of Wales
9. Eminem

They all wanted things like peace, happiness, people who care, a relationship, a resolution to their problems, a better life. And they then realized suicide wasn’t the real answer. Those are famous people. What about the Average Joe’s out there?

(Imaginative Storytelling: read the following story from <https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/244yuu/>)

“I was in a really tough spot a couple of years ago. I was 24, homeless, and extremely depressed. I had recently stopped shooting heroin (for about 6 months) hoping my life would magically turn around, but the depression and anxiety were still there. I had to beg for change to get my next meal, live in filthy clothes, and sleep in a tent by a river infested with spiders and mosquitos.”

“It was the 4th of July and my 24th birthday was only a couple days away. I remember thinking about how I missed my family, and how impossible it seemed to turn my life around. Some kind stranger gave me \$30 dollars, and I got it in my head that buying a fifth of cheap vodka and 20 of black tar was an easy way out. I went to a park and drank like half the bottle all the while watching the happy families have BBQ's and laughing. I knew my tolerance would be little to none, and being drunk and shooting H is a one way ticket out.”

“I cooked up the shot and watched all the happiness around me for about 20 min.

I put the needle in, and the last thing I remember was exactly ‘This is it. Its finally over...’ I pushed the plunger, and faded into darkness. It was weird though, It was like my last thoughts dragged on forever, and I entered a weird void where I was just floating. Luckily, a couple visiting the park from Texas had been watching me, and were making a plate up for me from their BBQ. The husband noticed me go down, and rushed over and called the ambulance. He later told me I was purple and unresponsive. He said he had never seen anyone that color before.”

“I woke up in the hospital scared, and confused. A doctor came in and told me what had happened. Then the couple came in. I had no idea who they were, but after talking with them, I admitted to them that it was a suicide attempt and not an accidental overdose. They refused to leave my side and checked me out of the hospital. They drove me to their hotel, let me take a shower, and gave me 3 meals a day for the duration of their trip. I'm thankful to them everyday.”

After some people responded to his post, he posted this:

“I actually stay in contact with them quite frequently. They had some family members in the city I was in and helped me get back in school and start tutoring some kids that needed help in math at their children's school. I can't express how much it helped me that someone just took the time to help me out. Instead of just giving money to someone on the streets, offer to take them to a fast food place and buy them a meal and talk to them like they are an ordinary person. It might just be the type of humanization they need to get through the day, and hopefully start to change their life.”

(Imaginative Storytelling): I was away at college. I was sitting on my bed and about to go to sleep. My mom had sent me pictures of the family. I sat there looking through the pictures. (Do the motions with my hands so they understand better) As I looked at the pictures, I kissed the people in the pictures goodnight. I kissed my grandmother goodnight. I kissed my mom goodnight. I kissed my dad goodnight. And I kissed my brother goodnight. But for some reason, I just couldn't bring myself to kiss myself goodnight. That's when I realized I had forgiven a lot of other people, but I had not yet forgiven myself for all the things I had done to myself.

We all have our own failures. We need to work through them. And one of those ways is to forgive ourselves.

Listen to these motivating stories. (Youtube.com, “Famous Failures,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLYECIjmnQs&feature=youtu.be>)

1. After being cut from his high school basketball team, he went home, locked himself in his room and cried -- Michael Jordan
2. He wasn't able to speak until he was almost 4 years old and his teachers said he would "never amount to much" -- Albert Einstein
3. Was demoted from her job as a news anchor because she... "Wasn't fit for television" -- Oprah Winfrey
4. Fired from a newspaper for "lacking imagination" and "having no original ideas" -- Walt Disney
5. At age 11 he was cut from his team after being diagnosed with a growth hormone deficiency... which made him smaller in stature than most kids his age -- Lionel Messi (Soccer player)
6. At 30 years old he was left devastated and depressed after being unceremoniously removed from the company he started -- Steve Jobs (co-founder of Apple Computers)

7. A high school dropout, whose personal struggles with drugs and poverty culminated in an unsuccessful suicide attempt -- Eminem
8. Was involved in drugs, gangs, homeless. Only had \$700 dollars in his pocket when he started his company. Could only afford black ink on white bottles--color cost too much -- John Paul (Paul Mitchell hair products)
9. A teacher told him he was... "Too stupid to learn anything" and that he should go into a field where he might succeed by virtue of his pleasant personality -- Thomas Edison
10. Rejected by Decca Recording Studios, who said "we don't like their sound"... "They have no future in show business" -- The Beatles
11. His first book was rejected by 27 publishers -- Dr. Seuss (famous author of children's books)
12. His fiancé died, he failed in business, had a nervous breakdown and was defeated in 8 elections -- Abraham Lincoln

“Failure is the first step to success. If you've never failed, you've never tried anything new.”

What would have happened if their failures had left them so depressed they didn't get back “up and at ‘em”? Or worse yet, what would have happened if these people had... (fire cap gun shots into mirror) ... killed themselves?

(Silent time for reflection)

Project Talk 4: “Anger”

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: ask a volunteer to blow up a balloon; then I pop it with a needle)

Question: How is this similar to anger?

Blowing up the balloon represents stuff that annoys us:

- The more pressure that builds, the more we’ll explode.
- It can be over something as small as a needle (show them the needle).
- The needle that sets us off may be the same thing over and over or it may be different things.

Examples of anger (specific):

- When I was little and played street hockey. I would bang my hockey stick on the pavement if I messed up. When a young adult, if you pushed me too far, I would blow up and curse you out. Everybody has their limit.
- My cousin punched the inside of the metal front door to his house and left dents in it.

Examples of anger (general):

- Parents, relatives, people out in the street.
- Punching holes in walls.
- Punching people.
- Breaking things.
- Yelling and screaming, etc.
- We all know what anger looks like and some of us also know what rage looks like.

Rage is when anger gets out of control and is taken to the next level.

(Imaginative Storytelling) I was out on a walk the other day and a lady passed by on her bike. She was running her pit bull on a leash. All of a sudden she started yelling, “Get your dog! Get your dog!” A neighbor had his pug loose in front of his house and it started chasing after her dog as she passed by. When the pug got to her dog, her dog turned around and started pulling the lady. She ended up kind of falling off her bike. Then her dog somehow got away from her. The whole time she was yelling for the neighbor to get his dog. The neighbor’s dog then started smelling her dog. Her dog put up with it for a few seconds, then bit and latched onto the pug on the top part of its neck and shoulders. The pug started screaming. By this time the neighbor had arrived. He and the lady were trying to get the pit bull off the pug. This was happening up in front of me in the middle of the street as I was walking up that street. When I got there I decided to help out too. We tried a few things, but they didn’t work. So the lady mentioned choking out the pit pull. I grabbed its leash and put it around its neck and started choking it out. After a little while the pit bull let go of the pug. The neighbor grabbed his dog, which seemed to be OK, and went home. And the lady grabbed her pit bull by the collar and reattached the leash. The pit bull was actually calm and friendly. She kept it next to her.

How does this story relate to anger? (Dialogue with audience)

Let’s go back to our balloon illustration and ask six questions to better understand what causes the “balloon” to explode. How anger works is different for each person.

(Handout a sheet of paper titled: “5 W’s and 1 H”; have these six questions down the page in bold: Who?, What?, When?, Where?, Why?, How?; run through these six questions with them and dialogue)

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: chocolate eating contest—who can eat it the fastest; need 100% chocolate [Baker Baking Chocolate Bars, Unsweetened - 4 oz box, Walmart], milk chocolate [Hershey’s kisses], water bottles, paper towels, trash/plastic bag; ask for at least 2 volunteers; break off equal pieces of 100% chocolate; have them eat the 100% chocolate first, but don’t tell them it’s 100% chocolate; then they are to eat the Hershey’s kisses; the water is there if they need a drink afterwards)

(After they’re disgusted with eating the 100% chocolate and obtain relief by eating the Hershey’s kisses, say the following): That’s the difference between telling someone something in anger (100% chocolate: bitter) and telling them the same thing in a nice way (Hershey’s chocolate: sweet). Which one is easier to swallow? The milk chocolate. Let’s try and give people *milk* chocolate instead of *bitter* chocolate.

(Imaginative Storytelling) There was a guy. He was a teenager. He was walking in the back in an alley with his cousin. He got heated at his cousin about something. He had a pocketknife and pulled it out and stabbed his cousin in the stomach (do the motions). But you know what happened? He ended up hitting his cousin’s metal belt buckle and it snapped the knife blade. After that day he realized he really had an anger problem. So he went home and locked himself in the bathroom for hours to figure out how to deal with his anger problem. He came out of the bathroom a changed person. Do you know who that is? Ben Carson. Do you know who *that* is? He’s running for president right now. They have a movie on his life called, “Gifted Hands.”

As soon as the pressure starts to build in my balloon, I need to find a healthy way to release it. What are some ways we can release our anger before it gets the best of us? (Dialogue) Practical suggestions to release the pressure in our “balloon”:

1. Exercise.
2. Deep breathing.
3. Fresh air.
4. Go for a walk.
5. Walk away (it takes more inner strength to walk away from a fight than it does to stay there and go berserk).
6. Call somebody.
7. Do something that will take your mind, emotions, and energy off what’s ticking you off.

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: have a volunteer blow up a balloon with less air this time; then try to pop it with a needle—it’s harder to pop/explode; then take a balloon that hasn’t been blown up at all and try popping it with a needle—it can’t pop/explode; dialogue about the importance of releasing anger as it builds, so when we come to a “needle” type of situation, we don’t explode)

Project Talk 5: “What’s the Purpose of My Life?”

(Start with small talk to set up for the first Sensory Engaging Andragogy)

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: need a baby doll wrapped in a blanket so it looks like a real baby; stage this illustration with a non-participant; the non-participant comes to the front holding the “baby” in their arms and expresses in strong terms how they don’t want the baby and then throws it down on the floor in front of everyone; leave the baby on the floor during the talk until the end)

- Being rejected by parents or someone else affects you! It can lead you to question the purpose of your life.

Famous people who were abandoned or didn’t grow up with a father or mother: (read the name and description for a portion of them; then just read the names without the description; then towards the end read a couple more names with the description):

(Taken from: <http://www.withoutafather.com/celebrities.php>)

1. **Lance Armstrong** never knew his birth father.
2. **Notorious B.I.G.** was abandoned by his father when he was 2.
3. **Halle Berry** was abandoned by her father when she was 4.
4. **Mary J. Blige** was abandoned by *her* father when *she* was 4.
5. **Pierce Brosnan** was abandoned by his father before his first birthday.
6. **Mariah Carey** had little contact with her father after her parents divorce when she was 3.
7. **50 Cent** never knew his father and lost his mother when he was 8.
8. **Eric Clapton** never knew real father. Grew up thinking grandparents were parents and his mother was his sister.
9. **Jodie Foster** grew up without a father after her parents separated before she was born.
10. **Jamie Foxx** was abandoned by both his parents and raised by his adopted grandparents.
11. **Adrian Grenier** grew up not knowing who his father was.
12. **Laird Hamilton** was abandoned by his father when he was an infant.
13. **Enrique Iglesias** was raised mainly by his nanny, Elvira Olvarez.
14. **Samuel L. Jackson** only met his father twice during his life.
15. **Jay-Z** was abandoned by his father.
16. **Alicia Keys** grew up without a father.
17. **Martin Lawrence** rarely saw his father after his parents divorced when he was 8.
18. **John Lennon** grew up without a father and lost his mother when he was 17.
19. **Sarah McLachlan** was adopted and never knew her birth father.
20. **Eva Mendes** was raised by her single mother after her parents divorced.
21. **Marilyn Monroe** grew up without a father.
22. **Demi Moore** was abandoned by her father before she was born.
23. **Jack Nicholson** never knew his real father.
24. **Shaquille O'Neal** grew up without his birth father.
25. **Barack Obama** met his father only once before he died in a car crash.
26. **Clive Owen** was abandoned by his father when he was 3.
27. **Al Pacino** grew up in his grandparents’ home with his mother.
28. **Mekhi Phifer** grew up without a father having never met him.

29. **Keanu Reeves** was abandoned by his father when he was 13.
30. **Alex Rodriguez** was abandoned by his father when he was 7.
31. **Tupac Shakur** grew up not knowing his birth father while his stepfather went to prison when he was 2.
32. **Anderson Silva** was raised by his aunt.
33. **Gene Simmons** was abandoned by his father when he was 3.
34. **David Spade** was abandoned by his father.
35. **Jon Stewart** was raised primarily by his mother.
36. **Shania Twain** was abandoned by her birth father.
37. **Kanye West** was abandoned by his father when he was 3.
38. **Liv Tyler** didn't know who her birth father was until she was 9.
39. **Steve Jobs** - given up for adoption (I added this one).
 - Being rejected by parents or someone else affects you! It can lead you to question the purpose of your life.
 - Or maybe one or both parents died.
 - Maybe you were abused in some way by a parent or someone else.
 - Maybe one or both parents were gone for most of your life: incarcerated, working faraway, drugging, not around.
 - Any of these things can mess up our understanding of the purpose of our life.
 - But that doesn't mean our circumstances have to control us.

(Imaginative Storytelling):

(<http://www.dailytenminutes.com/2012/05/story-of-two-brothers-concluding-good.html>)

“This is a story of two brothers. One was a drug addict and a drunkard who frequently beat up his family. The other one was a very successful businessman who was respected in society and had a wonderful family. Some people wanted to find out why two brothers from the same parents, brought up in the same environment, could be so different.”

“The first one was asked, ‘How come you do what you do? You are a drug addict, a drunk, and you beat your family. What motivates you?’ He said, ‘My father.’ They asked, ‘What about your father?’ The reply was, ‘My father was a drug addict, a drunk and he beat his family. What do you expect me to be? That is what I am.’”

“They went to the brother who was doing everything right and asked him the same question. ‘How come you are doing everything right? What is your source of motivation?’ And guess what he said? ‘My father. When I was a little boy, I used to see my dad drunk and doing all the wrong things. I made up my mind, that is not what I wanted to be.’”

Don't let whatever happened to you early in life dictate what you do and who you become.

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy—illegal Mexican migrant worker who came to Stockton and ends up becoming a brain surgeon):

Alfredo Quiñones-Hinojosa. Illegal migrant worker; crossed the border into US at 19. Worked in the fields. But wanted to do something different with his life. So he worked on the railroad. But that wasn't for him either—he still felt he wanted to do something different. He didn't speak English so he took a class and learned. He ends up going to Berkeley, then Harvard, and becomes a brain surgeon at John Hopkins Hospital. And guess where he used to live? He lived in a one-room apartment with his parents and

three siblings in downtown Stockton. And guess where he took classes and learned how to speak English? Delta College (Stockton).

- There's no reason we have to *stay* down because we got *thrown* down (refers back to opening illustration).
- Alfredo got back up from his situation and found the type of purpose in life he was looking for. And we can do the same thing ... by learning the lesson of the hammer and the screwdriver:

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: need a board, nails, screws, hammer, screwdriver; call for two volunteers—one on one side of the board and the other on the other side; ask one volunteer to screw in the screw with the hammer; ask the other volunteer to nail in the nail with the screwdriver; now do it right: have the volunteer with the hammer nail in the nail and the volunteer with the screwdriver screw in the screw)

Alfredo worked in the fields. He was like a hammer trying to screw in a screw. He realized that wasn't for him. So he went and worked on the railroad. But he felt like a screwdriver trying to nail in a nail—until he figured out his purpose in life.

Are you a hammer forcing yourself to be a screwdriver or are you a screwdriver trying to be a hammer? Alfredo had to take some time and think about his life, his strengths, his potential, and where he wanted to be in life.

We need to know who we are: our strengths, abilities, our make up, so we can function in a way that makes sense to us and our uniqueness. Figuring out if we're a hammer or a screwdriver helps answer the question: "what's the purpose of my life?" and helps get the baby off the floor.

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: pick the baby doll up off the floor and hold it)

We're going to talk about how to start figuring all this out at our next talk, entitled: "How to Bring Purpose to My Life."

Project Talk 6: “How to Bring Purpose to My Life”

(Imaginative Storytelling): There was this woman who inherited a *fortune*. She was driving down the road in her *Lamborghini*. She was single so everyone called her Miss: Mis–spelled - she was always Mis–spelling her text messages. That’s because she did most of her texting while driving. One day she got pulled over and got a ticket. But she failed to pay her ticket and failed to appear in court. Mis–spelled got a new name: Mis–demeanor. In fact, she had *many* names like Mis–guided, Mis–led, Mis–matched. She was really Mis–taken because she thought she could be Mis–cellaneous and just drive her Lamborghini around without any real purpose in life. She died single and rich. Her tombstone read: “Mis–fortune.”

It would be a misfortune to die without any real purpose in life. So how do I bring purpose to my life?

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: need a Marvel Superheroes poster glued to a presentation board; there are many characters in the poster; it is so busy; there is no central character)

Who is the central character of this poster? Who are we supposed to focus on? The Incredible Hulk is at the center. Even if he’s at the center, there’s too much going on to concentrate on him.

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: pair off all participants; have them talk to someone a few chairs over; have them talk loud so their partner can hear; have them all do this at the same time)

How well can you communicate in a situation like this? There’s too much going on to concentrate. Is it just as important, maybe more important, to be able to concentrate on *ourselves* with no distractions?

At our last talk we asked the question: Are you a hammer forcing yourself to be a screwdriver or are you a screwdriver trying to be a hammer? (refer to Marvel Superheroes poster now) If I’m trying to bring purpose to my life and this poster represents my life, my life is too busy, there’s too much going on to concentrate on me to figure me out. So how will I ever bring purpose to my life?

In order to bring purpose to my life, I need “me time.” Being able to listen to myself is similar to listening to someone else. I need to be free from distractions. I need my own quiet time; wear earplugs if you have to.

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: moment of silence–1 minute) How did that feel? Is that something the average person does? When we take someone on a date we want to concentrate on that person. We want to get to know that person. We need to take ourselves out on a date. We need to get to know ourselves and understand ourselves. And that means we need to have a space and a place free from distractions where I can be by myself and concentrate on myself.

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: spreadsheet with days of the week at the top of seven columns and the hours of the day divided by half hours in the first column running down the left-side of the sheet; this is for them to schedule quiet time into their schedule)

How to create personal quiet time:

- 1) Time:
 - a. Schedule quiet time everyday if you can or start by picking a couple days a week.

2) Quiet Time:

- a. No: TV, noise, distractions, friends. No phone or computer (unless to write down thoughts).
- b. Go out in nature/park; walk; back yard; your house; your room.

3) What are you going to do during that quiet time?

- a. Think about your life; Where you're at; Where you want to go; How you're going to get there; The things you've accomplished; How you'll accomplish more; Mistakes you've made; How you might have done things differently, so the next time something like that comes around, you'll be ready to handle it better; Etc. Write down your thoughts, so you can remember your great ideas.

This is one of the ways we begin to bring purpose to our life. This is how we begin to understand if I'm a hammer functioning like a screwdriver, and if so, how do I become a hammer functioning like a hammer. Over the last weeks, we've also talked about stress, relationships, depression and suicide, and anger. "Me time" helps me think about all this and anything else going on in my life and how to deal with it.

Project Talk 7: “Setting Goals and Focusing”

(Imaginative Storytelling): This young girl looked in the mirror and realized she was turning into a woman. Pa-dow! She said from now on I’m going to make sure I take good care of myself. She started exercising, ate right, dressed nice, did her hair nice. And along with everything else, she went and got her nails did. She came back two weeks later and got her nails did again. They were a little longer this time. After another two weeks, she went back and got her nails did again. They were even longer this time. Another two weeks—the same story. This kept happening again and again, every two weeks, until her nails were so long they were curling into spirals.

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: print out picture of woman with super long nails and pass it around <http://jezebel.com/5840514/woman-grows-nails-for-18-years-is-honored-accordingly>):

(Now finish the story): The owner of a nail shop had been asking her why she didn’t want to cut her nails? She said, because that’s the way my nails are. It’s natural. However, she had set goals for herself at the gym and her nails were interfering with her goals. So she had to make a decision. What was more important: long nails because it was natural to have them grow long or focusing on her goals at the gym? She decided her goals were more important. So what do you think she did to her nails? She cut them off.

When we look at our habits and thought patterns, our *natural* way of being, our *natural* way of doing things. We may find that some things that are *natural* are interfering with our goals and we need to cut them off.

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: need a toy gun that shoots darts and a target; ask for a volunteer and give them the toy gun):

1. Target = our goal.
2. (Put something in front of the target) = distraction.
 - a. What are some *natural* distractions? (ask for feedback):
 - i. Day dreaming all day; temper; use of money; wasting time; majoring in the minors.
 - b. Other distractions:
 - i. Someone / something leads me to do things I later regret.
 - ii. People that run me: everything has to be their way, right away, all the time. No time for me.
 - iii. Things or people that guzzle my money, time, energy, emotions, etc.
3. (Remove “distraction” I put in front of the target in point 2 above) = focus.
4. (Have the volunteer shoot the toy gun and hit the target) If you aim for nothing you’ll hit it every time.

Things that come *natural* can be either distractions or *strengths*. Knowing our strengths helps us set and reach goals. Michael Jordan’s strength was basketball. He left and went to baseball. But he came back to his strength.

After understanding a little more of myself and bringing purpose to my life (the last talk), we need to set goals and focus.

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: handout a sheet of paper with letters, “PHG”: Present, Goal, How I’m going to get there; borrowed from Ben Maxson, “NCC Discipleship Coach Training: Partnering with God, Week 1”; explain to them we need to

figure out where we want to go “G,” then understand our present situation “P,” and then figure out how we’re going to get there “H”)

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: need a dry erase board and marker; run through PHG with them on the board and use examples to help them understand the process; ie: Goal: big money or just enough; a house or apartment; an office job or an active job? Etc.; then use the following goal as an example: someone wants to go to the NBA—what do they need to do to get there? Then explain that your main goal (NBA) is made up of smaller goals (ie: practicing); now take the main goal and walk it backwards so you know the smaller goals that make up the main goal)

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: need a basketball; this relates basketball to setting goals and focusing)

1. Dribbling: when you’re first learning to dribble, you can’t focus on anything else, otherwise you lose the ball. Once you can dribble, then you can work on crossovers or shots. By reaching one smaller goal after another, we reach our main goal.
2. When dribbling to the hoop, the ball goes up and down. There are ups and downs in life. That’s normal. It’s part of moving forward and reaching our goal.
3. Need to know where the hoop is otherwise you can’t make your shot. We need to keep our eyes on our smaller *and* larger goals.
4. Points and assists: You can dribble up the court by yourself and score. However, it’s more common to set up for a shot and have someone give you an assist and then score. We can reach our goals on our own. However, it’s more common to have others help us.

(Imaginative Storytelling: Viviana Andazola Marquez: homeless with her mother and siblings since middle school; Got accepted to Yale; abbreviate story: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-steps-one-homeless-teen-took-to-get-full-ride-at-yale_us_55dc926ce4b0a40aa3ac3bae)

(Imaginative Storytelling: “Homeless to Harvard: the Liz Murray Story”; Drug addicted parents; Homeless at 15; documentary, Youtube; abbreviate story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGe3u5rLGQc>)

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: same spreadsheet I handed out for the last talk with the days of the week broken down by half hours; hand it out this time for the purpose of them figuring out how they will attain their goals)

(ask them): How will you attain your goals in practical everyday ways?

Follow-up Talk 1: “Stress”

(SLIDE) [Cartoon of stressed out person with many stressors]
Anyone remember ways we can deal with stress?

What happens when you’re in a situation like this:
(SLIDE x 16) [pictures: my car wreck]

Do you know who was in that car wreck?
(SLIDE) [picture: me in hospital]
(Imaginative Storytelling: begin telling story of car wreck with accompanying pictures)

(SLIDE x 2) [picture: American Jets: Air ambulance]
When people found out we had been in a car wreck overseas, the president of the conference I worked for in Oklahoma went into the office. The first binder he pulled off the shelf had a piece of paper that came floating out. That piece of paper said I had insurance for a med flight back to the U.S.!

[Comment on following pictures as I show them]:
(SLIDE) [picture: me going into Ambulance in Ardmore, Oklahoma]
(SLIDE) [picture: my wife in the hospital in Ardmore, Oklahoma]
(SLIDE x 2) [pictures: me in the hospital in Oklahoma City]
(SLIDE) [video: me in physical rehab unit getting off bed into wheelchair]
(SLIDE) [picture: Lovenox shots]
(SLIDE) [picture: my surgeon and his P.A.]
(SLIDE) [video: my first day walking; had to use a walker]
(SLIDE x 2) [pictures: Physical Therapy]
(SLIDE x 3) [pictures: exercise ball with smiley face on it; used at physical therapy]
This smiley face exercise ball is an illustration of the attitude I’ve tried to maintain throughout this ordeal. No matter how much you squeeze the ball, it keeps smiling!

(SLIDE x 6) [pictures: athletes] Exercise/sports can really help release stress.
(SLIDE) [picture: my car wreck] However, it doesn’t matter how fit you are. It won’t help you with your stress in a car wreck like the one I was in, because you can’t do exercise when you’re in the middle of a car wreck like this.

(SLIDE x 2) [video: a friend’s dream. Before I was flown back to the U.S., God gave my friend a dream. She saw me in her dream with the scar I sustained on my forehead from the car wreck. She saw this even though she had not yet seen me after the car wreck. After her dream, she began interceding for me. She knew one of the things that needed to happen was for me to get back to the U.S. or else I wouldn’t live. She later shared this testimony with me and I asked her to make a video so I could share it with others.]
(SLIDE) [picture: car wreck] How did I deal with stress stuck in that crushed car? Later they found out I had stomach ulcers (that’s from stress)!

Describe how I came to consciousness:

- smelled fumes, shattered glass on floor
- reached up and touched forehead; left side of my forehead went in; blood

Two thoughts:

1. Don't move my elbows because the seat was pushing me forward; didn't know how much weight was on my back.
2. Breathe slowly so I don't make my blood circulate faster and bleed more.
 - Didn't know if car was going to catch fire, blow up; Didn't know if I would bleed out or what was going to happen.
 - I prayed and confessed my sins.
 - I was at perfect peace. I had a sense of total peace with no exercise, no deep breathing, no going for a walk. And I had no stress. Here's why:

(SLIDE x 3) Mark 4:35-41

³⁵ On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." ³⁶ Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. ³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. ³⁸ But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" ³⁹ Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How *is it* that you have no faith?" ⁴¹ And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

- I had supernatural peace because Jesus was in my boat.
- And if Jesus is in your boat you'll have times of stress, but there will also be times of supernatural peace that you won't be able to explain in any other way, except that you know God gave it to you.
- So how can you have Jesus in your boat? Ask Him to come into your life. Jesus loves you. You don't have to convince Him to come. He already wants to come.
- Confess your sins and He'll remove the guilt and stress that comes with it and bring peace into your life—in times and ways that no one else can. How does all that happen?

(Imaginative Storytelling): I was doing my prayer walk under the carport because it was raining. Unknowingly I stepped on a worm and moved it and mangled it. Jesus compared Himself to a worm (Psalm 22:6). We weren't trying to commit sins and put Him on the cross and mangle Him. Jesus' response: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

[pray]

Follow-up Talk 2: “Relationships”

At our last talk, I shared about my car wreck. My car wreck led me to buy a truck, because I wanted to be in something big. I never wanted a truck before, but my car wreck *conditioned* me to think a certain way.

Experiences, where we live, who we grew up with *condition* us to want a certain type of person to be with. Examples:

(SLIDE x 23) China: foot-binding.

(SLIDE x 8) Bodi Tribe, Ethiopia: Men. Fat is considered extremely attractive.

(SLIDE x 3) Bodi Tribe, Ethiopia: Women. Their definition of beauty is very different from ours.

(SLIDE x 3) Mursi Tribe, Ethiopia: Men. The men look very strange to us.

(SLIDE x 5) Mursi Tribe, Ethiopia: Women. They gauge their lips so they can wear extremely large discs in their lower lips.

(SLIDE) Europe, 17th and 18th Century: the fontage. Funny-looking hairdo.

(SLIDE) America: corsets for women. Very unhealthy.

(SLIDE x 2) Japan: Teeth Rot Fashion. Rotten teeth were considered attractive.

(SLIDE x 2) Kayan People, Burma: Neck Rings. Very long necks were considered beautiful.

Definition of beauty changes with time/place. Today, we think a girl that looks a certain way is attractive. How much of that is us being conditioned by the society we live in?

(Imaginative Storytelling): “Sell Your Guitar.” I was beginning my MDiv program at Andrews University and there was a weekend of spiritual emphasis in the seminary chapel. I was seated in the back. It came time for individual prayer. As I was kneeling and praying, I heard a voice say, “Sell your guitar.” I opened my eyes and looked around me. There was no one near me. So I closed my eyes and kept praying. Then the same voice came back and said again, “Sell your guitar.” I looked around me again. There was no one near me. And I knew I didn’t want to sell my guitar. So my conclusion was that it was either God or the devil. I prayed and reflected and told one of my friends who was a pastor and also doing his MDiv. He told me about the story of Abraham being called to offer up his son Isaac in Genesis 22. So I read the story again. After reading and praying, I decided it was God who had spoken to me. So I made “For Sale” signs and hung them up in the dorm, around campus, and at the local grocery store. One week went by—no phone calls. Two weeks went by—no phone calls. I started thinking that maybe I wouldn’t have to sell my guitar after all. Then I heard a knock on my dorm room door. It was one of my friends. He said, “I heard you’re selling your guitar. Is that right?” I said, “Yes.” He asked if he could take the guitar with him that night and play it and let me know if he wanted to buy it in the morning. I said sure. That night, as I got into bed and started thinking that I really might have to sell my guitar, tears started welling up in my eyes and running down my cheeks. It wasn’t that it was an expensive guitar or that I was an amazing player. But when I was stressed out or depressed or needed some time away, I’d play my guitar. I wasn’t married at the time. And out of everything I had, that was what I loved the most. As I was thinking about all this and the tears were running down my

cheeks, God spoke to me and said, “David, it’s so hard for you to give up a piece of wood and a few lousy strings. Imagine how hard it was for Me to give up My Son?” That’s when I realized this whole experience was an obedience check, a faith-builder. I realized God didn’t really want me to sell my guitar, just like He didn’t really want Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. But instead, God had allowed me to go through this experience to give me a tiny revelation of what it must have been like for Him to give up what He loved most—His Son Jesus Christ—in order to restore the broken relationship between Him and us.

The Bible compares God to a husband and His church to His bride. This is the most important relationship: the one between God and us.

(SLIDE) John 3:16-17

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

(SLIDE x 17) [pictures: Jesus on cross with a thief on either side. Explain how Christ’s death on the cross connected God to humanity—that’s the vertical beam of the cross; and connected humanity to humanity—that’s the horizontal beam of the cross; And draws us all—God and humanity—to be one: that’s the center of the cross where the vertical and horizontal beams meet.]

(SLIDE x 20) [pictures: A triangle with God on top and a man and woman on either side at the bottom corners of the triangle. This illustrates real love and closeness. A man and a woman can only get so close if they move toward each other in a horizontal direction from either end of the triangle. The real way for a man and woman to become close is for each to move toward God who’s at the top of the triangle. As they each move toward God from their bottom end of the triangle, they end up moving closer to each other. And they find their true closeness in God. When they’re one with God, they’ll be one with each other]

Appeal:

1. Ask God to help us connect with Him.
2. This will help us connect with others.
3. This will also help us connect with whoever we’re dating or married to.
4. This will also help us find someone to date who is also connected to God.

[pray]

Follow-up Talk 3: “Depression and Suicide”

(SLIDE x 76) [pictures: people who are suicide survivors; pictures taken from <http://livethroughthis.org>; go through the pictures quickly: ask “What do all these people have in common?”]

(SLIDE) [all 76 pictures on one slide in thumbnail size] What do all these people have in common?

(SLIDE) [at bottom of picture it now says] “Suicide Survivors: <http://livethroughthis.org>”

(SLIDE) Resources:

<http://depressionthewayout.com>

<http://wakingupalive.org>

<http://livethroughthis.org>

1 (800) 273-8255 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Available 24/7)

Examples of depression and/or suicide:

- My wife: Depressed after mom died in our car wreck. My wife wanted to die. She had to focus her mind on something, so she went back to school to do her master’s degree.
- Me: at one point, when I was younger, I was depressed and had suicidal thoughts.
- Jesus dealt with depression and suicide:

Jesus dealt with depression:

(SLIDE) Matthew 26:37-38 And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.³⁸ Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.”

Jesus was so sorrowful, He felt like He was about to die—because He *was* about to die. He prayed and asked His friends to pray with Him.

Jesus dealt with suicide:

(SLIDE) Matthew 4:5-7 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,⁶ and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In *their* hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’”⁷ Jesus said to him, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’”

- Satan tempted Jesus with suicide and Satan does the same to us.
- But Jesus wouldn’t risk killing Himself and tempting His Father to save Him.
- African Proverb: “If there’s no enemy within. The enemy outside can do us no harm.”
- If the devil tempted Jesus with suicide here, you can believe he tempted Jesus with it again.

(SLIDE) [picture: drawing of sad face with gun pointed to its head]

If the devil can’t get us to commit suicide, he tries to kill us in other ways: accidents, diseases, getting shot, etc. He also tries to do it directly himself:

(Imaginative Storytelling): One day after church I thought to myself—man you have such a hard heart. So I decided to watch the videos my mom bought on Jesus. The videos are a

movie with actors that act out the life of Jesus verbatim from the NIV. I decided to put in the fourth video since that's the one on the cross and that's the one that I thought I needed, since my heart was so hard. I was at home alone eating lunch as I was watching the video. And even if I wasn't looking at the screen, I could still hear the words of Scripture. Then it got to the scene where they ask Jesus who's going to betray Him and He says, "the one who dips his hand with Me in the dish." At that moment, the actor who plays Jesus looked directly into the camera, and I felt like Jesus was looking directly into my soul. And I started to cry while I was eating. Then I started weeping. And even though I couldn't look at the screen by this time, I could still hear the words of Scripture. And by this time they were crucifying Jesus. And I was weeping. Then I felt my neck getting a little tight. Then I felt it getting a little tighter. Then it got to the point where I could barely breathe. Then I realized I had unseen hands around my neck choking me. With the breath I had left I cried out "Jesus Help!" And immediately my neck was released and I could breathe again. This was the first time I had unseen hands choking me. Let me tell you about the second time:

(Imaginative Storytelling): I had made a decision to be re-baptized towards the end of my MDiv program. The night before my re-baptism I stayed up late calling a bunch of friends to come to my baptism. As I was lying in bed about to fall asleep, all of a sudden I felt unseen hands around my neck choking me. By this time I already knew what it was and by this time I had had other experiences with evil spirits, so I started laughing—not in mockery, but in faith, knowing that God wasn't going to let me go. Immediately the unseen hands let me go.

God will bring joy into your life. Let Him in.

(SLIDE) Proverbs 17:22 A merry heart does good, *like* medicine, But a broken spirit dries the bones.

(SLIDE) Hebrews 12:2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

- The joy that was set before Him = you and me.
- He endured the cross and overcame Satan where Adam and Eve fell. And now *Jesus* is the Prince of this World. Now Jesus has the right to be here and save us.
- Jesus saw He'd be with us for all eternity: that was the joy that was set before Him. So He pressed on and endured the cross.
- And in the midst of our tough times, Christ will give us strength to press on and bring us to a place of joy.

Appeal (move from Christ to us as I appeal):

1. Jesus knows what it's like to deal with depression and suicide. He went through all this so we can be saved.
2. Because Jesus knows and overcame depression and suicide, He can help us deal with it and also overcome it.

Follow-up Talk 4: “Anger”

(SLIDE x 23) [pictures: faces expressing different emotions] Which emotion do you think these faces are expressing? (ie: Happiness, Sadness, Anger, Excitement, Worry, Stress, Pain, etc.)

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: need a magnet and two pens—one metallic pen and one plastic pen; ask for a volunteer; put the magnet down; have the volunteer pass the metallic pen close by the magnet. What happens? The metallic pen is drawn to the magnet; now have the volunteer pass the plastic pen close by the magnet. What happens? There is no pull except for the little tip of the pen that is metal.)

(Explain the symbolism behind the illustration):

(SLIDE x 7) [6 steps in magnet / metal attraction]

- 1) Creation of the magnet = entrance of sin into world through Satan
- 2) Magnet = evil
- 3) Pull of magnet = temptation
- 4) Metal in pen = lust/desire for that evil thing
- 5) Metal connected to magnet = act of sin
- 6) Metal staying connected to magnet = leads to death:
emotional/social/mental/spiritual/physical

(Imaginative Storytelling): During allergy season, I’m outside and I get a runny nose and itchy throat and ears. But my wife is outside and she’s fine. What’s going on *outside* is the same for both of us, but what’s going on *inside* is *different*. Some people are attracted to the same “magnets.” Some people are attracted to different “magnets.”

(SLIDE) John 14:30 “... the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.”
- Jesus had no sin in Him. He didn’t desire any evil.

(SLIDE) [6 steps in magnet / metal attraction]

Walking this 6 step process backwards shows what Christ came to do in our life:

(SLIDE) Step 6. Christ came to disconnect us from the magnet

(SLIDE) Step 5. He has to help us here because we find ourselves going back and back to the same magnet

(SLIDE) Step 4. What God really wants to do is take the metal out so I’m not longer attracted to the magnet.

*** Why doesn’t God take the metal out? We have to want Him to? But I want Him to. Yes, but do I want Him to only in my head or also with my heart/feelings/emotions? Logical arguments against something can be agreed upon in my mind, but it doesn’t mean I’ve come to a place where I also *feel* the same way with my feelings.

There are at least two ways I can come to *feel* I don’t want something in my life anymore:

- 1) Experience it and suffer the consequences: this can lead me to no longer *desire* it. The sin may still have some magnetic pull on me, but I now have a *deeper* feeling where I don't *want* it anymore.
- 2) Learn from someone else's experience: go over *their* consequences, *feel* their consequences in your imagination. This can lead me to no longer *want* it. This is one of the reasons God gave us the Bible and included all those sinful stories—so we can learn from someone else's bad choices and not repeat them in our own life.

(Imaginative Storytelling): I was younger. I was struggling in my Christian walk. Sometimes I was doing good, but then sometimes I'd be slipping up again. One day I was discouraged about this. So I prayed to God and said, "God, if you see that I'm not going to make it in the end, then just let me go." I was by myself that night. As I got into bed and was about to fall asleep, all of a sudden I had all these sinful thoughts come pouring into my mind. And the strange thing was that I loved them all! I got up out of my bed and pretty soon I heard a sinister laugh coming out of my own mouth and it was just laughing. Then the voice started telling God how I was all through with Him. That wasn't my voice! I realized I was demon possessed. After I felt the evil spirit leave, I was shaken up and went back to my bedroom and prayed for most of the night. But the evil spirits came back and started disorienting my mind and deranging me. However, I was able to make some phone calls and ask people to start praying for me. In the middle of all this I was praying too. Eventually, some time later that day, I felt the evil spirits leave and I felt a power encircling me. It started at my head and then moved down and encircled me all the way down to my feet. It cast out those evil spirits, brought me back to my right mind, and gave me peace. I know that was the Holy Spirit! I learned that God was right there with me the whole time and only allowed the devil to go so far. God is in ultimate control not the devil! I also learned that day never to pray and ask God to let you go!

(continue now with slide presentation)

Step 4. is that God wants to take the "metal" (sin) out. Once I don't want it in mind *and* feelings, God will remove the metal.

(Imaginative Storytelling): During allergy season, if you take allergy meds, you can go outside and not have any allergy symptoms. The meds come *inside* and change how I react to what's going on *outside* (the magnet). The meds are Christ.

(SLIDE) Step 3. The magnet pulls and I feel it to some extent, but I no longer respond in the same way.

(SLIDE) Step 2. Now that I've been delivered from the pull of the magnet, I help others still being pulled by that particular magnet or by the magnet in general.

(SLIDE) Revelation 21:1-4

¹ Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

² Then I, John¹, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

(SLIDE) ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God

is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.

⁴ "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

(SLIDE x 2) Step 1. Someday soon, God will destroy the magnet and Satan who created it.

(SLIDE) Matthew 25:41 Then He will also say to those on the left hand, `Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

- Hellfire was not prepared for any human being. It was prepared for the devil and his angels. None of us have to experience it.

(SLIDE) [with picture of lamb on screen] Revelation 6:16 "...the wrath of the Lamb!" This describes God's anger. Christ is also called a "Lion" in Revelation. But Revelation doesn't refer to His anger as the anger of a Lion. That would paint a totally different and incorrect picture of God's anger. God's anger/Christ's anger is called "the wrath of the Lamb!" What kind of anger does a lamb have? When we think of a lamb do we think of some horrible scary ferocious animal? No. God's anger is like the anger of a *lamb*, not the anger of a lion.

Even though we may know all this, there are still times when we make mistakes. It looks like this:

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: need a balloon and a needle; have a volunteer blow up the balloon)

The devil sets us up to fill our balloon with emotion (ie: anger). Then he pops it (now pop it with the needle) and we explode.

Appeal: God help us not want evil, not just in our head, but with our feelings. Also, apologize when it's needed.

Follow-up Talk 5: “What’s the Purpose of My Life?”

(SLIDE) [picture: Michael Franzese, “Prince of the Mafia, the Michael Franzese Story”] He used to be in the Mafia and made them tons of money. Then he got locked up. He also met a girl that he really liked who happened to be Christian. So he wanted to get out of the Mafia for her primarily, but also for God. But he had to make a different decision in his life. He accepted God and his life turned around. God worked amazingly in his life. He’s out of the Mafia and he’s lived to tell about it. How did he get out of his situation? God helped him make different choices. This led to purpose in his life.

(SLIDE) [picture: Garrain Jones] He was an international fashion model and a lead guy in a few music videos. He got involved with the wrong crowd and had to leave the U.S. for a few years. He came back, but ended up running out of money. He lived in his car for 2.5 years. This is what he says next in his blog: “Numb and stubborn to the world until 3:43 am August 15th I cried in my Jeep for the last time. I realized that I was in that position in my life because I chose that for myself, simply because I chose to do nothing about it but wallow in my pain. That morning with eyes full of tears I spoke to God like never before. I asked for a new surrounding of positive people that I can actually call friends, I asked for home to lay my head, I asked for ALL the negative people to be removed from my life, I asked for whatever dollar a make to represent the hard work that I put into it, I asked for every dollar I make to represent something that I stand for and I asked to be fulfilled.” <http://incredibellifetestimony.blogspot.com/2012/10/incredible-life-testimony-amazing-read.html>

- When he called out to God for help, God turned his life around. How did he get out of his situation? God helped him make *different choices*. This led to purpose in his life. God will turn our downturn into an upturn when we make a U-turn from our sin to our Savior.

- What’s the purpose of my life? We find out when we give our life to God.

(SLIDE) Isaiah 49:15-16 ¹⁵ "Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you. ¹⁶ See, I have inscribed you on the palms of *My hands*; Your walls *are* continually before Me.

[comment on passage and encourage them]

(SLIDE) Psalm 27:10 When my father and my mother forsake me, Then the LORD will take care of me.

[comment on passage and encourage them]

(SLIDE) John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

- It doesn’t matter if my mother was the prostitute on the corner and my father was the drug addict that visited her.
- When we accept Christ we receive a new birth, a new parentage, a new environment: a new start on life.
- Therefore, I don’t start life on the bottom or in the middle or on the top. I start life on the top of the top! Why?

- God = King; We = princes and princesses.
- Because we are children of the King, we're already great. So act like it and live like it and walk like it.

Don't let whatever happened to you in life dictate who you become and what you do.

- No reason we have to *stay* down because we got *thrown* down.
- Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react.

God can turn a mess into a message, a test into a testimony, a trial into a triumph, a victim into a victory.

(Imaginative Storytelling: a church member's testimony): He walked into a bar. As he was drinking, he heard a voice tell him to leave. As he leaves and walks out, 2 guys walk in and shoot up the place.

-- What would have happened if he hadn't made a different choice and stayed like normal? He would've got shot.

-- You think God had a greater purpose for his life? That's why God wanted him to make a different choice.

-- You think God has a greater purpose for your life?

(Imaginative Storytelling): When I was younger, I was in a dance club in Sacramento, CA. Down stairs was Merengue and Salsa. Upstairs was Rap and Hip-Hop. As I was in the club, God spoke to me by a voice, "Is this what you want?" As I looked around, I saw some people drunk, some people high, and everybody trying to get into everybody else's pants. I thought to myself, "No." And I walked out.

-- What would've happened if I hadn't made a different choice and stayed like normal? I would have got caught up in the club scene.

-- You think God had a greater purpose for my life? That's why God wanted me to make a different choice.

-- Look at your life. Look at where you're at and what you're doing.

-- You think God has a greater purpose for your life?

-- If Michael Franzese and Garrain Jones and that church member and me had to make different choices, then what are you going to have to do for God to bring about a greater purpose in your life? Different choices = purpose in life.

(SLIDE) Romans 8:28-30 ²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰ Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

(SLIDE x 6) [purpose: 5 step sequence in how God works in my life to bring purpose]

Purpose:

Foreknows

Predestines

Calls

Justifies

Glorifies

In a good home, before a baby is born, the parents prepare. It's the same with God.

God foreknows that we're going to accept Him and be born into His family. So He then predestines us to be conformed to the image of His Son. Then He calls us. Then He justifies us. And someday soon He will glorify us.

God had all my sins and problems already figured out a long time ago. In His wisdom and power, God has already worked out the details of our salvation and delivering us from sin and the problems in our life.

God created me and wants me to be with Him forever. Between now and then, God has a purpose for my life.

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: sheets of paper with Jeremiah 29:11 printed in the middle; crumble up each paper. Give a crumbled paper to each participant.)
The crumbled paper represents our life. (Ask someone to open up their crumbled paper and have them read the verse):

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

(Now have someone else open their paper and read Jeremiah 29:11 again)
This crumbled paper represents your life. Let God take your crumbled life and open it up and bring Jeremiah 29:11 to pass in your life.

Follow-up Talk 6: “How to Bring Purpose to My Life?”

(SLIDE) (Poster–Marvel superheroes: same poster I used for project talk 6, but I put it on the screen) Who is the central character? Who are we supposed to focus on? The Incredible Hulk is at the center, but there’s too much going on to concentrate on him.

- If I’m trying to bring purpose to my life and this poster represents my life, my life has too much going on to concentrate on me to figure me out. So how will I ever bring purpose to my life?
 - In order to bring purpose to my life, I need “me time.” Being able to listen to myself is similar to listening to someone else. I need to be free from distractions. I need my own quiet time. I then invite God into this time to help me.
1. When I was younger, I used to go to church. I prayed and read my Bible once in a while, but nothing consistent and regular.
 2. Then after college, I went to Amazing Facts College of Evangelism. They showed this video on prayer. Next week I got up an hour earlier and prayed for one hour every morning. It was POWERFUL! But it was also too much too soon and only lasted for a week.
 3. So I ended up easing myself into it.
 4. And I ended up having a consistent and regular devotional life. GREAT!
 5. Devotions/devotional life: It’s like when we take someone on a date. We want to concentrate on that person and get to know that person. In the same way, we want to get to know God and God wants to get to know us. Devotional time = date with God. It’s made up of at least two things: 1) prayer: me talking to God and 2) Bible study: God talking to me. We also get to know ourselves better in this process.

(Imaginative Storytelling): I was at the seminary doing my MDiv. I had been having a regular devotional life now for some time. One summer I came home and worked doing concrete. I had to be at work right before the sun came up. So in the beginning of the summer I had to be at the job site at 7am. So I got up at 5am and did my devotions for an hour, got ready in half an hour, and had half an hour to get to work by 7am. Then I had to be at work at 6am. So I got up at 4am and did my devotions for an hour, got ready in half an hour, and had half an hour to get to work. Then I had to be at work at 5am! And I was like—that means I’d have to get up at 3am! No way, that’s too early. I’ll do a really short prayer and Bible verse in the morning and then do my devotions when I get home. So I went to work that morning. The first day everything was OK. The second day everything was OK. But by the 3rd and 4th day I was laughing at dirty jokes and I had all kinds of sinful thoughts going through my mind. And I stopped and thought to myself, “What’s going on?” Then I realized that because I wasn’t having my devotions in the morning with God, I wasn’t being filled with His Spirit and connected to Him. So I was going through my day in my own strength (which is weakness). So the next day I got up at 3am, did my devotions for an hour, got ready in half an hour, and had half an hour to get to work at 5am. And from that day forward my day at work and my day in general was totally different. It doesn’t mean I never sinned again. It means I had a power with me, strength, and what I thought and did was totally different, because I had power over myself!

God has a purpose for our lives. We want to understand that purpose and receive power to accomplish that purpose. And for that we need a devotional life.

(SLIDE) Isaiah 50:4-6 (Jesus' purpose was tied in with His devotional life)

⁴ "The Lord GOD has given Me The tongue of the learned, That I should know how to speak A word in season to *him who is weary*. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear To hear as the learned.

⁵ The Lord GOD has opened My ear; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn away.

⁶ I gave My back to those who struck *Me*, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.

[explain how this relates to Christ]

- Jesus knew His overall purpose. But everyday, His Father laid out His specific purpose for that day.
- God's overall purpose for me is to save me, give me the abundant life, fill me with love, joy, peace, etc., and allow Him to use me to save others.

Example: If the overall Goal is to win the Super Bowl, then there needs to be daily specific goals. The trainer will lay out what each player needs to accomplish that day. You can't make it through the week unless you first make it through Sunday.

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: need 4 markers that connect together at the ends—one on top of the other; need children's building blocks; ask for a volunteer; have them connect the markers end to end and stack the building blocks one on top of the other)

(Tell volunteer) Before you connected the markers and before you stacked the blocks you had to start with one. Before anything could be accomplished you had to start with one!

That one thing is connecting with God in our personal devotional life.

How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. Start small.

- If Jesus had no devotional life, how would God direct His life?
- He needed God's wisdom, direction, and power everyday, because He had to live this life the way we do—relying 100% on His Father. But God won't force Himself on us. Every morning when we spend quality time in Bible study and prayer, we open ourselves up to be moved upon by God.

(SLIDE) [picture: Daily Schedule I handed out at project talk 6]

[Pass out Handout: Daily schedule from project talk 6] *Quiet* Time: No TV, noise, distractions, friends. No phone or computer (unless to write down thoughts). Go out in nature/park; walk; back yard; your house; your room. Spend time with God.

[motivational quotes]

(SLIDE) Remind yourself that you don't have to do what everyone else is doing.

(SLIDE) Where you are today is the sum of every choice you've ever made. If you don't like where you are, change things!

(SLIDE) If you don't turn your dream into a plan, it won't last long.

(SLIDE) It's worth the trouble to become the person you were meant to be.

Devotional life brings true purpose:

1. You may not know your *overall* purpose until later. For some of us, we may only understand our *overall* purpose at the end of our life as we look back.
2. No one understands their entire purpose until heaven. Then God will show how He worked in different ways and how it all tied together with one overarching purpose.
3. However, a devotional life brings about our *daily* purpose. And this then leads to our *overall* purpose.

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: hold Bible; do a short overview of what it covers from Genesis to Revelation; Talk about how it relates to our purpose; what the Bible does for us; The stories it contains are windows we look out of into other people's lives, but then we start to see ourselves in their stories and we realize that these windows end up becoming mirrors we see ourselves in]

(handout on devotional life: "Closing scenes of Christ's life." Answer: "why start here?"):

Daily Devotional

Start with **10-15 minutes** every morning. Be consistent. Set your alarm clock. Go to bed earlier if you need to.

Always begin with **prayer** and ask God to help you understand the Bible and free you from any distractions in your own mind or things going on around you.

Read the closing scenes of Jesus' life – this converts the heart.

Starting with Matthew and going on through to the Gospel of John, read the following chapters:

Matthew chapters 26-28

Mark chapters 14-16

Luke chapters 22-24

John chapters 18-21

It's not about *how much* you read. It's about *how well* you read. **Take your time.** Go for quality, not quantity.

Pick a section in the chapter and then **read and re-read** it a few times.

Think about what you're reading.

Do any **questions** come up in your mind?

Ask God to help you **understand** what Scripture is saying.

Take notes or keep a journal.

Close with **prayer**.

Follow-up Talk 7: “Setting Goals and Focusing”

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: need a basketball; put it on the floor; ask for volunteer)
Show me how you shoot to get the ball in the hoop. (let them show me)

(Now explain the symbolism behind what just took place):

Basketball on the floor = our present situation.

The hoop = our goal.

Basketball player using their strength to pick up the ball and put it in the hoop = how we get from our present situation to our goal.

And that strength to get us in the “hoop” is Christ.

(SLIDE) [“PHG”–Present, How, Goal; borrowed from Ben Maxson, “NCC Discipleship Coach Training: Partnering with God, Week 1”]

[Reiterate How to get from our Present to our Goal]

(SLIDE) John 14:1-6

¹ "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² "In My Father's house are many mansions¹; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you². ³ "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

(SLIDE) [include at the bottom of this slide the graphic for “PHG”]

⁴ "And where I go you know, and the way you know." ⁵ Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going [goal], and how can we know the way [how]?" ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way [how], the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father [goal] except through Me [how].

- “Present” = problems, sin, this earth
- “Goal” = solution, righteousness, heaven (being with the Father)
- “How” = Jesus Christ

(Imaginative Storytelling): This guy is driving and runs out of gas. So he’s stuck on the side of the road. A man comes with gas. But the guy won’t open the cover to his gas tank. Christ is the

(SLIDE) [picture: guy stuck on side of road filling tank with gas]

gas that enables the car to get home. But I have to open the gas tank.

(SLIDE) [picture: airplane flying]

The fuel that propels the plane to its destination. But I have to receive the fuel.

(SLIDE) [picture: girl shooting bow and arrow]

The bow that moves the arrow to the target. But I have to let the bow move me.

(SLIDE) [picture: Stephen Curry shooting basketball]

The arm that shoots the basketball into the hoop. But I have to let Christ get me to the goal.

(SLIDE) [picture: Christ reaching with his arm into bottom of well to rescue person]
Christ is the strength of God that enables me to be saved.

(Imaginative Storytelling): A girl from church told me a young adult friend of hers named Sean was moving down to Ardmore, Oklahoma and needed a place to stay. Since I was single at the time and had a house, she wanted to know if he could stay with me. He was trying to get out of the party scene and needed a change. So I thought and prayed about it. I thought, this guy is a party-animal, I'm never home, and I don't know him. I don't think this sounds good. So I told her it wasn't going to work. It was about a day or so later and I was on my prayer walk. I was walking down a dirt road close to my house. There were fields with tall grass on either side. As I looked to my left, I saw a white mouse lying on its side by the edge of the dirt road where it meets the grass. I thought, "That's weird." So I walked over to him. As I got closer, I noticed his side was moving up and down. He was alive! I thought, "Oh no, a hawk is going to swoop down and eat him." So I walked into the field to find something to pick him up with. I found some kind of fabric and picked him up and brought him home. I looked through my trash and found an empty peanut container. I poked holes in the top so he would be able to breathe. Then I grabbed some paper towels and started shredding them to make bedding for him at the bottom of the container. Right as I was doing this, God spoke to me by a voice and said, "David, you have so much compassion on a mouse. What about Sean for whom I died?" That stopped me in my tracks! I then realized that although I was trying to make the right decision, I had made the wrong decision. So I invited Sean to stay at my house. The mouse died not long after. But everything went great with Sean! And we studied the Bible together and later Sean made a decision to be baptized. I prayed and asked God to tell me when to share this story with Sean. A little while before the date for Sean's baptism, he became hesitant. That's when I knew I needed to share this story with him. I did and it strengthened him and he gave his life to Christ!

(SLIDE) John 3:5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

(Imaginative Storytelling): While doing my MDiv, I attended a week of prayer at Andrews University for undergrads. At the end of the week, the preacher made an altar call for people to be baptized. I was in the back praying that God would convict people. As I was praying for others, I heard a voice and it said, "*You* need to be baptized."
(I needed to be re-baptized)

[Now motivate people to give their lives to Jesus and be baptized or re-baptized]

(SLIDE) [Isaiah Chapter 53. Reference Only. Read chapter with accompanying pictures from movie "Passion of the Christ"]

1 Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

(SLIDE) [picture: Boy Jesus]

2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground.

(SLIDE) [picture: Jesus' Face]

He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him.

(SLIDE) [picture: Jesus Accused]

3 He is despised and rejected by men,

(SLIDE) [picture: Jesus Suffering]

A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

(SLIDE) [picture: Carrying Cross]

4 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows;

(SLIDE) [picture: Whipped]

Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

(SLIDE) [picture: Piercing Hand]

5 But He was wounded for our transgressions,

(SLIDE) [picture: Pierced Feet]

He was bruised for our iniquities;

(SLIDE) [picture: Carrying Cross]

The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,

(SLIDE) [picture: Stripes]

And by His stripes we are healed.

(SLIDE) [picture: Mary]

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way;

(SLIDE) [picture: Condemned by Pilate]

And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

(SLIDE) [picture: Accused by Priests]

7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.

(SLIDE) [picture: Whipped]

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation?

For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.

(SLIDE) [picture: Unrepentant Thief]

9 And they made His grave with the wicked-- But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

(SLIDE) [picture: On Cross]

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many,

(SLIDE) [picture: Bloody Face]

For He shall bear their iniquities.

(SLIDE) [picture: Off of Cross]

12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death,

(SLIDE) [picture: Empty Cross]

And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

Have you been to the cross? Why not come today?

(Appeal to them from your heart)

1. Accept Christ - for 1st time
2. Accept Christ - Again
3. Baptism (1st time or again)

Most important goal: to be in Heaven with God. How? Let Christ pick us up and use His strength to get us where we need to go. Give your life to Jesus. What does that mean?: repent, confess, have faith, invite Him in [explain this to them].

[Handout from last week on devotional life: "Closing scenes of Christ's life." Answer: "why start here?"]

[Handout: sheet with break down of days of the week by half hours]

How will you attain your goals in practical everyday ways?

[Pray]

“Review and Follow-up Survey”

[Review of the 7 Follow-up Talks]

(SLIDE) Follow-up Talk 1: Stress

(SLIDE) [Cartoon of stressed out person with many stressors] Do you remember ways we can deal with stress? What happens if you're in a situation like this:

(SLIDE) [picture: my car wreck] I had supernatural peace from having God in my life.

(SLIDE) Follow-up Talk 2: Relationships

(SLIDE x 3) [Definitions of Beauty in various cultures at different times: ie: China-foot binding; Mursi Tribe, Ethiopia: Women-gauged lower lip; Europe, 17th and 18th

Century-the Fontage Hairstyle]

(SLIDE) John 3:16-17 ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

(SLIDE) [Triangle with God on top and man and woman at two bottom corners. The closer we move to God, the closer we move to each other (spouses and everyone in general)]

(SLIDE) Follow-up Talk 3: Depression and Suicide

(SLIDE) [76 pictures on one slide in thumbnail size] What do all these people have in common?

(SLIDE) suicide survivors: <http://livethroughthis.org>

(SLIDE) Resources on Depression and Suicide given at Follow-up Talk 3

- Jesus dealt with depression (Mt 26:37-38) and suicide (Mt 4:5-7)

(SLIDE) Hebrews 12:2 [Joy set before Him = you and me]

looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

(SLIDE) Follow-up Talk 4: Anger

(Sensory Engaging Andragogy: need a magnet; two pens—one metallic, the other plastic; metal pen attracted to magnet; plastic pen is not—except for metal tip) We are attracted to sin. However, Jesus was not attracted to sin, unwarranted anger, etc.

(SLIDE) Matthew 25:41 Then He will also say to those on the left hand, `Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

- Hellfire was not prepared for any human being. It was prepared for the devil and his angels. None of us have to experience it.

(SLIDE) Revelation 6:16 “...the wrath of the Lamb!”

Christ is also called a “Lion” in Revelation. God’s anger/Christ’s anger is called “the wrath of the Lamb!” What kind of anger does a lamb have? When we think of a lamb do we think of some horrible scary ferocious animal? No. God’s anger is like the anger of a *lamb*, not the anger of a lion.

(SLIDE x 2) Revelation 21:1-4 ¹ Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John¹, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. ⁴ "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

(SLIDE) Follow-up Talk 5: What's the Purpose of My Life?

(SLIDE) [picture: Michael Franzese, "Prince of the Mafia, the Michael Franzese Story"] Michael Franzese had to make a different decision in life: he accepted God and his life turned around.

(SLIDE) [picture: Garrain Jones]: international fashion model, lead guy in few music videos; got involved with wrong crowd; Gave his life to Christ and God turned his life around.

(SLIDE) Isaiah 49:15-16 ¹⁵ "Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you. ¹⁶ See, I have inscribed you on the palms *of My hands*; Your walls *are* continually before Me.

[encourage them]

(SLIDE) Psalm 27:10 When my father and my mother forsake me, Then the LORD will take care of me.

[encourage them]

(SLIDE) John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

[God has a purpose for your life]

(SLIDE) Follow-up Talk 6: How to Bring Purpose to My Life

(SLIDE) (picture: Poster–Marvel superheroes) Who is central character? Too busy. Need quiet time to reflect, pray, study Bible. Need God's wisdom, direction and power everyday. But He won't force Himself on us. Every morning when we spend quality time in Bible study and prayer, we open ourselves up to be moved upon by God. This brings purpose to our lives.

(SLIDE) Follow-up Talk 7: Setting Goals and Focusing
Christ is the:

(SLIDE) gas that enables the car to get home.

(SLIDE) The fuel that propels the plane to its destination.

(SLIDE) The bow that moves the arrow to the target.

(SLIDE) The arm that shoots the basketball into the hoop.

(SLIDE) Christ is the strength of God that enables me to be saved.

(SLIDE x 2) John 14:1-6 ¹ "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² "In My Father's house are many mansions¹; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you². ³ "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. ⁴ "And where I go you know, and the way you know." ⁵ Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
(SLIDE) [picture: Christ on cross from "Passion of the Christ"]

[Handout–Devotional Guide: "Closing Scenes of Christ's life]
[Offer once again: free tracts, Bibles]

(Administer the Follow-up Survey; hand out pens)

APPENDIX E
DATA SHEETS

Post-Presentation Survey Results (all 7 project talks)	P P YA Church S = 12 S = 6 S = 11		C C YA Church S = 18 S = 36 S = 44 S = 45		I I YA Church S = 0 S = 4 S = 7		N N YA Church S = 18 S = 17 S = 26		All All YA Church S = 48 S = 63 S = 489		P P C B Ball S = 12 S = 18 S = 12 S = 18		P P I B Ball S = 12 S = 0 S = 12 S = 18		P P N B Ball S = 12 S = 18 S = 12 S = 18		P P C Adult Church S = 12 S = 44 S = 445			
	B Ball	Church	B Ball	Church	B Ball	Church	B Ball	Church	All	All YA	All Adult	B Ball	Church	B Ball	Church	B Ball	Church	B Ball	Church	
1. Speaker good																				
Strongly disagree	0%	0%	11%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Neutral	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Agree	17%	33%	11%	22%	0%	50%	6%	53%	10%	32%	17%	11%	17%	0%	17%	6%	17%	6%	17%	36%
Strongly agree	83%	67%	78%	69%	50%	71%	94%	40%	85%	61%	83%	78%	83%	0%	83%	94%	83%	94%	83%	59%
2. Topic interesting																				
Strongly disagree	0%	0%	11%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	2%	0%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Disagree	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Neutral	8%	17%	0%	6%	0%	0%	6%	7%	4%	7%	8%	0%	8%	0%	8%	6%	8%	6%	8%	5%
Agree	8%	33%	22%	44%	50%	29%	6%	53%	13%	46%	8%	22%	8%	0%	8%	6%	8%	6%	8%	40%
Strongly agree	83%	50%	67%	44%	50%	50%	89%	40%	79%	44%	83%	67%	83%	0%	83%	89%	83%	89%	83%	53%
3. Imagined story																				
Strongly disagree	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Neutral	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Agree	42%	33%	22%	34%	50%	33%	0%	33%	19%	34%	42%	22%	42%	0%	42%	0%	42%	0%	42%	38%
Strongly agree	58%	67%	78%	60%	50%	71%	94%	47%	79%	57%	58%	78%	58%	0%	58%	94%	58%	94%	58%	57%
4. Story helped																				
Strongly disagree	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Neutral	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	7%	2%	0%	2%	0%	2%	6%	2%	4%	2%	4%
Agree	8%	50%	33%	42%	50%	33%	0%	33%	19%	37%	42%	22%	42%	0%	42%	0%	42%	0%	42%	38%
Strongly agree	83%	50%	67%	56%	50%	71%	89%	47%	79%	53%	58%	78%	58%	0%	58%	94%	58%	94%	58%	57%
5. Illustration helped																				
Strongly disagree	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Neutral	8%	0%	33%	42%	50%	33%	0%	27%	2%	8%	8%	0%	8%	0%	8%	0%	8%	0%	8%	5%
Agree	8%	50%	33%	42%	50%	33%	0%	27%	19%	37%	42%	22%	42%	0%	42%	0%	42%	0%	42%	38%
Strongly agree	83%	50%	67%	56%	50%	71%	89%	47%	79%	53%	58%	78%	58%	0%	58%	94%	58%	94%	58%	57%
6. Q&A helpful																				
Strongly disagree	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Neutral	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Agree	25%	50%	22%	50%	50%	33%	0%	53%	15%	49%	25%	22%	25%	0%	25%	0%	25%	0%	25%	42%
Strongly agree	67%	50%	72%	44%	50%	71%	100%	27%	81%	41%	67%	72%	67%	0%	67%	100%	67%	100%	67%	50%
7. Friends attend																				
Strongly disagree	0%	0%	6%	NA	0%	NA	0%	NA	2%	NA	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	NA
Disagree	8%	NA	0%	NA	0%	NA	0%	NA	2%	NA	0%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	NA
Neutral	25%	NA	6%	NA	0%	NA	6%	NA	10%	NA	25%	6%	25%	0%	25%	6%	25%	6%	25%	NA
Agree	0%	NA	22%	NA	0%	NA	17%	NA	15%	NA	0%	22%	0%	0%	0%	17%	0%	0%	0%	NA
Strongly agree	67%	NA	67%	NA	0%	NA	78%	NA	71%	NA	67%	67%	67%	0%	67%	78%	67%	78%	67%	NA
8. Follow-up																				
Strongly disagree	0%	0%	11%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	2%	0%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Neutral	8%	17%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	7%	2%	10%	8%	0%	8%	0%	8%	0%	8%	0%	8%	9%
Agree	25%	33%	0%	43%	50%	33%	0%	40%	9%	41%	25%	0%	25%	0%	25%	6%	25%	0%	25%	45%
Strongly agree	67%	50%	89%	49%	50%	71%	94%	33%	85%	45%	67%	89%	67%	0%	67%	94%	67%	94%	67%	44%
Yes	100%	60%	100%	66%	50%	71%	94%	69%	98%	65%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	94%	100%	94%	100%	77%
No	0%	40%	0%	34%	50%	29%	6%	31%	2%	35%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	6%	0%	23%

KEY:
P = Post-Christian
C = Christian
i = Individualized Christian
N = Non-Practicing Christian
YA = Young Adult Church Group
Adult = Adult Church Group
B Ball = Group after Basketball
Church = Group during church
S = Surveys

Post-Presentation Survey Feedback: P's (N = 5)	P	P	P	P	P	Totals
Participant	1	2	3	4	5	
Surveys Filled Out	5	1	3	2	1	
1. Speaker good						
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neutral	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	1	0	0	1	0	2
Strongly agree	4	1	3	1	1	10
2. Topic interesting						
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neutral	1	0	0	0	0	1
Agree	0	1	0	0	0	1
Strongly agree	4	0	3	2	1	10
3. Imagined story						
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neutral	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	3	0	0	2	0	5
Strongly agree	2	1	3	0	1	7
4. Story helped						
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neutral	1	0	0	0	0	1
Agree	0	0	0	1	0	1
Strongly agree	4	1	3	1	1	10
5. Illustration helped						
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	1	0	1
Neutral	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	1	1	0	1	0	3
Strongly agree	4	0	3	0	1	8
6. Q&A helpful						
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	1	0	0	0	1
Neutral	1	0	0	2	0	3
Agree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Strongly agree	4	0	3	0	1	8
7. Friends attend						
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neutral	0	1	0	0	0	1
Agree	1	0	0	2	0	3
Strongly agree	4	0	3	0	1	8
8. Follow-up						
Yes	4	1	3	2	1	11
No	0	0	0	0	0	0

	Data	%
Follow-up Survey Questions (N = 16)		
<input type="checkbox"/> I believe Jesus died on the cross for me and my sins.	14	88%
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm interested in learning more about the Bible.	14	88%
<input type="checkbox"/> I understand that God loves all people, even though He may not love what they've done.	13	81%
<input type="checkbox"/> I understand that God loves me.	13	81%
<input type="checkbox"/> I told somebody about something I learned from these talks.	13	81%
<input type="checkbox"/> I understand that God loves all people no matter what they've done.	12	75%
<input type="checkbox"/> I trust that God is able to help me in areas I can't help myself.	12	75%
<input type="checkbox"/> I believe that God created me and that my life on this earth has a purpose.	12	75%
<input type="checkbox"/> I trust that God will help me overcome sin in my life.	11	69%
<input type="checkbox"/> I believe that God created this world.	11	69%
<input type="checkbox"/> I believe that Jesus came to save us.	10	63%
<input type="checkbox"/> I confessed my sins and asked God to forgive me again.	10	63%
<input type="checkbox"/> I believe that Jesus is coming back to take me to Heaven with Him.	10	63%
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm interested in having more of these talks after basketball.	10	63%
<input type="checkbox"/> I believe that God sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross.	9	56%
<input type="checkbox"/> I have already accepted God/Christ into my life.	9	56%
<input type="checkbox"/> I trust that God will help me with any problems going on in my life.	9	56%
<input type="checkbox"/> I started praying more.	9	56%
<input type="checkbox"/> I confess my sins and ask God to forgive me on a regular basis.	7	44%
<input type="checkbox"/> I told somebody about something I read in the Bible.	7	44%
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm interested in talking one-on-one with Pastor David about something in my life.	6	38%
<input type="checkbox"/> I accepted God/Christ back into my life again.	5	31%
<input type="checkbox"/> I started praying again.	5	31%
<input type="checkbox"/> I started reading the Bible again.	5	31%
<input type="checkbox"/> I started reading the Bible more.	5	31%
<input type="checkbox"/> I told somebody about something God did for me.	5	31%
<input type="checkbox"/> I started praying for the first time.	4	25%
<input type="checkbox"/> I accepted God/Christ into my life for the first time.	3	19%
<input type="checkbox"/> I confessed my sins and asked God to forgive me for the first time.	3	19%
<input type="checkbox"/> I started reading the Bible for the first time.	2	13%

Follow-up Survey: P's (N = 6)	P	P	P	P	P	Totals	P	Totals
Participant:	1	2	3	4	5		15	
Project Talk 1	1	0	0	0	0	1	(NA)	(NA)
Project Talk 2	1	1	0	0	0	2	(NA)	(NA)
Project Talk 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	(NA)	(NA)
Project Talk 4	1	0	1	0	0	2	(NA)	(NA)
Project Talk 5	1	0	1	0	0	2	(NA)	(NA)
Project Talk 6	0	0	0	1	0	1	(NA)	(NA)
Project Talk 7	1	0	1	1	1	4	(NA)	(NA)
Totals for Project Talks	5	1	3	2	1		0	
Follow-up Talk 1	0	1	1	0	1	3	0	0
Follow-up Talk 2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Follow-up Talk 3	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0
Follow-up Talk 4	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	1
Follow-up Talk 5	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0
Follow-up Talk 6	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0
Follow-up Talk 7	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0
Totals for Follow-up Talks	1	1	4	6	2		1	
Follow-up Review	1	0	1	1	0	3	0	0
Grand Total for All Talks	7	2	8	9	3		1	
Follow-up Survey Questions								
<input type="checkbox"/> God loves all no matter	1	1	1	0	1	4	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> God loves all, may not love what's done	1	0	1	1	1	4	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> God loves me	1	0	1	1	1	4	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Jesus came to save us	1	0	1	1	0	3	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> God sent Jesus to die on cross	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Jesus died for me & my sins	1	0	1	1	0	3	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted God/Christ for the 1st time	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted God/Christ again	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Already accepted God/Christ	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Confessed sins, asked God to forgive for 1st time	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Confessed sins, asked God to forgive again	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Confess sins, ask God to forgive on regular basis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> God will help with problems in my life	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> God able to help in areas I can't help myself	1	0	1	1	0	3	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> God will help me overcome sin	1	0	1	1	0	3	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Started praying for 1st time	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Started praying again	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Started praying more	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Started reading Bible for 1st time	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Started reading Bible again	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Started reading Bible more	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Told somebody something I learned from talks	1	1	1	1	1	5	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Told somebody something I read in Bible	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Told somebody something God did for me	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> God created this world	1	0	1	1	0	3	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Jesus coming back to take me to Heaven	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> God created me, my life on earth has purpose	1	0	1	1	0	3	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Interested in learning more about Bible	1	1	1	1	0	4	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Interested in more talks after basketball	1	0	1	1	1	4	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Interested in talking with Pastor David	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Total Responses	16	3	19	20	5		10	

REFERENCE LIST

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VITA

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Background: I was born on September 3, 1977 in Lowell, MA and raised both in Massachusetts and New Hampshire by two wonderful Christian parents until my family moved to Northern California when I was nineteen. My younger brother lives in Florida with his family. I was raised Seventh-day Adventist and baptized at thirteen, but only converted in my early twenties. I was re-baptized in September 2005 at Andrews University.

Family: I was married on November 15, 2009 to Ana C. Larrotta who was born in Venezuela to Colombian parents.

Education: 2011-Present Doctor of Ministry, Andrews University, MI
2002-2006 Master of Divinity, Andrews University, MI
Fall 2001 Bible Work, Amazing Facts, Rocklin, CA
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2008-2012 Pastor, Ardmore, OK
2006-2008 Pastor, Bartlesville and Nowata, OK
Summer 2005 Evangelism Field School, Oakland, CA
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Spring 2002 Bible Worker, Amazing Facts Church Plant, E. Peoria, IL

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