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# Inspiring a Church to Dream

Jerry Austin Jenkins

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INSPIRING A CHURCH  
TO DREAM

An Abstract of a Project/Thesis  
Presented To  
The Faculty of the Graduate School  
Abilene Christian University

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

by

Jerry Austin Jenkins

May 1990

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## ABSTRACT

Robert Dale theorizes that persons and organizations are largely explained by their dreams. A historical examination revealed that the Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ, Birmingham, Alabama, was born out of a dream of evangelism. In the fall of 1988 a survey was conducted that showed a decline of concern for the founding dream.

The purpose of this study was to determine if there would be a significant difference in attitude toward evangelism as a result of a series of sermons designed to change direction positively. The sample group for the study consisted of 105 subjects who were members of the Roebuck Parkway congregation.

The study was carried out in four phases. The first phase was the development of the Evangelistic Organization Questionnaire, which included meeting with elders and a selected group of people to administer the pilot questionnaire to check for clarity. Phase two involved the administering of the pretest on a Sunday morning in mid-September, 1989. Phase three was the preparation and delivery of the ten sermons designed to inspire the members to redream the original dream. Phase four was the

administration of the post-test three weeks after the completion of the sermon series.

Several conclusions were derived from the analysis of the data gathered during the pre- and post-evaluation phases of this research project. They include the following.

1. The treatment program was effective in the area of members' attitudes concerning the work of the congregation in the area of evangelism.

2. The treatment program was effective in the area of evangelistic behavior.

3. The treatment program was less effective in the area of members' attitudes concerning personal responsibility.

Whereas the formal analysis does reflect significant changes in attitude, the observational data reflected this positive change even more significantly. Members are bringing their friends; attendance and contributions are at an all time high; evangelistic classes are being taught; and conversions are occurring.

Abstract approved:

Charles A. Liburd  
Primary Advisor

Carole H. Fould  
Secondary Advisor

April 12, 1990  
Date

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This project\thesis, directed and approved by the candidate's committee has been accepted by the Graduate Council of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Clint Hurley  
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April 12, 1990  
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	x
LIST OF FIGURES . . . . .	xi
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY . . .	1
Rationale . . . . .	8
Assumptions . . . . .	9
Definition of Terms . . . . .	9
Limitations of the Study. . . . .	11
II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND THEOLOGICAL UNDERPINNING . . . . .	12
Theoretical Framework . . . . .	12
Conceptual Model. . . . .	17
Attitude Change . . . . .	19
Theological Underpinnings . . . . .	28
III. ROEBUCK CHURCH OF CHRIST . . . . .	41
Context . . . . .	51
Identity. . . . .	56
Program . . . . .	71
Process . . . . .	75
IV. METHODS. . . . .	78
Setting . . . . .	78
Description of the Sample . . . . .	79
Instrument Development. . . . .	80
Questionnaire-Development Study . . . . .	82
Sermons . . . . .	83
Data Analysis . . . . .	87
Observational Data. . . . .	87

CHAPTER	Page
V. RESULTS . . . . .	89
Research Question . . . . .	89
Attitudes Concerning Congregational Involvement . . . . .	90
Qualitative Findings . . . . .	149
VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	153
Summary . . . . .	153
Conclusions . . . . .	155
Discussion . . . . .	155
Recommendations . . . . .	160
REFERENCES . . . . .	162
APPENDIX	
A ROEBUCK PROFILE INVENTORY . . . . .	168
B POETIC TRIBUTES TO PARKWAY CHURCH OF CHRIST . . . . .	191
C EVANGELICAL OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE . . . . .	195
D SERMONS . . . . .	205

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Need for an Organized Program by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	91
2. Preaching to Those Not Members by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	93
3. Leaders Sharing the Gospel by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	94
4. Greatest Responsibility of Sharing the Gospel by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	95
5. Important Works of the Church by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	98
6. Supporting Foreign Evangelism by Groups, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	101
7. Training Classes by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	103
8. Sharing the Good News of the Gospel by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	104
9. Talking to One's Neighbor by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	105
10. Talking with Others by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	106

Table	Page
11. Teaching the Bible in Private Situations by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	108
12. Teaching the Bible on a Personal Basis by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	110
13. Motivation for Evangelism by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	113
14. Who Will Be Lost by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	115
15. Personal Accountability for Those Lost by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	117
16. Reward for Evangelism by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	118
17. Praying for the Lost by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	120
18. Class of Evangelism by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	123
19. Involved in Talking with Others by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	126
20. Involved in Teaching by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	127
21. Inviting Others to Attend by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	128
22. Frequency of Sharing by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	131

Table	Page
23. Methodology of Concern by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	133
24. Favorite Way of Sharing the Gospel by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	136
25. Motivational Behavior for Sharing the Gospel by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	139
26. Practice of Daily Prayer by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	143
27. Frequency of Prayer for Lost by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	144
28. Specific Ones for Whom Prayed by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services . . . . .	147

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	Page
1. Dale's Conceptual Model of the Church . . . . .	20
2. Dale's Conceptual Model of the Church as a Result of Revitalization . . . . .	21

CHAPTER ONE  
INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

In his book To Dream Again, Robert Dale stated, "Persons and organizations are largely explained by their dreams."<sup>1</sup> Dreams have always played a dominant role in shaping the people of God. It was a dream that facilitated contentment in the heart of the wandering patriarch Abraham (Hebrews 11:10); it was a dream that empowered a prospective Pharaoh to renounce affluence, power, and acclaim, and to direct an inappreciative people to the promised land (Deuteronomy 1:27-2:4); it was a dream that precipitated the most monumental individualistic change in history--the transformation of Saul, a church wrecker, to Paul, the church builder (Acts 9:1-20). In fact, throughout human history, God has used only those who were able to dream a dream for His mission.

According to Dale, a healthy church is born out of a dream. He further postulated that in order to understand persons and organizations, a person must discover his dreams. A historical examination of the Roebuck Parkway

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<sup>1</sup>Robert D. Dale, To Dream Again (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981), 13.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

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<sup>1</sup>Robert D. Dale, To Dream Again (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981), 13.



Church of Christ, Birmingham, Alabama, reveals that this congregation was born out of a dream--a dream of evangelism. A small group of dedicated Christians bravely confronted seemingly insurmountable obstacles with an incessant dream of taking a city for Christ. The odds were against them, awesome, but their belief that great attempts for God would be blessed with great aid from God kept them forging ahead. Because of this redemptive dream, the founding fathers were able to answer the questions regarding origin, ministry, and goals.

The dream, which seems to run constantly throughout the history of this congregation, has been an incessant desire to evangelize. Factors which lend support to this conclusion are the following: (1) the utilization of tent meetings; (2) the establishment and assistance in the establishment of congregations located throughout the area; (3) the use of newspaper, radio, and television; (4) the establishment of congregations in foreign fields, and the instigation of radio and television programs in these regions; and (5) the establishment of a deaf congregation and a school to train deaf ministers.

The Churches of Christ in Birmingham came into existence under under an evangelistic tent. Brother Justus McDuffie Barnes, the original pacesetter, preached under a tent at Old Carder, near Birmingham, and eventually reached into Birmingham proper in 1876. This was the year that the

only known Christian family in Birmingham heard of the success at Old Carder and invited brother Barnes to come at once. He came and established a congregation of eight people, who met in the courthouse.<sup>2</sup> It was on December 19, 1871, that this town had been christened "Birmingham." Only five years later, the church was meeting in the two-year-old courthouse.<sup>3</sup>

At a tent meeting in Pratt City, the Fox Hall congregation invited brother John T. Lewis, a young preacher who shared the dream of this small band, to work with them. Many members from Fox Hall formed the nucleus of the Woodlawn Church of Christ. Forty years later brother Lewis, in reflection, stated,

This morning I walked up the first flight of steps, the very steps that I walked up on my way to the third loft forty years ago this morning to worship with, and preach to the few disciples that met to break bread. That was the beginning of my work in this great city. Brother J. M. Barnes and I held a tent meeting in Pratt City during August and September of the same year. It was in that meeting that I received a unanimous invitation from the brethren worshipping in "Fox Hall" to come and labor with them.<sup>4</sup>

At the close of 1916, brother Lewis gave a summary of his first years of work. He reported ninety-nine weeks

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<sup>2</sup>Ottis L. Castleberry, He Looked for a City (Fairmount, Indiana: Cogdill Foundation, 1980), 16.

<sup>3</sup>Bertha Bendall Norton, Birmingham's First Magic Century (Birmingham: Lakeshore Press, 1970), 9.

<sup>4</sup>John T. Lewis, "Birmingham Beginnings, 1907," (Unpublished Document, November 17, 1947).

spent in tent meetings with eighty-two baptisms and thirty-nine weeks in meetings in church buildings resulting in fifty-two baptisms.<sup>5</sup> These tent meetings usually lasted a minimum of three weeks, and some continued much longer. Advertising handbills from these meetings stated "The meeting will begin the third Sunday in June and will continue indefinitely."<sup>6</sup> Tent meetings were supported by the membership from throughout the city, even though it often required a change of street cars to get from one side of town to the other. The popularity of this type of evangelism continued into the 30s. In 1939, brother Floyd Horton reported, "This makes six meetings the Woodlawn church has sponsored this year, most of which were of three or four weeks' duration."<sup>7</sup>

In the fall of 1913, the Woodlawn group of Christians (currently the Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ), mostly converts from the preaching of brother Lewis, obtained a white-framed building on 60th Street between First Avenue North and Georgia Road, from a congregation of Presbyterians that was relocating. The meager sum of \$2,250, which constituted the purchase price and the \$1,100 for repairs

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Handbill dated May 2, 1920.

<sup>7</sup>Floyd H. Horton, "News and Notes," Gospel Advocate 42 (21 November, 1939), 1119.

and remodeling, seems trivial by today's standards, but one must remember that the average contribution of this group was only \$40.00 per month.<sup>8</sup>

The dream of evangelism did not diminish with the purchase of a building, as evidenced by the fact that in 1923, Roebuck, along with two other congregations, went together and equally shared the cost of a tent of their own, \$346.62. In these early formative years it was the tent meeting that became the most effective tool of evangelism. As late as the early fifties, Roebuck members supported 12 special tent meetings in its own district.<sup>9</sup>

This zeal to capture a city for Christ is visible in the establishment or assisting in the establishment of new congregations to the North, South, East, and West sectors of the city. In 1920, just six years after her own beginning, Roebuck, with assistance from West End, established the North Birmingham congregation; and according to the records, a "considerable number" of the charter members were from Roebuck.

From North Birmingham, Tarrant City had her beginning in 1922. Once again, there were members who left Roebuck to become charter members in this congregation. The same could be said of the Sandusky congregation in 1927. Sandusky

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<sup>8</sup>Treasurer's report (unpublished) in Roebuck Library.

<sup>9</sup>Raymond Crumbliss, "The Church of Christ in Woodlawn," (Unpublished Document), November 17, 1947. (Mimeographed.)

established Adamsville in 1941; so, indirectly, the influence of Roebuck was felt once again. On the second Sunday of May, 1926, the Ensley congregation came into being through a "swarm" from Roebuck. The greatest sacrifice of Roebuck was the establishment of the Seventy-seventh Street congregation. Roebuck lost about half of its members as they "swarmed" to begin this work east of them. A number of elders, deacons, and Bible class teachers assisted in this new work in June of 1949. Several members borrowed money and some even put their homes up as collateral.

The desire for evangelism motivated the church for a number of years. The church carried the bulk of the cost of a daily radio broadcast in which a number of local churches participated. For several years, beginning in 1945, the church was a consistent supporter of weekly newspaper sermonettes appearing in Birmingham newspapers.

Evidence of the continuing dream is seen during the period in which Floyd Horton was associated with the congregation, for work was begun among the blacks in the eastern area. The congregation gave generously to purchase property for a meeting house on 63rd Street and 2nd Avenue, South. A new vehicle for extending the dream was begun in 1967, when a television program was inaugurated in an effort to reach the thousands in the community with the gospel. "The Living Word" telecast has become one of Birmingham's

services of a full-time minister. This deaf congregation has the largest membership among deaf Churches of Christ in the United States.<sup>10</sup> The congregation began a school where deaf men are trained to preach to those unable to hear or with impaired hearing.

### Rationale

#### Statement of the Problem

In late 1988, a questionnaire adapted from the Parish Profile Inventory of Hartford Seminary<sup>11</sup> was administered to a group of 130 randomly selected members of the Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ (Appendix A). Statistical analysis, using SPSS for the Behavioral Sciences, revealed that less than half (45.6%) of the respondents believed that the original dream of sharing the good news of the gospel with the unchurched to be important. Other factors, such as (1) a steady decline in interest in mission work (two fully supported missionary families in 1974 to one native missionary family in 1989, and a drop in mission budget from 30.2% to 3.5% in these same years); (2) a dwindling of prayers offered on behalf of the unchurched; and (3) termination of the outreach visitation effort, are further indicators of the decline in the fundamental dream

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<sup>10</sup>Ed Bradford, Directory of Deaf Congregations of the Churches of Christ (Tullahoma, TN: Bel-Aire, 1981), 1-11.

<sup>11</sup>Jackson Carroll; Carl S. Dudley; and William McKinney, Handbook for Congregational Studies (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), 212.

which has served this congregations so well through the years.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this project/thesis was to determine if there would be a significant difference in attitude toward evangelism at the Roebuck congregation as a result of a series of sermons designed to change direction positively. This series of sermons was based on pre-test and post-test design.

#### Assumptions

The following assumptions were made in this study:

1. There is a need for the original dream of the Roebuck Parkway Church to be revitalized.
2. Evangelism is the method for revitalizing the dream.

#### Definition of Terms

The following operational definitions have been used in this study.

Attitude: Attitude refers to an individual's likes and dislikes and form the conceptual bridges between what one does and the cognitive processes that lead him to do it. According to H. H. Remmers, attitude may be defined as the following: ways of looking at things and persons; forms of readiness; approaching and withdrawing behavior toward people; feelings of rightness and wrongness; and like or

dislike for objects or values different from emotions although they are related to them.<sup>12</sup>

Dream: Dream is the vision or the driving force of a congregation which gives it potency.

Life Cycle: Life cycle denotes the birth, growth, maturity, decline, death, and rebirth of an organization.

Evangelism: To dispel some false assumptions regarding evangelism this definition begins with a negative. Evangelism is not (1) concerned only with getting people into churches to the exclusion of spreading the gospel of Christ, (2) playing tricks on people to add them to the membership rolls of churches, nor (3) limited to concern for numbers. What is evangelism? It is the conscious attempt to tell the world the good news of Jesus and how one may receive the many blessing he provides. Archbishop William Temple offered a classic definition of evangelism when he stated that:

To evangelize is so to present Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit that men come to put their faith in God through him, to accept him as their Saviour and to serve him as their King in the fellowship of his Church.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>H. H. Remmers, Introduction to Opinion and Attitude Measurement (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1954), 3.

<sup>13</sup>William Temple, cited by, Michael Green, Evangelism: Now and Then (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), 13-14.



### Limitations Of The Study

This study was designed to examine and analyze the attitudes of Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ members toward evangelism. Therefore, the limitations of this study are the following:

1. The subjects which compose this study consisted of members of one congregation; therefore, the results of this study can only be generalized to the present sample and to others groups which are similar in nature.

2. This study focused only on members in attendance at the Sunday services on ten specific occasions in the fall of 1989.

CHAPTER TWO  
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND THEOLOGICAL UNDERPINNING

Theoretical Framework

Linear View

According to writers such as David Moberg,<sup>1</sup> Ira D. Glick and David R. Kessler,<sup>2</sup> life may be viewed from a multifaceted prospective with the two most popular perceptions being linear and cyclical. The linear view promotes the tenet that there is no rebirth. One has only this life in which to acquire immortality. Whatever one hopes to achieve must be now. Shakespeare embraced this thought in As You Like it, when he described the seven ages of man. He began with the infant and progressed into the areas of development. He described the later ages of life as "second childishness and mere oblivion."<sup>3</sup> Shakespeare clarified this philosophy when he envisioned life as moving from role to role, with man assimilating the characteristics and

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<sup>1</sup>David O. Moberg, The Church As A Social Institution (Englewood Cliffs. N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), 118-123.

<sup>2</sup>Ira D. Glick and David R. Kessler, Marital and Family Therapy (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1974), 43ff.

<sup>3</sup>Alvin C. Eurich, The Major Transitions in the Human Life Cycle (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Company, 1981), 7.

physical appearance attributed to each phase of life.

Gordon L. Lippitt referred to this developmental process as birth, youth, and maturity.<sup>4</sup>

When one views the linear theory from an organizational perspective, a variety of terms are used to describe the process. F. Stuart Chapin used the designations "stability, experimentation, and integration";<sup>5</sup> Moberg used the stipulations, "incipient organization, formal organization, maximum efficiency stage, institutional stage, and disintegration stage";<sup>6</sup> Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard described organizational growth as evolution (stable growth) and revolution (crisis) stages.<sup>7</sup> Regardless of the designation employed, each author noted a similarity, namely, birth, growth, maturity, and death.

#### Cyclical View

In contrast to this belief, advocates of the cyclical view purport that birth, life, death, and rebirth on earth mark each person's existence.<sup>8</sup> Application of the cyclical

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<sup>4</sup>Gordon L. Lippitt, Organizational Renewal (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1969), 29.

<sup>5</sup>F. Stuart Chapin, Contemporary American Institutions (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935), 58-62.

<sup>6</sup>Moberg, 119.

<sup>7</sup>Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard, Management of Organizational Behavior (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977), 299-302.

<sup>8</sup>Carley H. Dodd, Dynamics of Intercultural Communication 2nd ed., (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1987), 96.

theory has not been limited to the biological, sociological, and values approach to the developmental process of individual human life; it has also been implemented in a number of other disciplines. For example, Edwin H. Friedman, in his vivid discussion of family approach to life-cycle ceremonies, emphasized the reincarnation which occurs at the naming of a child. "When parents do stand alone at the baptismal font, or before the Ark, their own parents, dead or alive, are always there also, sitting on their shoulders."<sup>9</sup>

Hersey and Blanchard applied developmental cycle theory to the management-employee relationship.<sup>10</sup> Warren Schmidt noted that "organizations have stages of potential growth in their life cycles, and that each experienced crises and situations demanding certain management and/or organization is to achieve its next stage of growth."<sup>11</sup> Because the church is an institution, it shares the characteristics which are common to all organizations; therefore, the life cycle format can be applied when attempting to understand the church.

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<sup>9</sup>Edwin H. Friedman, Generation to Generation (New York: The Guilford Press, 1985), 188.

<sup>10</sup>Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard, Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1982), 196-199.

<sup>11</sup>Gordon L. Lippitt and Warren H. Schmidt, "Crises in a Developing Organization," Harvard Business Review 45, no. 6, (November-December 1967): 102-112.

Dale not only noted the importance of the founding dream, he also affirmed that dreams are essential for continuation.<sup>12</sup> A church that attempts ministry without a clear reference to its dream will inevitably drift. The loss of a sense of vision is the most monumental problem a congregation must face as an organization. Dale affirmed that in order for the congregation to stay healthy, the dream must continue, for a healthy organism must have renewal. Failure results in the organization following the linear cycle of birth, growth, maturity, decline, and death.<sup>13</sup>

Jere Allen and George Bullard considered five states of development in the life cycle of a church.<sup>14</sup> First, there is the birth stage, which normally lasts several years and is characterized by good numerical growth. The second period is the developmental stage, wherein certain spiritual, missionary zeal, and programmatic themes emerge as the congregation wrestles with her "reason for being." In this period the church may develop a statement of purpose, and the goals and objectives may crystalize in ministry and mission. At this time, additional classrooms and service buildings probably would be needed.

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<sup>12</sup>Dale, 120.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 14.

<sup>14</sup>Jere Allen and George Bullard, Shaping the Future of the Church in a Changing Community (Atlanta: Home Mission Board, SBC, 1981), 18-20.

The third period in this profile is the maturity stage, when normally the church reaches the pinnacle of its original dream. The congregation is at its numerical height with good facilities and a multiple staff. Often among churches of Christ in this phase, two or more services are required and there is optimism evident in the attitudes of all members.

The latter part of a church's life cycle is a time which is often preceded by a decline in the church's environment. This period is appropriately called the decline stage. The church begins to have doubts about its mission and its leadership. Ted McEachern says perceptive leadership will, hopefully, see the necessity "to determine how rapidly change is occurring, how widespread it will be, and to the extent possible, anticipate the trends and direction of change."<sup>15</sup>

The final stage is one with a choice--death or redevelopment. The death may be slow, and it is often painful; but it is inevitable unless there is redevelopment. The process of redevelopment is difficult, complex, arduous, and often painful. The closer a congregation comes to the point of death, the more limited are its options and opportunities.

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<sup>15</sup>Ted McEachern, Exploring the Mission of the Church in a Changing Neighborhood (Nashville: The Association for Christian Service and Training, 1978), 4.

Church growth researchers use analyzers from pathology to explain causes of decline and death.<sup>16</sup> The ailments are the following:

(1) "Ethnikitis" is brought about when the community of an old neighborhood church changes ethnically.

(2) Old age is caused by the young leaving and not being replaced.

(3) People blindness is a malady often caused by cultural differences between groups in the church field.

(4) Hyper-cooperativism is built upon the quality of good will, but tends to weaken evangelism, not enhance it.

(5) Koinonitis is the turning of a church inward to its own fellowship and loving it.

(6) Sociological strangulation is created by a lack of space, whether the reference is parking space, worship space, or education space.

(7) Arrested spiritual development means that members remain in spiritual infantilism and fail to grasp the mission of the church.

(8) St. John's syndrome occurs when a church reaches its goals and begins to ease off.

#### Conceptional Model

The life cycle model as discussed in Robert Dale's book To Dream Again is the model for this study. This format

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<sup>16</sup>C. Peter Wagner, "Pathology," Church Growth II Notebook (Pasadena: Fuller Theological Seminary, n.d.), 1-18.

provides the researcher with a consistent framework from which explanations concerning the meaning of responses from individuals to situations and events within their environment can be made. The theory posits that there are four ways to revitalize a church when one is speaking from an organizational vantage point: (1) change policy, (2) change personnel, (3) change programs, or (4) clarify purpose.<sup>17</sup> The fourth construct served as the basis of this study.

Dale traced the cycle of most church organizations when he stated:

A group of persons dream of a redemptive ministry in a community. They sense and share what they feel God wants from them in their setting at that moment. Then they take ownership of their vision, band together, and organizational life begins. They clarify their beliefs by Bible study, doctrinal statements, and the hymns they sing repeatedly. They set goals and priorities. They develop programs, policies and procedures, budgets, and institutional habits called norms. Finally, they minister out of the focused dream and the trust that has developed within the congregation. Then if the congregation doesn't take steps to open itself to revitalization, a plateau occurs. Decline begins. First, people doubt the structures. "It isn't working as well as it used to, is it?" they ask nostalgically. Next, they doubt the goals. "Is this the right way to work and minister?" Then, they doubt the organization's basic beliefs and assert, "This idea is wrong!" Finally, they become completely alienated and drop out in total disillusionment. This is absolute doubt and marks the death of the kingdom dream in these persons.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Dale, 5.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 14.



Figure 1 schematically represents Dale's conceptual model of the church.

The key to avoiding this problem, according to Dale, is to revitalize the dream. When a church has started on its decline, reversal can be accomplished by attitude change. Figure 2 schematically represents what can happen when the dream is revitalized.

### Attitude Change

The major thrust of this study is to attempt a change of direction in the attitudes of members of the Roebuck Parkway congregation toward evangelism. Attitude change is as old as Satan's conversation with Eve in Eden,<sup>19</sup> but according to tradition, the art of rhetoric was invented in the second quarter of the fifth century B.C. in Syracuse, Sicily.<sup>20</sup> Formal recognitions of rhetoric, which Aristotle stated "functioned to recognize the persuasive and the apparently persuasive," began in Plato's Academy.<sup>21</sup>

According to William McGuire, the literature on attitude change is vast with more than one thousand new studies accumulating annually.<sup>22</sup> A review of related

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<sup>19</sup>Genesis 3:1-15.

<sup>20</sup>G. A. Kennedy, The Art of Persuasion in Greece (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), 26.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 18, 19.

<sup>22</sup>Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson, Handbook of Social Psychology, Vol. 2 (New York: Random House, 1985), 218.

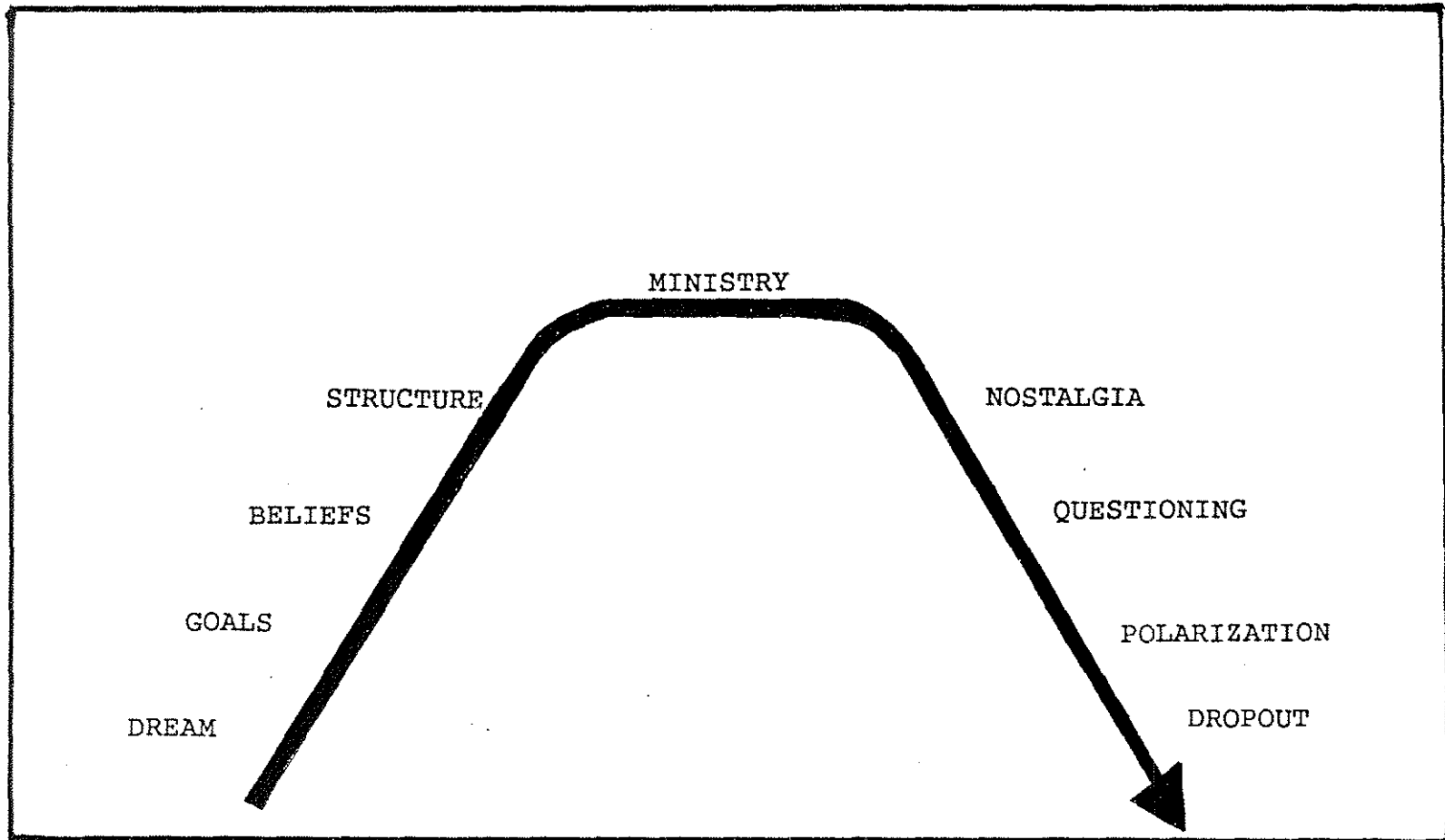


Figure 1. Dale's conceptual model of the church.

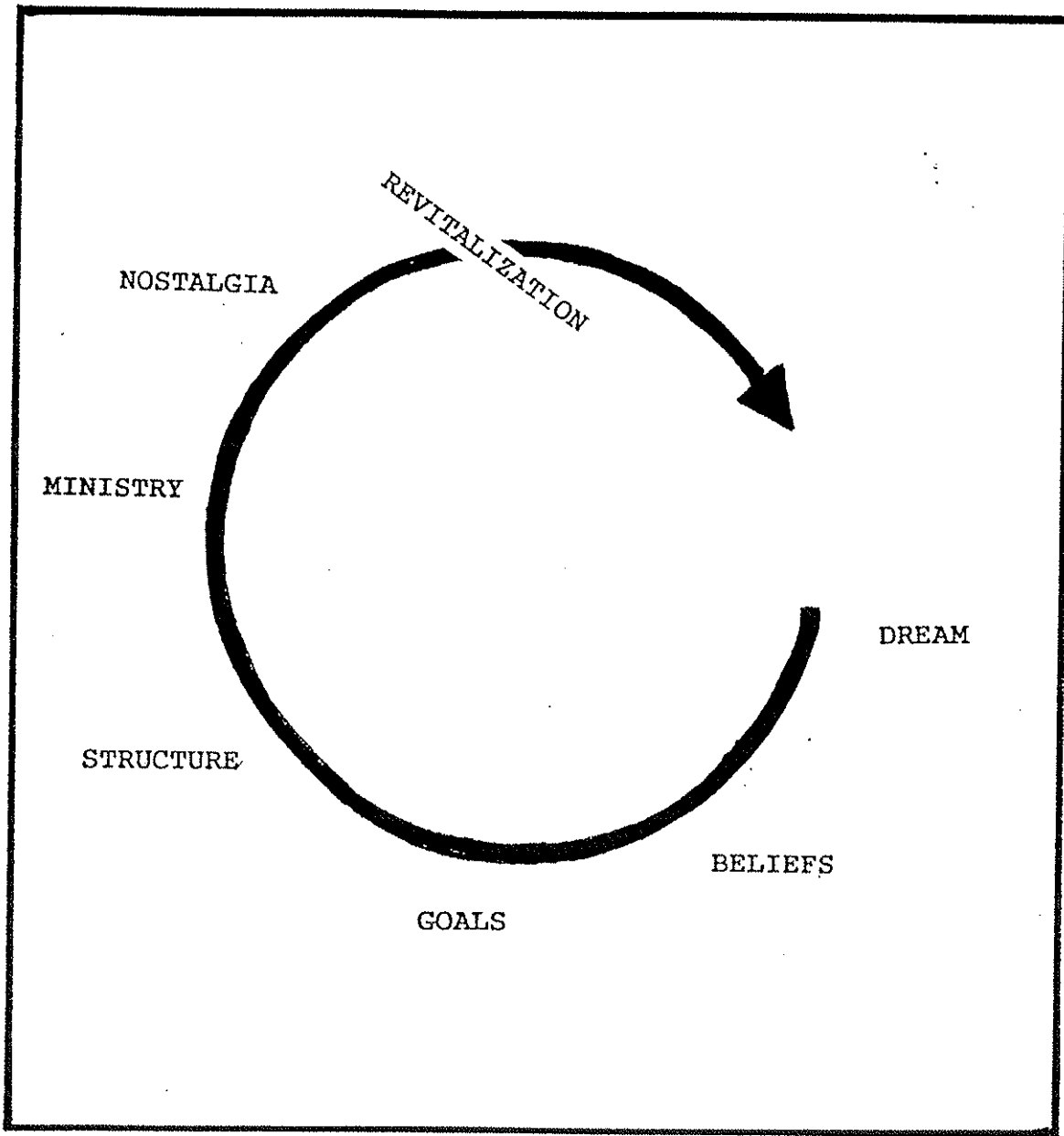


Figure 2. Dale's conceptual model of the church as a result of revitalization.

literature in the area of persuasion research and attitude change indicates that this research falls into three categories. First is the convergent unidirectional style dominated by C. I. Hovland's work.<sup>23</sup> The second category is the divergent unidirectional style of attitude change research which is typified by Leon Festinger's dissonance theory.<sup>24</sup> The third style of attitude structure research is the systems approach.<sup>25</sup> Although there are diversities in these categories, there is also congruence in that attitudes can be changed.

In the last half century, researchers have developed a number of theories of attitude change. The more salient include (1) formation, (2) structure, and (3) behavioral attitudes.<sup>26</sup> The one most germane to this writing, i.e., functional theories, remains the most empirically impoverished.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>C. I. Hovland, A. A. Lumsdaine, and F. D. Sheffield, "Studies in Social Psychology in World War II," Vol. 3. Experiments in Mass Communication (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1949), 3-20.

<sup>24</sup>Leon Festinger, A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), 233-259.

<sup>25</sup>Lindzey and Aronson, 218-234.

<sup>26</sup>McClure.

<sup>27</sup>C. A. Kiesler, B. E. Collins, and N. Miller, Attitude Change: A Critical Analysis of Theoretical Approach (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1969), 326-330.

Functional theory researchers concern themselves with why people accept the attitudes they do.<sup>28</sup> Fundamental to functional theories is the assumption that specific individualistic needs are met by attitudes,<sup>29</sup> i.e., attitudes permit the individual to execute successfully certain dreams and achieve certain goals. This occurs, according to Smith, Bruner, and White, through the following four functions: (1) ego defense attitude which is formed to protect one from accepting undesirable or threatening truths; (2) knowledge or object appraisal attitudes which are formed to give meaning to objects; (3) value expressive attitudes that allow one to express his/her basic values and dispositions; and (4) social adjustive attitudes which are fashioned on the proposition of how well they allow persons to fit into important social situations and behave in ways appropriate to various reference groups.<sup>30</sup>

Kenneth DeBono, while noting that there are many routes one may take to validate a functional approach, affirmed that the most compelling is through a persuasive paradigm.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>D. Katz, "The Functional Approach to the Study of Attitudes." Public Opinion Quarterly 24, 1960, 163-204.

<sup>29</sup>M. B. Smith, J. W. Bruner, and R. W. White, Opinion and Personality (New York: Wiley, 1956), 1.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 2-5.

<sup>31</sup>Kenneth G. De Bono, "Investigating the Social-Adjustive and Value-Experience Functions of Attitude: Implications for Persuasion Processes," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 52, no. 2, (1987): 279-287.

Theoretically, a message informing an individual that an attitude is no longer fulfilling its function should be particularly successful in producing significant attitude change.<sup>32</sup> This means that a message informing one that an attitude is not expressing an important value should cause an attitude change only if the motivational basis of that attitude is predominantly value expressive. The difficulty of implementing change is immediately apparent; how is the function serving the individual to be identified? Research has shown that attitude can be changed by persuasive communication. Whether it be by suggestion situations, as advocated by Theodore x. Barber;<sup>33</sup> conformity situations, such as imitation or social facilitation, as submitted by R. B. Zajonc;<sup>34</sup> or intensive indoctrination situations, as discussed by F. Conway and J. Siegelman;<sup>35</sup> social psychological research on attitude change affirms that attitudes are indeed altered by persuasive communication.

R. E. Petty and J. T. Cacioppo have advanced two types of persuasive communications, the central route and the

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<sup>32</sup>Katz, 163.

<sup>33</sup>Theodore x. Barber, Nicholas P. Spanos, and John F. Chaves, Hypnosis, Imagination, and Human Potentialities (New York: Pergamon Press Inc., 1974), 130-133.

<sup>34</sup>R. B. Zajonc, Compresence. In P. B. Paulus (Ed.), Psychology of Group Influence (Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1980), 35-60.

<sup>35</sup>F. Conway and J. Siegelman, Snapping; America's Epidemic of Sudden Personality Change (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1978), 23-54.

peripheral route.<sup>36</sup> The central route refers to persuasion which is caused by self-generated thoughts resulting from comprehensive thinking about a given position. Under this view, one is persuaded by compelling arguments that create favorable thought, and, conversely, weak arguments cause persuasion to be inhibited. Peripheral routes are mediated by nonmessage factors, such as source expertise or source attractiveness, and message content is inconsequential. The motivational factor influences which route will be dominant. When the motivation is high, e.g., the message has personal relevance, individuals appear to engage in central route processing. Conversely, when there are low motivational factors, individuals use the peripheral cues to the extent they are available.<sup>37</sup> Preaching is a form of persuasive communication. In the words of Daniel Baumann,

Communication is not, and never has been, an option for the preacher. It is a moral imperative. "How shall they hear without a preacher?" And how will they be changed unless the preacher communicates?<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>R. E. Petty and J. T. Cacioppo, Attitude and Persuasion: Classic and Contemporary Approaches (Dubuque, Ia.: William C. Brown Company, 1981), 25-79.

<sup>37</sup>R. E. Petty and J. T. Cacioppo, "The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion," in L. Berkowitz (Ed.) Advances in Experimental Social Psychology (New York: Academic Press, 1986), Vol. 19, pp. 123-205.

<sup>38</sup>Daniel J. Baumann, An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching, Paperback ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 29.

One of the basic constructs of the theory of preaching is communication. Without communication there can be no understanding; without understanding there is no need of preaching (Romans 10:13ff). One must agree with Myron Chartier, who affirmed that "communication means different things to different people."<sup>39</sup>

The dimensions of this paper prohibit a comprehensive discussion of all the theories communication experts have classified and will include only those most directly related to preaching. The first is a theory wherein communication is viewed as the transmission of information, ideas, emotions, and skills, by the use of symbols--words, pictures, figures, and graphs. When preaching is perceived by this model, it becomes the transmission of a message from God's word by the preacher to the hearer.<sup>40</sup>

A second theory is one in which communication is envisioned as a vehicular mode by which power is wielded. With this design, preaching becomes an exercise in social influence or control. The minister's goal is to alter the beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors of the listeners into compliance with God's word.<sup>41</sup> The third theory is behavioristic in its viewpoint. Communication is conceived

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<sup>39</sup>Myron R. Chartier, Preaching as Communication (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), 13.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.



as the evoking of a response from the hearer through verbal symbols.<sup>42</sup> The sermon becomes the stimulus for evoking a response from the hearers to the word of God. Some theories use success as the criterion of communication, i.e., communication occurs only when there is a meeting of meanings between persons.<sup>43</sup> Consequently, preaching would occur only when there is a correlation between the mind of the preacher and the hearer. Fred Craddock alluded to this when he stated that passion makes one persuasive.<sup>44</sup> Roy Pearson, in his comments added, "A sermon seeks widened understanding, strengthened resolves, cleansed hearts, changed lives..."<sup>45</sup> In Clyde Reid's list of six important functions of preaching, he showed that preaching is persuasive communication when it challenges people with a new vision and reinforces present attitudes.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Fred B. Craddock, Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 24.

<sup>45</sup>Roy Pearson, "Is Preaching Outmoded?" Religion in Life (Autumn, 1965), 545.

<sup>46</sup>Clyde Reid, The Empty Pulpit (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967), 100.

## Theological Underpinnings

### Theology of Change

Professor Karl Barth, in July of 1922, challenged all ministers with a statement which cannot be easily dismissed.

What are you doing, you man, with the word of God upon your lips? Upon what grounds do you assume the role of mediator between heaven and earth? Who has authorized you to take your place there and to generate religious feelings? And, to crown all, to do so with results, with success? Did one ever hear of such overweening presumption, such Titanism, or--to speak less classically but more clearly--such brazenness! ...Who dares, who can, preach, knowing what preaching is?<sup>47</sup>

Barth's statement reminds ministers of the danger of presumptuous arrogance. Who is man that God should use him to herald His message? Yet, in the final analysis, one must remember that God's sovereign purpose in the world is to be accomplished through earthen vessels--finite, sinful, frail men.

Therefore the question is not can ministry bring about change in human relationship; rather, the question is how? For the purpose of this paper the term "ministry" will be used to mean the performance of any service or function for another, and refers primarily to the communication or pulpit minister. The term "relationship" is used to mean the state or character of being allied by kindred, connected by consanguinity, or having similar properties. In this

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<sup>47</sup>Arnold B. Cone, An Introduction to Barth's Dogmatics for Preachers (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), 222-232.

context, it is relationship that normally exists in the church setting.

In analyzing the "how" of change, it must be remembered that before there can be change in behavior or in cognition, there must be change in attitude, belief, and/or value.<sup>48</sup> There are also degrees of each of these qualities; i.e., some attitudes are strong and persist over a long period of time, while others are weak and impermanent. The same may be correctly said concerning beliefs. One's beliefs are evaluations about whether a thing is true or false. The strength of a person's beliefs is determined by the feeling of reliability he/she has in the evidence which has been presented. The stronger and more central attitudes are ego-involving attitudes that a person strongly identifies with and incorporates as values into his/her self-concept.<sup>49</sup>

From man's origin, he has been a creature with a tendency toward persuasion. Eve persuaded Adam to eat the forbidden fruit in paradise. Mark Antony's oratory changed the minds of the mob to accept the death of Caesar as a blessing for Rome. Human nature has not varied much, as Madison Avenue so well recognizes. The Bible is filled with statement of change: Man can become a new creature

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<sup>48</sup>Erwin P. Bettinghaus and Michael J. Cody, Persuasive Communication, 4th ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1987), 8-9.

<sup>49</sup>Kenneth E. Andersen, Persuasion Theory and Practice (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1971), 47-56.

(II Corinthians 5:17); one rises from the waters of baptism to walk in "newness of life" (Romans 6:4); the entrance into right relationship with God is designated "new birth"; and such key Biblical words as "repent," "convert," and "turn" imply change.

The successful minister is one who can identify the various attitude change theories, select the most appropriate, and use it proficiently. No more competent mentor could be emulated than the apostle Paul. Paul's statement to the Corinthian Christians, "we persuade men" (II Corinthians 5:11), indicates that he believed a primary element of his work to be that of changing man's attitude, beliefs, and values.

How did Paul seek to accomplish this change? He had been schooled by Gamaliel and was not in the same category with the "ignorant and unlearned" fishermen of Galilee, but surely he was not a scholar of change theories. Modern theories of change and systematic efforts to explain human behavior by referring to laws did not begin until the early 1930s.<sup>50</sup> Nonetheless, Paul did utilize various constructs found in modern theories of change. Bible believers would cite this pragmatism as evidence of divine guidance.

First, notice Paul's use of social judgment. Three variables are associated with any judgment. There is the

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<sup>50</sup>Mary John Smith, Persuasion and Human Action (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1982), 59.

external stimulus to be judged, which may be animate or inanimate. Next, there is the set of internal cognitive schemata which people implement to interpret and judge incoming information. Finally, there is the judgment itself, which is the conclusion one reaches about the data as it is perceived, interpreted, and subjectively reconstructed in memory.<sup>51</sup>

Evidence of Paul's use of the concept of social judgment is seen in his letter to his dear friend and brother, Philemon. There was the external stimulus, which in this case was Onesimus, a slave who had escaped from his master. Next, there was the "frame of reference" that Philemon was a Christian and would, therefore, interpret Paul's request in this light. Centuries later, the social judgment theory as developed by Muzafer Sherif would affirm that judgmental processes are central to an understanding of attitude change.<sup>52</sup> Sherif indicated a two-stage process in which a person judges the advocated position relative to his/her own position, and after this judgmental process, attitude change occurs. The degree of change is dependant on the latitude of acceptance, latitude of rejection, and/or the latitude of noncommitment. Paul masterfully used this concept to change Philemon's attitude.

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<sup>51</sup>Muzafer Sherif and Carl T. Hovland, Social Judgment (London: Yale University Press, 1961), 19-25.

<sup>52</sup>Muzafer Sherif, "A Study of Some Social Factors in Perception," Archives of Psychology 27, no. 187 (1935).

The issues were,

(1) Should Philemon receive his runaway slave? If so, what effect would this have on other slaves, both his and his neighbors? and

(2) How should Onesimus be received? Should he be punished? Should he be received as a second-class slave? There is insufficient information to determine Philemon's latitude of acceptance, or his anchor attitude plus those attitudinal positions accumulated around the foundation that are judged to be acceptable or tolerable; but one could imagine that as Paul began his unusual request, Philemon was willing to receive Onesimus only as a slave. The concept of ingratiating is seen in Paul's communication with Philemon. He began with a request and not a demand, though he diplomatically reminded his friend of such a possibility. He then discreetly used his age (Paul the aged) and his situation (a prisoner) to open the door with Philemon. Finally he reminded Philemon that Onesimus rendered the service he would have performed had he the opportunity. No doubt these tenets fell within Philemon's latitude of acceptance and, as a consequence of the assimilation process, he doubtlessly received him, not as a slave, but as a beloved brother and fellow servant of the Lord.

Germane to the discussion of how ministry can effect change is the principle of inoculation. This rationale concerns itself with insulation against change. There are

two major reasons a proper understanding of these concepts is important. First, there is the obvious factor of the importance in ministry to retain changes gained, and second, a knowledge of the inoculation idea will offer an opportunity for better understanding of obstacles to change. Once again it is evident that Paul was skillfully using this concept found in modern communication theory, i.e., the inoculation concept.<sup>53</sup>

Inoculation involves primarily, three techniques: (1) supportive, (2) refutational, and (3) generalized forewarning. The New Testament champion of persuasion used each. When Paul's apostleship was challenged by Judaizing teachers, he armed his partisans with an incredible number of arguments. In this supportive technique he affirmed, "Am I not an apostle, am I not free, have I not seen Jesus, are not ye my work in the Lord, if I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord" (I Corinthians 9:1-2). He continued piling up his argument, "Have we not power to eat and to drink, have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, . . . have we not power to forbear working?" (I Corinthians 9:3-6).

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<sup>53</sup>William J. McGuire, "Inducing Resistance to Persuasion: Some Contemporary Approaches," in Leonard Berkowitz (ed.), Advances in Experimental Social Psychology (Vol. 1) (New York: Academic Press, 1964), 191-230.

In the second, refutational defense, Paul threatened believers by advancing arguments that attacked beliefs, but then he refuted the threatening arguments. A classic example would be Paul's discussion of the resurrection. He affirmed, "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (I Corinthians 15:13,14). He argued, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all, why are they then baptized for the dead" (I Corinthians 15:29). Finally he declared, "But some man will say, 'How are the dead raised up and with what body do they come?'" He then forcefully answered this assertion by showing the methodology of nature herself (I Corinthians 15:35-46).

The third premise of the inoculation principle is generalized forewarning. An example of Paul's use of this principle would be his admonitions to the Christians at Phillipi, "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of concision" (Philippians 3:2). As a mother might warn her daughter of threatening dangers, Paul gave these generalized warnings to his favorite congregation.

A third major reflection in considering change principles is "cognitive" theories. There is a whole class of suppositions referred to as "cognitive" theories that see the mind as a mechanism that organizes the messages it receives into meaningful wholes. These theories are based



on the common premise that disequilibrium is unpleasant, painful, and distasteful, and that the tensions created by this state will lead to attempts to reduce the tension.

Festinger's explanation of these balance theories is "cognitive dissonance."<sup>54</sup> He affirmed that when two simultaneous cognitions fit, there is consonance, but when they do not fit, there is dissonance. When this occurs there are a several paths, i.e., the individual may (1) raise his allowable dissonance level, (2) push the dissonant elements into the back of his consciousness, (3) ignore the repercussion of such dissonance, (4) shift his beliefs to coincide with the evidence presented, or (5) reject one of the elements that effected the dissonance.

Paul employed this principle in his eminent sermons before the Epicureans and Stoics at the Areopagus. That the Athenians were believers in a Supreme Being was evidenced by their many devotions. Paul set forth a cognitive dissonance for them when he argued the impossibility of an inanimate god giving their offspring life and the capacity to move and think. Some of these scholars raised their dissonance level and desired further information (Acts 17:32); some ignored the consequences of such dissonance and mocked the speaker (Acts 17:32); and some shifted their beliefs to coincide with the evidence they had received (Acts 17:34).

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<sup>54</sup>Festinger, 7-16.

In summary of this section, this writer believes that Paul, with the one exception of Jesus, brought more change to mankind than any other person in the New Testament and that he used each of the modern theories of change in his ministry. There could be a proliferation of examples cited. The examples given show that man is capable of change; that the change factors are complex; and that they were used by early servants of the Lord, thus proving once again the wisdom of God.

#### Theology of preaching

The quintessence of attitude change for God is preaching. God affirmed through Paul, "For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."<sup>55</sup> Here the emphasis is on the message being preached, the morias tou karugmatos. However, even as foolish as the message was considered by philosophical minds, the manner of proclamation was still to be preaching. As Pearson emphasized, "The gospel does not live unless it is proclaimed."<sup>56</sup>

Jesus, as the manifestation of this message, reiterated the high priority God attaches to preaching in two major statements. First, he addressed his purpose for coming to

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<sup>55</sup>I Corinthians 1:21 (New American Standard Translation).

<sup>56</sup>Roy Pearson, "Is Preaching Outmoded?" Religion in Life 4 (Autumn, 1965), 37.

earth: "And he says to them, 'Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach (karuzo) there also; for to this end came I forth.'"<sup>57</sup> The second statement was made after his resurrection and just before his ascension to the father. Jesus charged, "Go ye into all the world and preach (karuzate) the gospel to the whole creation."<sup>58</sup>

The investment made by both the Father and the Son was too great to offer a technique of mediocrity. God did not choose to communicate his message by a dream, feeling, or intuition, but by preaching. God had only one son who came and spent his efforts on earth preaching. Charles Jefferson reminded all that Jesus came performing miracles, but his greatest miracle was "by his tongue."<sup>59</sup>

#### Theology of Evangelism

God is a God of purpose and plan. He works relentlessly toward the fulfillment of His purpose. Paul referred to God's purpose (prothesis) as "the mystery (musterion)" and declared its eternality (Colossians 1:26,27). The entire Bible shows the unfolding of His persistence in that direction. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that if we identify the ministry of God and if the theology of evangelism comes under ministry, then the ministry of God is

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<sup>57</sup>Mark 1:38.

<sup>58</sup>Mark 16:15.

<sup>59</sup>Charles E. Jefferson, The Minister as Preacher (New York: The International Committee of Young Men's Christian Association, 1909), 12.

centered in the very matter of redemption. Further, if man is going to enter into labor with God, this too must be his focus.

God's great purpose for human redemption was designed to be consummated in Christ at a precise dispensation of time. This would be the providential achievement of all preceding ages (Ephesians 1:9). Paul informed that the plan was achieved "in the fullness of time" (Galatians 4:4). Description of the procedure of God's plan and purpose is embraced in the gospel message (Ephesians 3:1-7). Examination of the scriptures also reveals that the agency to continue what Christ began is the church (Ephesians 3:21, Matthew 28:18-20).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer portrayed the church as "Christ existing as community" (Sanctorum Communio).<sup>60</sup> With this Karl Barth concurred as he spoke of the church as Christ's "earthly form of existence." It was Ben Campbell Johnson who had the most articulate description:

The church is the bearer of the incarnate Lord in its life, worship and service. This exalted role involves neither a light tracing of the image of Christ nor the projection of an idealized picture of him, but the flesh and blood re-presentation of his Spirit and presence in people and in the community.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Communion of Saints: A Dogmatic Inquiry Into the Sociology of the Church (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 160-163.

<sup>61</sup>Ben Campbell Johnson, "Toward a Theology of Evangelism," The Christian Ministry 19 (January-February, 1988): 12.

Evangelism is one dimension of this representation. It is not the only mission of the church, but it certainly stands at the center of the church's outreach imperative. Just as Christ's healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and showing compassion to the lonely were by-products of the central underlying purpose of bringing people to God, so it is with the church. As one peruses the mien in which the church is modelled, he/she must be impressed by its homogeneous purpose as seen in the symbolic representations of the New Testament, i.e., the harvester serving the husbandman, the farmer spreading the seed, the fisherman drawing his nets, the shepherd looking for his sheep.

It was the love of God which prompted the sending of Jesus into the world (John 3:16) and the love that Jesus had which induced his coming (John 15:34). God became flesh in order that we might become godly. It is this incarnational perspective which gives the definition for evangelism. The word means "good news"--good news about God and good news for the people of God. This "good news" was to be communicated to all nations, every ethnic group, and, in fact, to every creature (Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15). This happy task was to be effected not by angelic beings or outstanding orators but by plain "earthen vessels" (2 Corinthians 4:7).

The rationale for evangelism is illustrated in an old but simple story. The story is told that an angel met Jesus in heaven after the ascension. "Where have you been?" he

asked. Jesus replied, "On earth." "For what purpose?" responded the angel. "I was dying for the sins of all men," answered Jesus. "How are they going to know this?" the angel then inquired. "I told twelve men to go and tell the story and to have the ones who believed to tell others and so on," Jesus replied. The angel then asked, "What if these men do not obey you?" Jesus said, "I have no other plan."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Eddie Cloer, Rescue the Perishing (Delight, Ark.: Gospel Light Publishing Company, 1987), 285.

CHAPTER THREE  
ROEBUCK CHURCH OF CHRIST

The early followers of Jesus were not remiss in accepting the challenge of representing Christ to their generation. These early Christians spoke the message of Christ (Acts 16:13), shouted it (Acts 2:14), wrote it (Ephesians 3:3), and read it (Ephesians 3:4). They traveled to preach (Acts 13), and preached while they traveled (Acts 8:36). They taught it to the poor (2 Corinthians 8:2), to the rich (Acts 12:1ff.), to those in jail (Acts 16:29-34), to worshipers at a riverside Bible class (Acts 16:13,14), to false worshippers in the synagogue (Acts 14:1), to curious pagans (Acts 17:22ff.), to a distraught maiden (Acts 16:16-18), and to interested people in their own homes (Acts 20:20). Everyone taught (Acts 8:1ff): the well-educated (Acts 22:3), the ignorant and unlearned (Acts 4:10), the married (I Corinthians 9:5), the single (I Corinthians 9:5), young men, and husbands and wives (Acts 18:24-28). There can be no wonder as to why the church grew so rapidly!

God, motivated by love (I John 4:8), purposed to bring men to himself. He executed that plan through Jesus. In His wisdom He established the church to represent Christ

as the hope of the world. This plan was so effective in the first century that everyone heard the good news. One wonders if it is legitimate to ask why the plan is apparently so ineffective today. Has the plan of God retrogressed? Has man floundered? Was it the original design that two thousand years after the coming of Christ the vast majority of men would not know him? The answer is obviously, "No."

The early church encountered some obstacles in their evangelistic thrust, but as Michael Green has so clearly illustrated, the pathways were much more dominant.<sup>1</sup> As the influence of Catholicism became more powerful and more changes occurred, there was a diminishing of evangelistic fervor. Early historical documents researched by Everett Ferguson record the early concerns of the people of God. These same documents make no reference to the need for converting relatives and friends. Typical of the early prayers was that of Clement of Rome in which he prayed for the fallen, the sick, the straying, but no petition is found for the sinner.<sup>2</sup> Of course, with the acceptance of infant baptism, there was no need for evangelism. Perhaps this, coupled with the dominance of the Platonian trajectory,

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<sup>1</sup>Michael Green, Evangelism in the Early Church (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), 13-28.

<sup>2</sup>Everett Ferguson, Early Christians Speak (Austin: Sweet Publishing Company, 1971), 138.



accounts for the lack of evangelism for the fourth through the sixteenth centuries. Plato propounded the theory that man views life in a semi-cave image. Because of man's limited vision, Plato set forth the theory that mankind has an upside-down, or warped, view of reality. He theorized that man, in his finite mind, has no true concept of God's intent.

Another real hindrance to successful evangelism is the divergent beliefs espoused by followers of Jesus. Division is a contributing factor and is so significant that even the Lord himself stated it would be a cause of disbelief (John 17:20, 21).

It is unrealistic to presume that one can validly access evangelistic success; e.g., God's evaluation of success may differ greatly from man's. However, it does appear that Christianity is losing ground to the paganism, materialism, and secularism so rampant in the world and that evangelistic efforts are in decline. Johnson purported that in mainline Protestant churches, a crisis of major proportion is fast approaching, and cited statistics of membership decline.<sup>3</sup> A major survey by the Gallup organization has found that "American churches have made little progress in the past ten years in recruiting professing religious believers as

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<sup>3</sup>Ben Campbell Johnson, Rethinking Evangelism: A Theological Approach (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 13.

members of congregations."<sup>4</sup> In the state of Alabama, which is of greater interest to this work, of the twenty-seven religious organizations, churches of Christ rank fourth. This constitutes only 2.9% (119,285 members) of the total population and 5.1% of all churchgoers.<sup>5</sup>

What about the immediate context of the Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ? None of these historic considerations, i.e., state religion, Platonic trajectory, or religious detachment, would account for the lack of enthusiasm for evangelism at Roebuck. No doubt these factors have influenced all churches of Christ, but they do not play a major role in present attitudes. Evangelism at Roebuck is presently characterized by (1) an ambivalent feeling, (2) a casual indifference almost to the point of akadia (not caring), and (3) ineffective practices.

This attitude becomes evident by an analysis of the evangelistic profile of the congregation. First, there is the decline in total number of conversions in the past four years (39, 38, 21, and 18 this year).<sup>6</sup> Second, for the first time in the past 23 years there is no class being taught on evangelism. Third, there has been a decline in

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<sup>4</sup>Bruce L. Shelly, "More Christians Say No to Church," Christianity Today 32, (September 2, 1988): 53-54.

<sup>5</sup>Greg Garrison, "Alabama's Religious Makeup," Birmingham News, 28 July 1989, sec. D, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Jerry Jenkins, "News," Roebuck Parkway Reminder, 48 December 1989, p. 3.

the prayer life of this church for the lost. There was a time when seldom was there a service without prayers for the lost. At one time a monthly prayer service composed of 50 to 100 met and prayed following the Wednesday night service. They brought specific names of lost relatives and friends before the throne of grace. This practice has been discontinued. Finally, a survey conducted last fall indicated that less than 50% (45.6%) of the congregation now believe sharing the good news of salvation to be an important priority of this body of believers. What brought about this degeneration? There are a number of factors which have contributed to this lethargic attitude toward evangelism.

First, there exists a vagueness concerning what constitutes evangelism. Sometimes successful evangelism might be equated with numerical growth. Even in this paper, citation has been given that might cause one to accept numbers as evangelism. Others have defined evangelism as "everything one does." The term "everything" covers the gamut from conducting Bible studies, to boycotting a multinational corporation, or taking a political stand against apartheid.

A second reason for the obvious apathy concerning evangelism is what this writer would call traditionalism. This problem is the result of blind acceptance of former practices without the necessary discernment and adaptation

for today's life situation. In the 1960s, the Jules Miller filmstrips became available, and many members found an instrument that enabled them to share the good news with their neighbors. It has been the experience of this writer that the nonchurched people are not receptive to this vehicle in 1989. Yet, at Roebuck, this filmstrip continues to be the primary tool of those who are conducting formal study sessions.

The third obstacle to successful evangelism is intellectualism. The sophisticated culture of the late twentieth century refutes the Biblical teaching concerning what constitutes sin. Somehow members have rationalized that the nonchurched people will be saved despite the fact that they have toppled God from the throne and enthroned self at the center of the world; they seek self-fulfillment with the content of this world. The biblical teaching concerning freedom of action has been perverted to such a degree that the teaching no longer stresses a proper relationship with Christ as an essential part of salvation.

Pessimistic attitudes must also be included in this list that seeks to account for the decline in evangelistic ardor. A sad pessimistic attitude contradicts the very nature of evangelism. A message which does not lead to deep and permanent joy, full of hope and love, is simply not "good news." No excitement, no air of expectancy, and the unprepared baptistry are marks that doom services before the

first song. The argument on the term euagellion, i.e., "eu" which means "well, good, etc.," implies that the message is one of happiness and not misery.<sup>7</sup> It is the loss of this concept which has led to a loss of the Roebuck founding dream.

Still another authentic hindrance to evangelism at Roebuck is what Ben Johnson referred to as "evangelicalism."<sup>8</sup> Evangelicalism is a specific form of belief, popular in the past two centuries, which emphasizes a sensational experience of conversion. Proponents of this method resort to a high-pressure sales technique, manipulating and depersonalizing prospects without concern for teaching. It is true that Jesus employed fear as a motivating factor, but never to the exclusion of the higher incentives of appreciation and love. A fear-motivating urgency must never be the controlling factor in outreach. This fear destroys the dignity of the subject and relegates him/her to a position of non-importance. In the past there was a period at Roebuck when soul-winning which ignored the personage for the sake of numbers was stressed. One does not have a right to speak to another about his soul when he does not even know his name. The emphasis to listen to man

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<sup>7</sup>Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Co., 1889), 256.

<sup>8</sup>Johnson, 16.

and to meet the needs of man, as Johnson suggested,<sup>9</sup> is not to exclude the primary impetus originating from God's imperative. In other words, this writer is not trying to exalt human needs above divine decrees. The congregation must rediscover that the mandate is from Christ.

Finally, attention is now turned to the problem of secularism. At the root of this problem is the loss of a sense of God's transcendence in one's life. God has been domesticated in order that He might be managed. However, Roebuck has not drifted as far as those churches described by Allen, Hughes, and Weed when they stated that, ". . . many American churches seemed more concerned to save marriages than souls, more interested in self-esteem than salvation, and more concerned to relieve depression and anxiety than to deal with the fundamental reality of sin."<sup>10</sup> Roebuck has felt the current even though the pull has been very subtle.

Roebuck has turned gradually inward. A nicer building, better transportation, and additional self-help programs have been stressed, while less and less money, time, and effort have been expended toward the unchurched. Infighting is being used among departments with political ploys,

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 25-40.

<sup>10</sup>C. Leonard Allen, Richard Hughes, and Michael R. Weed, The Worldly Church (Abilene: ACU Press, 1988), 30,31.

normally employed by those who have no knowledge of God and his ways.

Evangelism should be the primary factor in the life of this congregation. Evidence has been cited indicating a decline in members' enthusiasm for sharing the good news of a special relationship with Christ among neighbors and friends. Six major areas of concern have been noted.

In conclusion, it appears to this writer that there are three possible responses to the declining attitude toward evangelism. First, the Roebuck congregation could remain oblivious to the changes which have occurred in recent years and complacently do business as usual, with resultant ineffectiveness. Second, members could become intimidated and shell-shocked, discontinuing sharing the good news of God completely. Many "inward" programs will sustain the congregation for a number of years and provide approval from the membership and freedom from guilt feelings, but will gut the gospel of the savior. The third alternative, and the one to which this writer is committed, is for this church to rise to the challenge, to reaffirm the Biblical priority of evangelism, and to discover afresh our dependance on God and His wisdom in evangelism.

The setting for this project will be the Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ. There are many expressions of religion in America, ranging from a disillusioned past-corporate executive who sleeps in a tent on a mountainside jealously

guarding his very personal religion to the pantheist who sees God everywhere; but for most people in North America, it is the congregation which is the primary expression of faith. More people belong to congregations than to all other voluntary associations, contributing more financially to their works than to all other philanthropic causes combined. Presently, in the U.S. alone, there are 341,000 congregations claiming almost 135 million members with a weekly attendance of nearly 65 million adults.<sup>11</sup>

To understand why the founding dream of evangelism has been forgotten, attention will be given to an exploration of the network of audible and physical indicators of the Roebuck congregation. Not only is this church held together by its convictions of faith, organizational formation, and programs of involvement but also at a deeper level it is bound together by its own symbols and rituals which have been assembled and grounded into congregational idiom. In the book Handbook for Congregational Studies, the authors list four aspects of a congregation--context, identity, program, and process.<sup>12</sup> These four constructs will constitute the outline of this chapter.

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<sup>11</sup>Constant H. Jacquet, Jr., in the Fifty-second Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 11.

<sup>12</sup>Carrol, Dudley, and McKinney, 13.



### Context

The church has chameleon-like capabilities that enable it to adapt to its environment; therefore, it is important to see it in relation to its social context. For almost seventy-five years the congregation has influenced and been influenced by its setting. During this time the colors of the surroundings have changed and the congregation has responded.

Several major factors have influenced the Roebuck congregation. As an overview of the context, several factors are registered here. First, the influence of two men was responsible for the congregation's beginning. Justus McDuffie Barnes was not the first to preach the gospel in the Birmingham area. J. A. Butler had preached near Birmingham in 1838, and one year later Alexander Campbell preached in the area on a trip from Augusta, Georgia, to New Orleans.<sup>13</sup> It was J. M. Barnes, however, who baptized nine people in 1878 and established a congregation which began meeting in the courthouse just five years after the city had been christened "Birmingham."<sup>14</sup>

What kind of a man was brother Barnes? What were the characteristics of his preaching style which would so sway the attitudes of these early Christians? Brother Barnes has

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<sup>13</sup>Castleberry, 17.

<sup>14</sup>Bertha Bendall Norton, Birmingham's First Magic Century (Birmingham: Lakeshore Press, 1970), 9.

been described as a slim built man, not more than five feet seven or eight, and weighing less than 130 pounds. He usually wore a Prince Albert coat with a slit in the back, and he had long, white chin whiskers. One man who heard him speak said he "clasped his hand behind his back and slowly circled the podium. Looking up toward heaven, he would tone, 'I see my Jesus, I see my Jesus.'" Then after a pause, he would raise the question, "Lord Jesus, do you have any Baptists up there?" His answer would come in a serious far-off voice, "Not a one, not a one." Then he would inquire, using the same pattern for the Methodist, etc., and his answer would be the same.<sup>15</sup>

It seems to this researcher that this very frank, honest, and often controversial style of presentation would "set the tone" of the evangelistic endeavors of the Roebuck congregation. This same style was also characteristic of the man who would have an even greater influence in establishing the Roebuck congregation, John T. Lewis. In a ten page tract brother Lewis stated, "I have been thundering away against denominationalism and digression in this city for more than thirty-five years. I have debated with Glen V. Tingley, with Walker, the champion of Seventh Day

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<sup>15</sup>Castleberry, 21-22.

Adventism, and with Mitchell, an outstanding representative of the Church of God."<sup>16</sup>

Brother Lewis was a serious, firm contender for the faith; yet there was another quality that was to be the foundation of the Roebuck congregation, and that was his generous sacrificial spirit. He freely gave of himself, but he gave also monetarily. This generous spirit is reflected in almost every document which describes how funds were dispersed.

A second contextual factor was societal in nature. The South in general, and Birmingham in particular, had accelerating racial problems. Efforts were made on the part of Roebuck to rise above these prejudicial influences by showing concern for the blacks. In the late 1930s they brought brother Marshall Keeble to town and, perhaps more than any other congregation, led the way in establishing black congregations in the city.

The 1950s and 1960s experienced an increase in racial tension. The city became infamous when Mayor "Bull" Connor and his followers unleashed dogs and turned fire hoses on black citizens. During all this time Roebuck continued to support black congregations, but beneath the surface there was a problem. The ugly head of prejudice was raised when the first black was baptized in the Roebuck baptistry and

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<sup>16</sup>John T. Lewis, The Church of Christ in Birmingham Versus Cecil Abercrombie's "Jerusalem Patterned" (Birmingham: Lewis Press, 1935), 11.

wanted to worship in the Roebuck congregation, resulting in the loss of several families.

Again in 1973 it was primarily prejudice which caused a number of families to go to another congregation when the bus program began working the black areas and black children started attending. This condition would improve as the context changed.

What of the present context of this congregation? Roebuck is located about seven miles east of downtown Birmingham. This is in the heart of the five-county Birmingham Metropolitan Statistical Area which anchors the business and cultural life of the State of Alabama. The area contains 23% of Alabama's population, as well as 23% of the state households, and accounts for 24% of the business establishments, 25% of retail sales, and 32% of the payroll dollars. The population within a 100-mile radius of Birmingham is 2.7 million, with the Metropolitan Birmingham count standing at 911,000.<sup>17</sup>

Birmingham is a leading retail and wholesale trade center as well as one of the Southeast's major centers for finance, education, manufacturing, health care, research, engineering, transportation, and distribution. The service sector is the area's fastest growing employment category, having increased more than 50% since 1975. This broad

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<sup>17</sup>From an unpublished report prepared by Business Development & Research Division, Birmingham Area Chamber of Commerce, June, 1988, pp. 7-10.

grouping includes health care, medical research, engineering, data processing, and telecommunications. The area's 22 hospitals and other highly specialized health care facilities have made Birmingham a major international medical center. A study of physicians published in 1986 ranked the UAB's medical center as the third-best in the nation.<sup>18</sup>

The Birmingham Area profile reveals that Birmingham's population is made up of 320,090 white males (34.8%), 341,896 white females (37.2%), 118,240 black males (12.9%), and 139,161 black females (15.1%). The 72% white and 28% black does not give the real picture, for the percentage among the 0-24 age group reveals a tremendous gain among the black population. The average household income for the Roebuck-Center Point area is \$20,137.<sup>19</sup>

These demographic data point to a change of context that is reflected by this congregation. Some of these changes are as follows:

- (1) The congregation is urban as opposed to rural;
- (2) The congregation was composed in its formative years of mostly blue collar workers, but now is composed of professional people;
- (3) The congregation, in formative years, was composed of families supported by the men. Now many of the women work outside the home;

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

(4) The very frank outspoken style of evangelism has changed to accommodate an increased sensitivity of the congregation to the feelings of others, and finally;

(5) The demographics show that the black population in Birmingham continues to increase. This is reflected in the acceptance of an integrated church with a growing number of black members.

### Identity

Identity factors refer to the manner in which the congregation incorporates environmental elements within its own culture and differentiates them from all the forms the same influential factors elsewhere taken. In other words, these actions are what makes this community of believers unique from others. The order here followed will be the same utilized by Carrol, Dudley, and McKinney.<sup>20</sup>

### History

History refers to events which one remembers and records for posterity. Thousands of incidents occur weekly, but relatively few are worth recording. To differentiate one from the other, Norman Perrin spoke of both "history" and the "historic."<sup>21</sup> "History" means any happening; "historic" denotes occurrences that distinguish this congregation from all others. Two procedures for gathering

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<sup>20</sup>Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney, 23.

<sup>21</sup>Norman Perrin, The New Testament: An Introduction (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), 27-29.

this information were employed: (1) oral history gathered from seven of our senior members, and (2) recorded history on file in Roebuck's library.

#### The History of Roebuck Parkway

Roebuck Parkway was not the result of a church split. According to brother Lewis, there existed many divergent views. He stated, "They were apparently a group imbued with many opinions, . . . some were anti-class, some anti-collection, some anti-human help, or literature."<sup>22</sup> Roebuck started because of a dream of taking a city for Christ; it was not a result of self-division.

Plot Thickens. The involvement in Belize was not because of our ingenious plans to evangelize that country. We had decided on a method but we had not decided on a field. The choice of method was based on teaching received by this writer and on the philosophy given to the leadership at a summer seminar for elders and missionaries at Abilene. A committee was formed to determine a field in which to place mission families.

It was at this time that Luther Savage made contact with the congregation. He had visited Central America, and as he was going through Belize, he noted the absence of the Church of Christ. He had a desire to go to unevangelized

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<sup>22</sup>Raymond H. Crumbliss, "Churches in Birmingham," Library of Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ, Birmingham, Alabama, 1953. (Typewritten.)

territory, so somehow, undoubtedly through the providence of God, he contacted Roebuck.

Plot Unfolds. Many causes other than historical factors discussed in Chapter One influenced the dream of evangelism. In addition to the model of early preachers J. M. Barnes and John T. Lewis, a third man, Herman King, played an important role in perpetuating the original dream. He served the church for almost forty years as an elder, until his death in February of 1982. He constantly studied evangelistic methods in his home, at lectureships, and in seminar sessions. He was always reading and seeking better and more effective methods.

In 1970, Herman King was the first elder to visit the work in Belize. He taught and baptized people there, and insisted that the congregation support this work to the best of its ability. Brother King encouraged the beginning of the television ministry and was instrumental in initiating and building the work among the deaf. He practiced evangelism daily. He was not eloquent in the pulpit, nor was he an outstanding Bible class teacher. However, there have been few elders who have baptized 17 in one year, as he did.

Plot Twists. Roebuck was maturing, growing, and establishing a phenomenal record. Then with every good intention and childlike naiveté, a program was started that shattered the dream. The powerful monster of division reared its ugly head. The agency through which it worked



was a beautiful concept--what could be more appealing than showing concern for families by endeavoring to encourage their children to come and learn the stories of God's word? Plans included regular bus routes into nearby housing projects. Many of these children were, according to many, undesirable. Because some of the children were sent to church simply to get them out of their houses, discipline became a problem. These young people had unrealistic expectations about rewards for attendance. They expected refreshments and entertainment. Soon this problem became major. Instead of attacking the problem calmly, many began to form factions.

This enemy was voracious. It divided families and separated brothers who had been friends for years. Both sides were sincere but uncompromising in their convictions. The hurt was not limited to the company of believers but became common knowledge to the community, giving occasion for critics to gloat.

When the smoke had cleared, the congregation had lost one of its three elders, a bus director, fifty families, and the confidence to face the future with boldness. It would take several years before the fire of evangelism would again burn so brightly. What an unpredictable, unexpected twist to the Roebuck historic plot this program made!

## Heritage

The heritage of Roebuck is that which comes to the congregation out of its past. In contrast to history, which tells Roebuck's own particular story, Roebuck's heritage is the owning of beliefs and practices about the Christian faith, life, and purposes of the church.

Robert Redfield referred to the church's universal beliefs as the "great tradition."<sup>23</sup> This congregation restricts the "great tradition" to the Bible--sola scriptura. The Bible is accepted as the sole source of religious authority. There are no written mortal creeds; consequently it is difficult to judge orthodoxy. This congregation is considered a mainline church by the Birmingham community, but leans more to the right than the left. There exist seven different groups in Birmingham who use the name "Church of Christ." The groups are (1) one cup, (2) anti-eldership, (3) anti-Bible classes, (4) non-institutional, (5) Lord's supper on Sunday night only, (6) ecumenical, and (7) mainline.

What about Redfield's "little tradition"? Information pertinent to this topic has been lifted from a random survey done on the congregation.<sup>24</sup> First consideration is given to

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<sup>23</sup>Robert Redfield, Pleasant Society and Culture (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 40-59.

<sup>24</sup>Statistical analysis was computed through the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Level M Ver. 8 (SPSS Lev. M 8.1) (Chicago: SPSS).

individual beliefs. As one might expect, everyone in the congregation believed in God. One percent (1%) expressed apprehension about what to believe in God, but all rejected the concept that God was not active in creation and redemption. More than 9% believed in a somewhat deistic concept that God does not now guide nor intervene in the affairs or lives of individual Christians. The belief advocated by more than 15% of the congregation excluded the impression that God works through providence. This same percentage of the congregation believed God communicates with persons directly, though it seldom happens. Sixty-eight percent (68%) believed that God is in the world and in every person. In this survey, the "little tradition" would probably differ from the "big tradition" in reference to the belief that God communicates directly.

What were the personal beliefs about the Bible?

Members emphatically repudiated that the Bible was written by men who lived so long ago that it is of little value today. They denied that the Bible was written by wise and good persons, but accepted it as God's word. They believed that the Bible is the record of many different persons' response to God and because of this, persons and churches today are often times forced to interpret for themselves the Bible's basic moral and religious teaching. It was an immense surprise that although more than 25% believed the

Bible to be the inspired word of God, they also believed that it contains some human error.

The members were almost in total agreement with the "big tradition" and with one another that all people are sinful and are saved through faith which leads one to repentance, confession, and baptism. All emphatically rejected the concept that Christian living is unimportant, that salvation is based on believing and requesting salvation, and that sin is only a helpful way of describing people's ability to harm themselves and others.

What is Roebuck's heritage concerning worship? More than 90% considered worship to be important in deepening member's understanding of the sources and meaning of the Bible and the mission of the church. However, only 34% found the congregation's efforts very satisfactory. Members reported a vast difference in how much the worship service challenged them to relate Christianity to their daily lives and their personal satisfaction of the two corollaries being equal. Many felt the application and results to be unsatisfactory. The ratio was 90% to 41%. Lowest on the priority list of what is important to our members was the theory that worship should express the gospel in contemporary language and form (33%).

What did the members at Roebuck believe constitutes the mission of the church? Of all the questions on the survey this was probably the most enlightening. It was not

surprising to learn that encouraging members to view their daily life and work as a place for ministry (97%) and a similar concern for involvement in community issues (96%) were high on the priority list. However, it was shocking to learn that less than 20% believed sharing the gospel with the unchurched to be very important and only 28% believed it to be somewhat important. This finding is amazing in view of the amount of teaching, preaching, and practice which has been done by this church. The church was most pleased with the job being done in encouraging all members to view daily life and work as a place for ministry.

Considered most important in the congregation's spiritual development was providing guidance and growth in spiritual life. Ninety-eight percent (98%) thought it to be important, and 96% were satisfied with the job being done. Ninety-one percent (91%) felt that we should consider it important to help members develop a stronger personal relationship with God; whereas, 93% believed an adequate job was being done. The percentage of dissatisfaction was high in regard to the help members believed they were receiving in the area of prayer and meditation (75%).

The membership believed it to be important for members to get to know one another; they felt they should be taught to care and support one another. In the personal interviews with the older members of the congregation, each of them praised the job being done. They related incidents when

food and assistance had been provided. Members seemed to be most satisfied with the care and counseling being given to help members deal with their problems.

As indicated by past contribution records, the item of stewardship ranked high in importance in their lives. However, this part of the survey ranked overall lowest of any area surveyed. Members believed that (1) educating and challenging members to support the work of the church; (2) helping members understand and view their use of money, time, and talents; and (3) helping members understand their Christian responsibility for the care, development, and conservation of the earth's natural resources to be important. Members stated that little or no help was being offered in reference to caring for earth's natural resources.

As one might suspect, the teaching of children and youth about the Bible ranked highest in analyzing the congregation's education responsibilities. In fact, 100% believed this to be important. Ninety-three percent (93%) believed a satisfactory job was being done. Lowest marks were received in the area of providing adult education dealing with contemporary issues, topics, and problems.

Considering the heritage of Roebuck, one would conclude that the distribution of beliefs is not widespread. The survey reveals, as one might suspect, that the views of the younger tended to be more liberal than those held by the

elder members. The views would tend to range highly orthodox with none falling into the category of agnostic. The survey implies a rather clear theological identity.

#### World View

A defined world view enables us to make sense of our total lives. Included in this view are not only the personal beliefs, goals, and aspirations but also the various circles in which we move. One's perception of the world along with the raw data gleaned through ones's five senses, gives the images of universal significance. This combination differentiates emotions from reality.

It was revealing to note various images of faith chosen by Roebuck members. Ten scriptures, which through the years have been considered explicit of one's faith, were presented in survey form.<sup>25</sup> The members were requested to note which was nearest their image of faith. The most popular scripture was the beautiful twenty-third Psalm (73%). Ninety-seven percent (97%) found Jesus statement to a certain lawyer, "Love your Lord with all your heart . . . and your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39) to be either very descriptive or somewhat descriptive of their faith. The passage which seemed to be the least meaningful was Job's statement, "Oh that I knew where I might find God" (Job 23). From the frequency of selection of these indicators of faith, two things are noteworthy: (1) passages

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<sup>25</sup>Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney, 186-187.

most often chosen were those offering comfort in time of trial and (2) passages relating to one's responsibility before God and his/her fellowmen were next in popularity.

James Hopewell's technique for detecting how one envisions the world proved beneficial in the interpretation of Roebuck's data. Roebuck members have long been exposed to a catechetical approach in determining their view. Some ask about different credal tenets, such as the Trinity, sin, or salvation, to determine their view, but this certainly does not exhaust the entirety of a member's perception of life.<sup>26</sup> Hopewell's four categories--canonic, gnostic, charismatic, and empiric--offer a unique way of interpreting one's world view. When one looks at these categories, it might be predicted that members would be more canonic. The survey reveals this to be a true assessment. Of the 961 answers which were checked on Hopewell's world view test, 494 were classified by this philosophy. The majority of members measure or at least believe they measure their life by what they believe to be the revealed word of God. Roebuck members do not believe one should integrate himself into the pattern but subordinate his selfhood to it.

Hopewell's world view test reveals that almost one fourth of the members fall into the empiric grouping. If Hopewell's technique is correct, this means there is a

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<sup>26</sup>James F. Hopewell, Congregation Stories and Structures (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 67-85.



rather large category whose outlook would tend to be liberal. This finding was somewhat surprising; perhaps the high number in the canonic group has suppressed the empiric view.

The Birmingham community through the years has been a fertile field for those who advocate a personal manifestation of God's imminence. Recently a church building which seats ten thousand was constructed for a group which expounds the doctrine of God's imminence. One of the local television stations is owned by the Seven Hundred Club. With such strength in the community and such exposure on television, this philosophy is bound to impact many churches in this area. It is not surprising that 14% of the members here fall into this class. Northrop Frye called this group the "Romance involved on a quest."<sup>27</sup> Perhaps in most, there is the desire for adventure and the love of a hero or heroine to direct their lives.

One could predict the smallest group would be the gnostic; and, in fact, this proved to be correct. A total of 10% fell into this classification. The gnostic's philosophy promoting unity is appealing in view of infighting among various congregations. This one concludes that division within accounts for this small group of gnostics.

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<sup>27</sup>Northrop Frye, The Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1937), 131.

## Symbols

By definition, a symbol is that which stands for something else. As one looks around the Roebuck Parkway building, he/she discovers a number of symbols. There are symbols which depict the understanding of the mission of this congregation. First there is a picture of the old sixtieth street building. It is displayed in the entry to the main auditorium. Recently this writer asked one of the older men what he saw in the picture. He replied, "I see struggle, I see sacrifice, I see heartache, I see victory." Of course he was referring to the early years of Roebuck and reflecting the struggles and accomplishment.

In the foyer, there is a case that contains a number of artifacts which have symbolic meaning to this congregation. In the case there are two bricks. One is a red clay brick from Fox Hall, where a small band of Christians met for a number of years. This brick represents the faith and courage of those who overcame great obstacles to keep the dream of conquering a city alive. The second brick is light brown and was taken from the second building of Roebuck. It represents years of happiness and struggle to a large segment of the congregation.

The case also contains a pair of small white tennis shoes with names written all over them. These tiny shoes were given to this researcher by seventeen college students who gave up a month of their summer to campaign for Christ

in Belize. This writer jogged each day along the Caribbean Ocean. On the last night there were prayers and singing as the group rejoiced that nineteen people had obeyed the Lord's will. They gave the writer this symbol of the time and work which had been shared.

A group of eight drinking glasses with the names of all the major towns in Belize written on them also stands in the case in the foyer. These glasses represent where churches are now meeting because of the efforts of the congregation. They were given to one of our ladies as an expression of love, but the giver did not become a Christian. To many, they represent an unfinished task, and the lesson that one can make friends of those who do not obey.

In the elders' office there is a unusual painting of the building on First Avenue North. There is a big bulldozer in the picture shoving up debris and trash as this old building is about half torn down. This picture symbolizes to the elders that meetings spent considering mundane items is wasted time.

Not only are there symbols which remind one of the mission, there are also symbols which remind all of the link between the present and the transcendent. On the pulpit rests a very large Bible, which was donated by the elder who has served longer than any other. When this Bible was given, he requested that the scriptures should always guide members' lives. To the right of the pulpit is a rather

large wooden Bible which opens up and inside are sixty-six tiny books with the names of the books of the Bible. This symbol is used only with the children in a special class for them, taught by this writer each Sunday evening before the regular services. This book represents the concern for young people, and to them it represents reverence and respect for God's word.

There is a symbol which indicates the intertwining of the congregation's identity and love. It is the large fellowship hall and a kitchen. Each item in the kitchen itself is symbolic, for it was donated by some family. Because of the ultra-conservative feeling of some, it was suggested that the items should be bought with individual donations rather than from the church treasury. When we were considering a new building, there was little talk about the auditorium, but most were concerned about an adequate place to express our love for one another. It is used constantly and represents the warmth and love which is so evident in the congregation.

The power symbol in the congregation is not "Old Man Bigbucks," for this spirit does not exist. If there are those more wealthy than the average, one could come here for years and never find them. There is no display of power by money tactics, but there is a symbol of power. There are seven offices and six of them have a number rather than a name. One has a name, it reads, "Elders' Office."

There are many other symbols which tell the story of Roebuck, but space forbids further discussion of this area of identity. Consideration is now directed to the importance of rituals and identity.

### Program

#### Rituals

Ritual, as far as this study is concerned, is repetitive proceedings that have more than utilitarian significance. Ritual is more than a verbalization about a belief or concept: it is an action bigger than the act itself. Rituals at Roebuck are expressive of the vocal members. These rituals include a number of components. One of these rituals is the use of mechanical music in wedding ceremonies performed in the church building. However, all "mainline" congregations are not in agreement with this practice.

Not only are rituals seen in the distinction made between the great and little traditions, they are also evident in what Arnold van Gennep has called "rites of passage."<sup>28</sup> The rites of passage which will be noted are birth, marriage, baptism, welcoming new members, visitors, and death.

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<sup>28</sup>Arnold Van Gennep, The Rite of Passage trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 3.

Birth is a very special time for the members at Roebuck. Every expectant mother who is a member of this congregation is given a shower. The work at Roebuck is divided into areas; the showers are planned by the committee headed by the ladies of the congregation. Showers are listed as priorities, and baby showers are given special preference. This ritual follows a set criteria for every mother. Invitations are sent, announcements are made in the bulletin and announcement sheet, the fellowship hall is beautifully decorated, and gifts are given. At times the showers are for the couple; so the men are also invited. This is usually done when the expectant mother is not a member of the congregation and her husband is, or vice-versa.

Another ritual that follows a set criteria is weddings. Every bride is given a tea. Again invitations are sent, announcements made, the fellowship hall is beautifully decorated, and gifts are given. Often, especially when money is a problem to the couple, ladies of the congregation handle the decorating of the building and the directing of the wedding ceremony.

Baptismal rituals are also significant. When one responds at a public service, the service is interrupted until the baptism is completed. After the service, the one baptized is requested to go to the exit where several elders introduce him/her to as many members as possible. It is the

Roebuck ritual that no one leave a baptismal service unless there is an emergency. When a baptism occurs at a non-service time, it is the custom to call a group together to welcome the new members. This non-scheduled gathering is characterized by singing, prayers, and words of encouragement. There is also an annual newcomers' banquet given each year to welcome all new members.

Visitors have a designated place to park and are welcomed by pre-arranged "greeters." In bad weather their cars will be parked for them if they desire. In the worship service all stand for a couple of minutes designated for greeting one another. Visitors are recognized and are given a special packet of information which includes a small rose for the person to wear as identity. A video film is available to introduce them to the activities of the congregation. The members assume that this could be the one opportunity to influence visitors. As a deacon recently said, "They may not remember the sermon, but they will remember how they were received."

Death is given special meaning at Roebuck. The funeral itself is usually at a funeral home. In the five years in this building, there has been only one funeral conducted in the church edifice. The church here generally provides a group to sing. The services generally consist of (1) two songs, (2) Bible reading and prayer, and (3) funeral sermon. The congregation, immediately upon learning of a death,

provides a "food tray" taken by several elders to the family. Food is provided in abundant supply. A call system is in place so that members are informed of death and crises. A special number to call is available throughout the week for those who desire church news.

Not only are there rites of passage, there are also rites of intensification. These rites which intensify a group's commitment to its shared beliefs and meaning are important. The Lord's Supper is such a rite. At Roebuck, it is a very solemn occasion. This might be proved by a story which came from an interview with brother Taggart, one of the shepherds. The Lord's table at the building on First Avenue North was encased behind rails and it was necessary to enter through a back room. On one occasion when the man who was to head the table started through this room there was a woman who had fainted lying in the room. The brother never stopped to see about the dear sister. He went on through the room and stood behind the table at which time he said, "There is a woman lying in the back room who needs some assistance. Brother Brown, would you please see about her?" Then he continued waiting on the table. This ritual includes a short talk made before the Lord's Supper is served.

The seating arrangement expresses a clue to identity. The building was constructed in a fan-shaped design. There is no seat farther from the podium than seventy feet. The



circular seating arrangement gives a feeling of closeness. Young people always sit together in a group. There is also a special place where the oldest members tend to gravitate. The elders and deacons have no special place to sit.

Roebuck deals with crises and conflict by a program known as the Area Minister's program. Similar to a zone system used by most congregations, the program is designed to offer almost immediate attention when a family member is in some kind of trouble. The usual Christian acts of service are lovingly performed.

Ervin Goffman<sup>29</sup> has used the concept of the "underlife" of an institution to describe the manner in which individuals make adjustments to the demands that the congregation places on them. In other words, what is expected of members? Members are expected to live Godly, Christlike lives, to attend the services, give freely of their income, love God supremely and their neighbors as themselves. No elder, deacon, preacher, or staff member is allowed to smoke, drink, or do anything unbecoming to a Christian.

#### Process

In congregational studies, process does not refer to what happens but how it happens. What is the dynamic interaction between values and events? To determine the

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<sup>29</sup>Ervin Goffman, Asylums (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1961), 173.

actual result of the process, a random survey was compiled. Most Roebuck members moderately agreed that there was ample opportunity for members to make known their concerns and hopes for the congregation to elders and other members. Though the congregation has a policy of "open books" with reference to finances, a weekly bulletin, a weekly announcement sheet, a monthly business meeting, and a quarterly meeting for every member (male and female), there was not total agreement that members are well informed about the activities taking place in the congregation.

Members believed that they were even less informed about what the various committees and groups in the congregation were doing. There was more disagreement than agreement that the community around the church was being informed about activities taking place in the congregation.

Fewer than half were pleased with the method used to determine the needs of the congregation. They also felt a need for a better way to plan the programs of the church; however, no one made constructive suggestions. Most felt that the congregation has a clear statement of goals and a plan for meeting them, but felt that there was not a regular process for members to give feedback to the elders about their performance in assisting with these plans.

One third of the congregation felt that some members were more influential over policy than others. This is the way it should be, if this group consists of those who are

more spiritually minded, but if the group is given this power because of wealth, kinship, or friendship, it is unfortunate.

Most in the church believed that the stewardship program is effective. More than 70% expressed approval that members are encouraged to discover their particular gifts for ministry and services to the church and that they are provided the necessary training and resources to develop them. Of special interest to this writer was the strong endorsement in favor of the minister participating regularly in continuing education. The church spoke with strong voice as 98.2% were in agreement, and 61.8% said they strongly felt that the minister should continue his training.

The story of Roebuck has been poetically told by one of Roebuck's deacons (see Appendix B).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### METHODS

The review of the literature concerning the life cycle approach to organizations, specifically the life cycle of the church, preceded the design for this study. The concerns and implications revealed in the literature served as the basis for an investigation of attitude change possibilities as precipitated by a series of sermons on the theme of evangelism. This chapter describes the materials and methods used to investigate these concerns. This was a descriptive study designed to examine the attitude of members of a congregation who had begun to lose their founding dream. A pretest-posttest design was employed. The research question addressed in this study was, Do members of the Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ describe themselves as having significantly altered their attitude toward evangelism as a result of a series of sermons on this topic?

#### Setting

The setting for this study was the Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ. The congregation included 685 members

from 382 families. The work is under the oversight of seven shepherds, who are assisted physically and spiritually by twenty-two deacons. The staff is composed of six paid employees and many volunteers. The annual budget is \$471,640. The congregation is located in Birmingham, Alabama. Birmingham is the heart of a five-county Metropolitan Statistical Area and anchors the business and cultural life of the State of Alabama. With almost one million people, Birmingham is a leading retail and wholesale trade center as well as one of the Southeast's major centers for finance, education, manufacturing, health care, research, engineering, transportation, and distribution. The eastern section of Birmingham, where the Roebuck Parkway congregation is located, is comprised of middle and upper-middle class citizens with the mean income in the twenty to thirty thousand dollar bracket.

#### Description of the Sample

The sample for the study consisted of 105 subjects who were members of the Roebuck Church of Christ. Subjects ranged in age from 16 to over 65 with the age categories of 26-35 (22.4) and 36-45 (25.2) most identified by the respondents.

Forty-nine of the subjects were male, representing 47% of the sample, and 56 were female, representing 53% of the sample. The majority of the subjects were married (80.8%).

Some 10.3% of the singles had never been married, and 7.5% had been married previously. The highest percent of subjects (66.4%) were employed outside the home. The income range for the respondents was under \$10,000 to over \$50,000, with the highest number of respondents reporting income from \$26,000 to over \$50,000 (64.4%). In the area of education, 3.3% completed only elementary school; 39.7%, high school; 9.8%, junior college; 29.9%, college; and 16.8% had done graduate work. A review of the data revealed that a majority of the subjects attended services Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night (76.2%), with 14.5% attending only Sunday morning and Sunday night, and 6.5% of the respondents attending only Sunday morning. A more detailed presentation and inspection of the demographic variables is given in Chapter Five.

It is of note that more than half of all respondents indicated that they had already participated in the activities being studied prior to the beginning of this project. This indicates that the sample under examination exhibited a high degree of evangelism at the outset of the project.

#### Instrument Development

A review of the literature indicated that no appropriately developed instrument was available which would obtain the specific demographic, work, and family data, as well as data concerning members' perceptions of evangelism.

Therefore, a structured questionnaire was designed by the researcher which would measure those variables (Appendix C). The questionnaire consisted of two major parts. In part I, the subjects responded to demographic type questions, such as sex, marital status, work situation, education, church attendance, and income. The second part of the test, The Evangelical Opinion Questionnaire (EOQ), measured their the opinions, feelings, and judgments concerning the belief and practices relating to the mission of the church. Section one measured the attitudes of members toward other members of the congregation. A five-point Likert format was used with classifications being strongly agree, moderately agree, moderately disagree, strongly disagree, don't know.

In the second section of EOQ, the subjects were asked to rate the importance or unimportance of worship, involvement in community issues, teaching children, and sharing the good news of the gospel with those not members of the church. A three-point Likert format was employed with response categories being very important, somewhat important, and little or no importance.

The next two sections of EOQ measured personal attitudes toward certain activities of the church and called upon the subjects to indicate their levels of participation in these activities. The categories appraised were (1) teaching Bible classes, (2) talking with others about

their spiritual condition, (3) teaching persons in private situations, (4) praying for the lost, (5) developing opportunities to know the members of the congregation better, (6) inviting the nonchurched as one's guest to the services, (7) showing personal concern for others, and (8) reflecting on personal influences that caused them to choose Roebuck to be their church home.

The final section examined (1) attitudes concerning the most important work done by the congregation, (2) special motivational factors that influence the sharing of the gospel, (3) the occasions when the subject most often told the gospel message, and (4) the subjects' emotional responses when narrating the gospel to outsiders.

### Questionnaire-Development Study

#### Pilot Study

A questionnaire-development study was conducted during the summer of 1989 to refine data-gathering techniques and ensure that the design was appropriate to the questions proposed and data gathered. This pretest instrument was administered to the seven shepherds of the congregation, the associate minister, two secretaries, and an American Sign Language Specialist. The questionnaire was submitted to two experts in the field of attitude analysis: a university professor and author and a doctoral student who taught analysis on the college level. These people examined the



items of the instrument for clarity and content validity. Two changes were made in the wording to improve the clarity of the statements at their suggestion. No difficulties were encountered in administering the test.

### Procedures

The first administration of the EOQ occurred in September of 1989. The posttest was administered in December, 1989, following the 13-week treatment which consisted of delivering the 10 sermons on the theme of evangelism.

### Sermons

A major part of the project was a series of sermons on the theme of evangelism (Appendix D). The precise topics and a brief synopsis of each follows.

Sermon number one, "The Roebuck Dream," began by quoting Langton Hughes, "Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken winged bird that cannot fly,"<sup>30</sup> to introduce the topic of the importance of dreams. Caleb's dreams make him a memorable figure to most Bible students. His dreams inspired action. He said, ". . . let us go at once." He added, ". . . we are well able to overcome it" (Numbers 13:30). Using God's declaration "Your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:17) as a springboard for the discussion, the sermon

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid. Dale, 33.

reminded the congregation that the founding dream of Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ was evangelism.

Sermon number two showed that God's mission has always been to evangelize His world. If Roebuck Parkway has forgotten her founding dream of evangelism, then the mission of God has been forgotten. God's message to the Jews was defeated by legalism and an inward turning. Roebuck had fallen prey to these same deterrents. Finally there was a discussion of the motivation of evangelism. Improper motivation included exchanging evangelism for what Johnson called "evangelicalism," by limiting concern to middle and upper class Alabamians, and by the desiring things for convenience or expedience.

Sermon number three showed that the early Christians envisioned the dream of the gospel being taught throughout the ancient world. The environment enhanced this dream. Rome offered peace and roads, Greece contributed culture and language, and Judaism offered a religious format and nurturing parent. The circumstances are compatible in this environment. There was flexibility in their approach, but the message was a crucified and raised savior everywhere the early Christians went. Roebuck needs to follow their method, their enthusiasm, and their commitment.

Sermon number four showed the nature and repugnance of sin. It discussed Biblical examples and experiences from

life emphasizing the atrocity, inhumanity, and outrage of sin. The primary text was taken from Isaiah 1:2-8. The lesson stressed the importance of realizing the horrors of the disease of sin, for without this realization, Christians will not attempt to offer the remedy of the Great Physician.

Sermon number five was a lesson entitled "Love for Souls." This sermon offered a definition of "a soul." Again and again there was a concentrated effort to compare the great loss of life in the 1989 earthquake with the eternal loss of man's most precious possession. The Scriptures argue for the value of man's soul from three vantages: (1) the soul is important because it came from God; (2) the soul is important because it is eternal in duration; and (3) the soul is important because of the price tag God placed on it. This sermon reiterated Jesus' statement in Mark 8:38 and appealed to the church to love souls as those around Oakland loved their fellowman.

Sermon number six discussed the power of evangelism. The book of Acts, which so vividly portrayed the evangelistic fervor of the early Christians, shows that the source of their power was prayer. Prayer gave them power to speak with boldness; prayer gave them power to dream great dreams; and prayer gave them power to access the providence of God. The lesson was not simply a study of the place of prayer in the lives of the early Christians, but also a reminder of what power prayer has for Christians today.

Sermon number seven was the message of evangelism. God could have come with great might, but He chose to come quietly in the incarnation of Jesus. The message for evangelism is not baptism, or some cleverly devised gimmick, but is Jesus. Jesus will never be the source of embarrassment like many world leaders. Jesus has a great throne, but his strength and life are worthy of emulation.

Sermon number eight, entitled "The How of Evangelism," was the practical sermon of the series. The text was John 1:35ff., and the lesson was based on the evangelistic methods of Andrew. Andrew realized converts are made one by one; he was enthusiastic; he started with what he knew; and he brought his friends to Jesus. The appeal is for Christians to imitate his marvelous example.

Sermon number nine was a narrative lesson using inductive movement. The theme was the worth of the kingdom as taught in the parables showing Jesus' kingdom dream (Matthew 13:44-46). A small box was placed before the congregation and various offers were made for its contents. Finally the treasure was purchased for everything owned by the finder. The application, though never actually stated, was that apparently the kingdom is worth everything.

Sermon number ten was a summation of the entire series. It reminded the listener that the gospel is for all and described why Roebuck members should enthusiastically share the gospel with all. This motivational sermon challenged

members to have a sense of responsibility, a sense of concern, and a sense of appreciation. The lesson was more than just informational in nature, for it recalled the price of redemption. It attempted to refocus our dream back to evangelism.

#### Data Analysis

Differences in attitudes were assessed by computing differences in the percentage of individuals responding to the items on the pretest and posttest. A 10% change from pre- to posttest was considered a significant change, especially given the high pretest scores of this sample. A 5% change was considered a marginal change.

Data were analyzed for significance using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.<sup>31</sup>

#### Observational Data

In addition to the EOQ, data were collected through the use of a qualitative paradigm that relied on observational data, detailed description derived from the close contact of the researcher with the participants in the study, and holistic analysis.<sup>32</sup> According to Michael Q. Patton, the value of using observational data in the evaluation of a

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<sup>31</sup>Nie, Jenkins, Steinbrenner & Brent.

<sup>32</sup>Michael Quinn Patton, Utilization-Focused Evaluation (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1978), 203-204.

program is that it allows the evaluator to develop an in-depth understanding of how the people in the program reacted to what had occurred.<sup>33</sup> The observational data were collected through the use of a journal kept by the researcher.

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<sup>33</sup>Michael Quinn Patton, Qualitative Evaluation Methods (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1980), 124.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate if there was a significant difference in attitude toward evangelism at the Roebuck congregation as a result of a series of sermons designed to change direction positively. The sample was made up of 105 members of the Roebuck congregation in the fall of 1989. The subjects completed the Evangelical Organization Questionnaire following the pre- and posttest design of the study.

#### Research Question

The rationale for obtaining answers to this study led to the development of the following research question and formed the basis for analyzing the responses. Do the attitudes of Roebuck members concerning evangelism differ as a result of a series of sermons? That is the central question addressed in this study.

The responses to 23 items of the EOQ were computed to determine whether or not significant differences in attitudes concerning evangelism existed. The data fall into three distinct categories: (a) members' attitudes

concerning the work of the congregation in the area of evangelism; (b) members' attitudes concerning personal responsibility; and (c) members' behavior.

#### Attitudes Concerning Congregation Involvement

Five items in the EOQ were designed to measure members' attitudes concerning congregational involvement. These items examined the organized program, preaching, foreign mission work, the role of church leaders, a ranking of program importance, and responsibility.

#### Need for Organized Program for Reaching Those Not Members of the Church of Christ

An organizational concept is important because such structure assists in maintaining the focus of the dream and also because God's design included this organizational emphasis. Table 1 presents the responses to this item.

It is the consensus of the results of the data on church growth that evangelism which originates from within is superior to that which comes after one has been urged. It is further agreed that churches which combine both an evangelism which has become almost second nature to the Christian along with an organized effort are most productive.<sup>1</sup> Although the sermons in this project gave emphasis to the former philosophy, there was also encouragement to have an organized program for this congregation. Findings

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur G. McPhee, Friendship Evangelism (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1945), 50-63.



Table 1

Need for an Organized Program by Group, Gender,  
Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses	Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Total Group	65.7	75.2	9.5
Gender			
Male	65.2	71.4	6.2
Female	65.6	78.2	12.7
Age			
≤ 35	54.5	45.5	9.0
> 35	58.1	66.7	8.6
Educational Level			
≤ High School	66.7	76.2	9.5
> High School	66.1	73.8	7.7
Income			
≤ \$25,000.00	56.3	66.7	11.4
> \$26,000.00	70.6	80.6	10.0
Services			
Sunday A.M.	83.3	87.5	4.2
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	58.8	73.3	14.5
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	65.8	73.4	7.6

of this study indicated that an extremely high marginal change (9.5%) did occur. It is interesting to note that the greatest margin of change (12.7%) occurred in the female respondents of the study. This change could be attributed to the fact that a large number of females became aware that the congregation had no organized evangelistic program.

### Preaching to Those Not Members

An additional component of the organized program of the church is preaching. This project has given much emphasis to the value of preaching in God's plan. Preaching is recognized as a viable method for promoting attitude change both to the unchurched and those in God's family. In this study a particular emphasis was shown for the need of preaching to non-members. The percentages for the responses are presented in Table 2.

Findings of this study indicated a significant change of attitude (10.9%) in the respondents. Not a single variable fell below the marginal significant change (5%), and most were above the significant change factor (10%). The change factor of the female subjects was almost three times greater than that of their counterparts. Perhaps this indicates their sensitivity to general concern for all humanity. The greatest change of attitude occurred in those who attended only the Sunday morning assemblies. A possible explanation might be that they recognized the weaknesses in their own lives and, therefore, are more responsive to attitude change. This would be in agreement with the principle that those encountering obstacles tend to be more sympathetic to fellow sufferers.

### Whose Responsibility is Evangelism?

Since the days when Adam found it easier to excuse himself by attributing responsibility to another, mankind

Table 2

Preaching to Those Not Members by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses	Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Total Group	67.0	77.9	10.9
Gender			
Male	66.0	71.4	5.4
Female	69.1	83.3	14.2
Age			
≤ 35	58.1	66.7	8.6
> 35	71.4	81.7	10.3
Educational Level			
≤ High School	66.7	84.5	18.7
> High School	66.7	75.4	8.7
Income			
≤ \$25,000.00	68.8	81.8	13.0
> \$26,000.00	66.7	82.0	15.3
Services			
Sunday A.M.	57.1	85.7	28.6
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	76.5	93.3	14.8
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	64.5	75.9	11.4

has often looked to others instead of himself. Two items on the EOQ measured attitude change by asking if the subjects would attempt to seek solace by shifting responsibility to congregational leaders. A summary of the responses is presented in Tables 3 and 4.

An inspection of the data reveals that most of the subjects (82.6%) believe that church leaders should share the gospel with the unchurched. Perhaps this large

Table 3

Leaders Sharing the Gospel by Group, Gender, Age,  
Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses	Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Total Group	82.6	86.4	3.8
Gender			
Male	90.7	89.4	-1.3
Female	73.8	83.6	-9.8
Age			
≤ 35	83.3	86.7	-3.4
> 35	83.3	87.1	+3.4
Educational Level			
≤ High School	75.0	82.9	+7.9
> High School	86.8	90.0	+3.2
Income			
≤ \$25,000.00	76.9	84.4	+7.5
> \$26,000.00	84.7	90.2	+5.5
Services			
Sunday A.M.	80.0	75.0	-5.0
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	78.6	86.7	+8.1
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	84.6	88.3	+3.7

Table 4

Greatest Responsibility of Sharing the Gospel by Group,  
Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Total Group</b>				
Deacons	1	1.0	0.0	-1.0
Elders	2	5.2	1.1	-4.1
Preachers	3	7.2	0.0	-7.2
All members	4	84.5	97.7	+7.2
Others	5	2.1	1.1	-1.0
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Male</b>				
	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2	50.0	50.0	0.0
	3	9.3	0.0	-9.3
	4	86.0	97.7	+11.7
	5	2.3	0.0	-2.3
<b>Female</b>				
	1	1.9	0.0	-1.9
	2	7.5	0.0	-7.5
	3	5.7	0.0	-5.7
	4	83.0	100.0	+17.0
	5	1.9	0.0	-1.9
<b>Age</b>				
<b>≤ 35</b>				
	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2	0.0	0.0	0.0
	3	6.7	0.0	-6.7
	4	90.0	100.0	+10.0
	5	3.3	0.0	-3.3
<b>&gt; 35</b>				
	1	1.5	0.0	-1.5
	2	6.2	1.7	-4.5
	3	7.7	0.0	-7.7
	4	83.1	98.3	+15.2
	5	1.5	0.0	-1.5
<b>Educational Level</b>				
<b>≤ High School</b>				
	1	2.5	0.0	-2.5
	2	7.5	0.0	-7.5
	3	7.5	0.0	-7.5
	4	80.0	97.1	+17.1
	5	2.5	2.9	+0.4

Table 4, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %	
> High School	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	
	2	3.6	1.9	-1.7	
	3	5.4	0.0	-5.4	
	4	89.3	98.1	+8.8	
	5	1.8	0.0	-1.8	
Income	≤ \$25,000.00	1	3.3	0.0	-3.3
		2	6.7	0.0	-6.7
		3	6.7	0.0	-6.7
		4	80.0	96.2	+16.2
		5	3.3	3.8	+0.5
	> \$26,000.00	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
		2	4.6	1.8	-2.8
		3	7.7	0.0	-7.7
		4	86.2	98.2	+12.0
		5	1.5	0.0	-1.5
Services	Sunday A.M.	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
		2	14.3	0.0	-14.3
		3	0.0	0.0	0.0
		4	85.7	100.0	+14.3
		5	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Sunday A.M. & P.M.	1	6.3	0.0	-6.3
		2	6.3	0.0	-6.3
		3	25.0	0.0	-25.0
		4	62.5	90.9	+38.4
		5	0.0	9.1	+9.1
	Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
		2	4.2	1.4	-2.8
		3	2.8	0.0	-2.8
		4	90.1	98.6	+8.5
		5	2.8	0.0	-2.8

percentage accounts for the lack of significant difference in attitude change (3.8%). However, a change (9.4%) in attitude was noted as the data revealed that members were

assuming more personal accountability and assigning less to church leaders.

#### Important Works of the Church

It is generally accepted that in recent years there has been a major shift in religious organizations toward societal concerns. Traditionally, Churches of Christ have given major emphasis to the areas of benevolence, edification, and evangelism. An item of the EOQ was designed to investigate whether the importance ranking of the work done by this congregation would change as a result of the sermons.

A review of responses concerning the important work done by the congregation reveals a major shift in attitude was away from benevolence (-8.7%) and religious training for children (-9.9%) to evangelism (16.0%). The subgroups which indicated the greatest change on this item were those in the age category 35 and under (23.5%) and those with lower incomes (38.3%). The general body of knowledge about attitude change indicates that younger persons and those with lower income are more open to new ideas.

Table 5

Important Works of the Church by Group, Gender,  
Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Total Group</b>				
Helping needy	1	11.8	2.9	-8.7
Worship	2	12.7	11.7	-1.0
Teaching gospel	3	57.8	73.8	+16.0
Politics	4	16.7	6.8	-9.9
Training children	5	1.0	2.9	+1.9
Others	6	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Male</b>				
	1	4.3	4.2	-0.1
	2	13.0	10.4	-2.6
	3	67.4	77.1	+9.7
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	13.0	4.2	-8.8
	6	2.2	4.2	+2.0
<b>Female</b>				
	1	18.2	1.9	-17.3
	2	12.7	13.0	-0.3
	3	49.1	70.4	+19.3
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	20.0	93	-10.7
	6	0.0	100.0	+100.0
<b>Age</b>				
<b>≤ 35</b>				
	1	12.9	3.4	-9.5
	2	16.1	6.9	-9.2
	3	54.8	79.3	+24.5
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	16.1	3.4	-12.7
	6	0.0	6.9	+6.9
<b>&gt; 35</b>				
	1	8.7	2.8	-5.9
	2	11.6	14.1	+2.5
	3	60.9	70.4	+9.5
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	17.4	8.5	-8.9
	6	1.4	1.4	0.0



Table 5, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Educational Level</b>				
$\leq$ High School				
	1	14.6	2.4	-12.2
	2	17.1	16.7	-0.4
	3	53.7	71.4	+17.7
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	14.6	4.8	-9.8
	6	0.0	2.4	+2.4
$>$ High School				
	1	8.3	3.4	-4.9
	2	10.0	8.5	-1.5
	3	61.7	76.3	+14.6
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	18.3	8.5	-9.8
	6	1.7	3.4	+1.7
<b>Income</b>				
$\leq$ \$25,000.00				
	1	25.0	3.0	-22.0
	2	21.9	15.2	-6.7
	3	37.5	75.8	+38.3
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	15.6	3.0	-12.6
	6	0.0	3.0	+3.0
$>$ \$26,000.00				
	1	5.9	3.3	-2.6
	2	7.4	11.7	+4.3
	3	67.6	73.3	+5.7
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	17.6	8.3	-9.3
	6	1.5	1.7	+0.2
<b>Services</b>				
Sunday A.M.				
	1	0.0	12.5	+12.5
	2	16.7	25.0	+8.3
	3	66.7	50.0	-16.7
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	16.7	12.5	-4.2
	6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sunday A.M. & P.M.				
	1	35.3	7.1	-28.2
	2	23.5	14.3	-9.2
	3	41.2	71.4	+30.2
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	0.0	7.1	+7.1
	6	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 5, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	1	6.6	1.3	-5.3
	2	10.5	10.3	-0.2
	3	60.5	76.9	+16.4
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	21.1	6.4	-14.7
	6	1.3	3.8	+2.5

#### Personal Commitment and Involvement

Results of the study support accepted research findings which conclude that attitude change occurs more readily in this area. The data herein confirms that it is more difficult to change attitude when focus is directed to the personal aspects of the individual's Christian life.

#### Supporting Foreign Evangelism

Jesus instructed his followers not to limit evangelism to their immediate environment. Of the 105 respondents, only a few (2.0%) considered contribution to foreign mission activities to be of little importance. Members at Roebuck do believe that preaching in foreign areas is a matter of high priority and that it is their responsibility to support these efforts through their personal contributions, as indicated in Table 6.

As noted in Table 6, a moderate change of attitude in supporting foreign evangelism (5.9%) occurred. The subgroup which showed the greatest change on this item was the males

Table 6

Supporting Foreign Evangelism by Groups, Gender,  
Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses	Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Total Group	63.7	69.6	+5.9
Gender			
Male	55.6	70.4	+14.8
Female	92.7	96.3	+3.6
Age			
≤ 35	54.8	60.0	+5.2
> 35	69.6	73.9	4.3
Educational Level			
≤ High School	61.0	70.7	+9.7
> High School	66.7	71.2	+4.5
Income			
≤ \$25,000.00	62.5	71.0	+8.5
> \$26,000.00	64.7	75.4	+10.7
Services			
Sunday A.M.	60.0	85.7	+25.7
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	47.1	53.3	+6.2
Sunday A.M., P.M. Wed.	67.5	72.7	+5.2

(14.8%). This might be explained by the large number of men who have participated in campaign efforts in Central America, the men who have served in the military, and those who are involved in business which necessitates foreign travel. Further, the findings indicate that more change occurred in participants with less education (9.7%) and infrequent attendance (25.7%) as opposed to those with higher education (4.5%) and regular attendance (5.2%). Only in the area of income was there a reversal of this trend.

More change was noted in respondents with higher income (25.7%) as opposed to those with lower income (8.5%).

#### Training Classes

It is not enough to desire to do more evangelism; it is also important to understand the method which would enhance success. One who is serious about becoming more evangelistic must be willing to increase his or her skills in this area through training. Are members at Roebuck willing to make such a commitment? Answers to this question are presented in Table 7.

These findings give a clear indication that the treatment did not promote a positive attitude change. In fact, the total group findings indicated a negative attitude change (-5.0%). No dissimilarity was noted in the subgroups, as each scored a negative percentage. The message seems to be very clear; i.e., there is a feeling by the participants that a class on evangelism is not desirable. Explanation for this negative response could include statements that members were made to feel guilty for not attending such classes when they were being conducted. A second and more positive explanation may be that they already feel proficient in doing evangelism. Results from an additional item on the subject of training classes led the researcher to conclude that respondents did not feel the need for a weekly class.

Table 7Training Classes by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses	Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Total Group	71.6	66.0	-5.0
Gender			
Male	66.0	53.2	-2.8
Female	77.8	76.4	-1.4
Age			
≤ 35	67.7	56.7	-11.0
> 35	73.9	68.6	-5.3
Educational Level			
≤ High School	76.2	70.7	-5.5
> High School	67.8	61.7	-6.9
Income			
≤ \$25,000.00	75.0	62.5	-12.5
> \$26,000.00	69.1	67.2	-1.9
Services			
Sunday A.M.	100.0	37.5	-72.5
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	50.0	33.3	-16.7
Sunday A.M., P.M. Wed.	74.0	72.7	1.3

Personal Attitudes Toward Evangelism

Centuries ago, the wise man Solomon stated that a man is the product of his thinking (Proverbs 4:23). In order to be evangelistic, the Christian must genuinely believe that evangelism is extremely important. Members of the Church of Christ generally believe that the gospel is the power of redemption (Romans 1:16); that men without the gospel are lost (I Thessalonians 1:7-9); and that Christians are to be

the agents who offer this message to their fellowman. Five items in the EOQ focus on members' personal feelings about evangelism and investigate whether attitude change occurred. The results of these analyses are given in Tables 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12.

Table 8

Sharing the Good News of the Gospel by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses	Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Total Group	95.1	93.2	-1.9
Gender			
Male	93.6	93.6	0.0
Female	92.7	96.3	+3.6
Age			
≤ 35	93.5	96.7	+3.2
> 35	95.7	91.4	-4.3
Educational Level			
≤ High School	100.0	97.6	-2.4
> High School	91.7	91.7	0.0
Income			
≤ \$25,000.00	93.9	93.8	-0.1
> \$26,000.00	95.6	93.4	-2.2
Services			
Sunday A.M.	100.0	75.0	-25.0
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	100.0	100.0	0.0
Sunday A.M., P.M. Wed.	93.4	94.8	+1.4

Evangelism is considered to be an important aspect of serving God. One may believe in evangelistic efforts for others, but what about one's belief in personal involvement? Findings in Table 8 indicate that no significant attitude

change was produced on this topic by the ten sermons which were preached. When participants were questioned about their feelings concerning the importance of sharing the good news of the gospel with those not members of the Church of Christ, there was no significant change (-1,9%).

A similar response was noted when they were asked to rank the importance of talking to one's neighbors about Jesus and the Bible (1.8%) and is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Talking to One's Neighbor by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses	Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Total Group	.2	87.4	-1.8
Gender			
Male	83.0	78.7	-4.3
Female	94.4	94.5	+0.1
Age			
< 35	90.3	90.0	+0.3
> 35	88.4	85.7	-2.7
Educational Level			
≤ High School	90.2	85.4	-4.8
> High School	88.3	88.3	0.0
Income			
≤ \$25,000.00	90.6	87.5	-3.1
> \$26,000.00	88.2	85.2	-3.0
Services			
Sunday A.M.	80.0	62.5	-18.5
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	94.1	66.7	-27.4
Sunday A.M., P.M. Wed.	89.6	93.5	+3.9

Support of these results was noted when the responses to a similar item was computed. Those data are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Talking with Others by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Total Group</b>				
Very important	1	76.9	87.5	+10.6
Somewhat important	2	23.1	10.6	-12.5
Unimportant	3	0.0	1.9	+1.9
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Male</b>				
	1	70.2	77.4	+7.2
	2	29.8	18.4	-11.4
	3	0.0	4.1	+4.1
<b>Female</b>				
	1	82.1	96.3	+4.2
	2	17.9	3.7	-14.2
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Age</b>				
<b>≤ 35</b>				
	1	71.0	76.7	+5.7
	2	29.0	20.0	-9.0
	3	0.0	3.3	+3.3
<b>&gt; 35</b>				
	1	51.7	91.5	+9.8
	2	18.3	7.0	-11.3
	3	0.0	1.4	+1.4
<b>Educational Level</b>				
<b>≤ High School</b>				
	1	83.7	92.9	+9.2
	2	16.3	7.1	-9.2
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>&gt; High School</b>				
	1	71.7	85.0	+13.3
	2	28.3	11.7	-16.6
	3	0.0	3.3	+3.3



Table 10, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Income</b>				
≤ \$25,000.00	1	81.8	96.9	+15.1
	2	18.2	3.1	-15.1
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
> \$26,000.00	1	73.9	82.3	+8.4
	2	26.1	14.5	-11.6
	3	0.0	3.2	+3.2
<b>Services</b>				
Sunday A.M.	1	85.7	85.7	0.0
	2	14.3	14.3	0.0
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	1	70.6	80.0	+9.4
	2	29.4	13.3	-16.1
	3	0.0	6.7	+6.7
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	1	77.9	89.9	+12.0
	2	22.1	8.9	-13.2
	3	0.0	1.3	+1.3

Teaching the Bible in private situations also showed no significant change (very important, 1.8%; somewhat important, -2.7%; and of little or no importance, 1.0%).

Table 11 presents these data.

Table 11

Teaching the Bible in Private Situations by Group,  
Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Total Group</b>				
Very important	1	82.7	84.5	+1.8
Somewhat important	2	17.3	14.6	-2.7
Unimportant	3	0.0	1.0	+1.0
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Male</b>				
	1	76.6	79.6	+3.0
	2	23.4	18.4	-5.0
	3	0.0	2.0	+2.0
<b>Female</b>				
	1	89.3	88.7	-0.6
	2	10.7	11.3	+0.6
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Age</b>				
<b>≤ 35</b>				
	1	71.0	73.3	+2.3
	2	29.0	23.3	-5.7
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>&gt; 35</b>				
	1	88.7	88.6	-0.1
	2	11.3	11.4	+0.4
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Educational Level</b>				
<b>≤ High School</b>				
	1	83.7	90.2	+6.5
	2	16.3	9.8	-6.5
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>&gt; High School</b>				
	1	81.7	81.7	0.0
	2	18.3	16.7	-1.6
	3	0.0	1.7	+1.7
<b>Income</b>				
<b>≤ \$25,000.00</b>				
	1	93.9	93.8	-0.1
	2	6.1	6.3	+0.2
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>&gt; \$26,000.00</b>				
	1	79.7	82.0	+2.3
	2	20.3	16.4	-3.9
	3	0.0	1.6	+1.6

Table 11, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Services				
Sunday A.M.	1	85.7	100.0	+14.3
	2	14.3	0.0	-14.3
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	1	70.6	73.3	+2.7
	2	29.4	20.0	-9.4
	3	0.0	6.7	+6.7
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	1	85.7	85.9	+0.2
	2	14.3	14.1	-0.2
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0

In this area of the EQQ, only one item showed a high marginal change. An inspection of Table 12 reveals that the importance of teaching the Bible on a personal basis showed a positive change of 9.4%

An explanation of these results can be better understood by an analysis of the attitudinal view of the total group. An examination of the pretest scores reveals that 90% believed evangelism to be important. This left little room for significant change.

Table 12

Teaching the Bible on A Personal Basis by Group, Gender,  
Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Total Group</b>				
Bible classes	1	28.0	21.8	-6.2
Sermons	2	13.0	11.9	-1.1
Television and radio	3	6.0	5.0	-1.0
Printed material	4	2.0	1.0	-1.0
Personal	5	49.0	58.4	+9.4
Other	6	2.0	2.0	0.0
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Male</b>				
	1	34.0	20.4	-9.6
	2	10.6	10.2	-0.4
	3	6.4	6.1	-0.3
	4	0.0	2.0	+2.0
	5	46.8	59.2	+12.4
	6	2.1	2.0	-0.1
<b>Female</b>				
	1	23.1	23.5	+0.4
	2	15.4	13.7	-1.7
	3	5.8	3.9	-1.9
	4	3.8	0.0	-3.8
	5	50.0	56.9	+6.9
	6	1.9	2.0	+0.1
<b>Age</b>				
<b>≤ 35</b>				
	1	29.0	26.7	-2.3
	2	12.9	6.7	-6.2
	3	9.7	10.0	+0.3
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	45.2	50.0	+4.8
	6	3.2	6.7	+3.5
<b>&gt; 35</b>				
	1	28.4	20.6	-7.8
	2	13.4	14.7	+1.3
	3	4.5	2.9	-1.6
	4	3.0	1.5	-1.5
	5	49.3	60.3	+11.0
	6	1.5	0.0	-1.5

Table 12, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Educational Level</b>				
≤ High School				
	1	28.2	20.5	-7.7
	2	25.6	17.9	-7.7
	3	2.6	7.7	+5.1
	4	5.1	2.6	-2.5
	5	35.9	48.5	+12.6
	6	2.6	2.6	0.0
> High School				
	1	28.3	21.7	-6.6
	2	5.0	8.3	+3.3
	3	6.7	3.3	-3.4
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	58.3	65.0	+6.7
	6	1.7	1.7	0.0
<b>Income</b>				
≤ \$25,000.00				
	1	24.2	18.8	-5.4
	2	15.2	12.5	-2.7
	3	3.0	0.0	-3.0
	4	3.0	0.0	-3.0
	5	51.5	62.5	+11.0
	6	3.0	6.3	+3.3
> \$26,000.00				
	1	30.3	25.4	-4.9
	2	10.6	10.2	-0.4
	3	7.6	6.8	-0.8
	4	1.5	1.7	+0.2
	5	48.5	55.9	+7.4
	6	1.5	0.0	-1.5
<b>Services</b>				
Sunday A.M.				
	1	28.6	12.5	-16.1
	2	42.9	0.0	-42.9
	3	0.0	12.5	+12.5
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	28.6	75.0	+46.4
	6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sunday A.M. & P.M.				
	1	11.8	14.3	+2.5
	2	29.4	14.3	-15.1
	3	17.6	21.4	+3.8
	4	5.9	0.0	-5.9
	5	35.3	50.0	+14.7
	6	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 12, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	1	30.1	22.4	-7.7
	2	6.8	13.2	+6.4
	3	4.1	1.3	-2.8
	4	1.4	1.3	-0.1
	5	54.9	59.2	+4.4
	6	2.7	2.6	-0.1

### Motivations for Evangelism

There are a number of possible motivational factors for evangelism, i.e., fear, duty, concern for the lost, joy of seeing lives altered, rewards after this life. The EOQ contains four items which are concerned with motivations for evangelism. The following is a discussion of these items with computed data presented in Tables 13, 14, 15, and 16.

An inspection of the pretest findings indicates that the primary motivator for practicing evangelism was personal reward in heaven (42.0%). The second most popular motivational factor was appreciation for all God's blessings (20.0%), with concern for the well-being of others (13.0%) being third. Several of the sermons in this study indicated the atrocious nature of sin. Perhaps this is reflected in the marginal change in the motivational factor "what will happen to friends and loved ones" (5.0%). The strongest shift, though it, too, was only marginal, was the item of appreciation for salvation (7.9%).

Table 13

Motivation For Evangelism by Group, Gender,  
Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Total Group</b>				
Help world	1	7.0	6.7	-0.3
Commanded	2	6.0	3.8	-2.2
Fear for others	3	13.0	13.5	+0.5
Fear for self	4	3.0	1.9	-1.1
Personal satis- faction	5	9.0	7.7	-1.3
Heavenly rewrđ	6	42.0	38.5	-3.5
Gratitude	7	20.0	27.9	+7.9
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Male</b>				
	1	4.3	4.1	-0.2
	2	6.5	2.0	-4.5
	3	13.0	16.3	+3.3
	4	2.2	2.0	-0.2
	5	10.9	14.3	+3.4
	6	41.3	34.8	-7.6
	7	21.7	26.5	+4.8
<b>Female</b>				
	1	9.4	9.3	-0.1
	2	5.7	5.6	-0.1
	3	13.2	11.1	-2.1
	4	3.8	1.9	-1.9
	5	7.5	1.9	-5.6
	6	41.5	42.6	+1.1
	7	18.9	27.8	+8.9
<b>Age</b>				
<b>≤ 35</b>				
	1	3.2	6.7	+3.5
	2	12.9	6.7	-6.2
	3	6.5	20.0	+13.5
	4	6.5	3.3	-3.2
	5	6.5	3.3	-3.2
	6	48.4	46.7	-1.7
	7	16.1	13.3	-2.8
<b>&gt; 35</b>				
	1	9.0	7.0	-2.0
	2	3.0	2.8	-0.2
	3	14.9	11.3	-3.6
	4	1.5	1.4	-0.1
	5	10.4	9.9	-0.5
	6	40.3	35.2	-5.1
	7	20.9	32.4	+11.5

Table 13, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Educational Level</b>				
<u>≤ High School</u>				
	1	10.1	17.1	+7.1
	2	7.5	4.9	-2.6
	3	5.0	9.8	+4.8
	4	2.5	2.4	-0.1
	5	12.5	4.9	-7.6
	6	45.0	34.1	-10.9
	7	17.5	26.8	+9.3
> High School				
	1	5.0	0.0	-5.0
	2	5.0	3.3	-1.7
	3	18.3	16.4	-1.9
	4	3.3	1.6	-1.7
	5	6.7	8.2	+1.5
	6	40.0	41.0	+1.0
	7	21.7	29.5	*7.8
<b>Income</b>				
<u>≤ \$25,000.00</u>				
	1	6.7	9.1	+2.4
	2	6.7	6.1	-0.6
	3	10.0	15.2	+5.2
	4	3.3	3.0	-0.3
	5	6.7	3.0	-3.7
	6	43.3	30.3	-13.0
	7	23.3	33.3	+10.0
\$26,000.00				
	1	5.9	4.9	-1.0
	2	5.9	1.6	-4.3
	3	14.7	14.8	+0.1
	4	2.9	1.6	-1.3
	5	10.3	8.2	-2.1
	6	41.2	42.6	+1.4
	7	19.1	26.2	+7.1
<b>Services</b>				
Sunday A.M				
	1	0.0	14.3	-14.3
	2	14.3	14.3	0.0
	3	0.0	28.6	+28.6
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	0.0	0.0	0.0
	6	57.1	14.3	-42.8
	7	28.6	28.6	0.0



Table 13, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	1	6.7	13.6	+6.6
	2	6.7	6.7	0.0
	3	0.0	6.7	+6.7
	4	13.3	6.7	-6.6
	5	0.0	13.3	+13.3
	6	60.0	40.0	-20.0
	7	13.3	13.3	0.0
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	1	6.7	5.1	-1.6
	2	5.3	2.5	-2.8
	3	17.3	13.9	-4.4
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	12.0	6.3	-5.7
	6	37.3	40.5	+13.2
	7	21.3	31.6	+10.3

Is obedience to the will of God essential to salvation?  
Or will God save those who do not obey His will? Table 14  
is the computed data for the item concerning who will be  
lost.

Table 14

Who Will Be Lost by Group, Gender, Age,  
Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Total Group				
All saved	1	3.0	3.0	0.0
Obedient	2	97.0	97.0	0.0
Gender				
Male	1	4.3	2.0	-2.3
	2	95.7	98.0	+2.3
Female	1	1.9	3.8	+1.9
	2	98.1	96.2	-1.9

Table 14, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Age</b>				
≤ 35	1	3.3	3.3	0.0
	2	96.7	96.7	0.0
> 35	1	3.0	2.9	-0.1
	2	97.0	97.1	+0.1
<b>Educational Level</b>				
≤ High School	1	0.0	100.0	+100.0
	2	100.0	92.5	-7.5
> High School	1	100.0	0.0	-100.0
	2	96.6	100.0	+3.4
<b>Income</b>				
≤ \$25,000.00	1	3.2	3.1	-0.1
	2	96.8	96.9	+0.1
> \$26,000.00	1	3.0	1.7	-1.3
	2	97.0	98.3	+1.3
<b>Services</b>				
Sunday A.M.	1	14.3	0.0	-14.3
	2	87.5	100.0	+14.3
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	1	6.3	14.3	+8.0
	2	93.8	85.7	-8.1
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	1	1.4	1.3	-0.1
	2	98.6	98.7	+0.1

Responses made by the subjects on the pretest to this item reflect that 96.8% believed that all men who do not obey the will of God are lost. Therefore, there was insufficient room for significant attitude change.

The sermons in the series presented the idea that each Christian has a responsibility to warn his neighbor of the consequences of failure to accept God's will. Data collected through the EOQ reveal no change in conviction

regarding whether one will be held partly responsible for those who are lost if one does not teach them the gospel (pretest 82.7% and posttest 84.5%). This researcher has no explanation for this lack of change, for one of the lessons did endeavor to treat this issue. This is reflected in Table 15.

Table 15

Personal Accountability for Those Lost by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses	Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Total Group	98.0	96.1	-1.9
Gender			
Male	95.7	93.9	-1.9
Female	100.0	98.1	-1.9
Age			
≤ 35	96.8	93.3	-3.5
> 35	98.5	97.1	-1.4
Educational Level			
≤ High School	100.0	100.0	0.0
> High School	96.6	93.4	-3.2
Income			
≤ \$25,000.00	100.0	100.0	0.0
> \$26,000.00	97.1	95.1	-2.0
Services			
Sunday A.M.	83.3	85.7	+2.4
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	100.0	92.3	-7.7
Sunday A.M., P.M. Wed.	98.7	97.5	-1.2

There are two distinct views concerning reward for evangelism. One view indicates that Christians will be especially blessed for souls saved. The other view

indicates that all will receive the same reward. Table 16 reflects the data of these views.

As noted in Table 16 there was a marginal change of attitude (8.4%) indicated by the respondents following the ten sermons. This reflects the concept believed by many that the more people one teaches, the greater will be his/her heavenly reward.

Table 16

Reward for Evangelism by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Total Group</b>				
Greater reward	1	51.0	59.4	+8.4
Equal reward	2	49.0	40.6	-8.4
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	1	37.8	51.0	+13.2
	2	62.2	49.0	-13.2
Female	1	64.0	66.7	+2.7
	2	36.0	33.3	-2.7
<b>Age</b>				
≤ 35	1	22.6	33.3	+10.7
	2	77.4	66.7	-10.7
> 35	1	65.1	69.1	+4.0
	2	34.9	30.9	-4.0
<b>Educational Level</b>				
≤ High School	1	59.0	59.0	0.0
	2	41.0	41.0	0.0
> High School	1	48.6	58.3	+13.7
	2	55.4	41.7	-13.7

Table 16, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Income</b>				
≤ \$25,000.00	1	70.0	62.5	-7.5
	2	30.0	37.5	+7.5
> \$26,000.00	1	42.2	56.7	+14.5
	2	57.8	43.3	-14.5
<b>Services</b>				
Sunday A.M.	1	42.9	50.0	+7.1
	2	57.1	50.0	-7.1
Sunday A.M. & P.M	1	50.0	46.7	-3.3
	2	50.0	53.3	+3.3
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed	1	52.9	61.0	+8.1
	2	47.1	39.0	-8.1

### Praying for the Lost

Daily prayer is considered to be an important aspect of evangelism. Daily prayer may consist of praying for self, family, and other loved ones. However, a particularly important concern in this study was whether respondents included praying daily for some lost person. Table 17 presents these data.

Findings of this study show a group change of 7.7%. Subgroups which indicated the greatest change on this item were individuals under the age of 35 (18.5%) and those earning \$25,000.00 or less. Interestingly, those who attended services Sunday A.M. only reported a significant negative change (-14.0%). These findings appear to indicate that the attitudes of the young are more flexible than those

Table 17

Praying for the Lost by Group, Gender, Age,  
Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Total Group</b>				
Very important	1	92.3	94.2	+1.9
Somewhat important	2	7.7	4.8	-2.9
Unimportant	3	0.0	1.0	+1.0
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Male</b>				
	1	85.1	87.8	+2.7
	2	58.3	41.7	-16.6
	3	0.0	100.0	+100.0
<b>Female</b>				
	1	98.2	100.0	+1.8
	2	100.0	0.0	-100.0
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Age</b>				
<b>≤ 35</b>				
	1	90.3	93.3	+3.0
	2	9.7	3.3	-6.4
	3	0.0	3.3	+3.3
<b>&gt; 35</b>				
	1	93.0	94.4	+1.4
	2	7.0	5.6	-1.4
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Educational Level</b>				
<b>≤ High School</b>				
	1	93.0	95.2	+2.2
	2	7.0	4.8	-2.2
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>&gt; High School</b>				
	1	91.7	93.7	+1.6
	2	8.3	5.0	-3.3
	3	0.0	1.7	+1.7
<b>Income</b>				
<b>≤ \$25,000.00</b>				
	1	97.0	96.9	-1.0
	2	3.0	3.1	+0.1
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Income</b>				
<b>&gt; \$26,000.</b>				
	1	89.9	91.9	+2.0
	2	10.1	6.5	-3.6
	3	0.0	1.6	+1.6

Table 17, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Services</b>				
Sunday A.M.	1	100.0	85.7	-14.3
	2	0.0	14.3	+14.3
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	1	94.1	93.3	-1.8
	2	5.9	0.0	-5.9
	3	0.0	6.7	+6.7
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	1	92.2	94.9	+2.7
	2	7.8	5.1	-2.7
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0

of older people. They appear to have been more receptive to suggestions made in the sermons than were older individuals. This finding is in keeping with the general body of knowledge about attitude change: younger persons are often more open to new ideas and more willing to alter their behavior than are older persons. Further, those with lower incomes were more receptive to change on this item. A possible explanation might be that they have experienced hardships themselves and are thus more sensitive to hardships experienced by others. A negative change in the attitude of those who attend only on Sunday morning could be explained in two ways. (1) They may not have heard all of the sermons, or (2) they may have become defensive because of their lack of acceptance of responsibility.

### Attitude Change Reflected in Behavior Modification

Remmers, in his discussion of attitudes and behavior, stated, ". . . the basic criterion for validating opinion must be corresponding behavior."<sup>2</sup> H. C. Link and A. D. Freiberg, in their research of attitude change among large groups, also stressed the importance of the behavior consideration when they stated, "When one measures validity on a verbal level, the connection with actions must be established."<sup>3</sup>

There are eleven questions on the EOQ which note the pre- and posttest behavioral practices of the respondents. These items consider changes of attitude concerning (1) willingness of respondents to attend a class on evangelism, (2) willingness of respondents to talk about and share the gospel with friends and relatives, (3) the frequency of such sharing, (4) the methodology employed in the sharing of the gospel, and (5) the practice of prayer for those with whom the gospel is being shared.

#### Class on Evangelism

The treatment in this project gave emphasis to the need of proper training to be effective in evangelism. Yet, the survey gave clear indication that those tested did not

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<sup>2</sup>Remmers, 41.

<sup>3</sup>H. C. Link and A. D. Freiberg, "The Problem of Validity Versus Reliability in Public Opinion Polls," Public Opinion Quarterly 6 (June, 1942), 87-98.



desire a weekly commitment of their time to a class on evangelism. Table 18 illustrates these responses.

The respondents displayed a change in attitude against a class each week (-11.9%), with a marginal change in attitude favoring a class twice each month (8.6%). There are several factors that could explain the lack of interest in a weekly class on evangelism. (1) A large number of those surveyed have attended these classes previously and may not feel the need for such intensive additional training. (2) They may not desire a return to the degree of emphasis which in past years has created avoidance and is associated with guilt.<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that the largest degree of change (-18.7%) occurred among those in the income group earning \$25,000 and under. Perhaps this negative change reflects this group's growth toward independence.

Table 18

Class of Evangelism by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Total Group				
Never	1	6.3	5.0	-1.3
Seldom	2	3.2	7.0	+3.8
Once a month	3	23.2	24.0	+0.8
Twice a month	4	8.4	17.0	+8.6
Each week	5	58.9	47.0	-11.9

<sup>4</sup>Em Griffin, The Mind Changers (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1987), 63.

Table 18, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	1	9.1	8.5	-0.6
	2	6.8	6.4	-0.2
	3	27.3	27.7	+0.4
	4	4.5	14.9	+10.4
	5	52.3	42.6	-9.7
Female	1	4.0	1.9	-2.1
	2	0.0	7.5	+7.5
	3	20.0	20.8	+0.8
	4	12.0	18.9	+6.9
	5	64.0	50.9	-13.1
<b>Age</b>				
≤ 35	1	9.7	6.7	-3.0
	2	6.5	3.3	-3.2
	3	22.6	30.0	+7.4
	4	9.7	20.0	+10.3
	5	51.6	40.0	-11.6
> 35	1	4.8	4.4	-0.4
	2	1.6	8.8	+7.2
	3	23.8	22.1	-1.7
	4	7.9	13.2	+5.3
	5	61.9	51.5	-10.4
<b>Educational Level</b>				
≤ High School	1	5.6	5.1	-0.5
	2	2.8	7.7	+4.9
	3	19.4	20.5	+1.1
	4	2.8	10.3	+7.5
	5	69.4	56.4	-13.0
> High School	1	6.9	5.1	-1.8
	2	3.4	6.8	+3.4
	3	25.9	27.1	+1.2
	4	12.1	20.3	+8.2
	5	51.7	40.7	-11.0
<b>Income</b>				
≤ \$25,000.00	1	7.4	6.9	-0.5
	2	0.0	6.9	+6.9
	3	11.1	24.1	+13.0
	4	11.1	10.3	-0.8
	5	70.4	51.7	-18.7

Table 18, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
> \$26,000.00	1	6.1	4.9	-1.2
	2	4.5	6.6	+2.1
	3	28.8	23.0	-5.8
	4	7.6	18.0	+10.4
	5	53.0	47.5	-5.5
<b>Services</b>				
Sunday A.M.	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2	0.0	12.5	+12.5
	3	33.3	37.5	+4.2
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	66.7	50.0	-16.7
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	1	25.0	23.1	-1.9
	2	0.0	15.4	+15.4
	3	16.7	23.1	+6.4
	4	8.3	0.0	-8.3
	5	50.0	38.5	-11.5
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	1	2.7	2.6	-0.1
	2	4.1	5.3	+1.2
	3	24.3	23.7	-0.6
	4	9.5	19.7	+10.2
	5	59.5	48.7	-10.8

The Practice of Sharing the Gospel with Others

There are many ways the gospel may be communicated, i.e., newspapers, television, tracts, letters, etc., but in this project concern for the personal sharing of the gospel with others was emphasized. How often do members of the Roebuck congregation talk about Jesus to their friends and loved ones? Would they do the simple task of inviting another person to attend the services? The EOQ examines

such items and Table 19 presents the responses to the first point considered.

Table 19

Involved in Talking with Others by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses	Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Total Group	56.3	50.5	-5.8
Gender			
Male	53.2	57.1	+3.9
Female	58.2	45.1	-13.1
Age			
≤ 35	51.6	46.7	-4.9
> 35	57.1	51.5	-5.6
Educational Level			
≤ High School	47.6	38.5	-9.1
> High School	61.7	60.0	-1.7
Income			
≤ \$25,000.00	73.9	82.3	+8.4
> \$26,000.00	56.3	50.0	-6.3
Services			
Sunday A.M	50.0	85.7	+35.7
Sunday A.M. & P.	58.8	33.3	-25.5
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed	55.8	52.6	-3.2

This item exhibited a marginal loss for the total group after the sermons (5.8%), and a significant loss among the female respondents (-13.1). A possible explanation for this change could be that the subjects have become more keenly aware of what is meant by talking about Jesus with their neighbors. These sermons touched on the idea that many

people visit in the name of Jesus, but fail to touch on the topic of God and His work. They spend the the time in pleasantries or social talk.

### Involved in Teaching

As previously cited, most people do believe in the importance of teaching the word of God to others, but practice of those beliefs is the measure of the depth of such convictions. The item measured in Table 20 raises the issue of practice and profession.

Table 20

### Involved in Teaching by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses	Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Total Group	28.2	31.7	+3.5
Gender			
Male	27.7	30.6	+2.9
Female	29.1	32.7	+3.6
Age			
≤ 35	22.6	26.7	+4.1
> 35	30.0	31.9	+1.9
Educational Level			
≤ High Sc	16.3	30.8	+14.5
> High Sch	37.3	33.3	-4.0
Income			
≤ \$25,000.00	31.3	36.7	+5.4
> \$26,000.00	27.5	29.5	+2.0
Services			
Sunday A.M.	14.3	57.1	+42.8
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	29.4	35.7	+6.3
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	28.9	29.9	+1.0

This item reflects that before the sermons, slightly less than one-third of the reporting respondents on the pretest were involved in teaching others in a private setting (28.2%). Following the posttest, this figure had increased to 31.7%, while not statistically significant, the increase is interesting. There was a significant increase (14.5%) among those who had an educational level of high school or less.

#### Inviting Others to Attend

When one finds an activity of personal interest, whether it be a sporting event, concert, or church service, he/she wants to invite others to attend. This invitation reflects his/her attitude toward the activity. Table 21 reports the responses in reference to inviting others to attend church services.

Table 21

#### Inviting Others to Attend by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Total Group				
None	1	19.9	20.6	+1.6
One	2	20.0	15.7	-4.3
Two	3	22.0	20.6	-1.4
Three	4	13.0	12.7	-0.3
Above three	5	26.0	30.4	+4.4

Table 21, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	1	21.9	25.0	+3.3
	2	19.6	16.7	-2.9
	3	19.6	20.8	+1.2
	4	13.0	8.3	-4.7
	5	26.1	29.2	+3.1
Female	1	15.1	16.7	+1.6
	2	20.8	14.6	-6.2
	3	24.5	20.6	-4.1
	4	13.2	16.7	+3.5
	5	26.4	31.5	+5.1
<b>Age</b>				
≤ 35	1	12.9	20.0	+7.1
	2	32.3	20.0	-12.3
	3	19.4	20.0	+0.6
	4	16.1	16.7	+0.6
	5	19.4	23.3	+3.9
> 35	1	22.4	21.4	-1.0
	2	13.4	14.3	+0.9
	3	23.9	21.4	-2.5
	4	11.9	11.4	-0.5
	5	28.4	31.4	+3.0
<b>Educational Level</b>				
≤ High School	1	25.0	20.0	-5.0
	2	17.5	17.5	0.0
	3	17.5	12.5	-5.0
	4	15.0	22.5	+7.5
	5	25.0	27.5	+2.5
> High School	1	15.3	20.3	+4.7
	2	20.3	15.0	-5.3
	3	25.4	25.0	-0.4
	4	11.9	6.7	-5.2
	5	27.1	33.3	+6.2
<b>Income</b>				
≤ \$25,000.00	1	19.4	16.7	-2.7
	2	22.6	20.0	-2.6
	3	22.6	20.0	-2.6
	4	9.7	20.2	+10.3
	5	25.8	23.5	-2.5

Table 21, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
> \$26,000.00	1	19.4	21.0	+1.6
	2	19.4	12.9	-6.5
	3	22.4	17.7	-4.7
	4	13.4	11.3	-2.1
	5	25.4	37.1	+11.7
Services				
Sunday A.M.	1	33.3	12.5	-20.8
	2	0.0	12.5	+12.5
	3	50.0	12.5	-37.5
	4	16.7	25.0	+8.3
	5	0.0	37.5	+37.5
Sunday A.M. & P.M	1	18.8	30.8	+12.0
	2	37.5	30.8	-6.7
	3	18.8	15.4	-3.4
	4	6.3	15.4	+9.1
	5	18.7	7.7	-11.7
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	1	16.0	17.9	+1.9
	2	18.7	14.1	-4.6
	3	21.3	21.8	+0.5
	4	13.3	11.5	-1.8
	5	30.7	34.6	+3.9

These findings reflect no significant change in inviting people to attend services. Changes recorded by the female subgroup indicated a marginal difference, from -6.2% who invited only one person to the service, to a marginal (5.1%) who invited three or more.

There was a significant change of attitude, reflected by behavior, among those who make above \$25,000.00 annually (11.7%). Perhaps this is a reflection that those who make below \$25,000 would include the younger and older members,



who might not have the same opportunities in the workplace as those in the higher income bracket.

### Frequency of Sharing

Events which are enjoyable and bring happiness are engaged in more often. There are more favorable attributes manifested concerning activities that bring happiness. A key item in the EOQ measures significant change of attitude; this change is measured by how frequently participants practiced the sharing of the gospel with others. Table 22 gives indication of the responses to this item.

Table 22

### Frequency of Sharing by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Total Group</b>				
More sharing	1	16.5	26.3	+9.8
Less sharing	2	18.6	13.1	-5.5
Same	3	64.9	60.6	-4.3
<b>Gender</b>				
Male				
	1	19.6	25.0	+5.4
	2	23.9	18.8	-5.5
	3	56.5	56.3	-0.2
Female				
	1	14.0	27.5	+13.5
	2	12.0	7.8	-4.2
	3	74.0	64.7	-9.3
<b>Age</b>				
≤ 35				
	1	25.8	30.0	+4.2
	2	19.4	13.3	-6.1
	3	54.8	56.7	+1.9
> 35				
	1	10.9	23.9	+13.0
	2	18.8	13.4	-5.4
	3	70.3	62.7	-7.6

Table 22, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Educational Level</b>				
≤ High School	1	10.3	27.0	+16.7
	2	20.5	10.8	-9.7
	3	69.2	62.2	-7.0
> High School	1	19.3	24.6	+5.3
	2	17.5	14.8	-2.7
	3	63.2	60.7	-2.5
<b>Income</b>				
≤ \$25,000.00	1	21.4	30.0	+8.6
	2	14.3	10.0	-4.3
	3	64.3	60.0	-4.3
> \$26,000.00	1	13.4	23.3	+9.9
	2	20.9	13.3	-7.6
	3	65.7	63.3	-2.4
<b>Services</b>				
Sunday A.M.	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2	33.2	14.3	-18.9
	3	66.7	57.1	-9.6
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	1	25.0	28.6	+3.6
	2	6.3	7.1	+0.8
	3	68.8	64.3	-4.5
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed	1	16.7	25.0	+8.3
	2	56.0	44.0	-12.0
	3	63.9	60.5	-3.4

Those who indicated in the pretest that they had increased their sharing of the gospel for the two months before the initial test continued to share more. This group recorded a high marginal increase in this activity (9.8%). There are many factors which might explain this increase,

and certainly one of them must include the ten sermons heard during this two-month period.

### Methodology of Concern

There are many ways of showing evangelistic concern for others, i.e., inviting them to services, giving a tract or written material, have someone in the home for a meal, praying for one who is lost, etc. This item, unlike several in the EOQ, is not as confining, for it offers a variety of methods for one to exhibit attitude change in evangelistic work. This information is cited in Table 23.

Table 23

### Methodology of Concern by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Total Group				
Invited	1	47.5	54.8	+7.3
Gave tract	2	15.8	11.5	-4.3
Meal in home	3	5.9	5.8	-0.1
Pray	4	17.8	22.1	+4.3
Other	5	4.0	3.8	-0.2
Nothing	6	8.9	1.9	-7.0
Gender				
Male				
1	1	43.5	49.0	+5.5
2	2	21.7	14.3	-7.4
3	3	4.3	4.1	-0.2
4	4	13.0	28.6	15.6
5	5	6.5	2.0	-4.5
6	6	10.9	2.0	-8.9
Female				
1	1	51.9	61.1	+9.2
2	2	11.1	9.3	-1.8
3	3	7.4	5.6	-1.8
4	4	22.2	16.7	-5.5
5	5	1.9	5.6	3.7
6	6	5.6	1.9	-3.7

Table 23, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Age</b>				
≤ 35	1	58.1	56.7	-1.4
	2	9.7	6.7	-3.0
	3	6.5	3.3	-3.2
	4	19.4	23.3	+3.9
	5	0.0	6.7	+6.7
	6	6.5	3.3	-2.2
> 35	1	44.1	54.9	+10.8
	2	16.2	12.7	-3.5
	3	5.9	5.6	-0.3
	4	17.6	22.5	+4.9
	5	5.9	2.8	-3.1
	6	10.3	1.4	-8.9
<b>Educational Level</b>				
≤ High School	1	45.0	57.1	+12.1
	2	17.5	11.9	-5.6
	3	5.0	7.1	+2.1
	4	20.0	19.0	-1.0
	5	2.5	4.8	+2.3
	6	10.0	0.0	-10.0
> High School	1	50.0	53.3	+3.3
	2	15.0	11.7	-3.3
	3	5.0	5.0	0.0
	4	16.7	23.3	+6.6
	5	5.0	3.3	-1.7
	6	8.3	3.3	-5.0
<b>Income</b>				
≤ \$25,000.00	1	41.9	59.4	+17.5
	2	22.6	9.4	-13.2
	3	3.2	6.3	+3.1
	4	25.8	18.8	-7.0
	5	3.2	0.0	-3.2
	6	3.2	6.3	+3.1
> \$26,000.00	1	50.0	54.8	+4.8
	2	13.2	12.9	-0.3
	3	7.4	3.2	-4.2
	4	14.7	24.2	+9.5
	5	4.4	4.8	+0.4
	6	10.3	0.0	-10.3

Table 23, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Services</b>				
Sunday A.M.	1	16.7	75.0	+58.3
	2	33.3	0.0	-33.3
	3	0.0	12.5	+12.5
	4	16.7	12.5	-4.2
	5	16.7	0.0	-16.7
	6	16.7	0.0	-16.7
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	1	37.5	26.7	-10.8
	2	18.8	20.2	+1.2
	3	12.5	13.3	+0.8
	4	18.8	20.2	+1.2
	5	0.0	13.3	+13.3
	6	12.5	6.7	-5.8
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	1	52.6	59.0	+6.4
	2	14.5	11.5	-3.0
	3	5.3	3.8	-1.5
	4	15.8	21.8	+6.0
	5	3.9	2.6	-1.3
	6	7.9	1.3	-6.6

The item that measured the method of showing concern for others during the time of pre- and posttesting indicates the practice of inviting others to services increased by a marginal factor of 7.3%. Those who indicated they were doing nothing at the time of the pretest (8.9%) showed a very favorable decrease of 7%.

#### Favorite Way of Sharing the Gospel

As previously indicated, there are numerous ways of sharing the gospel with others. Each farmer has his favorite method of planting; each fisherman, his favorite style of fishing; likewise, each worker for the Lord has his

favorite means of sharing the message with others. Table 23 presents the findings on the EOQ for the respondents.

Interestingly, the method one considered his/her favorite method in the gospel with others showed a significant negative change in the item "the manner of life one lives" (-8.2%). This would correspond to the sermons which indicated that, even though one's manner of life is extremely important, one should do more to impact friends, relatives, and neighbors positively.

Table 24

Favorite Way of Sharing the Gospel by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Total Group</b>				
Manner of life	1	73.2	65.0	-8.2
Teach class	2	6.2	9.0	+2.8
Give tract	3	3.1	5.0	+1.9
Teach family	4	10.3	7.0	-3.3
Bible by mail	5	0.0	6.0	+6.0
Other	6	7.2	8.0	+0.8
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Male</b>				
	1	66.7	68.8	-2.1
	2	8.9	8.3	-0.6
	3	4.4	0.0	-4.4
	4	8.9	8.3	-0.6
	5	0.0	4.2	+4.2
<b>Female</b>				
	1	78.4	60.8	-17.6
	2	3.9	9.8	+5.9
	3	2.0	9.8	+7.8
	4	11.8	5.9	-5.9
	5	0.0	7.8	+7.8
	6	3.9	5.9	+2.0

Table 24, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Age</b>				
≤ 35	1	80.0	66.7	-13.3
	2	10.0	6.7	-3.3
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
	4	10.0	10.0	0.0
	5	0.0	10.0	+10.0
	6	0.0	6.7	+6.7
> 35	1	70.8	65.7	-5.1
	2	4.6	10.4	-5.8
	3	4.6	7.5	+2.9
	4	9.2	4.5	-4.7
	5	0.0	3.0	+3.0
	6	10.8	9.0	-1.8
<b>Educational Level</b>				
≤ High School	1	82.9	63.2	-19.7
	2	4.9	10.5	+5.6
	3	0.0	7.9	+7.9
	4	9.8	2.6	-7.2
	5	0.0	10.5	+10.5
	6	2.4	5.3	+2.9
> High School	1	65.5	65.6	+0.1
	2	7.3	8.2	+0.9
	3	5.0	3.3	-1.7
	4	10.9	9.8	-1.1
	5	0.0	3.3	+3.3
	6	10.9	9.8	-1.1
<b>Income</b>				
≤ \$25,000.00	1	89.7	71.9	-7.8
	2	0.0	3.1	+3.1
	3	3.4	6.3	+2.9
	4	6.9	3.1	-3.7
	5	0.0	6.3	+6.3
	6	0.0	9.4	+9.4
> \$26,000.00	1	65.2	61.0	-4.2
	2	9.1	13.6	+4.5
	3	3.0	3.4	-0.4
	4	12.1	8.5	-3.6
	5	0.0	5.1	+5.1
	6	10.6	8.5	-2.1

Table 24, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Services</b>				
Sunday A.M.	1	100.0	71.4	-28.6
	2	0.0	0.0	0.0
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
	4	0.0	14.3	+14.3
	5	0.0	0.0	0.0
	6	0.0	14.3	+14.3
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	1	88.2	86.7	-1.5
	2	5.9	13.3	+7.4
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5	0.0	0.0	0.0
	6	5.9	0.0	-5.9
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	1	68.6	59.2	-8.4
	2	5.7	9.2	+3.5
	3	2.9	6.6	+3.7
	4	14.3	7.9	-6.4
	5	0.0	7.9	+7.9
	6	8.6	9.2	+0.4

### Motivational Behavior for Sharing the Gospel

Fear, guilt, joy, and happiness are all emotional factors which can cause attitude changes. Often the reason one performs a task will determine his/her effectiveness. If a person goes about struggling and depressed, his/her effectiveness will be diminished. Participants were asked to indicate the motivational behavior which prompted their evangelism. Their responses are presented in Table 25.

Seven items are considered: after evangelistic services efforts by the church such as a gospel meeting or



vacation Bible school (8.5%), after some problem has developed in the family such as illness or death (-6.3%), when a religious question is asked (-.6%), when one sees the joy and happiness others receive when they commit their lives to the Lord (5.2%), after a class on more effectively sharing the gospel with others (-1.4%), and after a sermon in which one is reminded of one's personal responsibility of sharing the message with others (-5.1%). The highest attitude change, and it was only marginal, was the one which indicated the motivation of evangelistic efforts, such as gospel meetings, lectureships, and vacation Bible schools.

Table 25

Motivational Behavior for Sharing the Gospel  
By Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income  
and Services

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Total Group</b>				
Gospel meeting	1	7.3	15.8	+8.5
Family problem	2	8.3	2.0	-6.3
Questionned	3	32.3	31.7	-0.6
Joy of others	4	15.6	20.8	+5.2
Class	5	7.3	5.7	-1.4
Sermon	6	22.9	17.8	-5.1
Other	7	6.3	5.7	-0.4
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	1	6.5	12.2	+5.7
	2	6.5	4.1	-2.4
	3	41.3	34.7	-6.6
	4	21.7	24.5	+2.8
	5	6.5	4.1	-2.4
	6	13.0	14.3	+0.7
	7	4.3	6.1	+1.8

Table 25, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %	
Female	1	8.2	19.2	+11.0	
	2	10.2	0.0	-10.2	
	3	22.4	28.4	+6.4	
	4	10.2	17.3	+7.1	
	5	8.2	7.7	-0.4	
	6	32.7	21.2	-11.5	
	7	8.2	5.8	-2.4	
Age	≤5	1	3.2	13.3	+9.1
		2	3.2	3.3	+0.1
		3	38.7	40.0	+1.3
		4	19.4	20.0	+0.6
		5	6.5	3.3	-2.2
		6	19.4	16.7	-2.7
		7	9.7	3.3	-6.4
	> 35	1	7.9	17.4	+9.5
		2	9.5	1.4	-8.1
		3	30.2	29.0	-0.8
		4	14.3	21.7	+7.4
		5	7.9	5.8	-2.1
		6	25.4	17.4	-8.0
		7	4.8	7.2	+2.4
Educational Level	≤ High School	1	2.8	23.1	+20.3
		2	2.8	0.0	-2.8
		3	25.0	17.9	-7.1
		4	25.0	28.2	+3.2
		5	8.3	7.7	-0.6
		6	27.8	12.8	-15.0
		7	8.3	10.3	-2.0
	> High School	1	10.2	11.2	-1.0
		2	10.2	3.3	+6.9
		3	37.3	39.3	+2.0
		4	10.2	16.4	+6.2
		5	6.8	4.9	-1.9
		6	20.3	21.3	+1.0
		7	60.0	40.0	-20.0

Table 25, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Income</b>				
≤ \$25,000.00	1	3.3	12.9	+9.6
	2	13.3	0.0	-13.3
	3	26.7	35.5	+8.8
	4	10.0	22.6	+12.6
	5	6.7	3.2	-3.5
	6	33.3	16.1	-17.2
	7	6.7	9.7	+3.0
> \$26,000.00	1	9.2	14.8	+5.6
	2	6.2	3.3	-2.9
	3	35.4	27.9	-7.5
	4	18.5	19.7	+1.2
	5	7.7	8.2	+0.5
	6	18.5	21.3	+2.8
	7	4.6	4.9	+0.3
<b>Services</b>				
Sunday A.M.	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2	16.7	0.0	-16.7
	3	33.3	25.0	-8.3
	4	16.7	37.5	+20.8
	5	16.7	12.5	-4.5
	6	16.7	12.5	-4.5
	7	0.0	12.2	+12.5
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	1	12.5	21.4	+8.9
	2	6.4	0.0	-6.4
	3	25.0	50.0	+25.0
	4	25.0	14.3	-10.7
	5	0.0	0.0	0.0
	6	25.0	14.3	-10.7
	7	6.3	0.0	-6.3
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	1	5.6	16.9	+11.3
	2	8.5	2.6	-5.6
	3	35.2	28.6	-6.6
	4	12.7	20.8	+8.1
	5	8.5	6.5	+2.0
	6	22.5	18.2	-4.3
	7	7.0	6.5	-0.5

### The Practice of Prayer and Evangelism

Evelyn Underhill stated, "The church will win the world for Christ when--and only when--she works through living spirits steeped in prayer."<sup>5</sup> Charlie Shedd taught that homes are saved, attitudes are changed, and new dimensions of the soul are reached when people dedicate themselves to a life of prayer.<sup>6</sup> It is generally agreed among those involved in church growth that prayer is an essential ingredient in evangelism.

### Practice of Daily Prayer

Men through the ages have piously raised their eyes toward heaven to indicate their attitudes. Religious people long before Paul charged, "pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17), were praying on a daily basis. Many from childhood have sung about Daniel praying morning, noon, and night, and have sought to emulate his example. The data presented in Table 26 examine attitude change toward the practice of daily praying for the lost.

Analysis of these data indicates that more than half of the respondents reported the practice of daily prayer for some lost person (64.4%). A marginal change (7.7%) was noted following the sermons. The subgroup indicated that a

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<sup>5</sup>Evelyn Underhill, The Fruits of the Spirit, Light of Christ, and Abba: Meditations Based on the Lord's Prayer (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1956), 8.

<sup>6</sup>Charlie W. Shedd, How to Develop a Praying Church (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), 114.

significant change concerning the practice of daily prayer for some lost person occurred among those who were thirty-five and under in age. This again reflects the general body of knowledge that the younger are more likely to change their practices.

Table 26

Practice of Daily Prayer by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses	Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Total Group	64.4	72.1	+7.7
Gender			
Male	55.3	63.3	+8.0
Female	73.2	79.6	+6.4
Age			
≤ 35	58.1	76.7	+18.5
> 35	66.2	69.0	+2.8
Educational Level			
≤ High School	62.8	71.4	+8.6
> High School	65.0	73.3	+8.3
Income			
≤ \$25,000.00	66.7	84.4	+17.7
> \$26,000.00	62.3	72.6	+10.3
Services			
Sunday A.M.	71.4	57.1	-14.3
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	70.6	73.3	+2.7
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	62.3	73.4	+11.4

Frequency of Prayer for the Lost

The EOQ occasionally seeks to confirm important items by rephrasing an issue. Table 27 offers the responses to a

limited number of items to indicate the study participants' habits of prayer for the lost.

These data show that 61.4% of the respondents prayed daily for the lost. This item reflected a marginal change from seldom (-6.1%) to daily (5.1%). Interestingly, for the item which notes those specifically mentioned in prayer, no

Table 27

Frequency of Prayer for the Lost by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Total Group</b>				
Never	1	2.0	1.0	-1.0
Seldom	2	18.8	11.8	-6.1
Once a month	3	22.8	24.3	+1.5
Twice a month	4	38.6	43.7	+5.1
Each week	5	17.8	19.4	+1.6
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Male</b>				
	1	4.3	2.0	-2.3
	2	28.3	18.4	-9.9
	3	21.7	32.7	+11.0
	4	34.8	28.6	-6.2
	5	10.9	18.4	+7.5
<b>Female</b>				
	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2	11.1	5.7	-5.4
	3	22.2	17.0	-5.2
	4	42.6	56.6	+14.0
	5	24.1	20.8	-3.3
<b>Age</b>				
<b>≤ 35</b>				
	1	3.2	3.3	+0.1
	2	22.6	13.3	-9.3
	3	22.6	26.7	+4.1
	4	41.9	30.0	-11.9
	5	9.7	26.7	+17.0

Table 27, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
> 35	1	1.5	0.0	-1.5
	2	17.6	11.4	-6.2
	3	22.1	24.3	+2.2
	4	36.8	47.1	+10.3
	5	22.1	17.2	-5.0
Educational Level				
≤ High School				
	1	2.4	0.0	-2.4
	2	14.6	12.2	-2.4
	3	26.8	19.5	-7.3
	4	24.1	46.3	+12.2
	5	22.0	22.0	0.0
> High School				
	1	1.7	1.7	0.0
	2	22.0	10.0	-12.0
	3	22.3	28.3	+8.0
	4	40.7	41.7	+1.0
	5	15.3	18.3	+3.0
Income				
≤ \$25,000.00				
	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2	16.1	3.0	-13.1
	3	16.1	21.2	+5.1
	4	45.2	57.6	+12.4
	5	22.6	18.2	-4.4
> \$26,000.00				
	1	2.9	1.7	-1.2
	2	20.6	13.3	-7.3
	3	26.5	25.0	-1.5
	4	35.3	36.7	+1.4
	5	14.7	23.3	+8.6
Services				
Sunday A.M.				
	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2	28.6	25.0	-3.6
	3	14.3	25.0	+10.7
	4	28.6	25.0	-3.6
	5	28.6	25.0	-3.6
Sunday A.M. & P.M.				
	1	12.5	6.7	-5.8
	2	6.3	13.3	+7.0
	3	12.5	13.3	+0.8
	4	62.5	46.7	-15.8
	5	6.3	20.7	+13.7

Table 27, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2	21.3	9.1	-12.2
	3	24.0	27.3	+3.3
	4	36.0	44.2	+8.2
	5	18.7	19.5	+0.8

attitude change was reflected (no one 0%, immediate family -1%, relatives .4%, friends -1.9%, and all people 4.9%). The subgroups reflected a significant increase in praying for one's immediate family among the males (11.9%). Perhaps this is an indication that males often are so involved providing for their families that they fail to see the need of prayer until it is specifically brought to their attention.

#### Specific Ones for Whom Prayed

A number of qualities, such as selfishness, greed, instability, etc., can be determined by observation of a person's prayer life. A person's secret prayers reveal the character of his/her heart. The respondents were asked about the objects of their prayers. The responses to that question are found in Table 28.

There appear to be some significant changes in attitude noted on this item:

(1) The only change by the group was toward prayer for all mankind (4.9%).



(2) The males indicated a significant shift in attitude toward praying for their own families.

(3) Those under 35 shifted from praying only for their friends (-22>3%) to also praying for all (18>1%).

(4) Those with educational levels of high school or less shifted from praying only for their families (-8.5%) to also praying for their friends (11.2%).

(5) Those with incomes under \$25,000 shifted away from praying for their families only (-19.2%) to praying for their friends (11.4%) and all mankind as well (11.0%).

Table 28

Specific Ones for Whom Prayed by Group, Gender, Age, Educational Level, Income, and Services

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Total Group</b>				
No one	1	2.0	1.0	-1.0
Immediate family	2	15.8	16.2	+0.4
Relatives	3	9.9	7.6	-2.3
Friends	4	25.7	23.8	-1.9
All people	5	46.5	51.4	+4.9
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Male</b>				
	1	4.3	2.0	-2.3
	2	6.5	18.4	+11.9
	3	15.2	10.2	-5.0
	4	26.1	20.4	-5.7
	5	47.8	49.0	+1.2
<b>Female</b>				
	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2	24.1	14.5	-9.6
	3	5.6	5.5	-0.1
	4	24.1	25.5	+1.4
	5	46.3	54.5	+8.2

Table 28, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
<b>Age</b>				
≤ 35	1	6.5	3.3	-3.2
	2	9.7	20.4	+10.3
	3	9.7	6.7	-3.0
	4	32.3	10.0	-22.3
	5	41.9	60.0	+18.1
> 35	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2	17.6	15.3	-2.3
	3	10.3	8.3	-2.0
	4	23.5	27.8	+4.3
	5	48.5	48.6	+0.1
<b>Educational Level</b>				
≤ High School	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2	27.5	19.0	-8.5
	3	10.0	9.5	-0.5
	4	15.0	26.2	+11.2
	5	47.5	45.2	-2.3
> High School	1	3.3	1.6	-1.7
	2	8.3	13.1	+4.8
	3	10.0	4.9	-5.1
	4	33.3	23.0	-10.3
	5	45.0	57.4	+12.4
<b>Income</b>				
≤ \$25,000.00	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2	31.3	12.1	-19.2
	3	9.4	6.1	-3.3
	4	21.9	33.3	+11.4
	5	37.5	48.5	+11.0
> \$26,000.00	1	3.0	1.6	-1.4
	2	9.0	14.5	+5.5
	3	10.4	8.1	-2.3
	4	28.4	17.7	-10.7
	5	49.3	58.1	+8.8
<b>Services</b>				
Sunday A.M.	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2	33.3	12.5	-20.8
	3	33.3	25.0	-8.3
	4	0.0	12.5	+12.5
	5	33.3	50.0	+16.7

Table 28, continued

Responses		Pretest %	Posttest %	Change %
Sunday A.M. & P.M.	1	6.7	6.3	-0.4
	2	18.8	26.7	+8.1
	3	6.3	6.7	+0.4
	4	18.8	33.3	+14.5
	5	50.0	26.7	-23.3
Sun. A.M., P.M. Wed.	1	100.0	0.0	-100.1
	2	13.2	13.9	+0.7
	3	9.2	5.1	-4.1
	4	30.3	24.1	-6.2
	5	46.1	57.0	+10.9

It is noteworthy that all of these shifts were in a more positive direction, whether the shift was from no one to one's immediate family or from one's immediate family to friends and all humanity. The sermons did appear to institute a positive change in this area.

#### Qualitative Findings

In addition to quantitative finds there were also qualitative finds. A journal was kept from the inception of this project, in which were recorded numerous incidents of interest as positive indicators that attitudes were being changed. This section is limited to eight of those events.

(1) An unusual number of remarks were recorded by subjects as they left the auditorium following various sermons. Some of these remarks included: "I had forgotten what our real mission is"; "I am excited about these

lessons. They're just what we need"; "Thank you for reminding me of the dream"; and "Is it possible to get a manuscript of the lesson presented today?" Often these remarks came from those who never or seldom commented on the sermons.

(2) The deacons are fired up! At about the mid-point of the sermons series, something suddenly happened to the deacons. They came in one Sunday morning to the elders' meeting and asked forgiveness for treating the gospel as a "play thing." Every deacon made a commitment to start functioning as a deacon so that the elders could get back into the "people business." They affirmed that any time there was a good work in which the deacons should be involved they would come in mass, and they have lived up to this pledge. For example, all of the deacons not working attended the men's retreat; they have initiated a practice of conducting a special service when a person is baptized; and they have started working on the yards of widows and shut-ins.

(3) The men's retreat is an annual event conducted each year in a rustic setting. The purpose is to encourage a deeper personal relationship with the Lord. Topics are changed each year, and this year the theme was "Rekindling the Dream." The recording secretary tabulated the various subjects, and the theme which was most popular was evangelism. The deacons suggested that a room be prepared which would serve as a prayer room. The room would have acetate

on each wall listing the names of prospective members who would be the subject of the prayers.

(4) Another indicator of the dream of evangelism being rekindled was a talk made at one of the Wednesday night services. The speaker had a bowl containing eggs; each represented essentials for an appetizing omelet. The analogy was between the good omelet and the productive work of the church. The speaker had one egg representing evangelism, which was essential to fulfilling the purpose of the church. As eggs have a definite purpose, so there are essentials for "taking a city for Christ." An egg unused will spoil; so evangelism untried will ruin the church.

(5) A fifth factor which showed positive attitude change was the excitement of the worship periods themselves. At the men's retreat, forty-five men made a commitment to be more vocal in affirming subjects about which they found agreement. There are now many amens heard after a spirited song, prayer, or point of emphasis in the sermon. There is also enthusiasm in greeting visitors and welcoming new members.

(6) Normal factors, such as attendance and member additions, have been on the increase since this treatment began. The Sunday A.M. attendances have averaged 57.9 more per Sunday, with the highest attendance ninety more than the average attendance in 1989. Another positive factor is an average of one baptism per week since the series. In addition, during this same period there have been five new

families to place membership. The dream of evangelism is  
alive at Roebuck.

CHAPTER SIX  
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The problem was that the Roebuck Church of Christ was losing her founding dream of evangelism which historically had served the church so well. Fewer conversions, diminishing prayer concerns, a 1988 questionnaire in which less than half (46.5%) of 130 randomly selected members indicated that evangelism no longer should be the first priority of the church, a drastic decline in foreign mission support, and no formally organized procedure for evangelism gave indication of the existence of this problem. A questionnaire was developed, a pre- and posttest were administered, and ten sermons were preached in an attempt to change attitudes positively.

Summary

The sample group consisted of 105 members of the Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ, which is located in the eastern part of Birmingham. A pretest was administered in September of 1989 at a Sunday morning service. Subjects ranged in age from 16 to over 65, with the age categories of

26-35 (22.4%) and 36-45 (25.2%) most identified by the respondents.

Forty-nine of the subjects were male, representing 47% of the sample, and 56 were female, representing 53% of the sample. The majority of the subjects were married (80.8%), with 10.3% single, having never been married, and 7.5% of the group indicating single, having previously been married. The highest percent of subjects (66.4%) were employed outside the home. The income range for the respondents was from under \$10,000 to over \$50,000, with highest respondents reporting incomes from \$26,000 to over \$50,000 (64.4%). In the area of education, 3.3% completed only elementary school; 39.7%, only high school; 9.8%, junior college; 29.9%, college; and 16.8% had done graduate work. The majority of the subjects (76.2%) attended Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night worship services, with 14.5% attending Sunday morning and Sunday night, and 6.5% attending only Sunday morning.

The operation was comprised of four phases. (1) The first, or EOQ development phase, included meeting with the elders and a selected group of people to explain facets of the study, seek recommendations, and administer the pilot questionnaire to check for clarity. (2) Phase two involved administration of the pre-test on a Sunday morning in mid-September, 1989. (3) Phase three was the preparation and delivery of ten sermons designed to inspire the founding



dream of evangelism in Roebuck members. (4) Phase four was the administering of the posttest three weeks after the completion of the sermon series.

### Conclusions

The treatment program led to several conclusions:

1. Members' attitudes rose in areas of missions, prayer, evangelism, foreign evangelism, and personal teaching, ranging from 1.8% to 9.5%.
2. Changes also occurred in other areas: 27 baptisms, elders asking forgiveness, deacons coming alive, attendance increasing (539 to 600), and changes in organizational structure.
3. Less effectiveness was seen in personal responsibility and some distaste for organized classes in evangelism. Overall, the theory that preaching is effective is upheld as indicated throughout the results of the study.

### Discussion

This researcher has served as the pulpit minister for the Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ congregation for the past twenty-three years. The years have been productive. The congregation has grown from one of the numerically smaller churches, to the second largest in the city, and the seventh largest of the 907 congregations in the state.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Mac Lynn, Where the Saints Meet: A Directory of Churches of Christ (Pensacola: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1987), 1-23.

Following a seven-mile move from the inner city to the Roebuck area, a number of concerns began to surface. Immediately following the relocation into a multi-million dollar property and facility, the church experienced numerical growth. This growth primarily was the result of people placing membership, and not from any evangelistic efforts of the members of this congregation. It was noted, however, that the growth trend did not continue. A review of the general body of knowledge in the area of church growth indicates the commonness of this; i.e., initially there is rapid growth, followed by decline. In addition to the decline in people making a public response, there was a general loss of excitement, and an aura of nostalgia was apparent. People were still very active in a number of areas, but something seemed to be missing. Remarks began to be made such as, "It just doesn't seem like it used to," or "I don't believe this church is as friendly and as dedicated to the work of the Lord as it formerly was."

It also became evident that the prayer life of the congregation was undergoing change. The prayers appeared to be more self-centered. One Wednesday night each month those interested stayed and prayed for lost friends and family whose names were handed in on a three-by-five card. Fewer and fewer names were submitted, and the number staying for this special service began to decline. Some said it was a bad practice because their children had to be in school;

others indicated they saw no evidence of good forthcoming. The program was discontinued.

Roebuck, during the tenure of this researcher, has been a leader of evangelistic activity. In foreign work, two full time families have been supported. However, less and less interest was indicated by the congregation. Gradually the foreign budget was cut, until only a small percentage was allocated for this endeavor, and only a few thousand dollars for foreign television and campaigning.

At one time, a minister of evangelism served the congregation to encourage members to teach their relatives and friends. He was replaced by a man whose primary duty was to do more teaching. As a result of the reduction of evangelistic classes, there were infrequent baptisms. For a while the congregation had averaged about two baptisms a week, but this number declined to an average of only one every two weeks.

There were good programs in existence, and many were working diligently; but an analysis of the programs indicated an inward turn. The Roebuck congregation had lost its founding dream of evangelism. Robert Dale postulated that it is possible for a congregation to go from "spring fever to cabin fever."<sup>2</sup> Roebuck Church of Christ had met the winter and had found it more comfortable inside.

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<sup>2</sup>Robert Dale, Keeping the Dream Alive (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1988), 108.

The purpose of this study was to revitalize the dream. It was based on the rationale that attitudes can be changed. The issue of how this could be accomplished became a major concern in the mind of the researcher. Was it possible for a pulpit minister who had served a church for such a long tenure to rekindle the dream?

Encouragement was found in research done in the area of attitude change by Petty and Cacioppo, who concluded that,

Attitude changes that result mostly from processing issue-relevant arguments (central route) will show greater temporal persistence, greater prediction of behavior, and greater resistance to counterpersuasion than attitude changes that result mostly from peripheral cues.<sup>3</sup>

With this in mind, the researcher attempted to shift the focus from the peripheral to the central. In an effort to positively affect the attitudes of the members in the area of evangelism, emphasis was placed on ten content messages.

Within the content of this study, data revealed that members' attitudes differed in two areas as a result of the treatment program. In the area of the work of the congregation, an analysis of the results of the pretest data indicated that whereas there was a high rate of agreement among the participants that the church should be involved in evangelism, there was indication that this should be done by the congregation.

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<sup>3</sup>Petty and Cacioppo, 21.

In all of the items that focused on congregational involvement, there was a significant change of attitude. This change of attitude was also evident in evangelistic behavior. It was interesting to note that, although their behavior changed, a review of the items which focused on personal commitment showed no significant change in the respondents' attitudes. It might be conjectured that a change in behavior takes place before a change of attitude.

While the formal analysis does reflect significant changes in attitude, the observational data reflect this positive change even more significantly. Members are bringing their friends; attendance and contributions are at an all time high; evangelistic classes are being taught; and conversions are occurring.

#### Related to the Conceptual Framework.

The conceptual framework for this study was derived from Robert Dale's cyclical theory.<sup>4</sup> A construct of the theory is that a church which loses its founding dream will slowly die. Evidence has been cited which revealed that, prior to this study, the Roebuck Parkway congregation was in a nostalgic state. It appears at this time that the founding dream has been revitalized. This conclusion is based on the results of both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Further, results indicate that although the dream was dormant, it was still there.

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<sup>4</sup>Dale, 14.

The treatment used in this study was a series of sermons. While it is recognized that attitudes can be changed through this mode of persuasion, additional factors may have contributed to the significant change in members' attitudes. The sermons were designed to revitalize the dormant dream, but because of the long tenure of the writer, some change may have occurred through what Petty and Cacioppo called the peripheral route.<sup>5</sup>

Another element in the peripheral route was the time factor. The time for attitude change was right. Knowledge of the long history of the Roebuck Parkway congregation would lead to the conclusion that this congregation was not accustomed to the lethargic attitude which had developed. It is the conviction of this writer that the significant change of attitudes reported in this thesis could not have happened five years ago. It was not any single factor that brought about the attitude changes but the interaction among the sermons, the time, and the dream.

#### Recommendations

In keeping with the conceptual model of this study, the cyclical construct demands that once the dream has been revitalized, the dream must be kept alive. This researcher

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<sup>5</sup>Petty and Cacioppo.

realizes the task of inspiring a church to dream must be an ongoing process. The following are recommendations for keeping the dream alive.

1. By constant communicational processes, one may be certain that the congregation has ownership of the dream. This means that the members must have input into congregational direction and work.

2. This study reaffirms the power of the pulpit in attitude change; therefore, the vision of the congregation must be championed with each opportunity. Preaching must put the vision in the congregation's hearts and their hearts into the vision.

3. The dream of the congregation must be put on display by putting the dream into the ceremonies of the church. When Roebuck has periods of worship, fellowship, and homecoming, the dream must be remembered.

4. Lest the founding dream be forgotten, the congregation's story must be told and retold.

5. Since this study indicates that attitudes of personal responsibility are more difficult to change, it is the recommendation of this researcher that emphasis on personal responsibility should be the goal. This study could be developed using the pulpit, Bible classes, and every teaching outlet on emulating Jesus, our model.

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APPENDIX A  
ROEBUCK PARKWAY PROFILE INVENTORY

## ROEBUCK PARKWAY PROFILE INVENTORY

## I. TASKS OF THE CHURCH

Listed below are a number of tasks that a local congregation is likely to perform as it seeks to give expression to the unique understanding of Christian ministry. Please give to each task in two ways:

- (1) In your judgement, how important should the task be in your congregation?
- (2) How satisfied are you with your congregation's current performance of the task?

	Importance				Satisfaction			
	Very Much	Much	Little Some None	or None	Very Much	Much	Little Some None	or None
<u>WORSHIP</u>								
1. Providing worship that deepens members' understanding of the sources and meaning of the Bible and the mission of the church.	84.8	13.4	0.9	0.9	33.9	40.4	23.9	0.9
2. Providing worship that nurtures, uplifts, and strengthens individuals to carry on their daily lives.	46.4	46.4	6.4	0.9	76.6	16.2	6.3	0.9
3. Providing worship that challenges members to relate the Gospel to the issues and situations that confront them in the world.	90.2	7.1	1.8	0.9	41.3	16.5	1.8	0.9
4. Providing worship that helps members share each other's faith, doubt, joy and sorrow.	40.0	46.4	12.7	0.9	58.2	16.4	21.8	3.6



	Importance				Satisfaction			
	Very Much	Much	Little or Some	None	Very Much	Much	Little or Some	None
5. Providing worship that reaffirms why the church exists and the continual need of existence.	70.3	26.1	2.7	0.9	37.6	38.5	20.2	2.8
6. Providing worship that expresses the Gospel in contemporary language and forms.	33.0	45.0	20.0	1.8	68.2	25.5	6.3	0.0
7. Providing worship that helps members express their joy and thanksgiving for God's gifts to them.	67.9	25.0	6.3	0.9	34.4	43.5	18.5	3.7
<u>MISSION AND OUTREACH</u>								
1. Encouraging members to view their daily life and work as a place for ministry.	74.5	22.7	2.7	0.0	77.3	21.8	0.9	0.0
2. Carrying out acts of charity to needy persons.	31.5	45.4	23.1	0.0	50.0	39.8	9.3	0.9
3. Involvement in community issues.	68.8	27.4	8.7	0.0	44.4	31.5	22.2	1.9
4. Supporting the mission of the church through study and giving.	46.8	33.9	17.4	1.8	15.0	0.0	0.0	7.5

	Importance				Satisfaction			
	Very Much	Much	Little or Some	None	Very Much	Much	Little or Some	None
5. Encouraging members to understand and act on the relationship of the Christian faith to social, political and economic issues.	32.1	29.4	32.1	6.4	87.4	9.0	3.6	0.0
6. Sharing the Good News of the Gospel with unchurched.	19.6	28.0	37.4	14.0	40.2	24.6	24.3	0.9

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Providing for the guidance and growth of members' spiritual life.	85.7	11.6	2.7	0.0	90.1	5.4	4.5	0.0
2. Helping members develop practices of prayer and meditation.	34.5	47.3	16.4	1.8	32.1	45.0	18.3	4.6
3. Helping members develop a stronger personal relationship with God.	74.1	17.9	8.0	0.0	67.9	25.7	6.4	0.0
4. Helping members to encounter God in serving persons.	22.7	36.4	37.3	3.6	31.1	39.6	27.4	1.9

\*This questionnaire is an adaptation of the Parish Profile Inventory developed by Hartford Seminary. It has been changed in order to fit the vocabulary and understanding of members of the Churches of Christ.

	Importance				Satisfaction			
	Very Much	Much	Little or Some	None	Very Much	Much	Little or Some	None
<u>CARING AND COMMUNITY</u>								
1. Developing fellowship opportunities in which members can be with and get to know one another.	64.9	30.6	4.5	0.0	61.8	25.5	9.1	3.6
2. Encouraging members to care for and support one another.	39.4	26.6	31.2	2.8	14.8	33.3	38.0	13.0
3. Providing care and counseling to help members deal with their problems.	75.9	20.5	3.6	0.0	77.7	18.8	3.6	0.0
4. Providing a caring ministry to sick and shut-in persons.	35.8	35.8	24.8	3.7	39.4	40.4	18.3	1.8
<u>STEWARDSHIP</u>								
1. Educating and challenging members to support the work of the church.	75.7	21.6	2.7	0.0	30.0	48.2	18.2	3.6
2. Helping members understand and view their use of money, time and talents in all areas of their life as expressions of Christian stewardship.	37.6	45.9	14.7	1.8	31.5	20.7	32.4	15.3

	Importance				Satisfaction			
	Very Much	Much	Little or Some	None	Very Much	Much	Little or Some	None
3. Helping members understand their Christian responsibility for the care, development and conservation of the earth's natural resources.	69.6	26.8	3.6	0.0	15.6	17.4	34.9	31.2

EDUCATION

1. Teaching children and youth about the Bible and the church.	94.6	5.4	0.0	0.0	62.5	30.4	7.1	0.0
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2. Providing education for children and youth that encourages an open search for a faith.	53.2	36.9	9.9	0.0	28.2	33.6	30.9	7.3
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3. Providing fellowship opportunities for youth to be together in a Christian context.	76.4	14.5	6.4	2.7	83.9	15.2	0.9	0.0
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4. Providing educational events that allow children, youth and adults to share with each other.	32.7	44.5	19.1	3.6	46.4	39.1	13.6	0.9
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	Importance				Satisfaction			
	Very Much	Much	Little or Some	None	Very Much	Much	Little or Some	None
5. Providing adult education that teaches about the Bible and the church.	83.0	13.4	3.6	0.0	50.9	27.3	20.0	1.8
6. Providing adult education that deals with contemporary issues, topics and problems.	62.2	29.7	6.3	1.8	23.9	37.6	29.4	8.3

## II. ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

In order to carry out its tasks effectively, every church must deal with certain organizational issues, such as making decisions and sharing information. Listed below are a number of statements describing how a variety of such issues might be handled. To what extent do you agree or disagree that each statement describes your congregation. A "don't know" response is provided, but please use it only when absolutely necessary.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
<u>COMMUNICATION</u>					
1. There is ample opportunity for members to make known their concerns and hopes for the congregation to leaders and other members.	36.6	47.3	8.9	3.6	3.6
2. Members are well informed about the activities taking place in the congregation.	34.8	36.6	18.8	8.9	0.9

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
3. Members are well informed about what the various committees and groups in the congregation are doing.	16.1	39.3	33.0	10.7	0.9
4. The community around the church is well informed about the activities taking place in the congregation.	11.6	18.8	35.7	25.9	8.0
5. Members are well informed about the concerns, needs and activities of the neighborhood/community around the church.	10.1	21.1	34.9	24.8	9.2
<u>ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING</u>					
1. The congregation has a clear statement of goals and a plan for meeting them.	35.5	37.3	13.6	10.9	2.7
2. Study of the needs of the congregation and the community is regularly undertaken as the basis for church-planning.	20.7	24.3	28.8	15.3	10.8

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
3. Committee and group chairpersons regularly attempt to discover how members feel about the way their committee or group is functioning.	15.5	17.3	29.1	23.6	14.5
4. There is a regular process for members to give feedback to the elders about their performance.	18.0	28.8	20.7	21.6	10.8

#### DECISION MAKING

1. Those who make important decisions about the life of the church consistently represent the thinking of the majority of members.	33.9	44.0	11.0	4.6	6.4
2. Important decisions about the life of the church are rarely made without being openly discussed and debated by a broad spectrum of church leaders and members.	23.6	26.4	26.4	18.2	5.4

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
3. The biblical implications of important decisions are always thoroughly and explicitly discussed.	33.3	36.0	19.8	6.3	4.5
4. It cannot be said of the congregation that "some members seem to have a lot more influence over policy than others."	24.1	25.9	16.7	25.0	8.3
<u>RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT</u>					
1. The congregation has an effective stewardship program.	37.3	42.7	13.6	2.7	3.6
2. The congregation has an effective program of new member recruitment.	26.4	30.0	26.4	14.5	2.7
3. Members are provided the training they need for their committee and task assignments.	17.4	26.6	27.4	15.6	11.9



	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
4. Members are encouraged to discover their particular gifts for ministry and services to the church and provided the necessary training and resources to develop them.	20.2	26.6	27.5	17.9	8.3
5. It is important in our congregation for the minister to participate regularly in continuing education.	61.8	28.2	8.2	1.8	0.0
<u>CHURCH IDENTITY</u>					
1. It is easy to summarize for visitors and non-members how our congregation differs from other churches in the area.	44.1	36.0	18.0	1.9	0.0
2. There is common agreement among members as to what our congregation stands for.	36.0	47.7	12.6	0.9	2.7

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
3. There are clear expectations for being a member of this church (for example, belief, participation, giving, etc.).	59.1	28.2	9.1	2.7	0.9
4. When I think of this congregation, I usually think of "we" rather than "they".	72.7	22.7	3.6	0.9	0.0
<u>CHURCH CLIMATE</u>					
1. Disagreements and conflicts are dealt with openly rather than hushed up or hidden behind closed doors.	20.7	30.6	26.1	14.4	8.1
2. The predominant attitude of the membership is that conflict and disagreement can be a positive force toward growth rather than something to be avoided or suspected.	16.4	30.9	22.7	17.3	12.7
3. There is considerable acceptance and appreciation of differing opinions and beliefs among members.	17.8	34.6	21.5	19.6	6.5

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
4. All things considered -- worship, programs, policies, people -- our congregation appears much the same today as it did ten years ago.	7.3	25.5	20.9	24.5	21.8
5. Most members view change in policies and programs as a necessary and desirable dynamic in our congregation's life.	19.6	31.8	26.2	11.2	11.2
6. There would be little negative reaction among members to experimenting with the style or order of Sunday worship.	13.9	11.1	24.1	46.3	4.6
7. Members place considerable importance on doing things in the church in traditional ways.	31.5	43.5	26.4	1.9	2.8
8. The current morale of our church members is high.	38.4	41.1	13.4	4.5	2.7

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
9. There is a sense of excitement among members about our congregation's future.	28.8	44.1	20.7	5.4	0.9
10. The church leadership has the full confidence and support of the membership.	54.1	33.3	10.8	0.9	0.9

### III. PERSONAL BELIEFS

1. Which of the following best expresses your belief about God?

- 1) .0 I do not believe in God.
- 2) 1.0 I really don't know what to believe about God.
- 3) .0 I do not believe in a creating and saving God, but I do believe in a higher power of some kind.
- 4) 9.3 God is the creator of an orderly world, but does not now guide it or intervene in its course of affairs or the lives of individuals.
- 5) 6.2 Although God has an can act in history and communicate with persons directly, it is not something that happens very often.
- 6) 15.5 God is constantly at work in the world from "above" directing people, nations, and events.
- 7) 68.0 God is the world and is in every person, thing, and event.

2. Which one of the following best expresses your view of the Bible?

- 1) .0 The Bible was written by men who lived so long ago that it is of little value today.
- 2) .0 The Bible is a valuable book because it was written by wise and good persons, but I do not believe it is really God's Word.
- 3) .0 The Bible is the record of many different persons' response to God and because of this persons and churches today are often times forced to interpret for themselves the Bible's basic moral and religious teachings.

- 4) 24.3 The Bible is the inspired Word of God and its basic moral and religious teachings are clear and true, even if it does contain some human error.
- 5) 75.7 The Bible is the actual Word of God and is to be taken literally.

3. Which of the following best expresses your belief about sin and salvation?

- 1) .0 Sin and salvation really don't have much meaning to me personally.
- 2) .0 Sin is a helpful way of talking about people's capacity to harm themselves and others, and salvation is a helpful way of talking about hope for a better future.
- 3) .9 I believe all people are inherently good, and to the extent sin and salvation have meaning to all, it has to do with people realizing or not realizing their human potential for good.
- 4) .9 Although people are sinful, all people participate in God's salvation regardless of how they live their life, even if they do not believe in God.
- 5) 1.8 All people are sinful but need only to believe in and ask for God's forgiveness to be saved.
- 6) .9 All people are sinful and if they are to be saved must earn it through living a good life devoted to God.
- 7) 96.4 All people are sinful and they are to be saved through faith which leads one to repentance, confession and baptism.

#### IV. BIBLE IMAGES

The Bible presents a variety of images of faith in action. How descriptive of your current faith journey is each of the following passages?

	Very	Somewhat	A Little	Not At All
1. OH that I knew that I might find God (Job 23)	26.5	20.6	14.7	38.2
2. Love your Lord with all your heart...and your neighbor as yourself (Matt.22)	67.6	29.4	2.9	0.0

	Very	Somewhat	A Little	Not At All
3. Go therefore and make disciples of all peoples (Matt. 28)	35.5	29.4	32.4	2.9
4. Come unto me all you who are heavy laden and I will give you rest (Matt. 11)	55.9	29.4	11.8	2.9
5. Do not love the world nor the things in the world... all that is in the world is not of the Father... and passes away (I John 2).	35.5	47.1	11.8	5.9
6. What does the Lord require of me, but to do justice (Micah 6)	37.5	40.6	15.6	6.3
7. Day and night you punished me, Lord; then I confessed my sins to you... The wicked will have to suffer, but those who trust in the Lord are pro- tected by God's constant love.	54.5	24.2	3.0	18.2
8. As long as you have done it to one of these the least of my people, you have done it unto me.	65.6	25.0	9.4	0.0

	Very	Somewhat	A Little	Not At All
9. The best thing people can do is eat and drink and enjoy what they have earned. Even this comes from God who gives happiness to those who please him (Eccl. 2)	21.9	34.4	12.5	31.3
10. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want... I fear no evil for thou art with me (Psa. 23).	72.7	21.2	6.1	0.0

#### V. SOCIAL ATTITUDES

Would you say you strongly agree, agree, disagree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The United States should freeze production of nuclear weapons regardless of what Russia does.	2.9	8.6	40.0	48.6
2. The use of marijuana should be made legal.	0.0	2.9	17.6	79.4
3. The law should allow doctors to perform an abortion for any woman who wants one.	0.0	8.6	17.1	74.3
4. It is wrong for a person to have sexual relations before marriage.	55.9	11.9	5.9	26.5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5. We are spending too little money on welfare programs in this country.	2.9	25.7	48.6	22.9
6. Women, if they work at all, should take feminine positions such as nursing, secretarial work, or child care.	8.3	2.9	36.1	47.2
7. Although blacks may have achieved legal equality, I believe affirmative action should be used to help them achieve actual equality.	8.8	23.5	41.2	265.0
8. Because of their wealth and power, large corporations have a clear moral obligation to help the poor and needy in our country.	18.2	36.4	30.3	12.1
9. In a country based on religious freedom such as ours, it is inappropriate for Christians to try to impose their beliefs and moral values on others.	2.9	26.5	32.4	38.2



## VI. TASKS OF THE MINISTER

In your judgement how high or low a priority would you like each of the following tasks to be for the preacher of this church? Remember, not every task can be highest priority.

	Very High	High	Moderate	Low
1. Handling administrative tasks effectively and efficiently.	9.5	29.5	41.0	20.0
2. Stewardship development.	22.3	52.4	21.4	2.9
3. Involving members in planning, participating in, and leading church events.	19.0	48.6	22.9	1.0
4. Bringing new members into the fellowship of the church.	40.6	45.3	11.3	1.0
5. Involvement in local community activities, issues and problems.	16.2	21.9	47.6	13.3
6. Planning and leading worship sensitive to the needs of the worshipping community.	50.9	37.0	8.3	3.7
7. Preaching the Word of God with urgency and conviction.	89.4	8.7	1.0	1.0
8. Attending to the spiritual development of members.	52.8	37.0	6.5	2.8
9. Visiting the sick and bereaved.	38.7	44.3	16.0	0.9
10. Being a caring and enabling counselor.	44.8	38.1	11.4	4.8
11. Developing a strong sense of community among members.	23.1	44.3	26.6	5.8
12. Supporting the foreign mission of the church.	33.0	39.6	20.8	5.7

	Very High	High	Moderate	Low
13. Development and support of Christian education for all ages.	31.7	41.3	21.2	3.8
14. Holding before members critical issues of social justice and concern.	22.1	24.0	34.6	18.3

## VII. STYLE OF MINISTRY

	Strongly Prefer	or	Strongly Prefer	
1. Expertise in Biblical Theological matters.			56.8	High degree of spirituality
2. Good standing with the elders.			60.4	A warm, outgoing, engaging personality.
3. Works hard to accomplish tasks.			59.4	Places feelings of others ahead of achieving goals.
4. Tends to be provoking and challenging.			55.5	Tends to be comforting and assuring.
5. In preaching and teaching usually emphasizes the Bible.	70.3			Usually emphasizes contemporary issues and ideas.
6. Helps people figure things out for themselves.	73.7			Advises people what to do.
7. Is a strong administrator.			86.6	Is a strong preacher.

## VIII. YOUR CONGREGATION PARTICIPATION

1. What is the name of the local church for which you are filling out this questionnaire? (It is particularly important that you answer this). \_\_\_\_\_

2. How long have you been a member of this local church?  
10.4 (mean) years.

3. How far do you live from this church? 8.2 miles (mean)

4. On the average, about how many times did you attend worship during the past year?

- 1) .0 None
- 2) .9 About once a year
- 3) .9 About once or twice every three months
- 4) .0 About once a month
- 5) 2.7 About two or three times a month
- 6) 95.5 Four times a month or more

5. In how many congregation programs (edification, benevolent committee, etc.) are you involved?

- 1) 29.9 None
- 2) 18.1 One
- 3) 23.8 Two
- 4) 21.9 Three
- 5) 12.4 Four or More

6. How many leadership positions, if any, do you hold in these church programs?

- 1) 69.5 None
- 2) 21.0 One
- 3) 4.8 Two
- 4) 2.9 Three
- 5) 1.1 Four or More

7. How much time would you say you spend during the course of an average month in church affairs?

- 1) .9 Less than 1 hour
- 2) 14.5 1-5 hours
- 3) 21.8 6-10 hours
- 4) 20.9 11-15 hours
- 5) 13.6 16-20 hours
- 6) 28.2 Over 20 hours

8. Has your involvement in the congregation increased, decreased, or remained the same in the last few years?

- 1) 58.3 Increased
- 2) 30.6 Remained the same
- 3) 10.2 Decreased

8a. If your participation has increased, which one of the following is the most important reason for this:

- 1) 9.9 More time available
- 2) 9.9 Because of children
- 3) 9.9 Accepted office or other responsibility in the church
- 4) 26.8 More positive attitude toward the church
- 5) 2.8 Better health
- 6) 40.8 Stronger faith

8b. If your participation has decreased, which of the following is the most important reason for that:

- 1) 60.0 Less time available
- 2) 0.0 Children less involved
- 3) 0.0 Given up office or other responsibility in the church
- 4) 13.3 More negative attitude toward the church
- 5) 26.7 Health problems
- 6) 0.0 Decreased faith

9. Think for a moment of your five closest friends (individuals or couples) with whom you have social and recreational life. Do not include close relatives. How many are members of your congregation:

- |              |              |                      |
|--------------|--------------|----------------------|
| 1) 15.1 None | 3) 20.8 Two  | 5) 10.4 Four         |
| 2) 4.7 One   | 4) 9.4 Three | 6) 39.6 Five or more |

10. Suppose your congregation were in real danger of closing because of financial problems. How much would you be willing to increase your giving to the church in order to prevent this from happening:

- |                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) 0.0 None               | 4) 22.5 A good bit       |
| 2) 6.9 A little           | 5) 26.5 A great deal     |
| 3) 37.3 A moderate amount | 6) 6.9 A very great deal |

11. Approximately how much does your family household contribute to your congregation per year?

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1) 1.9 Under \$100 | 6) 3.8 \$600-749    |
| 2) 1.9 \$100-199   | 7) 8.7 \$750-999    |
| 3) 2.9 \$200-299   | 8) 13.5 \$1000-1249 |
| 4) 1.9 \$300-449   | 9) 58.7 Over \$1250 |
| 5) 6.7 \$450-599   |                     |

12. How many persons or families have you invited to visit or become a member of the church in the past year?

- |              |                      |
|--------------|----------------------|
| 1) 12.3 None | 3) 45.3 Two or Four  |
| 2) 12.3 One  | 4) 27.4 Five or more |

IX. FINALLY, WE NEED A FEW ITEMS OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF.

1. Gender:

- 1) 47.3 Male
- 2) 52.6 Female

2. Age

39.5 (Mean)

3. Race

- 1) 93.6 White
- 2) 3.7 Black
- 3) .0 Other

4. Marital status:

- |                              |                 |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1) 16.5 Single               | 3) 1.8 Widowed  |
| 2) 2.9 Separated or divorced | 4) 78.0 Married |



APPENDIX B  
POETIC TRIBUTES TO PARKWAY CHURCH OF CHRIST

## TO THE OLD

Let's give honor to the old  
 Building where we've all been told  
 Priceless words of precious truth  
 Guilding many from their youth;

Taggart-to-Taggart weddings held..  
 Sinners to repent compelled..  
 Images of those who've passed  
 To their home in heav'n at last..

Breaking bread..showing care..  
 Bowing heads in words of prayer..  
 Singing out those grand old hymns..  
 Reaching out by showing films..

Hearing signals of police..  
 Launching campaigns to Belize..  
 Roaring trucks..whistling trains..  
 My wife feeling labor pains..

Air conditioner blowing hot..  
 Some patrolling the parking lot..  
 Having showers..announcing births..  
 Sharing sorrow..sharing mirth..

Being led by men of faith,  
 Nursery keeping babies safe,  
 Drying those immersed with tow'ls,  
 Giving gifts to Secret Pals.

Seeking--finding..giving..greeting..  
 "Oh, was there a deacons' meeting?"  
 Having Christian school taught there  
 Printing reams, the Word to share.

Elders cooking breakfast, standing,  
 Serving us who helped in planning..  
 Deep despair..all night prayer..  
 And when needed, help was there!

All these mem'ries are but part  
 Of the thoughts upon my heart;  
 Some will ask, without a doubt,  
 Why I left some mem'ry out;

Love has flowed throughout her halls  
Signs of purpose decked her walls;  
All one saw was not appealing--  
Plaster fell off from her ceiling;

Helping deaf to spread the Word  
To a world who's never heard..  
Training all the Lads and Lasses..  
Learning from those teaching classes.

Seeing young folks off on trips..  
No room for our fellowships..  
Installation..graduation..  
Canvassing and visitation..

Close the book (a new one open);  
Being read, its hold is broken,  
But the mem'ries have not ended,  
For the story has been splendid!

She was just a place, 'tis true;  
Old must fade away for new;  
But if truth were to tell,  
That old building's served us well!



## TO THE NEW

Now it's time for celebration,  
Ending long anticipation;  
Woodlawn Church of Christ moves east;  
Come and join in the love feast!

Be of Christ an imitator;  
Build a spiritual house that's greater,  
Finer, stronger, safer, too,  
Than the physical one 'round' you.

Live as Christ's disciples should,  
Praising God and doing good,  
Sharing Christ with those you know  
So through Him this church will grow.

Though we write from far away,  
We rejoice with you today,  
And we pray that God will bless  
All your labors with success!

P. S. Disbelievers we will be  
That all is well until we see  
The ultimate in signs of proof..  
No more leaking from the roof!  
E. Henry Huffard

APPENDIX C  
EVANGELICAL OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ROEBUCK PARKWAY CHURCH OF CHRIST

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. We are genuinely interested in your views and beliefs in a variety of areas. Your impressions, feelings, and opinions are important for the planning of this congregation. In some cases you may feel that your opinions are not well informed. Please go ahead and give your present impression even though you realize it could change by talking with others. Please use the "don't know" response only in those rare cases where you have no impression at all.

Please do not sign your name to this questionnaire. We are looking for the total results and not the specific member who filled out the questionnaire. The first section will assist in determining whether people who can be put into groups have similar attitudes.

I. Please check the appropriate answer.

1. I am:

1.  Male
2.  Female

2. I fall into the age category of:

1.  6-15
2.  16-18
3.  19-25
4.  26-35
5.  36-45
6.  46-55
7.  56-65
8.  Over 65

3. Please give the last four digits of your telephone number:

\_\_\_\_\_

4. I am:

1.  Single, having never been married
2.  Single, having previously been married
3.  Married

5. I work:
1. \_\_\_ Outside the home
  2. \_\_\_ In the home
6. My schooling includes:
1. \_\_\_ Grammar school
  2. \_\_\_ High School
  3. \_\_\_ Junior college
  4. \_\_\_ College
  5. \_\_\_ Graduate work
7. I attend the following services:
1. \_\_\_ Sunday morning
  2. \_\_\_ Sunday morning, Sunday night
  3. \_\_\_ Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night
8. The total annual income of my family is:
1. \_\_\_ Under \$10,000
  2. \_\_\_ \$10,000 - \$15,000
  3. \_\_\_ \$16,000 - \$20,000
  4. \_\_\_ \$21,000 - \$25,000
  5. \_\_\_ \$26,000 - \$30,000
  6. \_\_\_ \$31,000 - \$35,000
  7. \_\_\_ \$36,000 - \$40,000
  8. \_\_\_ \$41,000 - \$50,000
  9. \_\_\_ Over \$50,000

II. The following are a number of statements concerning this congregation. There are no right or wrong answers. After reading each statement, decide if you agree or disagree and the strength of your opinion and then *check the appropriate square*.

- |  | STRONGLY<br>AGREE        | MODERATELY<br>AGREE      | MODERATELY<br>DISAGREE   | STRONGLY<br>DISAGREE     | DONT<br>KNOW             |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Members are friendly to strangers and newcomers.                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Members help each other in time of trouble.                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Members are involved in various forms of evangelism and teaching. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

	STRONGLY AGREE	MODERATELY AGREE	MODERATELY DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
4. Members feel they have a voice in making important decisions which affect the growth of this church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. There are cliques or exclusive groups which make one feel unwelcomed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. There is a need to have an organized program of reaching those not members of the Church of Christ.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Members share God's love in what they do for and with each other.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Preaching to those not members of the Church of Christ should have a high priority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Praying for those not members of the Church of Christ is sufficiently practiced.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Helping people in need who are not members of the congregation should be a high priority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

III. Listed below are items many in a local congregation are likely to perform. In your judgment, how important should the task be to you personally?

	HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS ITEM TO ME PERSONALLY?		
	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	LITTLE OR NO IMPORTANCE
1. Providing worship that nurtures, uplifts, and strengthens individuals to carry out their daily living.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Providing worship that deepens members understanding of the Bible and the church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS ITEM TO ME PERSONALLY?		
		VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	LITTLE OR NO IMPORTANCE
3.	Providing worship that helps members express their joy and thanksgiving for God's gifts to them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Encouraging members in their daily lives to minister for the cause of Jesus.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Carrying out acts of charity to needy persons.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Involvement in community issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Engaging in foreign mission activities by one's contribution.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Engaging in mission activities by going on campaigns, conducting correspondences studies, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Sharing the good news of the gospel with those not members of the Church of Christ.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Spending time and effort in reclaiming those who are no longer attending.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Attending visitation classes to learn better how to teach others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	Teaching children and adults about the Bible and the church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	Talking to one's neighbors about Jesus and the Bible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	Having elders, deacons, and preachers, who share the gospel with those not members of the Church of Christ.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

III. The following are a number of statements about my personal attitudes toward certain activities of the church and how active I am in these activities. *Check the answer nearest your feeling.*

1. Teaching Bible classes
  1.  Is very important
  2.  Is somewhat important
  3.  Is of little or no importance
  
2. I am involved in teaching the Bible in Bible classes:
  1.  Yes
  2.  No
  
3. Spending time each week in talking with others about their spiritual condition:
  1.  Is very important
  2.  Is somewhat important
  3.  Is of little or no importance
  
4. I am involved in spending time each week in talking with others about their spiritual condition:
  1.  Yes
  2.  No
  
5. Teaching people the Bible in private situations:
  1.  Is very important
  2.  Is somewhat important
  3.  Is of little or no importance
  
6. I am involved in teaching people the Bible in private situations:
  1.  Yes
  2.  No
  
7. Praying daily for some lost person:
  1.  Is very important
  2.  Is somewhat important
  3.  Is of little or no importance
  
8. I pray daily for some lost person:
  1.  Yes
  2.  No

9. Developing fellowship opportunities in which members can be with and get to know one another:
1.  Is very important
  2.  Is somewhat important
  3.  Is of little or no importance
10. When fellowship opportunities are provided, I participate:
1.  Yes
  2.  No

IV. The following are a number of questions to measure the involvement of the membership in some church activities. *Please check the number which is most appropriate.*

1. How many people have you invited to attend services in the past two months:
  1.  None
  2.  One
  3.  Two
  4.  Three
  5.  More than Three
  
2. I usually pray for the following who are not members of the Church of Christ:
  1.  No One
  2.  Immediate family
  3.  Relatives
  4.  Friends
  5.  All people
  
3. In the past two months I have done the following to show concern for others:
  1.  invited them to services
  2.  given them a tract or written material
  3.  had one who is not a member of the Church of Christ in my home for a meal
  4.  prayed for one who is not a member of the Church of Christ
  5.  others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
  6.  have done nothing to show my concern



4. I think it is most important to teach the Bible: (Check only one)
1. \_\_\_ in Bible classes
  2. \_\_\_ in sermons
  3. \_\_\_ on television and radio
  4. \_\_\_ through printed material such as the newspaper and Bible correspondence courses
  5. \_\_\_ on a personal basis
  6. \_\_\_ other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Of all the considerations which contributed to my decision to become a member at Roebuck Parkway, the most important was:
1. \_\_\_ church location
  2. \_\_\_ friendliness of members
  3. \_\_\_ the preaching
  4. \_\_\_ a friend or relative who was already a member
  5. \_\_\_ the church programs
  6. \_\_\_ others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
6. I pray for those who are lost:
1. \_\_\_ never
  2. \_\_\_ seldom
  3. \_\_\_ weekly
  4. \_\_\_ daily
  5. \_\_\_ in every prayer
7. If there were a class on how to teach the lost the Bible, I would try to come:
1. \_\_\_ never
  2. \_\_\_ seldom
  3. \_\_\_ once a month
  4. \_\_\_ twice a month
  5. \_\_\_ each week

V. Check one statement which most closely reflect your attitude:

1. What do you feel is the most important work done by Roebuck:
  1. \_\_\_ helping the needy
  2. \_\_\_ providing opportunities of worship
  3. \_\_\_ reaching people with the gospel
  4. \_\_\_ serving as a political force in the name of righteousness
  5. \_\_\_ providing religious training for children
  6. \_\_\_ other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

2. What should motivate us in sharing the gospel with our friends and neighbors: *(Check one)*
  1. \_\_\_ to make the world a better place
  2. \_\_\_ because we have been instructed to show concern
  3. \_\_\_ fear of what will happen to lost friends and loved ones
  4. \_\_\_ fear of what will happen to us, if we fail
  5. \_\_\_ the joy and satisfaction which we derive when we do good for our fellowman
  6. \_\_\_ the reward of heaven which we will receive because we have done the will of God
  7. \_\_\_ appreciation for my salvation
  
3. I share the gospel most often with others: *(Check one)*
  1. \_\_\_ immediately following an evangelistic effort by the church such as a gospel meeting or v.b.s.
  2. \_\_\_ After some problem has developed in my family such as illness or death and I am again awakened to the need of sharing the gospel with others
  3. \_\_\_ when someone asks me a religious question
  4. \_\_\_ when I see the joy and happiness others are receiving when they are obedient
  5. \_\_\_ following a class or some type of instruction to inform me how to more effectively share the gospel
  6. \_\_\_ following a sermon in which I have been reminded of my responsibility of sharing the messages with others
  7. \_\_\_ others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. It is my conviction:
  1. \_\_\_ that some way God will save even those who do not obey His will
  2. \_\_\_ that all men who do not obey the will of God are lost
  
5. It is my conviction that:
  1. \_\_\_ I will be held partly responsible for those who are lost, if I do not teach them the gospel
  2. \_\_\_ it will not matter one way or the other, as far as my salvation is concerned, whether I tell anyone the gospel
  
6. I believe that all Christians will receive a reward:
  1. \_\_\_ the more people I teach, the greater will be my reward
  2. \_\_\_ all Christians will receive the same reward

7. In the last two months, I have done:
1.  more sharing of the gospel with others
  2.  less sharing of the gospel with others
  3.  about the same sharing of the gospel with others
8. It is my feeling that the following has the greatest responsibility of sharing the gospel with others? (*Check one*)
1.  Deacons
  2.  Elders
  3.  Preachers
  4.  All members have the same responsibility
  5.  Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
9. My favorite way of sharing the gospel with others is: (*Check one*)
1.  by the manner of life that I live
  2.  by conducting Bible classes
  3.  by giving out a tract
  4.  by teaching my family at home
  5.  by enrolling people in Bible courses
  6.  others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
10. When I share the gospel with others, I feel: (*Check one*)
1.  good
  2.  joyful
  3.  the usual
  4.  sad
  5.  excited
  6.  otherwise, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX D

SERMONS

## ROEBUCK PARKWAY'S DREAM

I once heard about a lady who slept all the way during the service at the synagogue. On the way out of the service, she was complimenting the Rabbi's sermon. She said, "Rabbi, you preached such a marvelous sermon today. It was so wonderful. It was so helpful." The Rabbi had seen that she had slept all during the service, so he thought he would try to put her on the spot just a little bit and he said, "What part of the sermon did you particularly like?" She said, "I just liked it all, it was just wonderful. It was just a marvelous sermon." He said, "What did you really think about the sermon?" She said, "I really thought your sermon was just a dream."

They are doing studies at Northwestern University on the affect of the behavior of doctors and nurses while the patient is under anesthesia. They have found out that if the doctors and nurses are happy and seem to be in good spirits, it makes a difference as to how the patient comes out from under the medication. I am so glad to learn that. I am so glad to learn that people, while they are asleep, can still learn some things. I think that every preacher that I know will be encouraged by this study that has been made.

I am directing your attention this morning to the word of God. While we find humor in stories of dreaming and sleeping in the services, I want you to know this morning that dreams are important. In Acts 2:17, Peter is standing on that occasion and he says to the thousands and thousands that had congregated: "...and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." Dreams are important. Langton Hughes, the black poet, said: "Hold fast to dreams; for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly."

You probably will not remember the names of these men. If I asked you today if you remember Shammua, Igal, Sethur, Shaphat, Gaddiel, I am sure you talked about them a lot the last few days. But if I should mention another man who is in this same category, you would recognize him. His name is Caleb. What was the difference in Caleb and these other men that I have mentioned? The difference is Caleb had a dream. Caleb was a dreamer. He had a great dream. He was excited the morning Moses gave the instruction. He was honored. Six hundred three thousand, five hundred fifty men above twenty years of age; only twelve had been selected. He was from the biggest tribe. He felt honored. Seventy-five thousand men of his age in his tribe, yet he had been carefully chosen.

His heart was pounding; his mouth was dry; he made his way with some difficulty. He was amazed at the marvelous land that he was spying out. They cut down some grape clusters that took two men to carry; the finest figs that he had ever seen. He was tired. They had been successful. They had been seen, but they had been camouflaged in such a way that the giants who lived in the land, and the enemies who lived in the land did not know the mission; so they allowed them to pass peaceably. Forty days had passed. He was extremely tired. He was tired not only of the terrain, not only of the temperature that had exhausted him; he was tired also of arguing with his comrades. They were afraid. He was afraid but he had a dream. He had a dream that when they said "we are like grasshoppers before them," the dreamer said we need to go and possess the land. Now it is his turn to stand and to speak, and he quiets the congregation and says, "Let us go at once, for we are able."

A dream will cause one to act -- let us go. A dream will cause one often to see the urgency -- let us go at once. A dream will create faith in the heart -- we are able. He was a young man, forty years of age; forty-five years later he is eighty-five and he says, "I want the place where the giants live -- the sons of Anak." He had a dream. But one man having the dream did not make the difference. Six hundred three thousand, four hundred forty-eight of his fellow soldiers died; thousands and thousands of women died because they did not share the dream.

Jesus had a dream. Jesus dreamed of the kingdom of God. He mentioned some subjects only one or two times, and if He mentions a subject only one time, it is important. But He mentioned his dream of the kingdom in His three and one-half years of personal ministry more than eighty times. He told fifty or sixty stories about the kingdom of God. Thirty-five percent of all His teaching directly dealt with the kingdom of God. He had a dream and it was a dream that prompted Him to leave the splendors of glory and come and give His life upon the earth. He had a dream.

I believe churches have dreams. Robert Dale, a church growth expert, states, "The best place to understand the church is to discover its founding dream and any remnant of that dream which continues to shape lives and ministry." What was the founding dream of this church?

In 1838, before most of us were born, J. A. Butler preached at what is now known as Birmingham. One year later, the great man, Alexander Campbell, traveling from Augusta, Georgia, to New Orleans, preached under a brush arbor that had been erected by some slaves right outside what we now know as Birmingham. In 1871, Birmingham was christened as the city of Birmingham. Five years later, the

Isaac Franklin Hood family moved here from Andalusia, Alabama. Her husband was not a Christian but she was a member of the church of Christ. Some of the local churches were having a revival, and they began to put pressure on two of her daughters to join up with them. She did not want that, so she sent down to Montgomery, Alabama, for J. M. Barnes. he came up and preached for several nights, and nine people were baptized. They met in the courthouse. The courthouse itself was only two years old, and they began to meet in the courthouse.

It was not long before, according to Sister Shelby when I recently talked with her, that her mother and father met in old Brother Bryan's Presbyterian church on Sunday afternoon. The Presbyterians allowed them to use their facility. In 1897, Brother C. M. Pullias came to Birmingham. He had \$100, and he thought that would carry him through the year. It did not, so he and his wife had to leave. J. M. Barnes continued to come to preach every chance he had. He was preaching in a tent meeting at Pratt City along with John T. Lewis. It is there that the brethren came and invited him to come and preach for them at the old Fox Hall. Fox Hall was located on 19th Street and 4th Avenue, North, and was just torn down a few years ago. I have a brick that I got when they were tearing down the old Fox Hall. I just wanted to have it as a little reminder that the church used to meet there. There were fifty-two chairs and Brother Lewis would put all the chairs out on Sunday morning and after the services, the chairs would be taken down. There was no night service -- they met in homes at night.

What was the dream of these brethren? They were not divisive in nature. They were not interested in just starting another group. You know something about a person as you observe their behavior -- as you notice what is important to them. I look at you and see what is important to you by the way you behave, by what you think about and what you talk about and what you believe. The same could be said of the church. Some of you may not believe this, but by observation I believe that we can find what was the founding dream of the church -- this church -- this church that I am speaking to this morning.

Let's look. In 1907, THE CONGREGATION WAS meeting in Fox Hall. In 1908, they bought some property at West End. Brother Lewis made a trip up to Nashville, Tennessee, and Brother David Lipscomb gave \$200. Now the church began to build its own facility. It meet for several year at West End -- the only church in existence in Birmingham. In 1913, a group of these brethren, whose mission was to take the city for Christ, found a Presbyterian building on 60th Street, right off 1st Avenue, and for \$2,250 they purchased

the building. They spent \$1,100 more in renovating the building and \$385 in interest, and the church began to meet. Brother Lewis, for a number of years, would preach along with Brother Ellis, who came later.

What was this church like? This church was interested in the city. In 1916, Brother Lewis gave a report of what the church had been up to. He said they had preached in ninety-nine weeks of tent meetings. He was giving a report of what had been going on at the old Woodlawn church. Ninety-nine weeks of tent meetings -- we have not spared any area of our city; we have preached everywhere we can find a location. We have been to all districts. Eighty-two people have been baptized in these tent meetings. In addition to that, we have preached in thirty-nine meetings in various buildings around this city, and fifty-two people have been baptized. Woodlawn and Roebuck Parkway churches were not born out of division, but a dream -- a dream of taking a city for Christ.

I have information before me this morning that indicates some of the works in which the church was involved. Tent meetings were one of the most popular ways of trying to evangelize the city and bring this city to Christ. The spirit of evangelism can also be seen in the encouragement and support Woodlawn provided in establishing new congregations. In 1920, North Birmingham was established. Many members went from Woodlawn to help in the establishment of the church. In 1922, some of this number, along with others from Woodlawn, went into Tarrant City and established the church there. In 1927, Sandusky was established, and in 1941, Sandusky assisted in the establishment of the church at Adamsville. In 1926, the Ensley congregation came into being through a swarm from the Woodlawn church. At the beginning there were seventy to seventy-five members, mostly from Woodlawn. The Gospel Advocate in June of 1949, makes the following statement: "The Woodlawn church in Birmingham has established a new congregation in the East Lake district of the city. It is on 77th Street. The beautiful commodious building has just been completed at a cost of \$65,000. The Woodlawn congregation lost about half of her membership."

In 1938, Woodlawn brought Marshall Keeble to Birmingham in a gospel meeting for the blacks. Again the following year, Brother Keeble returned. We find in The Gospel Advocate in 1939: "Marshall Keeble closes a month's meeting with the Woodlawn colored church on October 26th. He had large crowds and fine interest in spite of cold weather. During the time, twenty-eight were baptized and seven were restored." The Woodlawn church gave generously assisting in purchasing the property on 2nd Avenue, South.



Woodlawn started printing a paper entitled Truth In Love for the purpose of evangelizing the city. In 1939, and for a number of years, the church carried the heavy end of the cost of a daily radio program. The purpose of the program was to evangelize our city. For a number of years, the church carried the heavy end of the cost of a newspaper article, and the purpose again was to evangelize the city.

Woodlawn was not only interested in activities near by, but in foreign work as well. In 1940, the church began to assist brethren in Cedartown, Georgia; in the 1950s assistance was given to Rochester, New York; Juneau, Alaska; and Italy. Then in 1969, Woodlawn set as her goal to evangelize the entire country of Belize in Central America.

The church had a dream. I want to ask you this morning to think in your own heart, What was the dream of our founding fathers? Remember Robert Dale's statement? Robert Dale affirms that if a church forgets its founding dream, it is going to die. Behind every great achievement is a dreamer of great dreams. Much more than a dreamer is required to bring it to reality, but the dream must be there. The best way to understand a church is to discover its founding dream and any remnant of that dream which continues to shape the life and ministry. I am suggesting to you today that it was the dream of this church to take this city for Christ.

What is the present dream of this church? I know sometimes it is difficult for us to look at ourself; but in order for us to grow, there must be self examination. It is not always pleasant to look at ourself. I don't like to go to a doctor and for him to examine my heart. I don't like for him to look to see what might be wrong with me -- it is unpleasant -- I don't like to go. I don't even like to look in a mirror -- it is not a very pleasant experience.

Twenty-three years ago this month, I preached a sermon entitled "My Dream For This Church." I want us to think for just a few moments and give a little inspection. I do not want you to become defensive, but I want us to be realistic. If a dream is only the dream of one or two, it will be like Caleb in the long ago, and thousands of us will not be successful in serving God. I know that at times we were baptizing sixty to eighty people per year. I know that we had Saturday Bible School. I know that we used to take every Sunday afternoon and go around establishing Bible Correspondence Courses going door to door. I remember one year we enrolled 1,200 families in our city in the Bible Correspondence Course. I remember when we used to put out door hangers on as many as 12,000 doors and then go back a couple of weeks later, and for a number of weeks knock on all the doors inviting folks to attend the services.

I can remember when there were times that elders and deacons and Bible teachers and many members of this church were involved in personal home Bible studies with neighbors and friends. In a survey taken last fall, less than 50% of this congregation believed that conducting Bible studies to be one the major emphases in which God's people should be involved. I remember that we used to meet on Wednesday night occasionally and pray specifically for those that were lost. We discontinued this because we started out with maybe 100 present, but it was not long before that number had diminished until there were only a handful. I know that I do not hear as much praying from this pulpit for those that are lost as I used to just a few years ago. I know that last year fewer than fifteen precious souls were baptized by this congregation. I realize that we have no organizational outreach program at the present time.

The next seven weeks I would like to do, to the best of my ability, the preaching that will rekindle the dream of our founding fathers -- the dream of taking a city for Christ. I know that there will be those who will say that we have many wonderful programs with which we are involved; but I believe if you give careful scrutiny, you will observe that many of our programs, instead of being outward, have turned inward. Dreaming churches have plans -- doubting churches solve problems.

Daniel Levinson said, "A dream has the quality of a vision, an imagined possibility that generates excitement and vitality." We need to reactivate our dream of taking a city for Christ. We need not to be defeated by the doubts that old Satan has put into our hearts and minds. There is no reason in the world why this church cannot double in size in the next twelve months. But it will take a dream -- a dream that I hope will be the dream of our founding fathers.

## GOD'S MISSION OF EVANGELISM

I know that quite a number of you in our assembly this morning were so happy and delighted yesterday afternoon. One lady told me that her house did survive. She did not think it was going to survive, but it did. It fared even better than it did the week before. I wish we could get as excited about serving God as we are about athletics.

I was in Hamilton, Alabama, and the mother of Alabama's new quarterback came to me after the services and said, "I knew my boy could play ball if they would ever give him a chance. I believe he is the finest football player they have at the university." I wish you could have heard what all she had to say about him. I wish that those of us who are present this morning could think as much about Jesus as this dear mother thinks about her son.

If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister (Col. 1:23).

I would direct your attention to the phrase "which was preached to every creature which is under heaven." Paul said to the good church at Rome:

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world (Rom. 10:17-18).

Let us examine the apostles -- a small group of eleven men -- they were not distinguished men; they were not educated men; they had no influential backers. By their own estimation, they were nobodies. They lived in Judea, a second-class province of the Roman Empire on the extremity on the map of Rome. Stop and ask these men, What convictions do you have? And they would say, "We are convicted that Jesus is the Lord, and Jesus is the Savior of the world. We are convicted that we have the Spirit of God."

Your assignment, your task, is to take the gospel to the entire world. How their hearts must have sunk at such a tremendous task. An impossibility -- eleven men had to take the gospel to the entire world. A far, far more difficult task than for those of us at Roebuck Parkway to take the

gospel to every creature who lives in the city of Birmingham.

Today, we resume our investigation of the general theme of evangelism. We have reported, and I believe correctly so, that the dream of this church in its origin was to take a city for Christ. We believe that there is evidence in more recent days that maybe our dream has grown weak, and sometimes faint, and maybe even vanished away. It is not enough for you to sit here in this assembly each week and hear the fact that you need to take the gospel to your friends and neighbors and relatives and to those that you love. If you fail to share this good news each day of the week, the efforts are in vain.

The wisdom of God is evident in evangelism. First of all, the gospel was taken at exactly the right time. Had the gospel come a hundred years earlier, it would have been impossible for the world to have heard about Jesus. Had it come a few years late, it would have been impossible. The gospel came at the right time. Pax Romana! Peace! Rome had captured the world, and they were bent upon peace. Peace was unparalleled in the history of humanity. Never had there been a time like the days of Pax Romana, a time of peace.

Look at our world today. Have you been listening to the Russian leaders? Have you been watching the college students in China? Have you been seeing those across the border from East Germany by the thousands? Are you aware of the fact that our world today is a world that is seeking independence? Never in the annals of recorded history have men desired freedom of thought and expression so fervently.

One needs to examine the Greek culture to see a parallel in their civilization and ours of today. Rome had captured Greece but the Greeks had captured the culture. Greek was the dominant language. The Greek language was the universal language. I know there were many other languages that were spoken, and I realize that not everybody could speak the Greek language. But never in this history of man, except in the very beginning of time, had there been a time when there had been one language that was so dominant. Are you aware of the fact today that our language holds that reputation? We go down into Central America, and we find most of the people there can speak two languages, and nearly all of them, especially in Belize, speak the Spanish language and the English language as well.

Then there was the influence of the Jewish religion. The Jews were scattered throughout the world. They were everywhere. So are Americans today. We are everywhere all

across the face of the world, and many of these are Christians.

Today, I want to talk with you about evangelism in the Bible. I begin by noticing the evangelism of the Jews. The gospel is good news about a Jew. The gospel was first preached by a Jew to Jews. I would call your attention to the way the gospel was made known to these deeply religious people. Jesus is the fulfillment of Scripture.

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand: by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures (I Cor. 15:1-4).

Every sermon preached to a Jew in the book of Acts talked about the fact that Jesus was crucified and resurrected. All the epistles, with the exception of James, talks about the fact that Jesus is the fulfillment of scripture.

...and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us (Matt. 1:21-23).

The gospels again and again say "that the scriptures may be fulfilled."

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord (Matt. 3:1-3).

At Jesus' transfiguration, Jesus was the goal of both the law and the prophets. More than twelve times in the gospel of Matthew alone, the scriptures say "that it might be fulfilled."

And he said unto them, These are the words I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me (Luke 24:44).

...Thus it is written, ... (Luke 24:45).

You will notice again and again this appeal to the scriptures. In Acts chapter two, Peter is preaching on the day of Pentecost. The church is about to be brought into existence and Peter said:

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel (Acts 2:16).

Paul said in his defense before Agrippa:

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles (Acts 26:22-23).

This was the theme: evangelism, that Jesus is the fulfillment of scriptures.

We come to the Gentiles, and we notice the evangelism of the Gentile world. The gospel was for everyone.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15.)

...and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8).

The book of Acts can be divided, using that verse of scripture. In Acts chapters one through six, Jerusalem is evangelized. In Acts 6:8-9:31, the apostles are going into

Judea and Samaria. In Acts chapters nine through twelve, they are going into Antioch. In Acts chapters twelve through sixteen, they are going into Asia Minor; in Acts chapters sixteen through nineteen, they travel to Europe; Acts chapters nineteen through twenty-eight, they journey to Rome. The gospel was preached to the eunuch, to Cornelius, to the strangers of the gate; but the gospel was also taken to the pagan world as well.

It was taken to Antioch. It was taken to Antioch in a very unique way. Why Antioch? Why choose this particular city, the city of Antioch, as an example of how to evangelize the Gentiles? First of all, it was the capital of the province of Syria. It was called the third city of the Roman Empire. It was a mixed city. They would not think anything about the Jew and Gentile being congregated together in one assembly. It was a mixture of all different races of people. It was a great commercial city; so if the gospel could get a foothold in Antioch, those who came and traded in that particular city would take the gospel everywhere.

The early world was evangelized. Paul could say that there is not a creature that has not heard of Jesus. The message was sounded out from these eleven men to all the world. They did not have daily newspapers. They did not have radio. They did not have television. They had only the word of mouth. They did not have airliners. They could walk and ride a boat. They could ride a camel, but they did not have the way of presenting the gospel. Yet do you not realize that the most effective way of teaching our neighbors and friends in the city of Birmingham is by personal concern and personal interest?

May I remind you of the flexibility of the approach that they made? They did not get one particular way and say this is the only way the gospel can be presented. But notice how flexible they were. The Bible says, for example, that when it came to preaching to the Jews, there was one manner of presentation, "that the scripture might be fulfilled;" appealing to the Old Testament scriptures, the scriptures of which the Jews would be keenly aware. But they did not use that same approach when it came to preaching to the Gentile pagan world. They realized that would not work.

So what did they present? Acts 11:20 said that they presented Jesus as Lord. To the Jews they presented the good news of the coming kingdom. The Jewish people longed for a kingdom -- they wanted a kingdom. They wanted a Jew to reign upon the throne, so the message was of a coming kingdom. The second stage was that Jesus was a judge and that He would judge the living and the dead. The third idea

proclaimed to the Jews was that Jesus was the Christos, that Jesus was the Messiah.

When it comes to teaching the Gentiles, they did not use the same approach. They did not go in and tell them about the coming kingdom. They did not tell them that Jesus would be the judge of the living and the dead. They did not tell them that Jesus was the Messiah. They used a different approach in presenting the gospel to those that were pagans. First of all, they attacked the idolatry. They said, "Your idols are wrong; tear down the idols. Your idols can't save you; you have to feed the idols. You have to set the idols up. Look at the inability that the idols have. You must not worship idols." Then they proclaimed the one true God. They told them about a God that does not need to be served with men's hands as though He needed anything. You don't have to feed this God. You don't have to set this God up. You don't have to carve this God. We are talking about a living God. Then they told about the moral implications of following this great true God.

When Paul came to Lystra, they wanted to worship him. When he came to Athens, they did not know who he was, but they were willing to listen to him talk because of his education and because he said he knew something new, and they always wanted to hear something new every day. When Paul stood in Athens, he said, "I want to make known to you an unknown God, and you are ignorantly worshipping this God." He attacked their polytheism, and he told about the nature of this true God, and he even quoted their Greek poets. These poets were pagan men; yet he quoted them to show that even the Greek poets could have a message that would cause men to want to know more about God.

I am saying to you today that there are different approaches that we need to make. For example, when we meet someone who is already religious, we will not use the same approach as the man who is an infidel or an atheist. To the person who is religious, we can commend the fact that they are religious people; we can commend the fact that they believe in God and that they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet we can show that there is something unique and distinctive about the Bible, and it is this unique thing that we want to tell them about. We want to show you from the Bible that there is a way to become a Christian, and there is a distinctive way to worship God.

I believe that our world is ripe for that kind of approach today. I am convinced that our world is sick and tired of the commercialism of religion. We are just tired of the notoriety of our televangelists and how they are bent upon making money. We can point out that the Roebuck



Parkway church has been on television for more than twenty-three years and has never asked one single donation in all that time. We are not like the televangelists. We are not out to promote ourselves. We are not out to take a buck from everybody from whom we can glean a buck.

The approach of evangelism worldwide is the same -- it is not with some kind of super organization and some kind of structure where money is poured into a headquarters and maybe 50-70% is ripped off the top for the overhead expenses. We want to tell you about God's way.

But we will not approach someone who is an atheist in the same manner. We need to introduce people to Jesus. We need to tell our world, a world that is suffering, a world that is hurting, a world where there is divorce, that there can be peace. We need to tell our world where there is heartache, where children are being abused that Jesus does bring the solution to family problems and to problems that husbands and wives are having. Underline that message with the fact that it all begins with redemption, and what a message we have!

The import of my lesson today is simply this: What advantage did those eleven men have over us? They were ignorant, unlearned fishermen without any kind of financial backing, without any world-wide organization; but before that forty years had expired, the Bible says that every person under heaven had heard the gospel -- everyone of them. Our task is to take the gospel to the city of Birmingham, almost one million people in number. But instead of eleven men, today we have a congregation of some 650 people. The early Christians knew their task. It did not give them arrogance. They were kind and they were loving. They worshipped God; they committed themselves to service.

These early Christians spoke the word of God (Acts 16:13). These early Christians shouted it. Without the use of PA systems, they literally shouted the message (Acts 2:14). They wrote it down (Eph. 3:3). They read it (Eph. 3:4). They travelled to preach (Acts 13), and they preached while they travelled (Acts 8:36). They preached to the poor people (II Cor. 8:2). They preached to the rich people (Acts 12:1ff). They preached to people who were in jail (Acts 16:29). They preached to those that were worshipping in error down at a riverside at a ladies Bible class (Acts 16:13-14). They preached to false worshippers in the synagogue (Acts 14:1). They preached the gospel to curious pagans (Acts 17:22). They preached to a distraught maid (Acts 16:16-18). They preached the gospel to interested people in their own homes (Acts 20:20). Everyone taught (Acts 8:1). Everyone taught. Teenagers who were Christians

taught. Widows who were Christians taught. The Bible says that every Christian taught. Maybe I misread that. Every Christian taught (Acts 8:1). Everyone taught. The well educated taught. The man who had the equivalent to a Ph.D. taught (Acts 22:3). The ignorant and unlearned, even those who had no formal education taught the gospel (Acts 4:10). The married taught the gospel (I Cor. 9:5). The single people taught the gospel (I Cor. 6:9). Young men, twelve to fourteen years of age, taught the gospel (I Tim. 4:12). Old men past retirement age taught (Phil. 9). Single girls taught (Acts 21:8). Husbands and wives travelled together, not to sell Tupperware, but they travelled together to tell others the story of salvation.

So you wonder why in that forty-year period that Paul would write and say that every creature under heaven has heard the gospel? Do you know the way we can evangelize the city of Birmingham? It is for every Christian who is a member of this congregation to follow the example and tell our world the story of redemption.

I beg you today not to allow this message to fall upon ears that have been closed because you have heard it so frequently. I beg you today, if you have some loved one who is not a Christian, to write them a letter and let them know that you are interested in their health, in their financial affairs, and in their political concerns; but most of all you are concerned about their soul. Will you this week and in the weeks that are ahead find some neighbor who is not a Christian and make friends with him? You would make friends if you realized that they could help you in some way in a job promotion. You would make friends with somebody if they could help your children get ahead. Will you make friends for the purpose of leading them to heaven? Will you pick out somebody who maybe is beneath you educational wise, or somebody who is beneath you economical wise and befriend them in order that you can tell them about Jesus? After all, their soul to them is worth the entire world. Is not one soul for you worth an entire lifetime of effort?

They spoke it. They shouted it. They wrote it. They read it. They travelled to preach, and they preached while they travelled. They preached to the poor and to the rich, to those in jail, to worshippers at a riverside, to those in the synagogue, and to interested people in their own home. Everywhere, everyone fell so madly in love with the story of Jesus that they wanted the whole world saved.

In the judgement day it is my fervent hope that you will be able to look around and say, "Lord, here I am and here are all these that I brought with me." Will you make that your lifetime dream? Will you make that a fundamental of your priorities? Will you from this day forward say: I

have been caught up in the materialism of the society in which I live and I have neglected sharing the gospel message; and if the Lord came today, I would have to say that there is not a single soul that I have ever shared the gospel message with. Will you never let that be said after this coming week? Will you, because of Jesus' love for you and because of Jesus' encouragement and because Jesus wants you to, get excited about the work of Jesus as we are about football? Will you get an inkling of a grandmother's pride as she tells about her grandchildren, and will you get that same kind of concern to tell others about Jesus? It will take a city for Christ. Some of these days, when you look back, you will say that it has all been worthwhile. I appeal to you: Please do not allow the message to fall upon hearts that are hardened and ears that have been stopped up because you have heard it so frequently; but let us, as never before, re-dream a dream and take Birmingham for Jesus Christ.

We are going to sing a song of encouragement. There are those present today who are not New Testament Christians. You need to join in this great effort of taking a city for Christ. You believe in Jesus. Will you turn away from your sins, and will you confess that you believe Christ to be the Son of God and will you today be buried with your Lord in baptism? Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Will you do so? Let your intention be known as together we stand and sing.

## EARLY EVANGELISM

I don't know whenever I have gotten a sermon together and couldn't give it a name, but I don't have a name for this sermon this morning. It deals with three important words and I thought about calling it "M and M," but there is another "M" involved. I thought about calling it "Three M's," but if I called it "Three M's," I am giving too much publicity to an industry here in the United States. I don't know what to call it -- I will just call it a sermon without a name. I have three important points that I want to make in this sermon and I hope this is a sermon that will enable you to take these three big words home with you.

Last Sunday this series of eight sermons was introduced by a statement from Robert Dale, a church growth expert. Robert Dale said the best way to understand a church is to discover its founding dream, and any remnant of that dream which continues to shape lives and ministry. After examination, after interviewing with some of the charter members and older members of this congregation, after research and reading all that I could find historically, we came to the conclusion that the dream of the Roebuck Parkway congregation was the dream of evangelism. A group of men set out to take a city for Christ -- not the result of a church split -- not the indication that these men wanted notoriety and fame. Certainly they were not doing it for money, they were doing it for another reason. They wanted to take a city for Christ. I believe they had a legitimate dream.

While it is recognized that self-examination is often painful, we looked in our mirror last week and discovered that we have just about abandoned that dream. A survey last November indicated that less than 50% of this congregation believed that sharing the gospel with your neighbors and friends and relatives is important. There has been a decline in the praying for those that are lost. We no longer have Wednesday night prayer sessions where we take the specific names before the great throne of God and ask God's providential leadership as we try to lead them to Him. Before a gospel meeting, a prayer session was usually attended by eight or nine with a membership of more than 650. How long has it been since you have heard from this rostrum a petition for those that are lost in sin? There is no organized program soul winning in this church. In the last twelve months, there have been fewer conversions in this congregation than any time that I can discover in its history. I am not trying to be threatening; certainly I do not want you to be defensive for if I make you defensive by these statements and you want to argue and fight back, then I have failed in the mission of these eight sermons.

The question this morning is, Why? Why? We believe in God. In the survey to which I made reference, 100% said they do believe in God. I am preaching to a congregation where 100% of the members believe in God. We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe in the Bible. In this survey, 100% said they believed the Bible to be the Word of God. We believe men are lost without the gospel. We believe that God wants man to be saved. The question, therefore, is, Why? Why is the dream diminishing in our hearts and in our lives? It is a simple question, but complicated to answer.

This morning I want to begin by the word "m." We need to properly understand the mission of evangelism. God has always commanded His people to be evangelistic.

And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years (Gen. 6:3).

There was no specific command given to Noah recorded in the book of Genesis that says he is to go around and tell people what is going to happen. But in the New Testament, the Bible refers to Noah as a preacher of righteousness (II Pet. 2:5). He was preaching by the authority of God. He was preaching because God wanted him to preach. The author of I Peter wrote,

By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison (I Pet. 3:19).

A somewhat perplexing verse, it simply refers to the fact that it was through Noah that the Holy Spirit preached to those people who were in prison of sin. God, therefore, wanted Noah to preach. He wanted Noah to be an evangelist - - to preach a message of the good news that salvation was available and possible for humanity.

Abraham was an evangelist of God. He lied about Sarah being his sister. Abimelech took her. He got sick; so he did not have sexual relations with her. God came to Abimelech in a dream and said: "Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet..." (Gen. 20:7). Abraham was God's spokesman down in the land of Egypt. In the Patriarchal Age, God wanted his people to evangelize.

The import of our lesson today will really center around the Jewish people. The bulk of our sermon today will center around perhaps something that some of you may not have thought about before. God wanted the people who are His people, called the Hebrew people and later referred to as the Jewish people, to be evangelistic. You may not understand that principle but that is a Biblical principle,

and we wish to set forth overwhelming evidence to show that God wanted the Jewish people to be evangelistic. God said to Pharaoh,

And in very dead for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth (Ex. 9:16).

Not just to the Jewish people, not just to the descendants of Abraham but God wanted His name to be declared to all the earth.

And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee (Deut. 28:10).

I am emphasizing the fact that it was the intent of God that His name would be known not by just a select handful of people, but that His name would be known by every living person -- by all of the earth -- by everyone. How is God going to get this accomplished? If we agree that God in His word says He wants His name to be declared to all the earth, how is God going to accomplish this?

Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: ... therefore ye are my witnesses saith the Lord, that I am God (Isa. 43:10, 12).

God said He wanted His name known by every person. Who is going to tell? God said, It is you, I want you to be My witness.

And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, ... I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth (Isa. 49:3, 6).

I want you to be the light to the Gentiles. They are in darkness and in sin. You are My people -- you are the hope of the world, and I want you to be the light to the Gentile pagan nations.

In the Christian age, first a small group of eleven were instructed to take the gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:15). I repeat that God has always intended for His people to evangelize the world. The mission of evangelism - - if you are a child of God, please understand that God has assigned to you the mission of evangelism.

Secondly, there is the method of evangelism. Why didn't the Jews do that? Why didn't the Jews take the light to the whole world? The Jews believed in God. They believed in the power of God. They believed that God could save and they knew that God wanted man to be saved.

Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approved the things that are most excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness (Rom. 2:17-19).

They knew that they were to be God's light. The Jews had perverted the law. The law was intended to bring men to Christ, not to exclude men from God. The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:24). The purpose of the law was to bring men to Christ. Why did they fail? They believed in God. They knew what God wanted. They were confident -- they knew the law. Why did they fail? They were filled with pride. In Luke chapter eighteen, the Pharisee is an indication of the Jewish nation: "I thank you that I am not like other men; I thank you that I am not like sinners." They were filled with pride. William Barclay said the Pharisee thanked God that he was not born a slave; he thanked God he was not born a woman; he thanked God he was not born a Gentile.

Jonah typifies the Jewish nation. Jonah did not want to go. God told him to go -- you know the story. Jonah got on a boat and tried to get away from going to preach to pagan people. He typifies the Jewish nation.

Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, ... than sixscore persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; ... (Jonah 4:10-11).

The attitude of pride caused the Jewish people to turn inward, so they let the world die and be lost. They were concerned about "us," and they turned inward more and more and more and made up their own law and served themselves. God said, You are to be My light, go take My message to the world. Instead of doing so, they turned inward more and more.

Secondly, they became legalistic.





But woe unto you, Pharisees! For ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God:... (Luke 11:42).

You are so concerned about giving a tenth of you onions and your potatoes to God, you have forgotten about love and judgment and mercy.

For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers (Matt. 23:4).

They were so particular about doing the right things that their hearts were far away from God. Outwardly they made some evidence. They washed the outside of the cup and made it clean, but inside their hearts were not right with God. That is what we do when we become legalist. Instead of doing the will of God and allowing God's will to change the hearts and lives, it is so much easier for us to write down some laws and say, "One, two, three, four, we have done all of those."

What we are doing at Roebuck Parkway may be very similar to this. It is often unpleasant for us to look inward. But the question has been raised this morning, Why? It is possible that we have fallen into the same trap experienced by these Jewish people. Is it possible that we have become legalist? Have we placed so much emphasis on the need to wear the right name, have the correct organization, and terms of membership that we have lost the gist of the message? Have we forgotten that faith is an attitude about God? Have we forgotten that faith is an attitude about the Word of God as well as an attitude toward life? It may be that we sit in the church building and do exteriorly the things that are right. We have the right name; we sing the right words; we do things; but our hearts may be far away from God. I say it may be -- it may be some of our problem that we have become proud and arrogant like the Jews. We may feel that we are right and all others are wrong. We may have become egotistical and proud, and are allowing the world to die and become lost eternally, and we are still particular about the exterior.

It is also possible that we have turned inward. Every program that we have at this congregation is dear to me, and I certainly, by making the following statements, do not mean in any way to try to discourage those who are involved; but I want us to emphasize this morning that in spite of the good all these programs are doing, let's look at our

programs. The Edification Program -- a great program, indeed, but it is primarily an inward program. The Area Ministry Program is a great program, but it is an inward program. The Lads and Lasses Program is a tremendous program, but it is a program that is primarily turned inward. The Wee Folks, which is so thrilling, again is a self-serving program and is a program inward to help us. The programs that we are providing are primarily programs for us. They are primarily to serve us, and I raise the question this morning, Is it possible that we, like our Jewish fore runners (who were to be the light of the world, and Jesus said we are to be the light of the world; and the Jews were the hope of the ancient world, and we are the hope of this world) are not truly committed to God, and that we have turned inward in our activities rather than to take the gospel outside the walls of this building?

Thirdly, there is the motivation. Not only is it important that we have a proper understanding concerning the mission of this church, that the mission of this church is evangelistic; not only is it important to understand the method of evangelism is not to be self-serving, but it is also important for us to remember the motivation for evangelism. Ben Campbell Johnson, in a book entitled Rethinking Evangelism, talks about evangelism and evangelicalism. He says evangelism is the sharing of good news about Christ with others; evangelicalism is a method employed which has the following characteristics. There is a great deal of emphasis upon personal experience; there is stress on the eminent return of Jesus; there is a depersonalizing of mankind; there is a manipulative method that we employ as we try to tell others of Christ. He is saying that we have depersonalized this matter of soul winning for Jesus. We have actually manipulated people, and we have placed upon us a feeling of guilt and anxiety, and it is not coming out of the proper motivation.

I confess freely that in the last twenty something years standing in this pulpit from time to time I am sure that there were many who went away feeling somewhat perplexed and guilty that they were not doing more for God. I am suggesting to you this morning that this is evangelicalism, and it is not to be the motivating factor as to why we are to be evangelists.

The greatest evangelist I know is God. God is an evangelist. The purpose of the whole Bible is not historical or scientific, but the purpose of the Bible is to reveal God to us. The Bible reveals to us that God is an evangelist. Therefore, if we want to be evangelists, we should model His example.

First of all, look at the concern God has for all mankind. In Genesis chapter twelve, God said to Abraham, "In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed." Not just the Jewish people, not just My people, but all the peoples of the earth. The Rabbi was asked the question, "Do you suppose that God gets upset because of the punishment he has to put on His people?" The Rabbi told a Jewish legend which says, "One day the angels were rejoicing and God came on the scene and said, 'Why are you so jubilant?' One of the angels spoke up and said, 'Your people have just crossed the Red Sea and their enemies started behind them and we brought the waters round about them and we drowned them.' God said, 'You are dismissed from my service.' They asked, 'Why?' He said, 'I do not want anyone rejoicing while some of my people are drowning.'"

It may be that some of us have the concept that God just wants us saved -- that God wants those who are in attendance at Roebuck Parkway on this first day of October, 1989, to be saved. "In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed."

...for mine house shall be called an  
house of prayer for all people (Isa.  
56:7).

Not just the Jewish people, but for all people. Even in the temple there was the court of the Gentiles.

Moreover concerning the stranger, which  
is not of thy people Israel, but is come  
from a far country for thy great name's  
sake, and thy mighty hand, and thy  
stretched out arm; if they come and pray  
in this house (II Chron. 6:32).

Even the temple itself was to invite outsiders -- those that were not Jews to come into the court of the Gentiles. God wanted all people to worship Him and all people to honor His name. God was concerned about all people.

I am asking the question today: Are you concerned about everybody? Are you? Am I concerned about everybody? Am I concerned about the alcoholic -- the homosexual? Am I concerned about those of a different race? Am I really concerned the poor, the ignorant, the uneducated -- the people that our world overlooks? I tell you that God is concerned about them. God is concerned about all people, and He always has been. He hasn't changed. It was not in the Christian Dispensation that He suddenly got concerned about everybody. God has always been concerned about all people.

As I model the example of the greatest evangelist of all, I will be concerned about everybody. It will affect the way I treat my neighbor, because I realize that he has a soul that is worth more than the whole world; and when I am ugly to my neighbor, I close the door of evangelism as far as he is concerned and I am not being much like God. That means the person that checks out the groceries. That means the person who comes to my house and works. That means the insurance salesman, or whoever it might be, that calls at our door. That means the person that fixes our hair. That means all people of our world. We are to be concerned about all humanity if we are to follow the example of our great loving God.

Second, God was inconvenienced. He was bothered. He was really bothered by people -- people who would not do His bidding -- people who were an inconvenience to Him. We need to be inconvenienced for people. God was inconvenienced. One day He said, "What is the greatest possession that I have?" He looked around and could find no greater possession than His own dear Son. He was willing to give this dear Son to show His love for the people of the world, and He did. We had killed His messengers, so He sent His Son. He said, "Surely they will not mistreat my Son; look how good I have been to them, surely they won't mistreat Him." We took Jesus and we spit upon Him, and we slapped Him in His face, and we nailed Him to the old rugged cross. God was inconvenienced.

I am asking you during the next six or seven weeks to begin to be inconvenienced, to be an evangelist for God. Your mission, if you should choose to accept the challenge of God, is to be an evangelist. If you should choose to accept the challenge of God this morning, your method will be a method not of evangelicalism, not of manipulating people, not of depersonalizing people. If somebody does not know my name, I am not interested, my friends, in the message that they have. If you are out to chalk down another number and don't even know the name of the person, know nothing of their life, nothing of their needs, you have no right to try to reach him. Will you accept the challenge of God, of sharing the message with your fellowman?

Third, will you be motivated? Will you accept the challenge that God gives to you today to look to every person who is living, to look to the scum of the earth, to look to the other extremity of the rich and hateful and the ugly and the bitter and realize that they also have a soul that is more valuable than the entire world? Will you be willing to be inconvenienced for His cause? Will you accept the challenge to be motivated to be an evangelist, prompted by your love for God and your love for lost humanity?

## HOW BAD SIN IS

We have had tremendous singing this morning -- "Do You Know Your Name Is Written There?" I don't care what kind of problems you have, if you know your name is written there, it makes everything okay.

I have been told that eight sermons cannot change attitudes, but I have set out, by the help of God and with your prayers, to try to make some changes in this congregation. I want us to re-dream a dream of our founding fathers of this church. I know that we have some deacons who are really stirred up and committed, and I believe that this enthusiasm that they have is going to catch fire in all of our lives. I know their enthusiasm has already made me want to be more enthusiastic in being a better servant of God and a better preacher for this congregation.

We are grateful for your presence today. I know there are two kinds of preaching that people will not listen to. People just will not listen to poor preaching. People just will not listen to sorry preaching. They will sit back and day dream and let their minds drift and write notes and talk to their friends and punch one another and do everything they possibly can. People will not listen to poor preaching. But there is another kind of preaching people will not listen to. It has been my experience over the years that people won't listen to good preaching. Those are the two kinds of sermons that folks don't want to hear -- a bad one and a good one. A good one gets too close to home.

In the United States we pride ourselves on the best of the best. At the present time we are trying to select the best football team in the SEC. In baseball this week, we have started the World Series, and a game was played last evening. We want to find out the best of the best. The best baseball team in the world will be designated in the next few days. We want to choose the best dressed, so sometimes you see in newspapers the idea of the ten best dressed people in America, or the ten best dressed women in America. We like to choose the best of the best -- the prettiest of the prettiest -- the strongest -- the best boxer -- the best wrestler. In the business world, we want the best of the best -- the stock with the best performance that you can read in Forbes Magazine. In our neighborhood, we want the best of the best. We want the beautification award for our grass -- for our lawn -- for our flowers.

In our sermon today we are looking not for the best of the best, but today I want to talk to you about the worst of the worst. In sermon number one, we pointed out that a church that forgets its original dream is in serious trouble. It may exist by paying the janitor, paying

somebody to stand up and make a little talk, paying the utility bills -- just keep on keeping on in the same rut until all the members die out. The original dream of this church was to take a city for Christ. As painful as it has been, we have tried to look inward. We have tried to look into the mirror of our own lives and what we are accomplishing here at Roebuck Parkway and it is painful. We have found that we are not praying for the lost like we used to pray for them. We have no organized program of personal evangelism. A survey taken in the fall of 1988 revealed that less than 50% of the members of this church believe and practice sharing the gospel with neighbors as a high priority in their lives.

In sermon two, we noted that God loves all humanity. He said to Abraham, "In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed." There was in the temple of the high God a court called the Court of the Gentiles. The house of God was for all men, Jesus said. It was the plan of God that the Jews be the light of the entire world and that men be brought to God through their evangelistic efforts and the Bible says they knew that. They were confident that they were the light of the world (Rom. 2). I believe we understand, as members of the Church of Christ, that it is our mission to take the gospel to the whole world, that we are to be a city set on a hill whose light cannot be hid, that we are to evangelize the world in which we live. They got bogged down in pride and egotism and exclusiveness and they turned more and more inward. As a result of that attitude, the ancient world died and was lost eternally because God's people got involved in things of lesser importance than the work that He had assigned to them.

It is not enough to know the truth, we must have it in our hearts, as Brother Ron mentioned in our prayer a few moments ago. It is not enough to know what is right, we must live it day by day in our lives.

Woe to the obstinate children, declares the Lord, to those who carry out plans that are not mine, forming an alliance, but not by my Spirit, heaping sin upon sin (Isa. 30:1).

You are heaping sin upon sin. You did not observe my assignment to be the light of the world to evangelize the world. You have heaped sin upon sin, God charged His people of old. In order for us today to really appreciate the marvelous task to which God has assigned us, I believe it is mandatory that we see how bad sin really is. Today it will be my purpose to show all of us how bad sin really is.

Number one, there is an illness that is worse than illness. Several weeks ago I was called up to Carraway about 1 A.M. I sat and watched a man as he died. I cannot begin to count how many times I have seen people die. It is never a very pleasant experience. I have seen people who were injured, whose brain came out of their head and whose heart was laid out of their body. I have seen limbs that were broken. I saw one man who had his hand cut completely off. Illness.

...I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand. Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the Lord; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him. Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness -- only wounds and welts and open sores (Isa. 1:2-6).

Some of you have heart problems -- it is an illness. Some who are congregated today have terminal cancer, and the doctors have told you that you only have months or years to live. All of us have seen people who were injured at one time or other. But there is an illness that is worse than illness. I am speaking today about those who are ill spiritually speaking -- those who are sick in sin. God said, "My people are sick in sin, their head is burst open, their hearts are laid out and there are sores from the top of their head to the sole of their feet because they are spiritually sick."

Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? (Jer. 8:22).

Six times the Bible uses the word "physician," and four of those times Jesus said, "I am the physician." I want to tell you that our great physician has given us the remedy for the ills of our world.

Lawrence Kohlbert, noted psychiatrist, in discussing about morals and ethics describes in Europe one who had a disease that required a pharmacist to fill a prescription of radium. It cost the man about \$200 to make, and he multiplied the price tenfold. He sold it for \$2,000, and

the man whose wife was dying of this disease did not have \$2,000. He went to one friend after another, and finally he had about \$1,000. He broke into the drug store and stole the medicine. Kohlbert wants to know if the man was justified. It was an exorbitant price, but it was the only way his wife could be healed.

I want to ask you how you feel about the pharmacist. How do you feel about the man that jacks the price up? Here is a dear woman who is dying, and he has the medicine but he is interested in making tenfold profit so he puts the price up so high that he makes it impossible for the poor man to buy it. I want to ask you in your heart of hearts today, How do you feel about the pharmacist?

To make the application, we have neighbors and friends whose heads are burst open and whose hearts are laid out and who are covered in sores over their whole body, and Jesus Christ has given us the remedy. Here we sit; we are content to keep the remedy within the own confines of our lives and allow our neighbors and friends and often even our relatives to die. They could live eternally with God, but we just sit here and hoard that medicine -- the remedy of salvation -- and we keep it confined to this building. What kind of people are we?

There is a bondage worse than bondage. God's people were slaves in Egypt. I don't know what all that entails; I do know that one day Moses saw an Egyptian beating one of his people. One of the dark blots on American history was the time when there were slaves in our country. I vote against slavery. I have been totally opposed to slavery all my lifetime. I am not responsible for what my great grandparents did, but I want you to know that when the whisper was heard at the cabin door, "Mr. Lincoln has said we are free," I vote for Mr. Lincoln.

I have seen other forms of slavery. I talked to a lady who was working in the hotel down in Belize in Central America. She told me that she made \$12 a week. She came to work at 6 A.M. and she worked until dark, sometimes six or seven o'clock at night. She was the only maid in the hotel. She washed all the sheets, made all the beds, and did all the sweeping and dusting, and her total fee was \$12 per week. She had a husband who had abandoned her. She had four children at home. I believe that is a form of slavery.

There is another kind of slavery. It is a slavery to sin.

...for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him (II Pet. 2:19).



...everyone who sins is a slave to sin  
(John 8:34).

As bad as it was during the days of slavery when a man did not have any time of his own, now many of you in this audience today are servants? You go to work, and you serve somebody until five o'clock, but then you go home, and it is your own life. But a slave has no time of his own -- he has no recourse whatever. If he is abused, who is going to defend his rights? Slavery is horrible.

I know a boy who is a slave. He is a slave to cocaine. I think I have mentioned him before. He called and asked that I come by. I went over to see him. He literally ran into a wall and butted his head against the wood wall -- getting in the fetal position in the corner and said, "Jesus, Jesus, please help me." Later I drove him down to pick up some milk and other things, and he talked about how he detested this drug that had become so dominant in his life.

I know those who are slaves to alcohol. We had a young lady who visited our services several months ago. Her sister had called me from Mobile. I went out to where she lived. She has to have a drink every day of her life. She is addicted to alcohol. She is a slave of alcoholism.

But wait! Wait just a moment! I want to talk to you about some other sins. I know that there are those who are slaves to a bad temper. Whenever things don't go your way, you are immediately ready to lash out, and you are a slave to that bad temper. There are those who are guilty of wife abuse and husband abuse, and there may be those present today who do not abuse your wife physically, but who abuse her verbally. She can never do anything right, and whatever she does, it is always the wrong way or the wrong thing. Some of you are slaves to wife abuse or husband abuse.

Some of you are slaves to cursing. You would curse in front of your own mother. You are not addicted to cocaine or alcohol, but you are a slave to cursing, and you take God's name in vain and you curse and swear. Some are slaves to lying. How horrible it is to lie.

I am glad today that we have a key -- it is the gospel key. It is a key that will loosen the slaves -- a key that will say at the cabin door, "You are free." You have that key. Every Christian who is in this congregation today has that key that offers freedom to a world that is enslaved in sin. I ask you today, Are we going to keep the key locked in our own purses, in our own billfolds, in our own cars, in our own homes; or will we take the key out and unlatch the door?

There is a death that is worse than death. Think of the horror of death. When Abel did not come home that day, I wonder how Adam and Eve must have felt. I wonder how they felt when they eventually found his body. I wonder if Mother Eve did not run over and clasp his head in her arms and say, "Speak to me, son, speak to me." The horrors of death. Many times I have gone from the hospital room when the mother or wife would be saying, "He is gone, he is gone," and the family walks away from the hospital room, and the body is taken down to the funeral home.

I am telling you today that there is a death worse than this death. It is to be dead in sin. God said to Adam and Eve, "The day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2). To be separated from God. How marvelous it would be for us to go back into that hospital room and to put our hand on the brow of that departed one and say, "Rise up," and for them to be able to raise off that hospital bed and walk around. Wouldn't you like to do that? The mother who had just lost a little baby in an automobile accident -- wouldn't you like to be able to walk over and pick that little baby up and give baby his life again, and allow that mother to rear that child to old age?

There is a death that is worse than death. It is to be dead in sin, for to be dead in sin is to be separated from God. Yet according to John 6:63, we have the words of life. Jesus said:

...the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life (John 6:63).

We can pick up that bowed head. We can pick up that one who is dead in sin and offer him spiritual life. Will we sit content in this building, happy that our lives, most of them, are as they should be and allow our world to go on and spend eternity in a death that is worse than physical death?

Finally, there is a hell that is worse than hell. How horrible hell is. I can think of many ways I had rather die as to be burned to death. But in hell a man will not burn to death, he will burn for ever and ever and ever. I don't want to go to hell. I don't want to burn forever. There is a darkness called outer darkness where life does not permeate, where there is no light. There is a place where there is only hatred.

But I want to tell you that there is a hell that is worse than hell. Luke 12:48-49 says that those who knew the will of God but refused to do it would be beaten with many

stripes. I would rather die having never heard the name of Jesus, never having heard the gospel plan of salvation; I would rather die in some backward nation, as to know the will of God in Birmingham, Alabama, at the Roebuck Parkway congregation, and then just simply keep that message to myself. God has commissioned us to tell the gospel to our neighbors and to tell the gospel to our friends. He has no other plan other than this. That is His arrangement -- that is His plan. If we refuse to do His bidding, the Bible says that He is going to beat us with many stripes. The one that didn't know will be beaten with few stripes, but those who knew but wouldn't do will be beaten with many stripes. That is us. That is members of this church. Those of us who go to hell will be beaten with many stripes because we knew what God wanted, but we were content not to do anything about it.

When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul (Ezek. 3:18-19).

There is a illness that is worse than illness. It is to be sick in sin. Today I speak to some 500+ who have the remedy for sin. Will we keep it ourselves during this oncoming week? I speak to you today about a death that is worse than death. It is to be dead in sin. We can resurrect people with the message of redemption. I speak to you today about a bondage that is worse than bondage, but you have the key that can unlock somebody who is in slavery today and allow them to escape from slavery. There is a hell that is worse than hell and if you warn your neighbors and friends and they do not turn but persists in their wickedness, God says they will be lost but your blood had been delivered. But if you refuse to warn them -- you know they are lost but you don't warn them, their blood will God require at your hands.

May God help us to be evangelists for Him. That is His plan. That is His arrangement. Will God help this church not to be smug and content to sit on a hill paying our light bills, but strengthen us that we may take this city for Christ which He has assigned for us to do? If this city is to ever be evangelized, it must be evangelized by those of us who are His children. It is time we get up off the seat

of doing little and become involved in the message and mission that God has assigned to us.

Should you not be a Christian today, we hope that this will be the service that you will obey God's will. If you have wandered away from God, we hope that you will come back to Him today. Will you come as together we stand and sing?

## LOVE FOR SOULS

We don't want to try to brow beat or intimidate you, but we are taking a very critical positive way of looking at our accomplishments and where this church is headed in the years that are ahead. The founding fathers who brought the gospel to this area had a dream. That dream was to take a city for Christ. Historically we have viewed the fact that for many years this was in the hearts and on the minds of so many people. There is evidence that we may have forgotten our founding dream, and Robert Dale says that no church can be the kind of church it ought to be when we have misplaced our dream. It is the purpose of this series of lessons to try to rekindle that dream that once flamed so brightly; and I notice that on the outside we have all our new lights up. As I drove in from Center Point the other night and those lights were on, I thought, this is a city set on a hill whose light cannot be hid, and it shines all around us illuminating now as never before. What we are interested in is not putting out additional amperage, but generating within all our hearts a keener desire for what God would have us to be.

Are all the children in?  
 The night is falling and storm clouds gather in  
 the threatening west;  
 The lowing cattle seek a friendly shelter, the  
 birds hide to her nests;  
 The thunder crashes, wilder grows the tempest and  
 darkness settles over the fearful den.  
 Come shut the door and gather around the  
 hearthstone,  
 Are all the children in?

Are all the children in?  
 The night is falling when gilded sin doth walk  
 about the streets;  
 At last it biteth like a serpent, poisonous or  
 stolen sweets.  
 O mothers guard the feet of inexperience, too  
 prone to wander in the paths of sin.  
 O shut the door of love against temptation,  
 Are all the children in?

Are all the children in?  
 The night is falling, the night of death is  
 hastening on a pace;  
 The Lord is calling, "Enter thou thy chamber and  
 tarry there a space."  
 And when He comes, the King in all His glory who  
 died the shameful death our hearts to win;  
 O may the gates of heaven shut about us,  
 With all the children in.

Livingston's love for children led him into the jungles, the swamps, the malaria of Africa. He died on his knees praying for lost souls. His body lies entombed in Westminster Abbey as one of England's uncrowned kings, but his heart is buried in Africa.

In 1976, I was asked by the elders of this church to go to Central America and to tell a missionary that his work was being terminated. I agreed with the decision that the elders had made. I stayed in his home and for many hours that night I heard his wife as she cried and sobbed. I will never forget one statement that she made repeatedly, "These people need someone to teach them. These people need someone to teach them." On September 22nd, her cremated body was scattered on the Belize River. The natives, in a very beautiful service, took a flower and allowed the flower to float on the river out to the sea.

Today our sermon is entitled "Love For Souls." The word "soul" is defined by The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia as living beings, as light, as self, as purpose, as desire, as appetite, as emotion, as passion; but in this lesson we are concerned about the eternal part of man -- that part that is made in the image of God.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them (Gen. 1:26-27).

Man is a soul. Man is a composite of a body -- a body that we bathe, a body that we perfume, a body that we educate, a body that we take such good care of; but a body that at its longest is only short in duration.

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (Gen. 2:7).

...for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return (Gen. 3:19).

But thanks be to God, that is not all there is of us. There is a soul within us. Abraham believed that man had a soul. He said to Sarah, "My soul shall live because of thee" (Gen. 12:13). Jacob believed that he had a soul. "O my soul, come not thou into their secret;..." (Gen. 49:6). David believed that man is a soul. He said, "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hades..." (Acts 2:27). Paul believed that we have a soul. "Moreover I call God for a

record upon my soul..." (II Cor. 1:23). Jesus believed that man is a soul.

For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mark 8:36-37).

The soul of man is important. Remember please, if you don't take anything else away today, that the soul of man is important. It is important, for it was made by God.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it (Ecc. 12:7).

God gave man his soul.

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live (Heb. 12:9).

He is the author of our spirits. He is the Father of our spirits. Zechariah 12:1 says He "formed the spirit of man within him." God made us with a soul.

The soul of man is important for the soul of man is eternal. Bucky Alvin Helms, 57 years old, was trapped in highway I-880 three nights and four days in a vehicle. How thrilled we were yesterday afternoon as the highway patrol of California reported that he had been pulled out and taken to the hospital and is in stable condition. How long do we give him? His ex-wife reported on the television news last evening that his three children will know the joy of a father. Perhaps he will hold grandchildren in his arms. But if he lives to be 100, that is only forth-three more years.

The soul of man is eternal. There were those who climbed and risked their lives to give a man forty-three years. Will we not risk all that we have to give a man eternity with God? Does it not seem logical to you that when we grasp one from the grips of Satan, dangling over hell itself, and we extend to them life eternal that we are altering a destiny that is eternal in nature?

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Matt. 10:28).

The soul of man is eternal. The Bible speaks of the eternal spirit of man. The same word that is employed to describe the duration of God is used to describe the soul that is within us. As long as there is a God, there is a soul. When you held the little baby in your arms and said you had a real responsibility to see that the baby gets proper nourishment, to see that the diaper gets changed, to see that he is bottle fed, to see that all goes well with the baby; you are only talking about a matter of a few years. But when you get up off the stool of do nothing and wander out in the darkness of night and with Bible in hand tell somebody the story of Calvary, you affect someone throughout all eternity.

The soul is important because it came from God. The soul is important for it is eternal. The soul is important because of the price tag that God put on it. Everybody's junk is somebody's treasure. I am amazed at the garage sales. I am amazed at what people will give money for. Almost everyone present could clean his or her home and sell the so-called discards. People will pay surprisingly high prices for the objects, for as it is said, "One man's junk becomes another man's treasure." Is God foolish for paying the price that He did for the redemption of our souls?

The Bible says that we were not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold from our vain conversation. What is the price tag, O Lord, that you placed upon the soul? He said that you were purchased by the blood of the Son of God. We are bought with a price -- the death of Jesus upon Calvary. Our soul is important. The souls about us are important.

We cannot expect the friends in our civic organizations to take the gospel to this area of Birmingham or to take this city for Christ. We cannot expect those televangelists who are bent upon lining their own pockets with more silver to hear it jangle to take this city for Christ. We are it. We are the messengers. We are the ones who decide whether all God's children get in or not, and it is not the paid staff of this congregation who are going to do the job. It is all of us working together.

I lay a charge that we really don't believe in the value of a soul. I have been concerned, as Brother Heisler mentioned in his prayer this morning, for these people in San Francisco area. I picked up the U.S. News and I read about a man named William McElroy. He was driving not far from his home in Oakland, near the Nimitz Freeway when the top deck collapsed. He was not hurt, but he could hear people moaning and crying for help. He decided to do what he could do, and he was not the only one. Rescue people was



the theme. McElroy said they came down from the project and brought their pliers, their car jacks, their wire cutters, and their flashlights. They had never done this before. They didn't know how. They had never helped people out of crushed automobiles, but there was within them a desire to save human life. He said they brought twelve or thirteen out on stretchers.

Oakland police brought four dog teams to search for survivors. There was no hope. Don Rich joined in the rescue effort. He said there was a section of the highway where there was literally blood rushing down the side and into the gutters. Rich and other rescue worker, many of them ordinary people, pushed to take action in an extraordinary manner. They tried to pull survivors through a one and one-half foot crawl space between two sections. Many of them say they will always be haunted by the screams they heard from victims that they could never reach. "Two women died in my arms," said Robert Majors, who lived a block away. "There was a man who died with all of us watching. There was nothing that we could do." William McElroy, who also lived nearby, organized a group of about twenty neighbors who spent five hours Tuesday using ladders to try to reach and rescue people with jacks, 4x4s and crowbars. Incredibly there were survivors who lived mostly because of the kindness and courage of strangers.

I believe people in this church would do exactly the same thing if some grave catastrophe raced through our community. I have no doubt that there would be a coming to rescue. We would not stand by in timidity because we realize the value of human life. But today we are not talking about human life; we are talking about a soul, eternal in duration, priceless economically speaking, made in the image of God and the question today is, What will I do for God? What will I do to get all the children in?

If you are not a Christian, will you obey the gospel? If you have wandered away from God, will you come back to Him? Will you come now as we stand together and sing?

## PRAYER

I am ready to go home. That is tremendous. I appreciate that. I let you out this morning in about twenty minutes, so tonight I want to make that up. I have a sermon that is a little over an hour, so I hope everybody is ready.

What would you say is the greatest need in the church today? What would you say it is? I am sure that some of you would say we need better preachers. We need better preachers. I expected to hear an "amen" on that, but I really think that is what some folks think we need. Some would say that the church really needs better leadership -- better elders. I don't believe a congregation rises higher than its eldership. I think one of the reasons that this church has had such a phenomenal record is because we have been blessed with great leaders. I consider the seven elders that we have to be just super men of God.

Some would say we need trained personal workers. We need folks who can go out and reach the lost with the gospel. We do need that. We are living in a world that is becoming pagan. One and a quarter million people are born in our world every week. In 2000 B.C., there were just a handful of people living in our world; 2000 A.D. the projection is six billions of people. If we continue to go as we have been going, it has been projected that before 3000, we will have only one square foot of property for each of us. That is rather limited, isn't it? By the year 3600, if we don't have any catastrophes and the world continues, people will weigh more than the whole earth weighs. Something is going to have to happen. We do need trained people to teach their friends and neighbors the gospel.

Some would say the church really needs committed members. We all need to be committed. We need to be committed to God and to the ways of God. We need to be committed to the right attitudes and to the right actions.

Tonight I believe we have a greater need than any of these. As great as these needs are, I believe there is a greater need that this church has. Not discounting the good leadership, not discounting those who are trained personal workers and Bible Class teachers, not discounting the committed membership, the greatest need in the church today is for the church to be a praying church. Last Sunday night we had a prayer in behalf of one of our deacons who has been out of work six or eight weeks. By the providence of God, he was called in for an interview this past week. They liked him and have invited him back. I believe that he will get the job, and I believe it is in answer to prayer.

We do lip service to prayer. Have you ever noticed Elijah's life? The Bible says "he prayed to God with a prayer." How else would you pray to God? I am making reference to what I understand the Hebrew says - that "he prayed to God with a prayer." Have you ever heard anybody say, "We are going to call on Bro. John Doe to say a prayer for us today"? We have a lot of folks who say the prayer; what we need is for folks to pray the prayer. I believe there is a difference in just saying the prayer and praying the prayer.

When I was a little boy, we used to play church, and we would play prayer. We still have a lot of folks who play prayer. We have a lot of folks who pray by rote. As a little boy, my mom taught me to pray:

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep.

We have learned the ropes, and we say it by rote. Bless all that are sick. Bless all the missionaries preaching in hard places. You know the deal, don't you? You know the words that we say, and they have become almost trite. We are like the little boy that nailed his prayer on the wall, and he never had to say it again. He would just point to it. I am afraid sometimes that is what our prayers have become. We will never know God if we use prayer like a telephone conversation -- a hurried conversation. We pray as though it is our duty and not a glorious privilege.

James said, "You do not have because you do not ask." As a father, I cannot recall ever having refused my children anything that I believed was in their best interest. If they asked for it, I tried to give them satisfaction. There were some times I told them "no." When they wanted a motorcycle, I told them that was one thing this dad will never buy -- I believe motorcycles are dangerous. I know we have some folks who will debate on that in this assembly tonight, but that was my own personal view. Anything that was good for them - isn't that what every father does? Is there a father here tonight that would withhold something that his child really wanted that was the best for that child to have? Is there a father like that? Jesus said,

Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?  
Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him (Matt. 7:9-11).

There were things my children never had because they never asked for them. There are things your children do not have tonight because they have never asked you for them. There are things that God would give to us, but James says we don't have because we have never asked for them. Paul admonished the Thessolonians, "Pray without ceasing" (I Thess. 5:19).

That does not mean to always be in a prayerful mind. I guess we all ought always to be that way. I got aggravated at a service station attendant the other day. I really feel bad about it. I preach at you about being unkind to people. I was not unkind; I just told him very kindly and with a big smile on my face, "I won't be back." But I didn't invite him to church, and that bothers me. I will have to tell you that it does bother me. It means that you are to pray on a schedule. Daniel is an example of praying without ceasing. The Bible says that Daniel prayed morning, noon and night. That is what it means to pray without ceasing. It means to have a schedule of prayer. It does not mean this hit-or-miss thing that you pray only when the rip cord of the parachute of some problem needs to be pulled.

Two men are working -- one works and provides for his family and has just enough to get by. Another man works and has all that his family needs, and he can help out his neighbor. Some of us pray like the former. We pray just enough to get by -- just enough to soothe our conscious. It is a temptation to all of us.

Do I sound like I am preaching at you tonight? I am preaching to myself. I want you to know that there have been times when I would go in the morning to the hospital and someone would say, "Would you have a prayer?" It would suddenly dawn on me, I am a sorry Christian; I haven't prayed a single time as yet this day. We all get tied up and busy, don't we. It is not that we mean to forget about the importance of prayer, but we just have a tendency to forget to pray.

Tonight I want to talk to you about prayer in the book of Acts to give us some direction. If you want to make a few notes, we welcome you so to do. If you want to turn and read, we only have four points that we want to make.

First of all, there is the prayer recorded in Acts 4:23ff.

And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them (Acts 4:23).

They had been hauled in before the congress of the Jews, the Sanhedrin, and they had been told by the president of the Sanhedrin not to preach anymore about Jesus because they were upsetting the people.

And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord,... (Acts 4:23-24).

Lord, get those enemies; do something to them. Don't let us have to suffer any more. We are scared; we are threatened; so just take care of our enemies. That is not what they prayed, is it? They prayed,

...Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:24-32).

They spoke with boldness. They were not brazen. They did not get up and berate and be unkind to their fellowman. I once saw a preacher write the names of many different organizations on the board, and he erased them one by one. If he wants to preach that way, that is his business, but don't try to make the standard of preaching how ugly you can

be from the pulpit. I just don't believe that is the way God wants it done. Paul wrote, "But speaking the truth in love,..." (Eph. 4:15).

They spoke with boldness, but they did not speak brazenly. One of the major reasons we are not evangelizing our world and our community and our slice of Birmingham is because we are afraid.

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of sound mind (II Tim. 1:7).

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

The word "fear" there is the word which means "reverence." Some of us need to pray for boldness tonight - boldness to say a word for Christ to the person who checks out our groceries; boldness to speak to the person who does our hair; boldness to speak to the person to whom we hand the cleaning. We need to pray for boldness. Some of us had rather shy away and let our world die unprepared, but that is not what the Lord wants.

Second, the records from the book of The Acts show us that the church grew by leaps and bounds.

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word (Acts 6:1-4).

They prayed a prayer for service. They had a problem - it is an age-old problem that will last as long as our world lasts. It is the problem of prejudice. These Hellenistic Jews were being neglected while the home folks were being cared for. They did not wait until there was an

explosion. Some people believe it will all go away. Some of us treat it as we do a tooth when it first begins to give us pain -- maybe it will go away; or like that lump in our body that we are so concerned about, and we think that maybe it will go away.

They devised a plan. A congregation needs a plan: where are we going -- what do we hope to accomplish? Division among God's people will be avoided when there is a dream. We have been preaching about that: what is the dream? If you only have a dream, you can stay anywhere and put up with about anything. What is the dream of this church?

I sat in our elders' meeting this morning and listened to these men as they began to dream. One of them said, "I believe that instead of trying to fill this whole hill up here, we ought to have a parking deck." One said, "With the deacons as enthusiastic as they are, we ought to get ready; this church is going to explode. Where are we going to build the new education building? When are we going to think about enlarging the auditorium?" I had rather hear men talking like that as to be arguing. I have been in both kinds of meetings. I have been in meetings where leaders did not have a dream and where they only patched up holes that were already inside the pavement, rather than preventing them by dreams.

What is your dream for this church? What is your dream for your family? What do you hope to accomplish? Mom and Dad, what dreams and aspirations do you have, spiritual plans for your children? Leroy Owens, one of our elders, told his Marriage Enrichment Class that he and his wife were praying for the two families of the young men who would some day marry their daughters. Is that what you are praying for your children? Are you praying for some family to instill in that daughter who is going to marry your son, or that son who is going to marry your daughter, love for God -- a stand for righteousness?

They had a plan. They appointed some deacons. These deacons were not just deacons in name only. These deacons really "deked," or whatever they do. They really got on with it. They got the matter taken care of. I believe most deacons would do this if they were given a job. The parameter was set; get on with it. Deacons need to have sense, and I have noticed that all the deacons we have appointed in the twenty-three years I have been here all had good sense. Sometimes we didn't treat them as though they had good sense. Sometimes I bounce on the deacons - you have to bounce on somebody. I realize that I have been hard on the deacons, but I want you to know how proud I am of our deacons. They are meeting every Sunday morning at seven

o'clock -- that is worth a lot. Some good is bound to come out of it.

And we will give ourselves to prayer. That is important. People say apologetically, "I wish I could do something for you, but all I can do is pray for you." These people seem to relegate prayer to the least helpful way a person can assist another. They fail to realize the power of prayer. All these men could do was give themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word. If I had been there, I would have said, "Wait a minute, the most important thing is the ministry of the word -- preach the word, that is what we need." But you will notice that Luke, writing by the inspiration of God, took time to tell us that they "gave themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

I ran across a quote the other day from James B. Irwin, one of the astronauts who went to the moon. He said, "As I was returning to earth, I realized I was enroute back home and I realized I was a servant, not a celebrity. So I am here as God's servant on Planet Earth to share what I have experienced that others might know the glory of God." He thought about that when he was coming back in the spaceship. That is a great thought, isn't it? There ought to be a motto to come out of that: I am a servant; I am not a celebrity. He that would be chief among you, let him do what? Let him get up and brag about all his accomplishments? No. Let him tell you how it is to be done while he stands aloof? I am the sergeant -- I am the board of directors -- I am the one pointing the way? No. Let him be the servant of all. May God give us servants' hearts. That is what we need. We need the heart of a servant.

Third, there is that prayer of deliverance recorded in Acts:12. I will not take time to read the context there. You know the story. The Bible indicates that Herod had James beheaded, and he was going to do the same thing to Peter. Peter was locked up and the Bible says the church was praying without ceasing for him. That is, they were praying on a regular scheduled time for him. Look at the power of this prayer. The power of the prayer is powerful because God is powerful. All the doors were shut and locked except one, and that was the door to God. Isn't that amazing? Nobody can close that door except you. They can put you in a concentration camp, and they can feed you on bread and water, and they can bolt twelve doors; but there is one door they can never close. Only you can close that door, and that is the door that leads to talking with God.

They were persistent. Notice the whole church came together. I guess if we announced that we were going to pray for some major event, we would have a lot of folks who were out looking at the trees or something -- we would have



a hard time getting everybody. We have folks who haven't been here in a couple of years and that is a tragedy. The church came together, and they didn't pray one of these general prayers: Lord bless everybody; bless all the people of our world. Notice how they prayed specifically. They were praying about Peter. That is why they came together.

It is alright for a church to come together and pray: Lord, we have \$400,000 worth of bonds that we have not sold. Would it be alright just to pray about that? Lord, this church needs to be an evangelistic church. We need to be ignited some way or other to get on with our dream -- the founding dream of those who established this church in 1914. Would it be alright for us to pray for evangelism? It might be dangerous because the Lord might answer our prayer.

I prayed for a friend for years -- for years. No, don't pray that long. Pray a couple of times, and if nothing happens, forget about it. I prayed for a friend for years before he became a Christian.

It has always amused me that Peter was the only one asleep. The church was all down on their knees praying, and Peter was asleep. There is a great deal of security when we are doing what God wants us to do. If you are doing to the best of your ability what God wants you to do, you can sleep. A person's good relationship with God allows him to rest peacefully. God answered the prayer late. The next morning Peter was suppose to have his head cut off, and here Peter was. Although Peter knew that the next morning would bring the assassin with the axe, he slept soundly. He did not lose sleep worrying about what would happen to him; he knew that James had been beheaded, but he slept peacefully.

God waited a long time to answer that prayer. He waited until the final hour. He answered the prayer so leisurely. He took the chains off and opened up the doors, and Peter walked out the front door of the jail. He answered the prayer in a limited way. He didn't swish Peter over and put him there in the house -- Peter had to walk.

God often wants us to show our commitment. How important is this to you? Are you willing to do something to show that you genuinely are interested? It is easy for us to say, Lord, bless the people in Center Point and Roebuck and Huffman and all our friends and help them to know the gospel. It is easy to do that, but God is looking for some feet to do some walking and some knuckles to do some knocking and some voices to be His spokesman. God wants us to let Him know how sincere we are about this matter. He answered the prayer in a limited way.

I had another point, but you have been good, and I won't prolong. There are five kinds of prayer in the book of Acts. Maybe I will talk about those at a later time. Does that whet your appetite? Do you want to come back? Okay. Maybe that will be a good place to stop. Five different kinds of prayer in the book of Acts.

Tuesday at 5:04 P.M., as people gathered to watch the World Series, a small section of the earth needed to rearrange itself. The rumble was heard around the world. This rumble was ten miles below the surface of the earth. I know it erupted on the top, but the disturbance was ten miles deep and it was just a little spot. You are not talking about thousands of miles. On Interstate 880, people were driving along getting ready to listen to the World Series -- maybe a husband and wife were arguing -- maybe a boyfriend with a present to take to his girlfriend to say how much he loved her -- and that interstate collapsed. We don't know yet how many are dead. They may never get them all out. Some will just be entombed there. It is going to take a while, isn't it?

Life is so brief. There are those present tonight who are not Christians. What if you had been driving along on that freeway? You would be lost. It just goes to show that we need to always be ready -- to live every day as though it is our last day. Do you believe in Jesus? You say, Yes, I believe in Him. Are you willing to turn away from your sins and say before this congregation that you believe Jesus is the Son of God? Are you willing to comply with God's commandment to be baptized?

Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord... (Acts 10:47-48).

It is a command of God to be baptized (Acts 10:47-48). There are those present tonight who haven't been faithful. None of us have been perfect, but some of you in the congregation tonight have let little things interfere with your work for God, so your neighbor, the person who lives next door to you, knows that Christianity is a sideline with you -- it is a hobby. You need to be committed to have a good influence, but most of all to go to heaven. We are asking you tonight by the authority of Jesus to please come back to Him - to please obey the gospel tonight. Will you come as together we stand and sing.?

## JESUS--THE MESSAGE OF EVANGELISM

This morning I presented a lesson that was somewhat difficult to present, yet the reception of the lesson was overwhelming. A number of people came out and said the lesson meant a great deal to them. I received telephone calls even this afternoon concerning the lesson that was presented. A number of you had something to say as you entered the building this evening. There are some sermons that are preached, and just the acceptance of those sermons we feel like is sufficient. It is like a father who is scolding his child and the child feels that he has received the scolding; therefore, he has paid his dues.

Beloved, I am here to tell you that simply because we say we have received our encouragement to do a better job in the field of evangelism will not cut it. God is not going to accept our service if all we do is to say we know we are falling short of what we ought to be, but we don't make any changes. The real test of what the lesson means to you will be how it effects you on your job this week, how it effects you in your home, and what changes will be brought to bear in your life to make this church the kind of church Jesus wants it to be.

We have a dream -- a dream of taking a city for Christ. We can sit here and pay the light bills if we want to. We have the manpower and mental power to design whatever is essential in taking our community to the best of our ability for the Lord and for His cause. I believe the pulpit is to be the spark that will ignite the great flame that burns within us of taking this city for Christ. I hope that we will never be the same and that we will recognize that there are alterations that all of us can make in our life in being more of what God would want us to be.

Tonight I want to talk to you, a sermon also centered around evangelism. It is not one of the original sermons that I intended to preach, but I want us to be aware of the fact that it is not enough for us simply to know that we need to do evangelism. Tonight I want to center around the message of evangelism. Those of you that I know personally want the church of our Lord to advance as far as possible. If I asked those who wanted the Lord's church to advance as far as possible to raise your hands tonight, I am sure that every hand would be raised by everybody listening.

I never met a person I didn't want to see become a Christian. Will Rogers said, "I never met a person I did not like." Somebody said he probably never met Howard Cosell. But I never met a person that I did not want to see become a child of God. A historical novel that was given to me some years ago was simply entitled Rape. It told about a young lady who, against the advice of her family, went into

the Northeast and knocked door to door trying to get folks to give their hearts and lives to Jesus. She knocked on one door, and there were some guys inside who took the young lady and raped her. She had to go back home for fear of a nervous break-down. But as this historical novel ends, she was back in the Northeast knocking on doors. She even wanted those who had raped her to give their lives to God.

If I knew how to present the story of Calvary more effectively, you can be assured that I would be trying to do so. Tonight our appeal is a fundamental appeal. I want to talk to you about the excellency of the founder of our faith. It is not enough just to get out and tell some kind of personal story; I want you to know tonight that we have a founder -- a founder of our faith. I want us all to be aware of the fact that we need to hold Him up and to lift Him up tonight.

Some organizations can build a bigger building than we can build. They have a greater hall than we have constructed here. I have read about some of the temples to Buddha, some of the magnificent structures that have been built in his honor. I know that there are organizations that can amass funds greater than we are capable. Our city's budget, for example, is over a billion dollars, and we are operating on one-half million dollars in this congregation. But there is no organization that can offer anything close to the personality that we have. I am speaking, of course, of Jesus. What we need to do is to show people how marvelous the Lord is, and perhaps they will be more constrained to follow Him.

We must be sold on the product. We cannot go up to the world and knock on the door and say, "We have a Jesus, you wouldn't want to accept Him, would you?" any more than we can ring the doorbell and say, "I have some item here, but it is not very effective, yet I would like you to invest some of your money toward that item."

Sometimes great leaders are an embarrassment. I was in Marion County when Jim Folsom came. I was young and naive; yet not too young to be a little embarrassed when he said, "Don't elect my opponent and make a crook out of him. I am already a crook; elect me back again."

You will never be embarrassed. You will never be embarrassed to say He is worthy of our adoration and He is worthy of our praise. We can highly recommend Jesus to you. Our text tonight is Hebrews chapter one. Our first consideration is that Jesus is better than angels.

Being made so much better than the  
angels, as he hath by inheritance

obtained a more excellent name than they  
(Heb. 1:4).

Jesus has a better name than the angels do. Angels have a great name, but they do not have a name as great as the name of Jesus. The Greek word for angel is angelos. It simply means a messenger. The name for Jesus is the word Iasous, almost like a Spanish word, but it means savior. "Thou shalt call his name Iasous." "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Angels worshipped Jesus.

And again, when he bringeth in the first  
begotten into the world, he saith, and  
let all the angels of God worship him  
(Heb. 1:6).

I am sure that all the angels of God worshipped Him. I know the shepherds were out looking after their sheep, and I know that they heard the angelic host as they worshipped Jesus that night, the night of His birthday. But the Bible indicates that all the angels of God worshipped Him. Jesus, therefore, is better than the angels, for the angels worshipped Jesus; and Jesus did not worship the angels. Angels are servants. Jesus is a Son.

And of the angels he saith, Who maketh  
his angels spirits, and his ministers a  
flame of fire (Heb. 1:7).

Angels are ministers. In Daniel 9:21, Gabriel was instructed to "fly swiftly, touched me...." Notice the term; angels are instructed. The angel said to Zaccharias, the father of John the Baptist,

...I am Gabriel, that stand in the  
presence of God; and am sent to speak  
unto thee, and to shew thee these glad  
tidings (Luke 1:19).

Notice the two words "stand" and "sent." Angels take commands. They are servants. In Luke 1:26, Gabriel was sent from God to a little city in Galilee called Nazareth. Observe he was "sent." Jesus was not sent; Jesus was sovereign.

Ask the man on the street what they think about Jesus, and they will say that Jesus is a man of good ethics, that Jesus had a high moral standard, that Jesus was an excellent teacher; but I am here to affirm tonight that this text shows us that Jesus is more than just a moralist. Thomas of old, when he put his hands where the nails had been driven and when he put his hand into the wound that had been caused

by a soldier's spear, said, "My Lord and my God." Isaiah, a hundred plus years before Christ, said, "Unto us a son is born and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be Everlasting Father." He is, indeed, the Prince of Peace. He is the Lord of glory.

The text shows the greatness of Jesus. First of all, Jesus has a great throne. The author stated, "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever:..." (Heb. 1:8). He has a great throne. That great throne is given by God. A throne will make us a better citizen. But there is no throne equal to the throne of Jesus. It is a throne that is above our White House in Washington, DC. It is a throne above the Supreme Court of our land. It is a throne above the policies of England and of our world. It is an everlasting throne. We are in the Bush Administration. President George Bush would like to govern us for the next eight years; but eight years is only a short period of time. The throne of God is for ever and ever.

I would like to ask our young people to raise your hand if you have ever heard of Al Jolson. How many have heard of Al Jolson? Raise your hand. I am amazed. How many have heard of Rudy Vallee? Raise your hand. Has anybody heard of Rudy Vallee? Haven't heard of Rudy Vallee? What about Perry Como? Have you heard of Perry Como? What about Elvis Presley? Yes, I see several hands. Michael Jackson has a record called "Thriller" that sold 35.5 million. In order for him to attain the record of Elvis Presley, he would have to sell that many records for 31 years. Presley had 107 hits in the top forty. He didn't get all the money. The best he could do was 7.5 million a year. We really feel sorry for him. Whether it be Old Blue Eyes or whoever it is, we are not remembered very long. I am sure that some of you who are older are saying, "I can't believe these young folks haven't heard of these people who were stars back in my day."

The throne of God is not for the next eight years. The throne of God is not for 25 years. The throne of God is for ever. Again, the writer of the Hebrew letter wrote, "But unto the son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever:..." (Heb. 1:8). Notice that God calls Him God. God calls the Son "God." He is God.

And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast  
laid the foundation of the earth; and  
the heavens are the works of thine  
hands (Heb. 1:10).

Colossians 1:16 tells us that everything that was made was made by Him. John 1:3 says that everything that exists, He made. The author of the Hebrew letter wrote that the

worlds are upheld by the word of His power (Hebrews:11). He spoke it into existence. I am grateful for the divinity of Jesus.

Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." I would not know what God was like had it not been for Jesus. I would not know that God can weep had it not been for Jesus. I would not know of the compassion of God had it not been for God coming to earth and living among us. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

...Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom (Heb. 1:8).

What is the sign of power? To some it is a gun. To others it is a knife. To some it is a police badge. To Jesus it is a sceptre. It is not a democracy; it is not a system of power where we have some choice; but it is the sceptre that Jesus holds. He is competent to fulfill the promises that He makes.

Some of you remember Evil Kneivel went on a publicity stunt a few years ago. He promised to jump about 160 feet across a canyon, parachute on his back propelled by a rocket motor attached to his motorcycle. A publicity stunt -- over 30 millions of dollars. He wound up at the bottom. He didn't make it.

I am not afraid of any claim that Jesus makes. Are there some young men present tonight who are afraid to marry a young lady who has committed her life to Jesus and is living according to the commands of Jesus? Is there a child among us tonight who is afraid to follow in the foot prints of parents and to accept the discipline that a parent is administering when that parent is following what Jesus wants? Is there a young person who is afraid to be reared like Jesus wants you to be reared? Is there some boss in this assembly tonight who is afraid to hire somebody whose life is guided by the precepts of Jesus Christ and whose code of conduct and ethics would be that of our Lord?

Now let's replace the name "Jesus." Ayatollah. Is there some young man in our assembly tonight who wants to marry somebody who is modeling their life after Ayatollah? What about the Mafia? Do you want the company where you work to be run by someone whose code of ethics is equivalent to the Mafia?

I am grateful for Jesus. The sceptre is in His right hand. The text indicates that it is the sceptre of righteousness. Jesus will never ask us to do anything that is wrong. He will never ask us to lie. Sometimes there are

secretaries whose boss says to tell the person calling he is not present. You say to that boss, "I have a problem with that," and the boss says, "You have no problem; you do what I tell you to do or you look for another job." So the young lady gives up her job or gives up her conscience.

The sceptre of Jesus is the sceptre of righteousness. We will never be afraid or ashamed or embarrassed to say this is the kind of life that Jesus recommends because one who follows the precepts of Jesus will not claim to have put insulation in the wall and leave the wall empty. He will not claim to have filled the wall with mortar only to find out a few years later that was not the case. It is the sceptre of righteousness.

I wrote an article in a bulletin called The Union Herald. In 1954, I started preaching for a little church in Somerville, Alabama. Somebody gave me an old mimeograph machine, and I started trying to publish a little bulletin. I remember an article, and I am sure I got the idea from some other bulletin, that tried to evaluate the worth of a man. It determined at that time that a man's worth was something like \$3.27, taking the amount of zinc and other chemicals within his body. We have learned a lot. We have found that the atoms in the body, 11,000,000 kilowatts of power per pound, properly harnessed is worth 85.5 billions of dollars if we are average in weight. But that is not what we are worth. We are worth the death of Jesus. Jesus said, "You are important to me, you are worth dying for" and He offers to us the dignity of living. He has the sceptre and the sceptre is of the kingdom. Paul wrote, "...Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom" (Heb. 18).

He has a kingdom. Are you a member of that kingdom tonight? Are you a citizen of the kingdom of heaven? Are you a mere pilgrim walking through this world, but your real citizenship -- your real identifying card, for you are a card-carrying Christian -- your real identifying mark is that you are a citizen of the kingdom of God?

Evangelism is important. But evangelism must have a message, and the message of evangelism is Jesus. This God who came and dwelt among us said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Except ye believe I am he, ye shall die in your sins." "I tell ye, Nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before the Father who is in heaven." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, You must be born again." "How can it be possible for a man who is old to enter the second time into his mother's womb?" Jesus answered and said, "Verily,



verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

Do you want to be in that kingdom? Will you come as together we stand and sing?

## HOW OF EVANGELISM

Indeed, the kingdom of God means a great deal to your life. You are willing to sell all in order to buy the treasure that our Lord was speaking about in Matthew chapter thirteen.

We have for some time been discussing with you a general theme that we have simply called "Inspiring A Church To Dream." We have found from a statement made by Robert Dale that a church which loses its original, founding dream in all probability is headed for disaster and nonexistence. At least if not nonexistent, it is merely keeping house for God. I do not believe that the membership of this church wants us to be content by keeping house for God. I believe that we are interested in taking our city for Christ. I call upon you tonight to think seriously in the area of methodology. In the lessons that we have presented, we have not talked much about the how; we have talked about the why. We have talked about the need, and before the series is concluded, we want to talk about the motivation. Tonight I want to talk with you about the how. Our text is John 1:35ff.

Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone (John 1:35-42).

His name means "manly." He is found thirteen times in the sacred scriptures. In twelve of those times, his name appears along side of his more famous, more talented, more popular brother, Simon Peter. But he is a Bible example of

taking a city for Christ. He holds the key to unlock the method of evangelism.

Charles Ardt made a survey concerning reasons people attend church. He asked, "Why do you go to church?" Two percent said that they had been visited by church members. Three percent had been attracted by the programs offered by the church. Special needs were the reason 4% came, and another 4% came because of the Sunday School. Only 8% walked in; whereas, 12% were attracted by the preacher. The balance of 80% had been invited by a friend.

Let us take our survey here in this congregation tonight. May I ask your participation by raising your hand? How many of you are here tonight because you heard about some of the great programs of this church? Would you raise your hand please? There are several who are here, maybe five or six. How many are here because of a special need that brought you to this church, maybe the singles class or something of this nature? How many would fall into that category? There are some in that situation. How many are here because of the Sunday School outreach program -- you came because you are interested in the Sunday School program? Let's see those hands. There are several. How many just walked by -- maybe you liked the building -- you just accidentally walked in? How many fall into that category? How many are here because . . . I am not going to ask how many are attracted by the preacher. How many of you are here tonight because you were invited by a friend or relative? Please raise your hand. I believe the last category has it.

Let us take a situation of a church in Anywhere USA to make this number more realistic. The church has 250 members, and we have polled them. Three came because of the Sunday afternoon visitation program. Seven of them came because of some church activity like a gospel meeting or Vacation Bible School. We asked the 250 members of this church in Anywhere USA why they were here. Ten of them said it was because of a special need they had. They had recently lost a loved one and are in need of counseling. We have a family member who is an alcoholic. Eighteen of these 250 members just simply walked in accidentally. Twenty-five had seen the television program, or maybe they had heard the preacher preach a funeral and were attracted by the preacher. Of two hundred and fifty members, 187 came because they were invited by a friend.

God does not want His world to be lost. God desires that His world be evangelized.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness;

but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9).

God does not want fishing without catching fish (Lk. 5:4-11). God does not want empty banquet tables (Lk. 14:15-23). God does not want sowing without reaping (Matt. 13:3-9). God does not want fig trees without figs (Lk. 13:6-9). God does not want lost sheep who are unsought (Lk. 15:3-9). God does not want a lost coin simply laying around serving no purpose (Lk. 15:8-10). God does not want a harvest that is ungathered (Matt. 9:36-39). God does not want a treasure which is not found (Matt. 13:44). He does not want a priceless pearl still for sale (Matt. 13:46). God does not want a proclamation without success and without response (Matt. 10:14). God does not want a church building half full and members fully satisfied.

Andrew is our example. He is our example. Are you willing to follow the example of Andrew? The method that he used - would you allow Andrew's method to be your method? Do you think the story of Andrew is just in the Bible to fill up space? What did Andrew do?

Number one, Andrew realized that converts are made one by one. My sons and I preach every Sunday morning to between 20,000-25,000 people, if the surveys are right. There have been a few unusual instances when we found someone who was baptized because they had observed the television program for some time, but that is very rare. When I lived in Arkansas, I wrote a weekly newspaper article. I was there for three years. As far as I know, no one ever came in and said they had read the article and had decided to become New Testament Christians.

Most of us are influenced to be Christians one on one. A number of times in the life of our Lord, as busy as He was with multitudes thronging around Him; He had to slip off in the night to be alone and to be in solitude. He had to get in a boat and go to the other side because the people were coming. He could not go from Cana of Galilee without a mob of people following Him. He knew the importance of one on one.

I don't think my mother and father ever attended a class on how to lead a soul to Christ. I remember that my mother and dad would invite friends and neighbors over for pie and coffee. I have vivid memories of Mother and Dad sitting at the dining table talking to those people about Jesus. People are more receptive to the message when they are in a warm atmosphere like that. No wonder that during the 60's the churches of Christ were baptizing more than

100,000 a year. It was the fastest growing religious body in America.

But we have turned inward, and what has characterized this particular congregation has characterized churches throughout the land. We have become problem solvers. We became fearful that the world is going into sin, and while we were afraid the world was going into sin, we have allowed another generation to die without the knowledge of Jesus. He realized that converts were made one on one.

Second, he was enthusiastic. The text says he "first findeth his brother." He was enthusiastic about it. He found something good, and the very first thing he wanted was for his brother to know about it. His brother in the flesh -- the boy with whom he had played in his childhood, and he was enthusiastic about it. He was not like the salesman selling vacuum cleaners who walked up to the door and said, "You don't need a vacuum cleaner do you?". He said, "I have found the Messiah."

Our class had fifty-one this morning -- fifty-one folks in the class -- a large class. We finished our book this morning on zeal. Our book, The ABC's Of A Happy Marriage and the last chapter was to be zealous in your marriage -- zeal. We talked about the importance of our duty and our desire being the same. We need to be enthusiastic and zealous about the cause of Jesus.

Are you bored that you are a Christian? Is it boring to you that you have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus? Can you get as enthusiastic about the story of Calvary that will save men eternally as you are about our two fine football teams in our state?

Third, Andrew started with what he knew. He didn't know very much, but he started with what he knew. He said, "I have found the Messiah." That was his message. Sometimes we want to make it so complicated. He just told what he knew. He was not critical of Jesus. He was enthusiastic, and he told what he knew. I know that sometimes there are those that we refer to as "Bible Thumpers" who learn a few verses of scripture and then go all over the land thumping on their Bible. A sower of seed will be far more effective if he knows how to prepare the soil, if he knows various kinds of soil needed for good growth, and just how deep and far apart he should plant the seed. This same sower needs to know how to water, feed, and cultivate if he is to have a good harvest. I realize that; but I also know that if all of us will start with where we are, we could be an Andrew and bring a neighbor or friend to Jesus.

We sometimes don't use good sense. Sometimes there are members that have been out of duty for a while. They haven't been in attendance, and they come back to the services, and the very first thing we do is to point that index finger in their face and say, "Where have you been?" Somebody says, "If you are so interested in me, why haven't you contacted me before now?" At least, that is what they should say. If you are really interested in where I have been, let me ask the question, "Where have you been?" I have had telephone calls from people who came back to the Lord after elders had visited them or someone had befriended them, and they said, "I was so hurt today at services because some sharp-tongued member got all over me for my failures." Start where you are with love in your heart.

He brought the friend to Jesus. He didn't bring him to the preacher. He didn't bring him to the program; he brought him to the cross of Calvary. Paul said,

For I determined not to know any thing  
among you, save Jesus Christ, and him  
crucified (I Cor. 2:2).

Andrew brought men to Christ. Andrew was just an ordinary man. He was not well educated. He was a fisherman. He never went to the great colleges and universities of Alexandria, Egypt or Athens, Greece. He was a common man. He was not articulate. He was not selected to preach the sermon that is recorded in Acts chapter two on the day of Pentecost. But he had a desire and, after all, that is the most important. The greatest soul winners of this church in the twenty-three years that I have been your minister have not been those that were the most skilled, not those that were best informed in Bible knowledge, but those that had an ingredient, a desire and that is what Andrew had. He had a simple desire.

What will it take for us just simply to say the word or maybe to say a word of encouragement to someone about the Lord's church here instead of being critical? Do you know that we have members of the church here who close doors, who take problems within the church before those of the world and, therefore, blaspheme the name of God before the heathen? What a great tragedy this is. Tell about the Bible classes. Tell about the good works and the good programs of this church. Tell about the time when the money is sent to people who have experienced a hurricane. Tell about the evangelistic outreach of the church, about our youth program. Say good words. Wouldn't it be marvelous if it would just come as natural as could be as we talk with our colleagues with whom we work, our peers with whom we are in school that we would be accenting the positive? Andrew

did something that no one else had ever done. He is the first example in all the Bible of bringing someone to Jesus.

There are a number of different programs of sharing the gospel one on one. There is a program called "Open Bible Study." This is a program that is designed to take your Bible and to write in your Bible the next scripture to which you are to go. Maybe you could make yourself a note of the first scripture and go through the whole Bible. With these marked passages, you can go through the Bible and tell a person the whole story of Jesus. I grew up on Brother Tisdale and his charts. These big charts picture all the various dispensations. It shows the Patriarchal, Mosiacal, and Christian Age. These charts discuss the three dispensations; all of it is made clear. Some of you cut your teeth on this. Maybe you didn't know the originator of the outline. That is a good method of teaching others. Brother Bristow's chart, Five Minutes With Someone Who Loves You, is a one-time opportunity. It is about as big as a newspaper. You take it into someone's living room or den or kitchen table and you open it up and say, "I love you very much and I want you to spend a few minutes with somebody who loves you." The little booklet that I have put together called "God Speaks Today" I think will work if we will take the time to use it. The film strips -- there are a number of outstanding film strips. Perhaps the most popular is the "Jule Miller Film Strips" - five films in color and narrated on a cassette tape. You just need to learn how to operate a film strip projector, put your film in, put your tape on, and show it to a neighbor or friend as you feed them coffee and cake. There are other films, like "Why and How to Become a New Testament Christian," by Batsell Barrett Baxter. Lesson one, "Jesus: the Great Man, Fraud, or Son of God"; lesson two, "The Bible: God's Plan for Our Salvation"; and lesson three, "The Church: How It Makes Us the Family of God." There is a set of film strips known as "The Fundamentals of the Faith," centered around the theme of the Bible. It operates in exactly the same procedure. Today we have some outstanding VCR tapes that have been put together, and nearly everybody has a VCR. Here is one with four lessons on one tape. Lesson one, "Why Are We All Lost?" These tapes are put together in West Monroe, Louisiana. Lesson two, "What Is the Gospel"; lesson three, "What Are the Identifying Marks of the Church of the Bible"; lesson four, "There Is a Great Day Coming: Are You Ready?" I promise you that if we could get a hundred people showing this film to a hundred of your neighbors, this church would baptize a hundred people in the coming year.

Do we really want the church to grow? Even if we didn't baptize a hundred people, we would still be doing what God has instructed that we do. Here is a set of tapes by Robert Oglesby. Brother Oglesby spoke here back in the

late 1960's or early 70's. It is called "One Story." There are four or five of these tapes. They also take you through a study of the entire Bible. Then I talked this week to the people who put out the "Jule Miller Film Strips," and they say that perhaps early in 1990, Brother Jule Miller will come out with his VCR tapes. If it is in the same category with the others, I believe it will be the finest yet produced.

Methods - the methods are available. The question is, Are we available? We have friends who are dying without a knowledge of Christ. I think, for example, of men like Billy White. I will speak about Billy and Margaret because they fed me a fine lunch today, so I will pick on Billy a little bit. They came and visited our services -- perhaps out of curiosity -- I don't know exactly why. Someone went by and studied the Bible with them by the means of a visual aid. They are in this building tonight, faithful members of the family of God, because somebody took a little time and cared. I wonder how many other Billy White's there are in the city of Birmingham who perhaps do not even know their need for the gospel. How many people in this assembly tonight would not be here if someone had not taken time to show your care and concern?

I bring the lesson to a close tonight by mentioning my dream. I realize that my dreams do not automatically become your dreams. But I have a dream for this church. Number one - I would like to see this church sponsor a state-wide television broadcast. I realize that it is not the most effective way of preaching the gospel, but it makes the gospel effective in the least expensive way and can be seen by more people today than any other way I know. We can do it if we really want to. I would like to see this church set goals because I believe that goals give us vision and goals give us encouragement. We have had 760 present on a Sunday morning because a goal was set and because members of this church cooperated in trying to attain the goal. I would like to see the elders set up a committee called "The Evangelistic Committee" and before any program is inaugurated by this church, try to find out if it could be tied to evangelism. Before any money is spent, ask the question, Is this tied to evangelism? or are we merely entertaining ourselves, feeding ourselves and looking after ourselves while our world is dying without the knowledge of Jesus? I would like to see us have a weekly newspaper article in The Birmingham Post Herald or The Birmingham News. I would like to see brief radio messages going out across our city. I would like to see us have a personal work class that would be run continuously to give people an opportunity to learn better how to be soul winners. I would like to see us have sessions of prayer for the lost. I would like to see us set aside a room we could call "The



Prayer Chapel"; and I hope this will not be thrown aside because it sounds like something we wouldn't do in the churches of Christ, but I really do believe that we believe in prayer. Around the four walls of that room I would like to have the names of those with whom members of this church are studying and those who are wayward and lost; and whenever a member had some time, they could go in and see the name perhaps of somebody they didn't every know and could begin to pray for them. I would like to see this church canvas our city and give away free Bibles such as this one that has been put out by Star Publications that has the question, "Are you sure you are going to heaven?" I would like to see us canvas and set as a goal in the near future this area of our city where we are living and give away a free Bible. It might cost us a couple of dollars for every family we visited, but I believe it would be an effective way for us to get to know better our friends and neighbors for whom we are immediately responsible. I would like to see us begin to send out tracts. Brother Joe Barnett has an outstanding tract entitled Churches of Christ, Who Are These People. We could give these out to our mailmen, to the person where we make our bank deposit, to the person that checks us out at the supermarket, and we would include this pamphlet, or some similar one, in our correspondence and in all our bills. I know some of you are doing that already. I would like to see us get back into the Bible Correspondence Course business where we go out and canvas an area and target to enroll 4,000 or 5,000 of our friends in the Bible Correspondence Courses.

God does not want His world unevangelized. I realize that we cannot do everything, but I also know that we can dream up hundreds of excuses for not evangelizing God's world. We would not want people to tell us, "You met me day by day, you knew I was astray; But you never mentioned Him to me."

May that never be said by neighbors or friends of ours. May we be known as the church that tries to evangelize a city for Christ. May this message not fall upon hardened hearts that have been made insensitive because the message has become so trite and you have heard it over and over again. But may it burn within your heart and catch a fire in our souls and take a city for Christ.

If you are not a Christian, will you obey the gospel tonight through faith, repentance, confession and baptism? If you have wandered away from God, will you come as we stand together and sing?

## TREASURE

Though I had the tongues of angels; though I could speak with the eloquence of all men, I would not be able to do justice to this particular discourse today. For if I had the ability to describe to you what I want to talk with you about, no one would leave this building unless they were in right relationship with God.

To become a Christian one must believe that Jesus is the Son of God; one must repent of his every sin; confess the sweet name of Jesus; and be buried with the Lord in the watery tomb of baptism for the remission of sins. A Christian who has gone astray must repent of his wrongs; he must confess that wrong that he has done to God and to those that he has wronged and must pray, thereby seeking the forgiveness of God.

The preacher was up preaching his regular sermon. He had chosen his favorite text. He quoted from an old poem,

Be not the first by whom the new is  
tried,  
Or the last to lay the old aside.

A bird in the hand is worth two in the  
bush.

A passer-by, since the windows were open, said, "Where are you going?" The passer-by said, "We are going to find a great treasure. We are going to find a pearl worth all the other pearls in the world. We are going to a great banquet where the poor, the lame, and the halt sit down and feast at the king's great feast." "Ah, you've got to be kidding. There is no where like that."

After the services were over, the preacher said, "What was the disturbance at the back of the building this morning? While I was up preaching, I noticed there was a disturbance. Could you explain to me what it was?" "Some guy wanted me to go out where they cast nets and catch all kinds of fish, where mustard seeds grow into gigantic trees, where the poor sit at the rich man's table." The preacher said, "Who was it?" "I don't know who He was. He had twelve men with Him."

Our text this morning is found in Matthew chapter thirteen:

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like  
unto treasure hid in a field; the which  
when a man hath found, he hideth, and  
for joy thereof goeth and selleth all

that he hath, and buyeth that field.  
 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like  
 unto a merchant man, seeking goodly  
 pearls; who, when he had found one pearl  
 of great price, went and sold all that  
 he had, and bought it (Matt. 13: 44-46).

There was a treasure that was buried in a field. I don't know why that treasure was buried in that field. I have often wondered why that treasure was in the field. I know sometimes when we read the Bible we are aware of the fact that they didn't have large vaults and safety deposit boxes where they could put their treasures.

I remember as a small boy I was given two silver dollars, and I put them in a fruit jar and I buried them out in the back near the barn. I remember that some time later, maybe two years later, I decided I would go dig up my two silver dollars. I had something I wanted to buy very badly and I went out and I dug and I couldn't find that treasure. I dug that whole back yard up, and I still haven't found those two silver dollars.

Maybe the man who had buried them died. When my mother died, she left us a house and a number of other things. She had told me at University Hospital, "I had some money and I want you to take that money. You have four children and it is going to be expensive to get them through college. I would like for you to take that money and use it to help get your boys and your daughter through college." When my mother died, there was no will. There was no evidence of any money, but I remembered about a year or two before she died that she had me to go up to a particular bank and sign a card, and she put \$1000 into the bank. I called the banker about three or four days after the funeral and told him that my mother had died and I thought she may have had some money in the bank. We had looked the house over and found no evidence, but we thought there may be some money there. He said, "Yes, there is some money -- \$1200." I said, "Is that all? Was there anymore?" "No, that is all." About three days later the banker called and said, "Mr. Jenkins, we have found that your mother had some more money. We found that she had some CD's up here worth about \$25,000-\$27,000." It is a wonder that we ever found that money.

Maybe the man had died and the money had been buried. I don't know why the money was there but I do know one thing, and please don't forget this. The money was of no value as long as it was buried. As long as the CD's were in the bank, they were of no value. But the man in the field this day found the treasure. He put it back in the ground and covered it over. He sold all that he had so he could buy this field.

Why would a man sell everything he has to buy the field? He went to work that day probably bored -- same old thing out working in the field. When he came away that day, he had excitement in his life. I am talking with you today about a treasure that will bring excitement into the lives of everyone who finds this treasure. This treasure I am talking about will cause two men to make correct decisions. They were called before congress and told not to preach any more in the name of Jesus; they were whipped like dogs and sent on their way. After all that, they returned to the meeting and rejoiced that they were counted worthy of suffering for the name of Jesus. I am talking to you about a treasure that will cause two men with their wounds exposed at midnight tired, having preached their heart out most of the day, locked fast in the stocks to have a song in their hearts and a song that went out into the night. That is the kind of treasure I am talking about. Jesus said,

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, ... (Matt. 11:28-29).

It is the yoke of which I speak -- Jesus referred to it as the abundant life -- it is called everlasting life. In this particular passage, Jesus simply calls it "my yoke." What is this yoke of which our Lord is speaking? It is the yoke of a dedicated life -the yoke of a dedicated life.

I found something. It is very, very valuable, and I wanted it very much. I was willing to give about anything for it. You will never really know how much I wanted what was in this container. I asked God if I might have it. God said, "What are you willing to give for it?" I said, "I don't have anything very much. I do have a little money. I believe I have about \$12.00 here." He said, "I will take that. Do you have anything else?" "I have \$300 or \$400 in the bank. It is at Southtrust Bank, and I guess I could write you a check." He said, "I will take that." So I wrote out a check for every dime I had in the bank. He said, "Do you have anything else?" and I said, "I am just a poor preacher. I don't have a lot of things. I do have a little computer." He said, "A computer. Yes, I will take the computer." I said, "For what is in that container, I would gladly give all the computers that I could possibly get my hands on." "What else do you have?" He asked. "I don't have anything else. I really don't have anything else. I just have my car." "Oh, you have a car?" "Yes." He said, "I will take the car." I said, "For what is in the box, I will give you my car," and I gave Him my car. He said, "What else do you have?" I said, "Look, I don't have anything else. I just have the house." "Oh, you have a

house." "Yes." He said, "I will take the house." I said, "For what is in the container, I will give you the deed to my house." "Is there anything else?" "I have \$1000 down at Birmingham Federal Savings and Loan." He said, "I will take that also." I said, "For what is in this, I will give the \$1000." He said, "What else do you have?" "I don't have anything else." "Anything else?" He asked. "I do have a life insurance policy made out to my wife and children." He said, "I will take that." "You mean you want my life insurance policy?" "Yes," and so He took that. "Anything else?" "Well, Nathan Heisler has been looking after some financial investments that I have -- an IRA it is called. I have been in it now for about three years and I do have a few little stocks." He said, "I will take that. Do you have anything else?" "I really don't have anything else." "Is there anything at all that you have?" "There is one thing that I have that I really do value. It is not worth very much but it is worth more to me than you can ever imagine because of what it represents. It represents what I consider to be the goal of my life practically. It is symbolic. As you know, I have been down to Central America and I tried to preach in that country. I was privileged to be the first to preach the gospel of Christ, as far as I knew, in a long, long while. I had a hand in encouraging the church. A few years ago I found that they were minting some coins representing that country, and I have them. They are not worth very much." He said, "I will take those. Anything else?" "No, I believe that is it. My house, my savings, the contents of my house, my automobile; I don't think I have anything else -- just me and my family." "Oh, you have a family?" "Yes." "You have a wife and children and grandchildren?" "Yes." He said, "I will take those as well." I said, "I will give them. For what is in the little container here, I will give it all."

I wonder if you would give all that you have for what is in here. I am sure some of you have. What is really in here cost me \$1.50; but you understand that this is symbolic, and what is in this container is what's in the parable our Lord told. It is the kingdom of God. The Bible says that a man went out one day and he was not looking -- he just accidentally came upon a treasure, and he sold all that he had. He gave everything he had and he bought the field. He was happy about it. He went away thinking he had really done something of value, and he gave everything he had joyfully.

I have found people that were not really looking for the kingdom of God, and one day they just accidentally seemed to stumble upon the kingdom of God, and they committed their yoke to it. They dedicated their life and everything they had to the kingdom of God.

Some were looking. A pearl of great price -- he had other pearls, but he was looking for one pearl greater than all the other pearls. He was looking for that one pearl, and when he found it, he sold everything he had. He got rid of all the other pearls, and he bought that one pearl.

A lady in Virginia in July of this year was looking for the kingdom of God. When about twenty-seven of our young people were up there knocking on doors, they knocked on her door. The lady found the truth. In 1970 in Central America, I knocked on the door of a man by the name of Hugh Frazier. He was looking for the kingdom of God. He was a steward in one of the churches in town, but he was not satisfied that he had found the kingdom of God. He risked everything. He risked his job, relationship with his family. He was thrown out of his church. He risked everything when he found the kingdom of God.

As long as the treasure is buried, it is of no value to anybody. As long as the pearl is in the container, it is worthless, indeed. As this church begins to redream a dream of evangelizing this city for Christ, we need to uncover the treasure. We need to expose the pearl.

I read about him. He was attending a baptismal service. It was out on the beach, and a lot of people had congregated. There they sang and waded out into the water, and the preacher baptized the lady. She came out and they made a big circle and somebody would begin to pray, and after a while they would sing. They had built a big fire. She was drying off near the fire and everything was just perfect. Old Zeke was the one who had built the fire. One by one they stood and said to the lady. One said, "I don't have much. I am a plumber; but if you ever have a pipe that needs fixing, please call me, and I will try to help you." An older lady said, "I don't have anything to really speak of but I do some sewing, and if there is ever a time that you need something, just let me know." Another said, "I run a grocery store, and if anytime you find yourself in a situation without food, if you will call me, I will bring you food." One by one each came saying what they were and what they would be willing to do for their new sister. After it was over, everybody left but old Zeke and the preacher. Old Zeke was kicking sand on the fire putting it out and he said to the preacher, "Preacher, you know, things just don't get any better than this."

They have a name for that over in South Carolina. They have a name for it. You know what they call it, don't you? They have a name when there is love that flows between members of a family of God -- when there is a willingness to encourage and a willingness to help one another. I know you

know what they call it. They have a special name for it  
over there. They call it church. They call it church.

Let us stand and sing.

## PRACTICE OF REDEMPTION

You should have received by now one of our little handouts. It has nine pages but it is big print. I would appreciate it if, during the course of the sermon, you would take the time to fill those out. I do not ask you to do very much for me in a personal way, but this is something that means a great deal to me. I have spent several thousands of dollars and many, many hours into the morning studying, I am down toward the end of the race, and I ask your cooperation and help. This same test was administered some ten weeks ago, and it is to be administered on December 17th. I want to thank you for your cooperation and the wonderful spirit of encouragement that you always give to me.

Lord, help me live from day to day  
 In such a self-forgetting way,  
 That even when I kneel to pray,  
 My prayers shall be for others.

Help me in all the work I do  
 To ever be sincere and true,  
 And know that all I do for You  
 Must needs be done for others.

Let self be crucified and slain  
 And buried deep and all in vain,  
 May efforts be to rise again  
 Unless to live for others.

And when my work on earth is done  
 And my new work in heaven begun,  
 May I forget the crown I've won  
 While thinking still of others.

Others, Lord, yes others  
 Let this my motto be.  
 Help me to live for others  
 That I may live like Thee.

Robert Dale says that a church must continue to dream and that if a church loses her original founding dream, the church is in bad trouble. For ten weeks, we have been talking with you on the general theme of inspiring a church to dream.

Great men have had dreams. Abraham Lincoln saw a unified America, and his dream has become a reality. Who will forget the famous "I Have A Dream" speech by Martin Luther King. I hear it even in my mind as it reverberates around America, and it has brought people closer together.



This church has a dream -- it is an evangelistic dream of taking a city for Christ. The gospel was taken in this area before Birmingham became a city. Shortly after it was founded, due to evangelistic tent meetings, a handful of people, mostly women, obeyed the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are three ways you can become a member of the Church of Christ at this place. Number one, you can become a Christian by simply believing that Jesus is the Son of God, repenting of your every sin, confessing the sweet name of our Lord, and by being baptized with your Lord in baptism. You can become a member of this congregation, having been astray and your name deleted from the roll, by being restored to your first love. This includes three things: repentance, confession and prayer. You may become a member of this church by placing membership -- a faithful Christian in some other location, moving to this area and saying, "I want to identify and work with the church at Roebuck Parkway."

These early people became Christians, and they met in the Presbyterian church building on Sunday afternoon. Eventually they rented the City Hall that was built only two years after Birmingham became a city. Then they moved to Fox Hall and met there until 1908. In 1908, a group of christians erected the West End church building. It is my understanding that this church building is probably going to be sold in the near future, and that congregation will be relocated in the Homewood area. Throughout the years there was a dream -- a dream of taking a city for Christ.

Turn with me to the book of Matthew chapter twenty-eight. If you have your Bible, we would like for you to turn. I know I can read it for you, but I believe it would be more meaningful if we read it together. Remember that Jesus had been executed. The Jews had chanted, "Crucify him, crucify him," and the Roman soldiers took Him out, and it took Him six hours to die on the cross. He was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and on Sunday morning bright and early He is resurrected. It is now forty days later.

And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Matt. 28:18-20).

Look at the "alls" of the verse: All authority, or all power; teach all nations; teach them to observe all things; lo, I am with you alway. The four "alls" of Matthew chapter twenty-eight. Turn now to the book of Mark -- that book of action, that concise book. Mark wrote, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

I never read the passage without thinking about Brother Marshall Keeble preaching to a combined audience under a big tent when some learned doctor said, "The black man is not a nation, and He said to go preach the gospel to every nation. The black man has no right to hear the gospel because he is not a nation." Brother Keeble said, "Will you turn and read what Brother Mark has to say?" Again Mark said,

...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:15-16).

Then one more passage -- Luke chapter twenty-four -- Luke's account of this same narrative.

And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high (Luke 24:46-49).

The enthusiasm to evangelize which characterized the early Christians is one of the most remarkable things in the history of the whole world. Men and women of every rank and from every station determined that they would tell the story of Jesus - that they would not keep the story of Calvary to themselves.

Tell the birds amidst the bursts of spring not to sing; tell the waters welling from the depths not to flow; tell the happy child not to laugh and jump; tell the sun and stars not to shine and when these have obeyed you, then tell the soul which has been baptized with the love of God that it

must not speak of Him and it will laugh you to scorn. It cannot but speak what it has seen and heard.

Yes, they faced ridicule. They faced shunning. They were disenfranchised. They were robbed of their homes and families. Yet they could not stop. The morning question is this: Why? What were the evangelistic motives of these early Christians? I believe there were three. Number one, there was a sense of responsibility. Number two, there was a sense of concern; and number three, there was a sense of appreciation.

First of all, there is the sense of responsibility. They wanted to live lives that were consistent with their profession. One cannot be what God wants him to be without being consistent with the profession that he has made to be a servant of Christ. I suppose that the majority in this assembly today have made that same profession that your number one job in life is to glorify and honor God. No wonder the early New Testament says that every creature under heaven had heard the gospel. No wonder Paul wrote to the church at Rome and said your faith has been heard around the world. No wonder he said of the Christians at Thessalonica that from them had sounded out the word of God to all Asia. No wonder he would say that there is not a soul living that has not heard the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:18). They made this confession, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," and they were constantly aware of the fact that they lived under the watchful eye of God, and they were determined to please Him.

I believe that same determination characterizes every member of this church today. I believe today that we are aware that we are under the watchful eye of God, and that above all else, we want to please God. How long would an employee serve a company who was working for the competition half the time? How long would an employee last who was working for someone that was out to destroy? We are in the army of God. We must not be traitors. We must not betray the trust that God has given to us. None of us like a free loader. You have been around them, and I have too. They always fumble with their billfold, and let you pay the bill and they get a name -- they are a free loader. Nobody wants to be a free loader in this church. We pride ourselves in everyone doing his fair share. We have a sense of responsibility.

There was a sense of concern, realizing the mission of Jesus was to seek and to save those that were lost. These early Christians recognized that man can be divided into those who accept the Lord and those who reject Him; that

there are two ways, a way that leads to everlasting bliss with God and the other a way that is broad and leads to eternal destruction. There are two rulers. One is the prince of the underworld -- the prince of darkness -- it is old Satan himself; the other is the Prince of Light and the Prince of Peace. Everyone here this morning is either serving one of these rulers or the other. In parabolic terms, there were the sheep and the goats, the wheat and the tares, the wise virgins and the foolish virgins, those who accepted the invitation to go to the wedding feast and those who did not do so.

The early Christians believed that the cross of Calvary was the hope of the world. There were twelve men originally, and they told their friends, and they in turn told their friends so that the ancient world had been exposed to the gospel of Christ. There are one billion people of our world today who have never heard the name of Jesus. You talk about optimism -- they realized the time was right. They realized that they were living in a time of hatred. They realized that they were living in a time of religious hypocrisy, that the religious leaders of the ancient world were only those that were bent upon filling their own pockets with gold and silver.

I believe the time is now for taking this city for Christ. I want us to be optimistic. The time is now. There are gangs that are roaming our streets, and we pick up The Birmingham Post Herald or The Birmingham News. We read of a little eleven year old girl that was raped by five or six different boys, only one over eighteen and the others younger. The gospel of Christ, penetrating the hearts of the people of our city, will do away with gangs in our city, and there will be no need of any young people belonging to a gang when they have committed their life to Christ.

The time is now. There is racial prejudice in our city. Have you noticed the way our city council votes? It is not the issue of what is right and what is wrong, but it is the color of the skin on the outside. Our black friends say they have been mistreated long enough; it is time for them to have a little of the income they have been deprived of years ago. The white people are saying, "You are stepping out of your grounds"; we want equality and justice today.

The time is now for this church to model how races can get along with one another -- where brethren can sit together, side by side, and sing about their love for Jesus -- where they can join hands in prayer together -- where there is a common goal. The time is now to evangelize our city.

I am sick and tired of our televangelists being paraded to Talladega, making a fanfare and dragging the gospel through the mire and mud of the materialistic world in which we live. It is time! It is high time for the people of God to be people of honesty and people of integrity.

The assistant principal at Huffman High School said, "You are throwing your food and you are eating like pigs; so we are going to move all the tables and chairs out from the lunchroom." It is time for our teenagers who attend Huffman High School to be an example. I tell you the time is now. The time is not way off in the distance -- the time is at the present -- the time is now.

Appreciation -- they stood beneath the cross of Jesus. They watched him agonize for six hours. I am fearful -- I am afraid that the story of Calvary has become trite from having been told so often. We listen with our ears, and we fail to open our hearts. It has lost its meaning because we have heard and reheard, and we have told it over and over again how Jesus came and shed His blood for us and how He died. Today we can smile at the death of Jesus.

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men (John 2:23-24).

Beloved, God has trusted Himself to us. We are His only plan for taking this city for Christ.

It was a Sunday afternoon. The family was having a very an enjoyable time. I suppose it was a day somewhat like last Friday. They were laughing and joking and playing car games. As they drove along, they saw a kitten. A child said, "Daddy, I saw a little kitty cat." Dad said, "Yes, I saw it." "Daddy, he probably hasn't got any home." "I know but we are not going to stop and get that old stray cat. We need a lot of things, but one thing we do not need is a stray cat." "But Daddy, some big dog might get after that cat. He looks so poor, like he was hungry, Dad." "Aren't we having a good time. Mother, aren't we having a good time. Children, aren't we having a wonderful time out here driving around. Everything is just great. Listen, I want you to be quiet. We are not going to stop and pick up an old stray cat." "Daddy, I didn't know you were so mean. He doesn't have a home to live in. Somebody might come along and run over him." "I know that. That is why they usually throw out cats, trying to get rid of them." "How in the world can you be so mean, Dad. Please, let's go back." Mother said, "You might as well go back." So he turned the

car around. "You kids stay in the car. It probably has leprosy or something." He got out and picked up the cat. He tried to pick the cat up without touching it. You know what I mean. He took the cat over and threw it in the back of the car and said, "Don't any of you touch it. It probably has the mange or something. Just leave it alone."

They took the cat home. As the father went over to get the cat, the cat at first tried to run away. But now he has a home -five baths. "Dad, do you think he could sleep..." "Yes, give him my bedroom. What do you expect? He can sleep anywhere he wants to." They made him a bed fit for King Farouk. Three weeks passed; bath after bath; nine gallons of milk and all the love that young folks can give an old stray cat. Now when you reach down to get the cat, he doesn't say hiss any more. He bows his back and rubs up against your leg. Is that the same cat? You know that is not the same cat. That is no more the same cat than you are the same person when somebody some years ago sat down with you and said, "I want to tell your about Jesus."

Recently my family has been blessed by God in some very special ways. And when God reached down His hand, I noticed that there were scratches all over His hand.