

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

ENVISIONING AND IMPLEMENTING A SERVANT/EVENT EVANGELISM  
STRATEGY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

A Thesis Project Submitted to  
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary  
in partial fulfillment  
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

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LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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## ABSTRACT

### ENVISIONING AND IMPLEMENTING A SERVANT/EVENT EVANGELISM STRATEGY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

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In examining the most effective evangelism models used by churches today, churches have a unique opportunity to reach a large number of people while utilizing gifts of service. This Thesis examines the current status of evangelism in churches and gives churches an opportunity to envision and develop a strategy that is two fold. This project will help church's to serve like Jesus, while at the same time share the gospel. This Thesis will do this by examining the need for a servant/event strategy while giving practical examples of how to implement such a strategy in their local context.

Abstract length: 98 words

## DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to the five most important aspects of my life. First and foremost to the one who eternally changed my life, my Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly I dedicate this to the love of my life my wife Jenna Lorick. You are the greatest gift God has ever blessed me with. Thank you for encouraging me to chase this dream in my heart. I love you and will always be indebted to you for your loving me.

Thirdly I dedicate this to my wonderful children. This pursuit has taken me away from many hours of life with you. I am so thankful and consider it the greatest joy of my life to be called your Dad.

Fourthly I dedicate this to my parents. You have led me to become the man I am today and for that I am so blessed. Thank you for all the sacrifices you made to make this possible.

Last but certainly not least, I dedicate this to all the wonderful churches that I have had the privilege of serving. You are the bride of Christ and I am so thankful to do life together with you.



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CHAPTER ONE  
INTRODUCTION

**Why the Topic is Needed**

Statistics show that the church in America is experiencing a sharp decline in its numbers of baptisms and church attendance. As writer Bill Hull says, “while certain pockets of evangelicalism have grown, overall the church is in a decline.”<sup>1</sup> Churches across the nation must come to the realization that evangelistic efforts must once again become a top priority. Therefore, building an effective evangelism strategy in the context of the local church is an absolute imperative. This thesis will put forth a model which will serve as a tool for churches to build an evangelism strategy that gives believers an opportunity to serve while also sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with unbelieving people in their communities.

**Background Leading to Awareness of the Problem**

The background that has led to the desire to create a servant/event evangelism strategy in the local church that is effective originates from the Great Commission. Jesus says in Mathew 28:19, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>2</sup> The failure of the

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<sup>1</sup> Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Church* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1990), 10.

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all references from the Bible are from the New American Standard Bible Updated Edition.

church to meet this goal was also a motivating factor in the pursuit of this project. This topic will provide a tool for churches to create a strategy that serves two purposes. The first purpose is to give believers in the local church the opportunity to serve in a way that is tangible, practical, and life changing. The second reason for this kind of strategy is to reach the unchurched people of the community with the gospel. When other believers are engaged in serving, it will ultimately lead people into a relationship with Christ; and in turn, believers will become more intentional about evangelism resulting in a church that grows by conversions.

### **Rational for Choosing This Topic**

Many churches have either reached plateau or are in decline because they have no strategy of how to reach people with the gospel. Many churches are come and see churches instead of go and tell churches. They believe that if the music is right or the programs are good, then unchurched people will pour in the doors and the church will grow. However, this thesis will argue that churches must go and tell. In order to accomplish this, churches need to develop a strategy that puts the church in the presence of the community making a connection with the unchurched through acts of service and events.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Churches often decline, not because of a lack of enthusiasm, but because of a lack of strategy. The old maxim rings true: “if you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time.” Therefore some churches simply maintain existence instead of striving to thrive. They believe that if they will build a program or building then people will come. This project

will serve as an instrument to educate churches of the need for an evangelism strategy as well as assist the church in implementing a servant/event strategy.

### **Terminology Defined**

Throughout this project there will be words used that warrant clarification in order fully to grasp the purpose of this thesis. Six words in particular that need to be defined are the following: “unchurched,” “evangelism,” “strategy,” “servant,” “event,” and “model.”

#### Unchurched

According to *The American Heritage Dictionary*, “unchurched” means, “not belonging to or participating in a church.”<sup>3</sup> While this is an academic definition of the word “unchurched,” the usage will carry a deeper meaning throughout this project. The term “unchurched” in this project will be defined as those who are not connected with a church and who have not professed faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

#### Evangelism

“Evangelism” is defined as “zealous preaching and dissemination of the gospel, as through missionary work.”<sup>4</sup> This definition is a good concise meaning of the word. However, for the purpose of this project the term “evangelism” will be defined as the sharing of the gospel by proclamation, acts of service, or any means that gives people a chance to come into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

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<sup>3</sup> Entry for “Unchurched,” *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/unchurched>> (accessed: November 10, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Entry for “Evangelism,” *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/unchurched>> (accessed: November 10, 2009).

## Strategy

In addition, according to *The American Heritage Dictionary*, “strategy” means “a plan of action resulting from strategy or intended to accomplish a specific goal.”<sup>5</sup> This definition is a bit broad for the scope of this project and needs to be sufficiently restricted. Therefore, the meaning of “strategy” in this project will be defined as the systematic approach of a church that meets the specific needs of its cultural context.

## Servant

A “Servant” can be defined as “One who expresses submission, recognizance, or debt to another.”<sup>6</sup> However, due to the nature of this project, the word “servant” will be defined as voluntarily giving of ones time, talents, and resources in various ways in order to spiritually impact someone else.

## Event

According to *The American Heritage Dictionary*, “event” means “a social gathering or activity.”<sup>7</sup> This definition accurately describes the intent of the usage in this project. However, to be more specific, the word “event” in this project will be connected with the local church and its strategy for reaching the surrounding community.

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<sup>5</sup> Entry for “Strategy,” *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/unchurched>> (accessed: November 10, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> Entry for “Servant,” *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/unchurched>> (accessed: November 10, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Entry for “Event,” *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/unchurched>> (accessed: November 10, 2009).

## Model

Finally, a “model” is “a standard or example for imitation or comparison.”<sup>8</sup> This is an accurate meaning of the word in the context of this project. However, to add an element of clarity, the word “models” will specifically be dealing with strategies that other churches or ministries have used.

### **Statement of Limitations**

This is not an attempt to manipulate readers into believing that a servant/event evangelism strategy is the only strategy that works in modern society. Moreover, this is not a new method in which churches are guaranteed numerical success overnight. This project will serve as a tool to help churches develop an evangelism strategy that achieves the two-fold purpose of believers fulfilling the Great Commission through serving, while allowing the unchurched of the community to be introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### **Theoretical Basis**

Envisioning and implementing a servant/event evangelism strategy in the local church is an approach that will help churches to move from plateau or decline into experiencing conversion growth while also helping people discover what it means to be a servant. This process should help a church to grow spiritually and numerically, which will, over time, lead to an overall increase in health. This approach has a significant theological, biblical, and historical basis that will be briefly examined.

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<sup>8</sup> Entry for “Model,” *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/unchurched>> (accessed: November 10, 2009).

## Theological

From a theological standpoint, the pastor, who is the leader of the church, has the responsibility to develop a vision to reach the unchurched people of the community. The pastor also carries the responsibility to lead his people to have a heart to reach the ends of the earth with the gospel. Along with these he has the responsibility of equipping and training his congregation to do the work of ministry. The theological understanding of this responsibility helps a servant/event evangelism strategy be successful because it helps reveal that the true function of a pastor's work is closely aligned with what is to be put forth in the proposed model.

### **Vision**

The pastor's main concern should be to develop a vision to reach the people in his Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). He cannot lead people into a strategy if he is blinded by a lack of vision. The pastor must have a vision of the who, when, where, and how of reaching his area. Moses received the vision from God to lead his people (Ex. 3:1-15). Joshua also received his marching orders from God (Josh. 1:9). A church can only be effective if her leader has a fresh vision from God. This should be the main priority for a pastor who desires to see his church develop a strategy for effective evangelism.

### **Heart**

A pastor who is going to lead an effective evangelism strategy in the local church must do so by example. The reality is that people will follow the leadership of their pastor only if they know his heart. He must teach the concept of having a heart for the lost. The pastor must point his people to the Scriptures, which will develop in them a

hunger and passion for winning people to Christ. The bible teaches that we are to be Christ's witnesses (Acts 1:9). Therefore, a pastor must exemplify and teach the heart of soul-winning.

### **Equipping**

As a church begins to get fervent about reaching the unchurched community around them, they must be properly equipped in order to maximize their efforts. This must be the pastor's primary goal in challenging his people. Ephesians 4:11-12 says, "and He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ." The pastor must lead the charge in training his people how to serve and share.

These three aspects are incredibly determinate of the pastor's success in leading his congregation to become evangelistically minded. Along with the pastor's leadership, fulfilling these three areas will prove to be meaningful in building an evangelistic strategy that engages people in service and the gospel.

### **Biblical**

The Bible gives several examples of servant/event evangelism that is successful. It is significant to this project to draw from the examples in Scripture to further help the case for servant/event evangelism strategies in the local church. Though there are many examples that will be drawn from in the project, five significant passages will be discussed here.



**Mark 2:1-12**

This passage in Mark proves the point that one can serve while engaging people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus was at home in Capernaum, and many people sitting listening to Him preach. At the same time four men took it upon themselves to bring a friend to Christ to be healed. The passage shows the reader that the four men went to great lengths to get their friend to Christ.

These four men overcame many obstacles in order to get their paralyzed friend in front of Jesus. Upon finally reaching Jesus, their friend was healed and saved. The interesting turn in the story is the fact that Jesus attributes the man's miracle to his friends who loved him enough to serve him, which in turn led to his restoration both spiritually and physically. This example points to the fact that opportunities to serve and engage people with the gospel can bear much fruit.

**John 2:1-11**

The miracle that Jesus performed at the start of His ministry is another great example of the servant/event type of outreach. Jesus was at the wedding when His mother came to Him with a problem. The wine had run out and something had to be done. Jesus commanded His disciples to go and fill the water pots. Then, he told them to take it to the headwaiter, who would go on to taste it only to realize that the water had been turned into the best wine. At this event, Jesus and His disciples were able to serve the people at the wedding. While at the same time the reader sees that the disciples of Jesus believed in Him. This is another great example of what happens when service and Jesus are brought together.

**John 4:1-30**

The woman at the well in Samaria can also prove the strategy of servant/event evangelism is incredibly effective. Jesus began having a conversation with a woman that would ultimately turn into mass evangelism effort. Jesus' conversation with the woman won her to Himself. The woman then went back to her city, serving the people of her city by telling them about Jesus. She did not just stop at telling them; rather, she brought them back to Him and witnessed nearly an entire city place their faith in Jesus. This woman was willing to be a servant who allowed God to use her to show many the way to Jesus.

**John 6:1-14**

John 6 shows another great example of the servant/event evangelisms strategy being effective. John tells a story in which over 5,000 people were gathered together listening to the Jesus' preaching. Jesus knew that they would be hungry and begin to teach His disciples a lesson by asking them where they were going to get food. His intentions were to do a great miracle by using little means. The disciples found a young boy who had five pieces of bread and two fish. Jesus then turned that little amount of food into an all-you-can-eat feast for over 5,000. The little boy was able to serve the crowd with his sacrifice, while at the same time the disciples were able physically to serve the 5,000 people who were at the event. John goes on to show that after eating and hearing the preaching of Jesus, people believed that He was the Prophet.

**Acts 2:1-41**

The day of Pentecost in which so many people came to place their faith in Christ is another wonderful example of this type of evangelism strategy. The disciples were torn with emotion, yet strongly desiring for God to move. They were gathered together and

God began to give them the opportunity to speak in other languages. The disciples were made into tools of service to allow others to hear the gospel in their own language. The passage teaches that many heard the gospel in their own language and gave their lives to Christ. In fact, the story records that around 3,000 people were saved that day. The disciples were servants being used by God at a mass event that turned out to be the start of the organized church as we know it.

### Historical

The servant/event evangelism model is well-attested in the history of the church; however, because of the vast history of the church's evangelistic strategy, this project will focus on the history of evangelism in America. Servant/event evangelism has been around for many years; however, it has not always been identified as such. Three examples of servant/event evangelism will be discussed here.

### **Revivals**

The American church has always been rich in its history of revivals. From the days of the great George Whitfield, the Wesley brothers, and Billy Sunday to modern day evangelists such as Junior Hill, America has always been blessed with mass evangelism efforts that have proved to be effective. One of the most well-known proponents of the revival model was Billy Graham. Graham's work points to the validity of the servant/event strategy. During a Billy Graham event people had the opportunity to serve as counselors, coordinators, and recruiters while at the same time witnessing many people come to faith in Jesus. This type of servant/event evangelism has changed to world as we know it. Millions of people have served and millions have been saved.

### **Neighborhood Events**

In the past another great outreach event has been to target neighborhoods with such things as block parties or more specific events like giving away food or clothing. These types of events allow people to get out of the church walls and to engage people in service with the gospel on their own turf. These kinds of events have caused people to know that the church cares. There is often nothing better than having people experience serving while seeing lives change before their eyes. These are opportunities to share the love of Christ in an environment that is non-threatening to people. Author Dino Rizzo writes, “Jesus lives His life seeking opportunities His love for people into action.”<sup>9</sup> This is what neighborhood events have historically provided for believers and non-believers.

### **Special Occasion Events**

In reaching people with the gospel by serving them, there have historically been special occasion events that have changed the world. Easter, Christmas, and Thanksgiving have always provided churches with unique opportunities to reach people. However occasions like the Super Bowl, vacation bible school family nights, Fall festivals, and others have in the past been great tools of serving and evangelism. These special occasions give opportunities to serve and share in mass numbers several times a year. Over history churches have seemed to capitalize on these special events and in turn, use them to impact the Kingdom.

### **Statement of Methodology**

The this project will consist of six chapters, each of which will be informative and persuasive to the project’s proposed purpose. The following is an overview of the project.

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<sup>9</sup> Dino Rizzo, *Servolution* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 81.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The introduction will give the reader an overview of the contents of this project. It will help to inform the reader on what to expect from the chapters of this project. The introduction will also clearly spell out for the reader the author's take on evangelistic strategies in the local church.

## Chapter 2: The Church and Evangelism Models

Chapter two will examine the reality of the church in modern-day America as well as the different models of evangelism being used today. This chapter will serve as the foundation of building the case for the development and implementation of this type of a strategy in the church. This chapter will focus on four major areas. First, it will give reader the realistic picture of the church. Second, it will clearly define what evangelism is. The third area this chapter will cover is the various types of evangelistic models that are used in churches today. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a critique of the models of evangelism used by churches today.

## Chapter 3: The Foundation for Servant/Event Evangelism

Chapter three of this project will begin to examine why the servant/event model of evangelism would work in American churches today. This chapter will focus on the uses of this type of evangelistic model in Scripture and in churches in America. This chapter will also highlight several passages of Scripture in which one can see this model being applied. Finally, it will conclude with a survey of ten pastors who are having success with this type of evangelism strategy.

#### Chapter 4: The Development of a Servant/Event Strategy in the Local Church

Chapter four will serve as the crux of this paper. It will outline a plan to begin a servant/event strategy in a local church. It will focus on three aspects of this type of a vision. First, it will teach of how to envision and develop the strategy. This will be a practical approach to kick-starting this type of model. It will be backed up with a practical example from the church life. Second, it will teach how to implement the strategy into the local church. Once again, this will be an approach based upon a practical example of how this strategy has been implemented into a local church. It will give specific event ideas in which churches can implement the servant/event evangelistic strategy. Finally, the chapter will conclude by examining some potential barriers to this type of model. This will help the reader understand that this type of model will come with obstacles but that its value for the kingdom of God will far outweigh the barriers.

#### Chapter 5: Conclusion

Chapter five will serve as a conclusion to the project. It will give a brief overview of the material covered in the project, and it will serve as the final statement of why the project was needed.

#### **Review of Literature**

This thesis is based upon research from many varying resources. Most importantly, it is grounded in Scripture and the current literature on evangelism. However, the project draws from experiences in the life of the local church. A survey of pastors whose churches are growing due to an emphasis on either serving or evangelism will serve as a key component to this project as well. In what follows, the sources from which the thesis is drawn will be briefly examined.

## Books

Robert Coleman is the author of *The Master Plan of Evangelism*.<sup>10</sup> He is a professor of Evangelism and has many years of experience in the field. In *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, Coleman takes the example that Jesus gives us of evangelism and lays it out for the reader. The greatest asset of Coleman's work to this project will be the fact that the best teacher on evangelism is Jesus Himself. Therefore a thorough examination of His methods of evangelism will be beneficial to our understanding of biblical evangelism.

David Wheeler's "Outreach: Back to Basics in Strategic Planning"<sup>11</sup> urges the church to get back to the basics of evangelism. He writes, "Evangelism, properly understood, must be reestablished as the main purpose of the church, not merely one of numerous functions."<sup>12</sup> This type of truthful teaching will help the reader to understand the need for an overhaul in the church while keeping true to the basic functions of the church and evangelism in particular.

In addition, Bill Hybels' *Volunteer Revolution*<sup>13</sup> is a great example of what God wants to do in the life of a "lay person." Hybels gives examples of ordinary people doing extraordinary work for the Kingdom through serving. This book leads the way in showing how one should be utilizing one's gifts for the Kingdom of God.

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<sup>10</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Fleming H. Revell Co., 1964).

<sup>11</sup> David Wheeler, "Outreach: Back to Basics in Strategic Planning" in *Innovate Church: 8 Innovative Ways to Lead and Grow the Church*, ed. Jonathan Falwell (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> Wheeler, "Outreach," 122.

<sup>13</sup> Bill Hybels, *Volunteer Revolution: Unleashing the Power of Everybody* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004).

Aubrey Malphurs' *Advanced Strategic Planning*<sup>14</sup> is a textbook for ministry. Malphurs reminds the reader that if she wants to excel in servant/event evangelism she must take time carefully and strategically to plan. This book guides its readers in becoming diligent about excellence through a thoughtful process of strategic planning.

Kirk Nowery's *Revolutionary Generosity*<sup>15</sup> is one of the best books on how to live sacrificially for others; it defines what it means to be a servant while sharing one's faith. Nowery suggests that being a witness "demands the making of a decision to love someone else to the point that you tell them that on the road they're traveling the bridge is out."<sup>16</sup> This is the type of love and service this project attempts to exemplify.

*Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them*,<sup>17</sup> by Thom Rainer, is a great tool to use in understanding the lost and unchurched. It is filled with statistical research that helps churches understand what the unchurched are thinking. In addition, it is an accurate picture of where culture is and what the church needs to do to reach it. Rainer's research gives useful evaluation forms to assist the church in its ministry to reach the unchurched.

Alvin Reid's *Introduction to Evangelism*<sup>18</sup> is a terrific book on the history, need, and methods of evangelism. Reid shows that the church needs to love evangelism out of a heartfelt conviction. Over and over again, he reminds that evangelism is what the church

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<sup>14</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005).

<sup>15</sup> Kirk Nowery, *Revolutionary Generosity* (Camarillo: Spire Publishing, 2006).

<sup>16</sup> Nowery, *Revolutionary Generosity*, 94.

<sup>17</sup> Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> Alvin Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 1998).



lives to do. His work helps point in the direction of a correct understanding of evangelism, therefore urging the church to engage itself in the practice of evangelism.

Dino Rizzo's *Servolution*<sup>19</sup> is an example of what God can and will do through a people willing to serve others for the glory of God. Rizzo gives real life examples of God moving in the hearts of people in a city. Once his church began to make serving others its priorities, a real change took place. Rizzo's work, therefore, gives a structure in which servant/event evangelism can take place.

*The Purpose Driven Church*,<sup>20</sup> by Rick Warren, is a tremendous work on church growth. It has a biblical yet practical approach to ministry, and it provides a portrait of what a well-balanced and healthy church should look like. Warren keeps the book simple enough for the layperson to implement these principles and apply them to the local church. This thesis is dealing with service and evangelism, both of which are part of producing healthy disciples and therefore creating healthy churches

#### Internet

The North American Mission Board's website is full of great tools for churches in the area of evangelism. The article "Planning An Intentional Evangelism Strategy"<sup>21</sup> gives practical ways for churches to start becoming intentional about evangelism. It challenges the church to get busy preparing and acting on evangelism opportunities for the people that surround them.

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<sup>19</sup> Dino Rizzo, *Servolution: Starting a Church Revolution through Serving* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Every Church Is Big in God's Eyes* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011).

<sup>21</sup> "Planning An Intentional Evangelism Strategy," *North American Mission Board*, <[www.namb.net](http://www.namb.net)>.

## Biblical

Mark 2:1-12 is a clear instance of the servant/event evangelism strategy in action. This passage will set the tone for the other passages to point in the direction of evangelism that is plainly set forth in Scripture.

John 2:1-11 is also a passage that will allow the reader to see a servant/event strategy by Jesus in action. This passage teaches that Jesus used many different means in order to make the most of the moments he had for the purpose of the message of the Gospel.

John 4:1-30 is another biblical example that will be discussed in this strategy. Jesus gives a great picture of how to influence a whole city, while at the same time allowing people to be served. This passage gives insight into how Jesus wanted to reach the masses by focusing on one person.

John 6:1-14 shows how thousands can be touched and blessed by being served and by being given the message of hope. Passages like this will help prove the point that a servant/event strategy dates all the way back to the ministry of Jesus. This passage lights the way for churches today to engage people with hope.

Acts 2:1-41 is an example of what happens when a few people get serious about sharing the gospel. It marks the first great revival movement of God to the masses in the New Testament, and it shows all churches that size is not as important as willingness to be used by God.

## Surveys

This thesis will use the answers of a survey from ten pastors of churches that are growing in both numbers and in health church. These churches have had growth due to an

emphasis on service, evangelism, or both. The following ten pastors and churches are the surveys which will be used:

- 1) Robert Welch, Rock Hill Baptist Church, Brownsboro, Texas
- 2) Heath Peloquin, Brighton Park Baptist Church, Corpus Christi, Texas
- 3) Dr. Hershael York, Buck Horn Baptist Church, Frankfort, Kentucky
- 4) Jarrett Stephens, Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, Texas
- 5) Nathan Lino, Northeast Houston Baptist Church, Humble Texas
- 6) John Meador, First Baptist Church Eules, Eules, Texas
- 7) Dr. Glynn Stone, Mobberly Baptist Church, Longview, Texas
- 8) Allan Thompson, First Baptist Church Clairemont, Clairemont, California
- 9) Dr. Matt Pearson, Wynne Baptist Church, Wynne, Arkansas
- 10) Dr. Bryant Wright, Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, Marietta, Georgia

CHAPTER TWO  
THE CHURCH AND EVANGELISM MODELS

**The State of the Modern American Church**

It is becoming increasingly evident that Christianity in America today is on the decline. The church has, for whatever reason, found itself wading in the waters of decline. Southern Baptists in particular are feeling the sting of this decline. As Lifeway research reveals, “baptism, worship attendance, and overall membership in the Southern Baptist Convention declined in 2010. Baptisms fell nearly 5 percent, their lowest level in 60 years.”<sup>1</sup> This problem is either a problem caused by the leaders and members of the church, or it is a problem caused by society. The reason for such a sharp decline is not as significant as the fact that people are dying and going to hell; if the church does not reach them with the Gospel, then no one will. The church in America stands in a place like none it has ever known before. It is not only dealing with people who are ignorant of the gospel, but instead is encountering people who have been saturated with the message of the church instead of the message of the gospel. This can lead to problems that programs alone are unable fix. It will take people getting out and living the Gospel in practical ways to reach these people.

According to the American Religious Identification Survey completed in 2008,

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<sup>1</sup> “Stetzer Comments On SBC Decline,” *Churchleaders.com*,  
<[www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/151903-stetzer-comments-on-sbc-decline.html](http://www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/151903-stetzer-comments-on-sbc-decline.html)>.

Christianity in America is in a steady downward trend. In fact the survey shows us that 86% of American adults identified themselves as Christians in 1990 and only 76% did so in 2008.<sup>2</sup> This is a serious matter for the church. Many churches act as if the church is in great shape, and pastors look at all the excuses possible when trying to explain away the reason for the decline of the church. However, the same study shows us that people are not rejecting Christianity for other religions but instead they are embracing “a rejection of all forms of organized religion.”<sup>3</sup> This ought to be a problem the church; the church must wake up and realize that people are walking away in droves from the message of hope because it has over-commercialized and over-programized the gospel. Therefore, the church must get back to the basics and serve people out of a heart of love.

The problem of numerical decline in today’s American church is not only an issue in Baptist churches. In fact one article from the Church of Christ denomination says that “the number of men, women, and children in the pews has dipped to the lowest level since a comprehensive effort to count members began in 1980.”<sup>4</sup> Another article tells reveals that “The United Methodist Church reported last year that its membership was at its lowest since 1930 with just over 8 million members.”<sup>5</sup> Regardless of what denomination a believer affiliates with, statistics like these should be shocking. Another survey says that “the number of Protestants soon will slip below 50 percent of the nation’s

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<sup>2</sup> Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey 2008* (Hartford: Trinity College), 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Bobby Ross, Jr., “Church In America Marked By Decline,” *The Christian Chronicle* (February, 2009), <[www.christianchronicle.org/article2158685~Church\\_in\\_America\\_Marked\\_by\\_decline](http://www.christianchronicle.org/article2158685~Church_in_America_Marked_by_decline)>.

<sup>5</sup> “SBC Urges Members To Combat U.S. Church Decline,” *The Christian Post* (March 27, 2008), <[www.christianpost.com/article/20080327/sbc-urges-members-to-combat-u-s-church-decline/index.html](http://www.christianpost.com/article/20080327/sbc-urges-members-to-combat-u-s-church-decline/index.html)>.

population.”<sup>6</sup> This reveals the chilling reality that soon Christians in America will be a minority. This is something that needs to be combated with a diligent effort to take the gospel to every person in America. However, each individual church must examine itself to see whether or not it is in decline.

### The Five Practical Ways to Measure Church Decline

Today’s churches often do not understand how to measure whether or not they have reached a plateau or are in decline. Many pastors and members go on with business as usual never realizing that their church is treading on dangerous ground. This happens because they do not understand how practically to measure decline. The following will propose five practical ways from Acts 2 to measure whether a church is in decline or has reached a plateau.

#### **Measurement # 1 – Numerical Health**

Numerical statistics are the first and most often used form of determining church health. This is a sure way analyzing where a church is in its pursuit of health. In fact, from the very beginning of the organized church numbers have been measured. This is shown in Acts 2:47 when the writer says that the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. For example, earlier in the passage 3,000 were saved at the event. This goes to show that numbers are important and should be kept in order to measure growth.

There are various methods that a church can use to keep track of church attendance. For example, a church can keep track of the attendance for the Sunday School

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<sup>6</sup> B.A Robinson, “Religious Identification In The U.S.,” *Religious Tolerance* (December 28, 2009), <[www.religoustolerance.org/ch\\_prac2.htm](http://www.religoustolerance.org/ch_prac2.htm)>.

hour. This is a way that has worked for many years; however, many churches today now keep worship attendance instead. The way in which a church keeps the attendance is not significant, as long as it is keeping track of attendance numbers.

One may ask why it is so important to keep track of church attendance. The answer to this question is twofold. First, a church must keep attendance in order to compare numbers on a year-to-year basis. This will help a church to evaluate whether or not it needs to change a strategy. It proves helpful to cut away that which is not leading the church to grow. A second reason a church should keep a good record of attendance is to help to provide a facility strategy. If a church is in fact growing at a rapid rate, it must be ready for needed space. Only a good record of attendance will give a church the needed tools for a proper strategy in church facilities.

### **Measurement # 2 – Discipleship Health**

A second measurement by which to tell whether a church is growing or declining is an evaluation of the involvement of a church in discipleship ministry. A pastor or key lay leader should take a close look at how many people are involved in being discipled. A discipleship ministry can be the greatest asset to church growth, and the lack thereof the greatest contributor to a church's decline. As author David Lee says, "discipleship training is the number one task for the church growth...discipleship training is the key for church growth because it is the obedience to the will of our Saviour, Jesus Christ."<sup>7</sup> If discipleship opportunities are alive and well, then people will respond with enthusiasm to grow in knowledge, and the church, therefore, will grow. However, if people are dry and dead, they will go where there is life.

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<sup>7</sup> David K. Lee, *Who Am I?* (FairFax: Xulon Press, 2002), 5.

Discipleship programs should lead people to embrace as many opportunities to learn as much about God as possible. This truth is shown in Acts 2:42. The passage shows that the church was eager to hear and learn from the apostles' teachings. This type of devotion is a sure sign of church health. However, if there is not a real desire to learn more of God's word and will, then the church must come to the place of confessing its sin and its need to change its ways.

### **Measurement # 3- Financial Health**

The third way of measuring whether or not a church is experiencing growth or is in decline is through a careful assessment of a church's finances. Matthew 6:21 says, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." This point urges the church to be pure in its finances. Oftentimes, although not always, churches that are cutting budgets due to major shortcomings are not healthy churches. This is a sign that people are not being obedient to the command to tithe. This tells the church where the people's hearts are and in turn will produce an unhealthy church.

Acts 2 presents an example of a financially healthy church. In verses 44-45, Luke shows that those who had much gave much for the sake of the needs of others. This leads one to conclude that the desire of the church's heart was to meet the needs of those who lacked. Because their heart was set on the things of God rather than the things of the world (i.e., money), the church was healthy. In this way, financial stability is an indicator of whether a church is healthy or self-focused.

### **Measurement #4 – Prayer Health**

It has been said that a church that prays together stays together. This is a great statement for a church that is looking for health. If a church desires to determine whether



or not it is growing or in decline, it should look at whether or not it is a praying church. A healthy church is one that has many people committed to prayer. Praying churches see results that lead to excitement which produces growth. For example, First Baptist Church of Malakoff, Texas has become a praying church. Over the past few years, prayer efforts have increased, and great things have come from intentional prayer that has led to a healthier church. One of the things the church has seen is an increase in its missions efforts. Since it began laying hands on and commissioning out its mission trips, there has been a noticeable increase in the church's missions activity.

Once again Acts 2:42 is helpful. This verse points out that the church was committed to prayer. This church was exploding with growth, and one of the reasons was its deep desire to pray; it was healthy in its prayer life. If churches are going to determine whether they are a growing church or a declining church, they must examine three things about their prayer lives. First, churches must ask about the intentionality of their prayer lives. Put differently, churches must have many people intentionally praying. Alvin Reid says that "prayer is essential to a growing relationship with God."<sup>8</sup> This is so true, and churches must be intentional about a growing relationship with God both personally and corporately.

Churches also need to examine the intensity of their prayer lives. Again, this can be seen in the early church's devotion to prayer, which teaches churches that they are to be intense in their prayer efforts. A growing church in the midst of a declining religion is one that is intense in its prayer.

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<sup>8</sup> Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 138.

Finally, churches must examine the integrity of their prayer lives. An intense prayer life means that people earnestly pray for specific people and specific movements of God. Many churches reveal their lack of health in the ways in which they pray. If the church only prays inward prayers of personal blessing, it is probably a church that is focused inwardly which will ultimately experience decline. Churches must be praying churches, and these areas will help the church to measure where it stands in its prayer efforts.

### **Measurement # 5- Ministry Health**

A final and very significant way of measuring the health of a church is to determine how much ministry is being done in and through the body. A church will be able to determine its value by asking three tough questions about ministry. The answers to the questions will reveal how well a church is doing in its ministry.

The first question is this: If your church were to cease to exist, would your community know it is gone? This is a question that should cause all churches to take a deep evaluation of where they are and how effective they are. The answer to this question may be the best indicator of what a community really thinks of a church.

A second question to answer to gauge if a church's ministry is effective or not is the following: Would your church be missed if it disappeared? This is a tough question that could have major implications for how churches do ministry. A community may notice a church is gone, but would they truly miss it? In order for the community to miss the church's presence, the church must play an active role in the community. For example, Olive Baptist Church in Pensacola, Florida has developed a ministry known as the ministry village. This ministry is one that deeply impacts many people around.

Therefore, if it ceased to exist, a void would certainly be left in Pensacola. Churches must strategize in such a way that their community would miss them if they were gone.

A third question to ask when dealing with the effectiveness of ministry is this: Has your church worked to reach the lost in the community? This should be a major driving point for churches. They should plan and implement a strategy within their community that ultimately leads to people hearing the gospel. When churches do this the scale of ministry should go up and the number of lost should go down.

The early church in Acts 2:45 gives yet another example of a church that is on the upward slope instead of a decline. This verse shows that the church was doing everything they needed to do in order to insure that all the needs of the people were met. They brought the needs to the attention of the people, and the people met the needs. This is a real model of effective church ministry that leads to growth.

It is extremely easy to recognize the state of the church in America. It is somewhat more difficult to realize that most churches fall into the category of decline. The time is now that the church must awaken to the reality that it is in decline and decide not to settle for mediocrity any longer.

### **What Is Evangelism?**

A word that has been misunderstood and has ultimately lost its value in many churches today is 'evangelism.' It is a word that once found itself on the forefront of the evangelical mind, yet now has slipped off into a distant part of reality. It is a word that over time has been softened by excuses that do nothing more than attempt to justify a church's inadequacy. It has dissolved into a simple cliché for the religious and the spiritual alike.

However, evangelism is a word that still has the potential to impact the world. It is still every believer's biblical responsibility to engage in evangelism outside the confines of the church walls. In fact, as O.S. Hawkins writes, "we will never draw the net and win our world through pulpit proclamation only. The church needs an army of men and women who will persuasively appeal to others through personal confrontation."<sup>9</sup> Believers must be committed to a lifestyle of evangelism. However, to be fully devoted to this lifestyle one must first define exactly what evangelism is.

Often times the best way to define what something is, it is first wise to understand what its not. Dave Early and David Wheeler do a great job helping us understand the reality of what evangelism is not:

Evangelism is not:

1. A choice. It is generally accepted in Christian circles that the majority of believers rarely share their faith with another unsaved person. In fact, I have noticed this in my graduate level Evangelism classes. By a simple show of hands, on average well over half of the students will admit that they fall into this unfortunate category. I am convinced that one of the contributing factors is that evangelism is taught as an individual choice rather than a biblical command. This is misleading and dangerous in reference to the Great Commission. Consider what Jesus' says in Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Note that the phrase "you will be My witnesses" is written as an imperative or better yet, as a direct command of Christ aimed at mobilizing His disciples into the world to fulfill His earlier promise as recorded in Mark 1:17, "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."
2. Just passing on information. There are hundreds of ways to effectively share Christ with an unbeliever. However, in doing so, one must remember that evangelism is not just sharing the right biblical information. As I always tell my classes, "you cannot divorce Jesus' message from the man He represented." This simply means

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<sup>9</sup> O.S. Hawkins, *Drawing the Net* (Dallas: Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 2002), 39.

that Jesus not only shared the truth in word, He also embodied that same truth through a consistent lifestyle. While it is very important that one should be able to pass on the correct biblical knowledge relating to salvation, he must also validate that same knowledge to the world through the consistent testimony of a changed life.

3. A spiritual gift. Contrary to popular belief in the church, evangelism is not listed as a spiritual gift in Scripture. Grated, while some people may have talents that aid in becoming more natural at evangelism, the call to evangelize is meant for the entire church. It is not reserved for a selected few soldiers. According the Greek, the word evangelism is meant to be a noun (*euaggelion*), not a verb (*euaggelidzo*) which means “to evangelize.” The word for evangelism literally means “good news” or the “message.” The problem is that most people define evangelism as sharing the Good News (verb), when actually evangelism is the good news (noun). Our problem with evangelism is that we define it by the action, not the nature or essence of the action. At the core, evangelism is the “good news” of Christ and must be embraced as a lifestyle by every Christian.
4. Just something you do. Evangelism is much more than merely being obedient to Christ. On the contrary, evangelism is who you are in the core of your spiritual being. Evangelism must never be minimized to something you perform as a duty to God. Rather, like breathing it should be an involuntary response to naturally share Christ whenever possible. In short, evangelism is who you are as you walk through daily life. It is the consistent and natural overflow of a deep and abiding relationship with Christ.
5. In competition with discipleship. I often hear people espousing the tenets of discipleship over the call to evangelize. These people often minimize evangelism and use phrases like “I am a disciple maker, not an evangelist.” This may sound good, but it is biblically incorrect. The truth is, evangelism and discipleship are uniquely dependent on each other. While intentional evangelism that leads to a spiritual conversion always precedes the process of discipleship, neither process is complete until the one who is being discipled learns to multiply their witness through sharing Christ with an unsaved world. Possessing a genuine passion for biblical multiplication through evangelism is a key indicator in evaluating spiritual maturity.
6. Based on your personality. Some people believe that evangelism is only reserved for “A” type personalities. Nothing could be further from the truth. As mentioned above, evangelism is a biblical command to be fulfilled through all types of

people. Regardless if you are shy or outgoing, remember that every Christian is responsible to the call of evangelism.

7. The same as “missions.” The word “evangelism” has lost its distinctiveness over the last twenty-five years as many people have replaced it with the concept of “missions.” The problem is that “evangelism” and “missions” do not mean the same thing. By nature, “missions” is the process of adapting the gospel message into culture while “evangelism” is the message. In other words, it is quite possible to be involved in evangelism without doing missions, but it is impossible to do real missions without intentionally doing evangelism.
8. Acting arrogant or superior. First Peter 5:6 says, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.” The key to effective evangelism is a well prepared, obedient, loving, and humble heart for God. A “know it all” and “cocky” attitude will always hinder the effectiveness of evangelism.
9. Meant to be silenced by fear. In Second Timothy 1:7-8, the Apostle Paul says it all, “For God did not give us a spirit of timidity [fear], but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord...” While appropriate fear is rational in certain situations, according to Scripture, this should not apply to the task of evangelism.
10. A theological dilemma. Some people try to use theological constructs to ignore the Great Commission. Because of hyper interpretations related to the doctrine of election, an increasing number of contemporary ministers are ignoring their responsibility to be active in evangelism. The same is true when liberal theologians compromise the authority of Scripture. In many cases humility and obedience are replaced by theological superiority and a critical spirit that is detrimental to evangelism. In short, a theology without evangelism is no theology at all.<sup>10</sup>

Early and Wheeler not only give clarification of the things that evangelism is not, but by helping to also understand the misconceptions of evangelism, they paves the way for Christians to clearly define it and give purpose to it. Early and Wheeler take everything away from what believers have come to know of evangelism that is not

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<sup>10</sup> Dave Early and David Wheeler, *Evangelism Is* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), vii-ix.

biblical. They give the green light to move forward in a terminology as well as a lifestyle of evangelism.

So the question of what evangelism actually is must still be answered. The definition of evangelism carries with it a weight of responsibility and initiative. The definition not only carries responsibility but also should ultimately have major implications on believers in local church. In the pursuit of clearly and concisely defining what evangelism is and what it should look like in individual lives and churches, several different definitions of evangelism will be offered.

1. Jerry Rankin: “Evangelism is proclaiming a message of hope for those in despair and salvation for a world in sin.”<sup>11</sup>
2. Elmer Town and Ed Stetzer: “Evangelism is communicating the Gospel in an understandable manner and motivating a person to respond to Christ and become a responsible member of His church.”<sup>12</sup>
3. Alvin Reid: “Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ by word and life by power of the Holy Spirit, so that unbelievers become followers of Jesus Christ in His church and in the culture.”<sup>13</sup>
4. David Gortner: “Your natural expression of gratitude for God’s goodness.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Jerry Rankin, *To The Ends Of The Earth* (Richmond: International Mission Board, SBC, 2005), 43.

<sup>12</sup> Elmer L. Ed Stetzer Towns, *Perimeters of Light* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 130

<sup>13</sup> Alvin Reid, *Evangelism Handbook* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Company, 2009), 31.

<sup>14</sup> David Gortner, *Transforming Evangelism* (New York: Church Publishing, 2008), 172.

5. J.I. Packer, “Evangelism is just preaching the gospel, the evangel. It is a work of communication in which Christians make themselves mouthpieces for God’s message of mercy to sinners.”<sup>15</sup>

6. Mark Dever: “To declare on the authority of God what He has done to save sinners, to warn men of their lost condition, to direct them to repent, and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>16</sup>

7. Jeffrey Arnold: “The conscious attempt, through word and deed, to share the good news of Jesus Christ, so that they can become disciples of Christ.”<sup>17</sup>

All of these definitions indicate how evangelism can be defined differently by everyone. Some of these definitions are sufficient; however a more clear and concise definition is needed. As such, evangelism is taking the gospel to people who are in desperate need of hope and dead in their sins, persuading them to become passionate followers of Jesus, thus leading them to engage in the Great Commission personally. This definition is not only based on biblical truth but also provides expectations for those desiring to be involved in evangelism.

Now that evangelism has been clearly defined, a biblical case for believers to engage in evangelism will be built. Throughout the entire New Testament there is a biblical mandate for believers to share the gospel. This not only frees a believer to share the gospel, but it ultimately helps a believer to see that he or she is required to do so.

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<sup>15</sup> J.I. Packer, *Evangelism and Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 49.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Dever, *9 Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004), 137.

<sup>17</sup> Jeffery Arnold, *The Big Book on Small Groups* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 203.



### Matthew 5:23

Matthew 5:23 says, “Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the peoples.” In this passage one can see that Jesus is actively sharing the gospel. He is engaged in evangelism. Believers know that they are to live and act like Jesus in order to become more like Him. Therefore they must come to the understanding that if Jesus Himself was active in sharing the good news, shouldn't they be motivated to do so? Jesus set an example of taking the gospel to people at the beginning stages of His ministry.

### Matthew 28:19-20

Matthew 28:19-20 says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the ages.” This is the passage to which many people turn in order to see the command of evangelism. Of all the things that Jesus could have commanded His disciples in that hour, He chose to command them to take the message of hope to all nations. This is a great motivator for believers to share their faith and for churches to be on a mission to bring Him glory through active evangelism. The Great Commission is the fuel that should make the church run on all cylinders.

### Mark 16:15

Mark 16:15 says, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.” This is a concise yet powerful command to preach the gospel. There are two significant factors about this command from Jesus for us to preach. First, it is a command to go to

the world—to all creation. This implies that believers are to be active in their evangelistic efforts and that those efforts must not be isolated to the convenience and comfort of the home. Christians must take the message of salvation to the entire world, which means every people group from every tribe, in every tongue, and in every nation. This is not a suggestion, but a mandate.

The second factor is the fact that Jesus says to preach the gospel. This implies an unadulterated version of the gospel of Jesus. Many times believers try to package Jesus into something He is not in order to share their faith. Jesus makes it very clear that they are to preach the gospel to all creation. This brings with it the understanding that Christians are to be actively pursuing opportunities to present the gospel.

#### Luke 4:43

Luke 4:43: “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.” At the point of this passage Jesus had impacted so many people with His message and His miracles that no one wanted him to leave. However, Jesus pointed out to them that His purpose for coming was to preach the kingdom of God—or, the need to repent. This is a gospel message of hope and restoration. Jesus lays out the fact that people all over needed to hear this gospel. This is in particular a reminder for churches to know that they must reach out beyond the context in which they find themselves. It is a great reminder that people all around believers need Jesus, and they—like Jesus—must have the heart to share it with as many people as possible.

#### Acts 1:8

Acts 1:8 says, “but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and

even to the remotest part of the earth.” This is clearest and most challenging passage for believers and churches alike to be engaged in the lifestyle of evangelism. The departing words of Jesus give a clear picture of the heart and mission of Jesus. When it comes to evangelism there is no clearer passage telling a church what is supposed to do than this one. Jesus gives a clear understanding that churches will be His witness in their community as well as around the world. A church that fails to see the biblical command that Jesus makes here will not fully grasp the significance of an evangelism strategy in their church. However, a church that takes these final words of Jesus seriously will be engaged in radical evangelism that will lead to many lives being changed.

#### Romans 10:14-15

Romans 10:14-15: “How then will they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent?” This verse is a great command for churches to send the gospel to the nations of the world. It is a cry for the message to be sent in order that those who have never heard the gospel may have the opportunity to come to Jesus. This will not happen until the church takes seriously the call to be evangelistic. This is believer’s biblical mandate and should be a real priority in their lives both individually and corporately.

These biblical commands will either lead a church to walk in obedience to Christ and to turn their eyes to the lost and dying world. A church that embraces the biblical call for an evangelistic approach will ultimately be effective in changing the world as they know it. On the other hand, a church that ignores the mandate of evangelism will die a slow and painful death. As Chuck Lawless says, “A church without a plan to evangelize

will be a church that does not evangelize.”<sup>18</sup> A church that does not evangelize will choose their traditions and rituals over the precious truth of Scripture, which ultimately has no power in such a congregation. Such a church will fade off into irrelevancy.

### **Excuses For Not Evangelizing**

The question still remains concerning why churches do not engage in evangelism, especially when they know what evangelism is and that it is mandated by Scripture? What would cause a church to ignore the mission of Christ, therefore missing the heart of God? There are three main excuses churches use for not engaging in the lifestyle of evangelism Christ has called them to which deserve further examination.

#### Excuse #1 – Too Much Work With No Guarantee of Success

Many churches fall into the self-centered mindset in which they will only do the things that bring them benefits in return. It is much easier for a church to consume instead of produce. Therefore, churches only spend time and resources on those things that will pad their numbers. The major problem with this is that Jesus was just the opposite in his approach. He lived in such a way that the truth was the most important priority. In fact, John 6 teaches that all the disciples had deserted Jesus. He looked at His twelve and questioned their loyalty to Him. He did not only speak when it was beneficial to Him and His ministry but when it would cause all to walk away. The heart of evangelism is that Christians should share the gospel and let the consequences fall where they may.

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<sup>18</sup> Chuck Lawless, “Leading A Church To Be Evangelistic,”  
<[www.chucklawless.com/files/leading-a-church-to-be-evangelistic\\_1.pdf](http://www.chucklawless.com/files/leading-a-church-to-be-evangelistic_1.pdf)>.

### Excuse # 2 – We Don't Want to Offend Anyone in Our Community

Many churches use this excuse to justify their lack of evangelistic zeal. They want to hide behind a veil, assuming that they know how others will take the gospel being shared. This does nothing but produce lackadaisical believers who are driven more by fear and speculation than they are by the horrific truth of the unredeemed world. Believers must be a light to a dark world. As Teresa Whitehurst states, “Jesus didn't provide excuses for not sharing your light. He was quite specific. If you have a light—the light comes from faith and wisdom—you have not just the right but the duty to share it with others.”<sup>19</sup> Churches that excuse themselves from speaking the truth based upon a presupposed barrier fall into danger. These types of churches find themselves involved in politics in the community instead of being focused on the mission of the cross.

### Excuse # 3 – We Do Not Have the Resources

This is an excuse that lacks any logical validity. A church that seizes the opportunity to be evangelistic needs no resources except for people who desire to be used by God. Somewhere along the way it seems that churches in America have over-commercialized the gospel. They have gone so far as to believe that there must be room in the budget for evangelism. However, in order for a church to become intentional about seeing the lost come to a relationship with Christ, evangelism must be in the hearts of the church and the people as opposed to merely a line in the budget. Churches cannot fall prey to the belief that it only takes money to change lives. It takes the gospel, and they are privileged to be able to share it for free.

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<sup>19</sup> Teresa Whitehurst, *How Would Jesus Raise A Child?* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2003).

Once churches begin to understand the definition and see the biblical command for an evangelism strategy, they must act. For the sake of bringing God glory and introducing the lost to a loving Savior, a church can no longer live in ignorance to what the heart of God is. Evangelism has the power to change lives and in turn change churches. As Martha Reese notes, “people who learn to share their faith say evangelism changes lives—theirs included!”<sup>20</sup> When people are changed the church will be changed.

### **Evangelism Models in the Modern American Church**

In churches today there are many different kinds of evangelism models or strategies. Some of the models have been around for many years, and some are new. In all types of evangelism the goal is the same: to win people to Christ through sharing the gospel. As the reader will see, the gospel can be shared in many different ways while being tied to the local church. The remainder of this chapter will list and briefly describe twelve models that are used in churches in the modern culture.

#### Model #1: Door-to-Door

Door-to-door evangelism has been around since the New Testament church was started. In fact, this model has for many years been a preferred method of evangelism in the local church. Many churches have called this ‘visitation night,’ a time in which people go out in teams and go door-to-door in order to share their faith or to share about their church. Over the years many different evangelism curriculums such as F.A.I.T.H. and Evangelism Explosion have been created with door-to-door evangelism in mind. These types of curriculums have created a cookie-cutter approach to door-to-door sharing. They seem to work well and are certainly better than no strategy at all. As

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<sup>20</sup> Martha Reese, *Unbinding The Gospel* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2008), 5.

Rudolph Louw states, “there are really many valid methods and techniques when it comes to evangelism strategies.”<sup>21</sup> As long as a church is being intentional about going out and sharing the gospel, any method will work.

This model of evangelism has both fans and critics. Most will say it is still a model that can see success while others believe that it is a thing of the past. David Dunlap writes, “church leaders are coming to the conclusion that door to door evangelism is essential if a church is serious about contacting an entire community for Christ.”<sup>22</sup> His concern is not to ask whether door-to-door evangelism is still needed; rather, but he says that it is absolutely still effective. While some will say that the method has seen its better days, many churches continue to use it weekly.

Door-to-door evangelism whether one likes it or not, has produced many converts to Christ. It has also served as a launching pad for many new church plants. It is a method that has stood the test of time but must ultimately be examined in each church’s context in order to determine its usefulness.

#### Model #2: Event

One of the more commonly used models of evangelism is event-based evangelism. These types of events aim to draw as many people as possible, and they are usually successful in terms of people coming into a relationship with Christ. David Wheeler says, “Evangelistic events are easily one of the best approaches to gathering people and allowing for both personal and mass appeals to the gospel.”<sup>23</sup> Wheeler is right

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<sup>21</sup> Rudolph Louw, *God's Plan for Man* (Fairfax: Xulon Press, 2004), 15.

<sup>22</sup> David Dunlap, *Written Aforetime* (Land of the Lakes: Xulon Press, 2009), 186.

<sup>23</sup> Johnathan Falwell, ed., *Innovate Church* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 143.

because the more people that hear the gospel, the more will enter into a relationship with Christ.

Event evangelism is so popular in churches today because it has the potential to see instantaneous results. This gets a pastor and a church excited and can usher a church into a season of great growth and momentum. These events can be categorized into events such as block parties, revivals, sports related gatherings, outdoor concerts, and many others. However, event evangelism can be costly and can never guarantee success. Therefore, churches must attempt to understand their cultural context in order to truly get an realistic picture of what types of events to do.

### Model #3: Relationship

Relationship evangelism tends to be a popular approach in today's churches. People also have a tendency to call this model 'friendship evangelism' as well. As Andrew Careaga says in his book *Eministry*,

Jesus called this approach making disciples. Today it's often called friendship evangelism, lifestyle evangelism, or relationship evangelism. Regardless of the name, however, it is Jesus' original plan to reach the entire world with the message of salvation, and it is based on the efforts of ordinary Christians. Each of us is called to build relationships with nonbelievers, work to develop those relationships into friendships, create a level of trust with these non-believing friends and then present the gospel to them at the appropriate time.<sup>24</sup>

This approach can be traced back to the life of Jesus as he sought to know people when he shared with them. A great example in the Bible is the woman at the well (John 4:7-42). This lady was minding her own business collecting water when Jesus engaged with her in conversation. He led the conversation in a way that ultimately pointed her to faith, yet that was still personal in nature.

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<sup>24</sup> Andrew Careaga, *Eministry* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001), 151.



D. James Kennedy speaks highly of this method of evangelism. He says, “Undoubtedly, the first place to begin looking for evangelistic opportunities in our everyday lives is the numerous relationships the Lord has enabled us to develop and enjoy.”<sup>25</sup> Kennedy goes on to define relational evangelism as

using existing relationships and developing new ones as bridges through which to communicate the message that in Jesus Christ, God has done all that is necessary to reestablish man in a right relationship with God and His people.<sup>26</sup>

Relational evangelism has many benefits and some obstacles. However, it seems to be the most natural form of evangelism to most people. Despite whether one feels that he or she has the gift of evangelism or not he or she is able to engage people with the gospel in a very non-threatening way.

#### Model #4: Practical Ministry

Practical ministry evangelism is a needs-based model. It is various types of evangelism opportunities that meet people’s immediate needs. Examples of this type of model would be food pantries, clothes closets, helping people with prescriptions, and benevolence. These types of opportunities come at a time in which people are in need and can help to earn credibility in order to speak into a person’s life. In fact one church in particular that does this well and has seen growth from it is First Baptist Church Leesburg. Richard Land writes about this church saying that it “reaches out to the unchurched by providing an array of services to meet practical needs of people in all

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<sup>25</sup> D. James Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion*, 4th ed. (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), 20.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 20

sectors of society, opening up opportunities to address their greatest need for a relationship with Jesus Christ.”<sup>27</sup>

This type of evangelism is one that people and churches can use on a daily basis. It gives churches an opportunity to be like the church in Acts 4:34, which says, “there was not a needy person among them.” This could once again be the reputation of the church if this evangelism model was to be taken seriously.

#### Model #6: Marketing

The idea of marketing evangelism seems to have increased in the last two decades. Many churches have taken advantage of modern marketing tools to share the gospel. These types of tools would fall into the category of billboards, mass mailers, clothing, and any other form marketing that shares the gospel. People are very familiar with marketing; in fact, “the average adult is exposed to over 3000 marketing messages everyday.”<sup>28</sup> The American society has become dependent upon marketing in order to gain information.

There are many churches that have bought into this new craze. They have taken full advantage of the opportunities that marketing affords and have utilized it as a means of evangelism. While there are many great things about using marketing as evangelism, there are dangers as well. A church must decide where marketing fits in its budget and strategy. A marketing church will oftentimes find itself needing to be more and more innovative. This can be a fun venture or can become burdensome over time.

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<sup>27</sup> Richard Land, *Imagine! A God Blessed America* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2005), 123.

<sup>28</sup> Bill Tenny-Brittian, *Hitchhiker's Guide to Evangelism* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2008), 55.

### Model #6: Servant

Servant evangelism is one of the models that has been around since the bible. However, it seems as if this model of evangelism is making a comeback in the church. Central to servant evangelism is sharing the love of Christ not only in words but also in deeds. Charles Lawless says that servant evangelism “does simple acts of kindness as a potential open door to sharing the gospel.”<sup>29</sup> This model is one in which many people who do not feel bold enough to share their faith in words can still see people come to Christ.

Servant evangelism is a method that is backed up by the words of Jesus when He said “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” (Matt. 20:28). At the core of this mindset is the belief that a believer can be like Jesus in serving while allowing people to take notice of the gospel being lived out. This model is often found in churches that have a heart to reach out to the less fortunate or those living in poverty.

Whether one believes the gospel is shared better in words or deeds can be debated. What cannot be debated, however, is the fact that Christ was a servant. Therefore, the life of Christ obligates believers to live out their faith in love and service. A church must determine if that can be done in the form of intentional servant evangelism.

### Model #7: Social Programs

Every church that exists in the western world is filled with programs. Believers have come to believe that programs reach people or at least keep them busy in the work of the Lord. However, many churches never strategically look at their programs as

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<sup>29</sup> Charles Lawless, *Disciplined Warriors* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2002), 141.

evangelistic tools. There are many whose sole purpose can be evangelism. In fact, as Glenn Daman says, “while the task of a Christian is to be a witness in the community, the responsibility of the church is to develop evangelistic programs and ministries.”<sup>30</sup> Three specific types of social programs exist.

First, age specific programs include Awana, Team Kids, Handbells, and Senior Adult trips. All of these programs are designed with a targeted age. These programs will be uniquely designed to reach people of these ages and are therefore somewhat exclusive.

A second program that can be used as an evangelistic effort is circumstance-specific programs. Such programs include divorce care, singles ministry, grief classes, and marriage enrichment programs. These programs target a situation that someone is going through and can be a great tool to share the gospel in a time of need or tragedy in someone’s life.

A third type of program ministry are special interest programs, including things like financial strategies bible studies or weight loss programs. These programs target certain subsets of people and oftentimes can draw people into the doors who have never expressed interest in church.

Program-driven evangelism is not the end, but it is a means to the end. Evangelism is not a program but can be integrated into programs in order to share the gospel. Churches have to take into consideration the ultimate goal of their programs. Where the goal is not being met, churches can have the option to add or take programs away.

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<sup>30</sup> Glenn C. Daman, *Sheparding the Small Church*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2008), 155.

### Model #8: Missions Evangelism

Missions and Evangelism go hand in hand. However, missions can be the engine that drives evangelism. As James Plueddemann writes, “the scope of missions requires evangelism.”<sup>31</sup> A model that is often used in churches but not often recognized as an intentional evangelism model is missions evangelism. This is the strategy in which churches get people involved in mission opportunities, both local and international. These types of mission adventures—whether they be projects or trips—can have a profound impact on a person and a church. In particular mission trips can lead to a more evangelistic church at home. As Shawn McMullen says, “mission trips unite us in the goal of world evangelism and gives us zeal at home in our service to the Lord.”<sup>32</sup> Missions projects and trips are primarily for evangelism, but they also increase fervor at the local church level.

A church that has a mission’s model of evangelism will more than likely be a church that is somewhat large in size. This is usually because they will have more people to send on projects. However, small churches have the opportunity to utilize this model as well. It can give them the boost that they need in order to experience church growth. All churches can implement a missions strategy that will greatly effect the church and help reach the lost people of the world.

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<sup>31</sup> James E. Plueddemann, *Leading Across Cultures* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 50.

<sup>32</sup> Shawn McMullen, *Unleashing the Potential of the Smaller Church* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 2006), 57.

### Model #9: Street

Street evangelism is a model that has been known to be successful in certain areas. In fact, in highly populated areas this can be a real winning strategy. In most cases this type of evangelism is done in a way that draws people in to hear the gospel. However, this model takes boldness. Churches will often have an evangelism team that will go out to a street corner or a park and begin street preaching.

Throughout the years many have come into a relationship with Christ through street preaching or evangelism. In fact, Kirk Cameron and Ray Comfort have become nationally known for their unique type of street evangelism through their ministry called The Way of the Master. This type of evangelism strategy is geared toward meeting people at where they are. People can be more comfortable with being engaged with the gospel in their comfort zone than within the walls of a church.

Street evangelism over the years has had a great opportunity to draw people in who would ordinarily not be able to attend a church or religious gathering. Nancy Backues says that “the intent of street evangelism is to saturate an area with the gospel message. It interrupts people in the midst of their lives—walking down the street, driving by on their way to work.”<sup>33</sup> This is certainly a benefit to this approach. People who were not expecting to be engaged with the gospel have not had the time to prepare their minds to reject the gospel message.

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<sup>33</sup> Nancy Backues, Kerry Beamen, and Wendy Briggs, *Drama Ministry* (Macon: Smith & Hewlys Publishing Inc, 2004), 135.

## Model #10: Media

Media evangelism is a relatively new approach to sharing the gospel of which many churches are taking advantage. In fact, in today's society this has become an easier and more effective way of presenting the life-changing message of Christ. This form of evangelism is done in many different ways, four of which will be briefly examined below.

### **Social Websites**

The opportunity to share the gospel with a mass number of people is available at the fingertips of many today on social websites. Popular website like Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter give the church an open market to share the gospel without fear of reprimand. David Gortner says, "young people may be able to help us relearn the freedom of speaking naturally about our faith in the midst of everyday conversation. Instant messaging, email, and website conversation spaces like My Space and Facebook have allowed people to find a new freedom with each other in conversation."<sup>34</sup> This is a great avenue in which people can dialogue and share their faith in a non-threatening way.

### **Television and Movies**

Another source of media evangelism comes from television and movies. For many years there has been an increasing number of tele-evangelists and Christian television networks. While this is a form that often draws criticism, it has been very effective throughout the years. Research shows that "In the USA, over 34 million households tune into the 'electronic church'—Christian television shows with popular, usually

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<sup>34</sup> David Gortner, *Transforming Evangelism* (New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 2008), 148.

fundamentalist preachers.”<sup>35</sup> This research proves that television can still be effective when it comes to evangelism.

Along with television there has been a new movement to use movies as an evangelistic tool. In the past few years there have been many Christian movies that have shared the gospel in a clear manner. Movies can be a great tool because of their ability to stir the emotions of the heart.

### **Radio**

Radio evangelism is still used around the world today. Churches often have their services live on the radio, or they create a talk show program. Whatever means are used on the radio can still be counted as effective. Gordon Olson says, “radio evangelism has come into its own as one of the most fruitful of methods. It is especially necessary for the penetration into closed countries and out of the way places.”<sup>36</sup> Radio may eventually become less effective, but for now it is still a valuable method that is being used.

### **Media Campaign**

A final method that is being used with some success is a media campaign. A great example of this is “IAmSecond.com” This website is a campaign that draws people to it by featuring celebrities and ordinary people who have come to faith. They tell their story and then share the gospel. The website claims that it is “a movement meant to inspire people of all kinds to live for God and others.”<sup>37</sup> Other forms of this include video-driven

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<sup>35</sup> Stephen Hunt, *Alternative Religions* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003), 69.

<sup>36</sup> Gordon C. Olson, *What in the World is God Doing?* (Cedar Knolls: Global Gospel Publishers, 2003), 338.

<sup>37</sup> “About I Am Second,” *I Am Second*, <[www.iamsecond.com](http://www.iamsecond.com)>.



evangelism, such as the Nooma video series from Mars Hill Church in Grand Rapids, MI. This type of approach is quickly gaining ground.

#### Model #11: Crisis

Crisis evangelism has a love/hate relationship with the church. Churches love to have the opportunity to share Christ with people, but they hate that the opportunity has to come at the expense of someone going through a crisis. However, crisis often proves to be a small window in which people are the most open to the gospel.

This type of evangelism is only used periodically as a circumstance would allow it to be used. This is not a method that a church builds into its evangelism strategy. It is, however, a method that the church needs to be ready to use when the opportunity presents itself. Crisis evangelism must be sensitive to the situation yet stand ready to take full advantage to share the gospel. An example of this type of evangelism opportunity are the days after America experienced the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. Thom Rainer says the following about crisis evangelism after 9/11: “we saw a small window of opportunity to share the gospel immediately after September 11<sup>th</sup>. It would appear that the moments during or immediately after a national or personal crisis are key opportunities to share our faith.”<sup>38</sup> Churches must seize the moment to share the message of hope in crisis.

Many churches today do not engage in this type of evangelism simply because they are so inwardly focused that they never see the need. They never fully grasp the crisis because they never truly become aware of the difficulties the people around them are experiencing. This form of evangelism may have the only answer people are searching for, and churches need to stand ready to provide that answer.

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<sup>38</sup> Thom S. Rainer, *The Unchurched Next Door* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 49.

### Model #12: Servant/Event

This model of evangelism is one that is not used very often, and it is the most effective of all methods. This model is the compilation of servant and event driven methods, and it recognizes that people have the opportunity to serve others while at the same time being able to share the gospel with the masses. This type of evangelism strategy will be discussed in detail in the remaining chapters of this thesis.

### **Critique of Evangelism Models in the Modern American Church**

As we have seen in the preceding section, there are many different types of evangelism strategies that the church uses today. These different models have seen many people come into a relationship with Christ through the years. However, not every strategy is extremely effective in today's culture. This section will, therefore, evaluate each of the aforementioned strategies.

### Model #1: Door-to-Door

Door-to-door evangelism's effectiveness is a question that is often raised today. This strategy has for years been a regular part of church evangelism. This model is one that whole churches have engaged in and for which they have developed programs. However, the question that must be answered is this: "Does this model still reach the lost and unchurched?" The answer is 'yes;' however, context must be taken into consideration. This model still works great in some areas, but in most metro areas this approach could be met with great difficulties.

However, just because this model can encounter difficulties does not mean that it should be thrown out. In fact, Tony Campolo argues that "visiting door to door is where we have to begin. If we are going to turn things around in urban America, we have to

make contact with the people in the neighborhoods that surround our churches.”<sup>39</sup> This is an accurate statement. Many churches have done away with this method simply because it is dated. Many believe it is not how evangelism today ought to be done and that, therefore, it is not a good program for churches. One should note that Jehovah’s Witnesses still use this model as their main source of evangelism. They have stuck with it and still see results to this day. This is a tragedy for evangelism in today’s evangelical churches. The wheel does not need to be reinvented; the church just needs to be faithful to what works.

#### Model #2: Event

Event driven evangelism is one of the best evangelistic models, and it works great when it is done excellently. Block parties, festivals, and concerts can be very effective when planned well and fully funded. This method usually will bring results in ways that others will not. These events can target a specific audience or attempt to reach the entire community. Richard Peace writes, “mass evangelism becomes a primary tool of outreach, since it is a structure that enables you to declare publicly who Jesus is and then issue an invitation to accept Him as Lord and Savior.”<sup>40</sup> This is the great benefit of event driven evangelism. The masses get the opportunity to hear the gospel and respond to Christ.

There are some barriers to this evangelistic strategy. For example, small churches often do not have the resources to pull off a great evangelism event. This can be a tragedy for a small town. However, those churches can join with other churches in the community and host an event. Another barrier to a great evangelism event strategy can be location.

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<sup>39</sup> Tony Campolo, *Revolution and Renewal* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 64.

<sup>40</sup> Richard V. Peace, *Conversion in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 286.

Elvin Adams writes that “success depends to a large degree on the venue you choose.”<sup>41</sup> For an event to be successful it needs to be accessible. A church must remember that it is trying to reach the unchurched who may not come onto the church campus for an event. Therefore, a church should carefully and strategically choose a location that is inviting to the targeted audience.

Event driven evangelism holds as much promise for conversions as any other method. However, if a church is going to thrive in this area they must have a clear plan for follow up. As Dag Heward-Mills writes, “without a follow up ministry, evangelism is virtually a waste of time, money, and resources.”<sup>42</sup> These events will draw a lot of people, but many will not respond to Christ after hearing the gospel. If a church has a great follow up plan they can share the gospel with the attendees again at some point.

### Model #3: Relationship

Relationship evangelism is often thought to be an on going evangelism initiative in the believer’s life. This model is can work well if truly applied, for it gives believers the opportunity to develop a friendship with a person and then share the gospel in a non-threatening way. The problem that is often seen with this approach is that people use this method a way of delaying the sharing of their faith. Many who do not feel comfortable sharing their faith will fall into the mindset of relationship evangelism. What tends to happen is that the gospel is never shared because of fear. A person never moves from the friendship to the proclamation of the gospel, but instead only stays in the process of building the relationship.

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<sup>41</sup> Elvin Adams, *Handbook of Health Evangelism* (Lincoln: IUniverse, 2004), 29.

<sup>42</sup> Dag Heward-Mills, *Evangelism and Missions* (Fairfax: Xulon Press, 2011), 29.

With that being said, it is important to note that one can build great relationships that can lead to the opportunity to share Christ. As stated in the above, Jesus Himself used this method in sharing the gospel. In fact it can be seen throughout the New Testament. As Careaga says, “building relationships is the New Testament model for evangelism”<sup>43</sup> While this model is certainly biblical, one should hesitate in labeling it as the only or even the primary strategy for evangelism in the New Testament.

#### Model #4: Practical Ministry

Practical ministry evangelism is a method that will never run dry. This method gives churches the opportunity to connect with people in times of need. This model should be incorporated into the day-to-day life of the church. As Buckley and Dobson teach in their book *Humanitarian Jesus*,

evangelism includes the sharing of the gospel and the meeting of needs. It includes the challenging of injustice and the championing of the oppressed. The truth of evangelism is that each of our everlasting destinies is of such absolute importance that we would stop at nothing to ensure that everyone we meet, meets Christ.<sup>44</sup>

Helping people in their time of need not only meets the need, but also opens the door for the church to share the gospel.

This type of evangelism can easily find its way into the believer’s life. As children of God believers should be continuously looking for the opportunity to meet people’s physical needs while meeting their spiritual needs by sharing the gospel. Jesus gives a great example of this when He says, “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28). Even Jesus was

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<sup>43</sup> Andrew Careaga, *Eministry* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001), 151.

<sup>44</sup> Christian Buckley and Ryan Dobson, *Humanitarian Jesus* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 52.

focused on serving other and giving of himself that others may be saved. How much more, then, should believers seek to meet practical needs in order to introduce them to Christ! As Atkinson expresses it,

ministry evangelism is simply caring for persons in the name of Jesus Christ. It is meeting persons at the point of their need and ministering to them physically and spiritually. The intent of ministry evangelism is to present the good news of God's love in order to introduce the person to Jesus.<sup>45</sup>

That is what practical ministry evangelism is all about. It is a highly effective approach in leading people to Christ. It connects the resources of a local church to the desperation of a needy heart. This method is one that was used by Jesus many times and will not see itself die off before Jesus returns.

#### Model #5: Marketing

Marketing evangelism is somewhat new to the church. It gives a church the opportunity to get the word out without relying on people to come into the doors of the church. This evangelism strategy has been on a wave of success over the course of the last twenty years. It helps people to see their need for Jesus without causing them to feel as if they were being preached at. As Simpson states, "I am talking about a relationship, based on trust, which leads to helping the potential buyer to fulfill a need they have identified."<sup>46</sup> This need could be the hope that only Jesus can bring! This strategy has some good aspects, but it seems to take the responsibility away from the believer. When this happens, it can become a way for Christians to back out of sharing their faith.

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<sup>45</sup> Donald A. Atkinson and Charles L. Roesel, *Meeting Needs, Sharing Christ* (Nashville: Lifeway, 1995), 10.

<sup>46</sup> Michael Simpson, *Permission Evangelism* (Colorado Springs: David Cook Publishing, 2003), 45.

In addition, this model will only be as effective as culture will allow it to be. There are a lot of churches that seek new and unchurched people through this avenue. As Joel Comiskey states, “many churches use marketing and other techniques to attract those wondering from church to church.”<sup>47</sup> This technique provided churches a new way to inform people of the ministries they offer. However, many times people are over-saturated with this marketing approach by churches. Take, for example, a growing city that has many churches. A citizen who receives mailers daily will only read through so many featuring churches, events, or various sermon series. Before long the citizen is likely to begin throwing these types of mailers away thus wasting effort and resources. This strategy can have some benefits, but it is far from clear that it is the best approach to taking the gospel to an unchurched community.

#### Model #6: Servant

Servant evangelism is quickly rising to the top of many churches’ priorities in evangelism. This form of evangelism is both love and action based. It does not rely as much on words as it does on deeds. As Glenn Daman puts it as follows: “before the words of the gospel can be disclosed, there must be a living demonstration of the gospel through the relationship. Having displayed and proclaimed the gospel, we allow time for the Holy Spirit to fruition the seed planted through our acts and words of love.”<sup>48</sup> This is what servant evangelism does for people and ultimately for the church.

Servant evangelism is successful because it is always focused on serving others. Steve Sjogren says it is “demonstrating the kindness of God by offering to do some act of

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<sup>47</sup> Joel Comiskey, *The Relational Disciple* (Moreno Valley: CCS Publishing, 2010), 32.

<sup>48</sup> Glenn C. Damon, *Sheparding the Small Church* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2008), 155.

humble service with no strings attached.”<sup>49</sup> Churches who engage themselves in this method of evangelism will usually make an impact that will go far beyond just an opportunity to share one’s faith. These types of encounters meet needs and therefore turn people’s hearts not only toward Christ but also towards His church.

When churches become active in servant evangelism, they are essentially following in the foot steps of the church found in Acts 4:34-35. This passage describes a church that has a heart to serve others. They were not focused on themselves. It states that “there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostle’s feet and they would be distributed to each as any had need” (Acts 4:34-35). Churches that follow this biblical pattern for how to do church and evangelism will see results that are unprecedented.

#### Model #7: Social Programs

In American culture some people see social programs as evangelism work. Such programs are geared for a specific people at a specific time. They are likely to reach people in a way that no other strategy can. The age-, need-, or interest-specific programs seem to meet people where they are instead of expecting them to change for the church. Social ministry and evangelism can work closely together to further the kingdom. However if separated from the material content of the gospel, social programs can be dangerous. As Sammy Campbell says, “without ministry, our evangelism effort possesses no evidence of our faith in Jesus.”<sup>50</sup> These two must be together. This approach takes the

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<sup>49</sup> Steve Sjorgen, *Conspiracy of Kindness* (Ventura: Regal Books, 2003), 18.

<sup>50</sup> Sammy Campbell, *The New Urban Missions* (Bloomington: CrossBooks, 2010), 73.



edge off of a religious evangelism and places it on meeting a need or desire first and then sharing the gospel.

Social program evangelism can be a great strategy for a church. However, many churches today provide programs to pacify of the church member instead spur them on to evangelism. As Stetzer and Rainer say, “buildings and programs help the mission but can also become an unnecessary focus of a congregation.”<sup>51</sup> An of this is a parent’s night out. A church can provide a night out for parents and only advertise this for members of the church. The other option is to use a parent’s night out as an opportunity to connect with young families who are not actively involved with a church.

These types of programs also have a depth of opportunity. For example, when you use a children’s specific program, the chances of reaching the parents will greatly increase. The opportunity to then reach the whole family stems from making the social program an intentional outreach. The bottom line is that many programs will draw people to themselves when they should be used to draw people to the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

#### Model #8: Missions Evangelism

Missions evangelism is one of the greatest tools that churches rarely use to encourage a heart for the lost. Churches all over the country could engage with unreached people groups around the world who have never heard the gospel of Christ. Stetzer and Putman say that “bringing missions and evangelism together means realizing that the

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<sup>51</sup> Ed Stetzer and Thom S. Rainer, *Transformational Church* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishing, 2010), 83.

church is the missionary and it exists on the mission field.”<sup>52</sup> Churches could and should function as missions agencies in their own back yards. In doing this, the church would be exposing people to the great need of the gospel in their areas. This should, in turn, give the people of the church a renewed perspective of the needs of their own community.

When a church takes advantage of the opportunity to take people on mission trips to serve and share the gospel, they see lives changed. In fact, one of the greatest opportunities that churches can seize is to take a lost person on a mission trip. As an example, First Baptist Church of Malakoff, Texas, experienced this very thing. The church took a young lady who was a professing atheist on a mission trip to Mexico, and she saw God at work in a real way. A few months later she responded to Christ. She is now growing in an excitement-filled walk with the Lord. This is what missions and evangelism is all about!

Churches can really kill two birds with one stone by taking this approach. A church that places an emphasis on missions will draw to themselves people who want to go on mission trips. Their intentions may not be the same as mature believers, but God can use this method in ways we cannot even begin to imagine in reaching the lost.

#### Model #9: Street

This evangelism strategy is one of the most difficult in which to encourage people to participate. Most people will not even share their faith on their own terms convenience let alone in a confrontational situation. For many evangelicals this form of evangelism is outdated and a thing of the past. In fact Brian McLaren says that “on the street,

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<sup>52</sup> Ed Stetzer, David Putnam, *Breaking the Missional Code* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006), 227.

evangelism is equated with pressure. It means selling God as if God were vinyl siding, replacement windows, or a mortgage refinancing service.”<sup>53</sup> McLaren uses this metaphor to illustrate the stereotype this method has seemed to evolve into.

This method is not the most efficient way to share the gospel in most areas; it requires bold people who are not afraid to get personal with people. While this is certainly not a problem with people who have the gift of evangelism, the majority of people would shy away from this approach. The fact that it may not be the most efficient and popular approach does not necessarily invalidate entire method. In fact, in some areas it can be beneficial to use this method. One other believes that street preaching “can be intimidating but effective.”<sup>54</sup> However, one must realize that there could be more efficient and effective methods to share the gospel in American culture today.

#### Model #10: Media

This form of evangelism is growing in popularity in churches at a rapid pace. Churches all across the nation are seizing the opportunity to reach people using different forms of media. As previously discussed, social websites, radio, and campaigns are the new way to do mass evangelism. As Jonathan Olakunle puts it,

evangelism through media-radio, TV, internet, publications of books, and magazines, tracks, and so on is the new perspective and concept in our day. The church needs to understand this and use it accordingly. Having a church website, email, TV program, podcast, printing press to get books out to people are good tools for evangelism. The IT in our days has enhanced the social media network; now we can share the gospel through social networking.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> McLaren Brian D, *More Ready Than You Realize* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2006), Introduction.

<sup>54</sup> Deborah Nembhard-Colquhoun, *Evangelism God's Way Manuel* (Bloomington: WestBow Press, 2011), 85.

<sup>55</sup> Jonathan T. Olakunle, *Evangelism Alive* (Pittsburgh: Red Leaf Press, 2011), 119-120.

This sums up the reality of the day in which we are living. Churches can take advantage of this new form of evangelism and have success in it for three main reasons.

The first reason many churches are turning to this approach is the ability to do mass evangelism at a fraction of the cost of many other strategies. This is beneficial to churches because they can play a part in mass evangelism while still retaining money for their other ministries. Churches that take advantage of these opportunities will reach a crowd they otherwise would not have had the opportunity to reach.

A second reason many churches are utilizing the media in their evangelism strategy is to expand their area of influence. A church that uses media can literally expand their influence to reach the world with the gospel message. A 2002 survey from Barna group shows that “a greater number of adults experience the Christian faith through Christian media, such as radio, television, or books, than attend Christian churches.”<sup>56</sup> The impact a church can have with media could be more than it has with other approaches in their own area. This provides small churches the opportunity to be as impactful as large churches.

A third reason that churches are rapidly moving to this strategy is because of the simplicity of this approach. There is no visitation to be done. There is no confrontation to be had. There is no twenty-step approach to walk through. The church can just simply present the Gospel. Schultze and Woods teach that “many evangelicals imagine that if

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<sup>56</sup> *The Barna Group*, "Christian Mass Media Reach More Adults With The Christian Message Than Do Churches," [www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/77-christian-mass-media-reach-more-adults-with-the-christian-message-than-do-churches](http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/77-christian-mass-media-reach-more-adults-with-the-christian-message-than-do-churches).

Jesus were alive today, He would use modern media to draw people to Him.”<sup>57</sup> While this may be a stretch, this is a way the gospel can be presented purely without creating the feeling that it must bring some kind of reward to church. The reward becomes the message being shared and impacting lives.

Media evangelism is an approach that is more than likely here to stay. This method can be so effective to so many people at once that it must not be ignored. Rick Richardson writes, “the uses of media and movies for communicating and exploring truth have exploded. Our evangelism must take this revolution into account.”<sup>58</sup> Richardson is right, and the church must realize that this method over time will become a central strategy for church evangelism. When this happens, churches will expand their influence and therefore expand the kingdom of God.

#### Model #11: Crisis

Crisis evangelism carries with it an exciting opportunity that is plagued with pain. It is a great opportunity for the church but unfortunately always comes at someone else’s expense. The church can be a real help during these times, yet it must remain sensitive to the situation. Many churches are ready to take advantage of this when the time arises. This should be a form of evangelism that becomes natural to any church that desires to reach the lost.

The lost or unchurched person is often more open and responsive to the gospel in the midst of crisis or tragedy. This is usually because of the great need that can be met by

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<sup>57</sup> Quentin J. Schultze, Robert Woods, *Understanding Evangelical Media* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 49.

<sup>58</sup> Rick Richardson, *Evangelism Outside of the Box* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 51.

the church during that difficulty. Although the church is capitalizing on someone's crisis, it very well may be the very moment someone needs to hear of God's love. Churches need leaders to rise up and tell people of the hope that Jesus brings in the days of crisis. As Echols, England, and Dockery note, "assuring leadership is providing hope and confidence to constituents in the midst of difficult circumstances."<sup>59</sup> Leaders have the message of hope and restoration, but just need to find the right opportunities to share it.

A church that engages in this strategy must be willing to meet the need of these individuals in their crisis. A church cannot just breeze in, share the gospel, and leave the people after they did their "duty." If a church decides to be involved in someone's crisis, it needs to see it all the way through. Jesus used this form of evangelism often. In Luke Jesus encounters a widow whose son had just died. He was moved with compassion and took the opportunity to show love by raising the boy from the dead (Luke 7:12-16). Churches should integrate the same compassion and seize the same opportunities to share the love of Christ. A church that is only interested in sharing the gospel and not meeting needs invalidates the message of hope and love that they are attempting to share. All churches should be active in the pursuit of this evangelism strategy.

#### Model #12: Servant/Event

This form of evangelism is the central theme of this Thesis. It is the preferred method of reaching the lost and unchurched with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. If done with excellence this method will produce many new believers and develop

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<sup>59</sup> Steve F. Echols, Allen England, and David S. Dockery, *Catastrophic Crisis* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishing, 2011), 141.

more mature Christians who will be willing to reach out at any cost. This approach has two major purposes.

The first purpose in this strategy is to have an excellent event-driven evangelism strategy. This will take a lot of time and resources. These events cannot be done without creativity and the pursuit of excellence, and they will have the opportunity to reach a multitude of people with the gospel of Jesus. Evangelistic events must be coordinated, promoted, and executed in a way that will draw people to them. Darrell Robinson says that “evangelistic events help to create a God consciousness in the community. As God does an impactful work through the event, the community is influenced by God.”<sup>60</sup> When these things happen many people will hear the message and respond to the gospel.

The second purpose in this strategy is to give church people an opportunity to fulfill the Great Commission by serving others in an event setting. Many churches believe that if they hold services and occasionally advertise, then the lost and unchurched will beat the doors down to get into the church. This is simply not the case. John Maxwell’s saying is applicable: “people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care”<sup>61</sup> Unchurched people will see Jesus in church people not when they hear them sing hymns but when they see them getting their hands dirty in service. Sjogren, Ping, and Pollack say, “servant evangelism is living out the gospel message...with servant evangelism you show people the gospel in a profound way through the kindness of God.”<sup>62</sup> When church people serve the unchurched something happens. Nelson Searcy

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<sup>60</sup> Darrell W. Robinson, *Synergistic Evangelism* (Bloomington: CrossBooks, 2009), 58.

<sup>61</sup> Maxwell John C, *Winning With People* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 91.

<sup>62</sup> Steve Sjogren, Dave Ping, and Doug Pollack, *Irresistible Evangelism* (Loveland: Group Publishing, 2004), 87.

and Jennifer Dykes Henson give a great example of this when speaking of an event they call Servant Evangelism Saturday. They describe the significance as follows: “servant evangelism is a wonderful expression of the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. It is great for people who are first learning how to share their faith as well as for the most seasoned Christian.”<sup>63</sup> This approach will open the eyes of the lost and help to believers to grow. The servant/event model is the greatest modern method for evangelism in the church.

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<sup>63</sup> Nelson Searcy and Jennifer Dykes Henson, *Ignite: How to Spark Immediate Growth in Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 188.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE FOUNDATION FOR SERVANT/EVENT EVANGELISM

In a day with so many new methods it can be easy to fall into an evangelism rut. New evangelism strategies are constantly being produce. However, the power lies in using a strategy that has been tested and approved. This is not to say that new strategies are bar; different kinds of strategies are needed to reach different kinds of people. As Rick Warren, “to reach all of these people for Christ will require a variety of styles of evangelism.”<sup>1</sup> In order truly to understand the significance of a servant/event evangelism strategy one must look directly at historical and modern successes. These two aspects have the ability to show the validity of a system or to deny its effectiveness. There is no better place to look than the Scriptures and the context in which one lives and serves.

#### **History of Servant/Event Evangelism as Found in Scripture**

In the pages of Scripture one can find many examples of a servant/event evangelism strategy. The bible is full of passages that deal with this method of evangelism. These examples can be found in both the Old and New Testaments and will be discussed briefly.

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<sup>1</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 156.

## 1 Chronicles 28- 2 Chronicles 6

This passage helps to show clearly what happens when God is exalted and people serve. In 1 Chronicles 28, God gives David the vision to build a new temple in which the Ark of the Lord could permanently dwell. David knew how great this vision was, but he did not realize the restriction that comes along with it. God told David, “you shall not build a house for my name because you are a man of war and have shed blood” (1 Chron. 28:3). God wanted a temple built but chose to give David the vision and Solomon the task of building it.

David began to plan the vision and strategy of how to build and pay for the temple. He gave clear instructions concerning what he would give and what he desired the people to give. In verse 21, David gave instructions to all the men who would serve in the project, saying, “every willing man of any skill will be with you in all the work for all kinds of service” (1 Chron. 28:21). In 2 Chronicles 1-5, the people dedicated themselves and served in building the temple.

In the midst of sharing his vision for building the temple, David continually spoke of the goodness of God and the need to give Him glory. He understood that people had to come together and serve in order for the temple to be built, but he also took the opportunity to share the priority of God’s Glory. However, shortly before the temple project began, David died.

In 2 Chronicles 3-5, Solomon takes the initiative to begin the massive building project. The people showed up in large numbers to serve their people by building the temple for the Lord. Solomon’s success in building the temple came because people showed up to help. This is true in the local church as well. If people will show up to

serve, the gospel will be shared successfully. This can be done both by mouth and by following the example of servanthood. Second Chronicles 5 gives a clear picture of God's dwelling presence filling the temple. The people showed up to serve, and God showed up to get the glory! This is a great example of serving while sharing.

### Ezra 3

Another Old Testament example of people serving while God's message goes forth is found in Ezra 3. The people of Israel began the process of building an altar and a temple for the Lord. This was a large task for these people at this time. They were ceremonially, but they knew that God desired a temple. They mourned because it had not yet been started. They decided that it was time for them to organize and begin the building process.

As the process of building this great temple for the Lord began, the men in charge knew that they would need people to serve in order for the temple to be constructed. The men were led mainly by Zerubbabel and Jeshua who called on young men to help with the project. As Ezra 3:8 says, "all who came from the captivity to Jerusalem began the work and appointed the Levites from twenty years and older to oversee the work of the house of the Lord." This story provides a clear picture of a diversified group of people pitching in to help with the effort of the temple.

While this passage shows the value of both young and old working together to build the temple, it also shows that credit, honor, and priority should be publicly and given to the Lord. This attitude is modeled in verse 11: "They sang, praising and giving thanks to the Lord, saying For He is good, for His loving kindness is upon Israel forever, and all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord." This verse

teaches that in the process of building, the message of why the people were working was being communicated. This is essentially what a servant/event evangelism strategy in the local church is all about: people working diligently for the Lord while at the same time seeing the message of God's glory, hope, and love being shared.

### Nehemiah 3-9

Nehemiah is another great example from the Old Testament that shows the collective work of people for God's purposes existing alongside of the message being shared in the midst of the project. In the first few chapters Nehemiah, readers see that God had laid it on the heart of Nehemiah to rebuild the walls. His task was crucial and overwhelmingly large. Nehemiah, however, never backed down from the challenge that God gave to him. In Nehemiah 3-9 the bible records the rebuilding of the walls.

Nehemiah 3 clearly spells out the names of all who would serve in completing the project. The rebuilding would take many people and would require many hours of serving. However, Nehemiah was able to motivate men to work hard for the Lord despite criticism and discouragement along the way. This is crucial to the servant/event strategy in the church. The pastor or leader must constantly motivate people to do the work no matter what the difficulties may be. Nehemiah had many people involved and was consistently reminding them that the project was for God.

One of the more challenging aspects of this Old Testament model of a servant/event strategy is Nehemiah's focus. Readers will see in Nehemiah 4 and 6 that men were out to discourage, distract, and destroy the men and their project for God. However, Nehemiah stayed focused on the task at hand. In Nehemiah 6:3, Nehemiah responds to his critics by saying, "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why

should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?” This is a great example for pastors who will face criticism and discouragement when taking on a servant/event strategy. Both a pastor and church must stay focused on what God has called them to do.

In Nehemiah 8 and 9, God began to show up when the word of God was read. Ezra the scribe began proclaiming the word to celebrate the restoration of the walls. When the Word of God went out, revival began to take place. The people responded to what Ezra was teaching and the Spirit spread among the people. This movement of God resulted in confession and repentance. Churches who have a strategy in which people serve and the word goes out should ask God and expect His Spirit to move in a mighty way.

### Haggai

Haggai is a short Old Testament book, but is another great example of the servant/event type of evangelistic strategy found in the Old Testament. In the first chapter of Haggai, God spoke a word about rebuilding His temple. The message from God which came through Haggai was received by Zerubbabel. He took this to heart and enlisted God’s people to help him. Haggai 1:14 says, “So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God.” This was the beginning of the people’s great service to God.

Haggai’s obedience in this book is a great example of churches sharing the word of the Lord through servant/event evangelism. People must not only serve but also share the gospel at the same time. Because of Haggai’s obedience the people had the

opportunity to experience God in a new and fresh way. In the final chapter of Haggai, God's promise is an encouragement to churches. God promises Zerubbabel that the people will experience the glory of God in the temple in an unprecedented way. This was all due to Haggai's commitment to sharing the word of the Lord to the people and the people stepping up to serve. This is what can still happen in churches across the world today that commit to make serving and sharing a priority in their evangelistic strategies.

#### Mark 2:1-12

Mark 2 is one of the greatest examples in all the bible of a servant/event evangelism strategy. In this passage a man is in great need of physical and spiritual healing. He had exhausted all avenues for his ailments, and when his friends heard that Jesus was in town they saw an opportunity that could not be missed. They loved their friend enough to make a way for him to meet Jesus.

The man was a paralytic who had no hope of being healed. Day after day his handicap was a reminder of his limitations in life. However, Jesus was now in town. His friends knew of his handicap and decided to develop a strategy to get this man in front of Jesus. This strategy involved the four men coming together and serving their friend. They made pallet and carried the man to where Jesus was teaching.

It was at this place they encountered a major problem. They had brought their friend all the way to Jesus but were met with crowds that would hinder them from entering (Mark 2:4). They could have stopped and given up. This is where many churches choose to give up on evangelism. Strategies that will reach people for Jesus will certainly be met with resistance from the enemy. Churches must choose whether to close down the

evangelistic effort or to revise the plan and make it work. The man's friends chose to make it work.

Because they loved their friend so much, they went to great extremes to see Jesus. These men pulled their friend onto the roof and broke off the rooftop. They were not going to go this far and not get him to Jesus. They lowered him down in front of Jesus and gave him the hope he had never dreamed of having. Jesus took note of the men's effort and faith and healed their friend. Churches that develop a strategy like these men will see results like these men saw. Churches must do whatever it takes and serve as long as they need to in order for people to hear of Jesus and be changed.

#### Luke 8:1-3

Luke 8 is a great example of serving through being available and being generous. This passage teaches that Jesus was traveling around to preach the gospel to people in cities and villages. In the process of traveling and taking the gospel to the people, Jesus was accompanied by some special women. These women were special because at some point Jesus had touched their life.

These women not only followed Jesus; they had also become a part of His ministry. Luke 8:3 says, "and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means." These people saw the significance of the message that Jesus was sharing and decided to be a part of it by sacrificially giving of their personal finances. These ladies served many people who would ultimately hear Jesus as a result of their generosity and sacrifice.

Churches that engage in a servant/event evangelism strategy will need people to serve in many ways. For example, they will need to have people who are wholeheartedly

committed to the cause and who will give of themselves to the cause. There are many times in which one cannot physically be at an event but can certainly be a part the event financially. The service of the women in Luke 8 allowed Jesus and the disciples to be able to focus on sharing the message.

#### John 2:1-11

John chapter two is one of the greatest examples of this strategy. Jesus and His disciples were at a wedding and encountered a problem that would ultimately launch the public ministry of Jesus. The wedding was going great until it ran out of wine. In this moment, Jesus reveals His deity by changing the water into wine. The servants were feverishly filling the water pots with water, and they had no idea what was about to take place.

Jesus performs this miracle at a critical moment. John 2:11 speaks of this miracle: “this beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.” His disciples had heard about Him but never truly experienced Him in this way. This was an eye-opening message for the disciples. They were not just following any man, but Jesus was supernaturally different.

Churches engaged in a strategy to reach the lost must understand that they are not doing their work through the power of anything less than supernatural. The servants obeyed and filled the water pots with all they had, which opened the door for Jesus to solve the problem. Churches must realize that they can obey by serving people and by allowing Jesus to change their hearts and lives.



### John 4:1-30

John 4 gives a great account of reaching the lost. Jesus had become weary from traveling and wanted a break. He sat down near a well and rested. A lady came to the well to draw water, but she would leave a changed person. The disciples were serving Jesus by trying to find Him food. They went all the way to town to get it. Jesus saw the opportunity to reach the woman who had no idea of her great need.

Jesus shared the simple gospel with the lady who had obviously had a difficult past. This message penetrated her heart and caused her to respond with action. The lady ran all the way back to town and told all the people she could tell about Jesus. She turned into a servant for Jesus as soon as she understood who He was.

The beauty of this passage is that many people came to faith in Jesus because of the woman's willingness to go and share what had happened to her. In the same way, churches must realize that they can serve their communities by intentionally taking the hope of Jesus to where they are. This will take people being willing to serve and to share.

### John 6:1-14

John 6 is arguably the clearest example of a servant/event evangelism strategy in the Scriptures. Jesus and His disciples were on the mountain, and they saw that there was a large crowd coming. Jesus knew that this was going to be a great opportunity for them to seize. However, there was a problem that only Jesus could address: there were over 5,000 people with no food to eat. The disciples became greatly concerned about what to do. Jesus knew this was a critical moment to perform a miracle for all to see.

The story goes on to tell that Jesus multiplied five loaves of bread and two fish in order to feed everyone. The great thing about this story is that there was an abundance

left over. The disciples obeyed Jesus and began to pick up all the left over food. This miracle sets the tone for the servant/event evangelism method.

The disciples were busy serving people and picking up after people while Jesus was setting the stage for people to believe in Him. In fact verse 14 says, “therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said ‘This is truly the Prophet who is come into the world.’” Jesus took the perfect opportunity to allow the disciples to serve while he was reaching the multitudes.

Churches that grasp this method will need to see things the way Jesus did. He was always able to recognize the perfect moment to share the hope. That is what a servant/event strategy is all about: churches creating events and seizing the moment to serve and share. Jesus leads the way here by being proactive in reaching people at all times.

#### Acts 2:1-41

Acts 2 is a great display of God’s power and presence on the newly forming church. It is a chapter that illustrates the conviction and example of the early church. However, tucked into this chapter is another great example of the servant/event method of evangelism. The disciples were part of about 120 people who were fervently praying and asking God to do something. Jesus told them in Acts 1:4-8 that they were to wait for the power of God to fall upon them. This happens specifically in chapter 2. The Spirit of God fell upon these believers, and they had to do something with it. These men began to serve by being available for God to use them.

People began to notice that something different was happening. They were hearing the gospel in their own language. This was a first for most of them. The crowds

began to gather, and Peter stood up to deliver the sermon God had given to him. Acts 2:41 says, “so then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.” Because these men were willing to serve the people, God spoke through them and three thousand people were saved.

This movement not only proved the manifestation of the spirit of God, but also put in place the beginning of the organized church as we know it today. God blessed the 120 people’s willingness to obey and be used by Him. Churches who adopt this type of evangelistic approach must realize that the power can only come from God.

### **Examples of Modern Servant/Event Evangelism in the Local Church**

The greatest examples of servant/event evangelism can only come from pastors and churches that are seeing this strategy work in various formats and contexts. This project surveyed ten pastors who have embraced some aspect of the servant/event model in their churches.<sup>2</sup> There were nine questions that each pastor was asked to answer, the ninth being to give examples of other churches who have experienced success in such a model. However, for the purpose of this project, only the first eight that directly pertain to servant/event evangelism will be discussed.

#### Question #1

The first question of the survey was, “In your cultural context, why did you choose to take a servant/event evangelism strategy?” This question found similar answers in most of the surveys. The overwhelming thought process behind this type of strategy is a specifically focused attempt to reach people. Most churches that are using this approach tend to believe that servant/event evangelism is a great way to target a certain segment of

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<sup>2</sup> See “Appendix A” for the charts overviewing the results of the surveys.

their community. Northeast Houston Baptist Church is a great example of this. Pastor Nathan Lino explains, “we decided to go after men because that’s the biggest payoff. We are intentional about not being a feminine church and we try to offer a lot of things for men.”<sup>3</sup> NEHBC focuses their servant/events in order to reach men.

Another great example of this is Rock Hill Baptist Church in East Texas. Pastor Robert Welch explains that their focus on event evangelism is centered on families. He says “Our community is family driven. So through our event evangelism strategy we have attempted to provide events that center around the family.”<sup>4</sup> Welch believes that families will be touched by these various events and will become more interested in the church.

A second similarity among these churches’ choices to utilize a servant/event strategy is that it provides a way for churches to lead people not to feel threatened by the church. Jarrett Stephens of Prestonwood states, “The average person has an idea of what Christians are and what Christianity is. To break down these walls and ideas, often incorrect and assumptive, we chose servant evangelism.”<sup>5</sup> This seems to be a common factor all across the country. People seem to relax and be more open to the message of the church if the church will serve them. Dr. Hershhal York reiterates this by saying “The community is far less suspicious when you serve them than when you simply try to

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<sup>3</sup> Nathan Lino, survey by author, November 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Welch, survey by author, November 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Jarrett Stephens, survey by author, November 2010.

convince them.”<sup>6</sup> This common belief is another great reason for a servant/event strategy to be in place in the local church.

### Question #2

The second question asked in the survey was the following: “What is the greatest servant/event your church has done?” While there were some similarities in the events that these churches have done, the church’s place in these different events was unique. Some of the churches had some form of servant/event that focused on Easter. This is a great way for churches to impact people on a weekend when many people are present at church.

The two major consistencies in these churches engaging their cities for Christ were surprising. First, the surveys showed that most of the churches’ servant/events were outside. Whether this was an egg hunt or backyard bible club, many of the churches felt the need to be outside of the walls of their own church building. This is a great way for churches to move beyond the mentality that ministry only happens at church.

A second consistency that was surprising was that most of the events from these pastors were off the church campus. This served as a wonderful reminder that the church needs to go to the people instead of expecting the people to come to the church. This can be seen in community events in which churches had a presence in the community. In order for churches to experience success with this type of strategy a church needs to recognize that people are busy and are generally not going to make extra time to come to an event that is on church property. Therefore, pastors must lead their churches to develop a go-and-tell rather than a come-and-see mentality.

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<sup>6</sup> Hershhal York, survey by author, November 2010.

### Question #3

For the third question, the survey asked, “How was this measured as the greatest (numerical results, new visitors, salvations)?” The two most common answers on how to gauge success were numbers of volunteers that helped from the church and number of people who visited the church as a result of this type of strategy. Heath Peloquin, who pastors Brighton Park Baptist in Corpus Christi, was excited about the volunteers that showed up to serve. He stated, “Our folks came and gave their lives to minister to the lost and unchurched around us. We had at least 100-150 volunteers whose faces were excited that our community had come in such a big way.”<sup>7</sup> Heath feels that his church was blessed because people came to the event. But in reality he was as excited about how many from his church came to serve their community.

The other major way of gauging success as noted above was the number of visitors who came to the church in the following weeks. John Meador is the pastor of First Baptist Church in Euless, Texas. He led his church to renovate homes for people in their community who were facing their home being condemned. He believes that the greatest way their church measured success was that many of the people whose homes they renovated came to faith in Christ. John said “On Easter Sunday in 2010, we baptized 26 people who were specifically residents of the renovated homes.”<sup>8</sup> This is an obviously great reward for the effort put in by the people of Meador’s church.

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<sup>7</sup> Heath Peloquin, survey by author, November 2010.

<sup>8</sup> John Meador, survey by author, November 2010.

#### Question #4

The fourth question asked in the survey was, “What are the strengths to this evangelistic approach?” There are many strengths of the servant/event model. This project is attempting to argue this very point. However, it is very important to validate the strengths of this approach by how it is being used among other pastors. In these surveys it was discovered that there were three major strengths to this approach. First, and discussed more than any other, was its effectiveness to reach the lost. Jarrett Stephens said, “our group has been able to interact with a large numbers of nonbelievers in a short time with servant evangelism.”<sup>9</sup> This approach will not only draw in large numbers but also large numbers of lost people.

A second strength found was that this approach helped open people’s hearts and minds to the church. Many people are close-minded about a specific church in the community due to a problem in the past or because of a church’s reputation. Therefore, a church often must remind the community that it is there and that it desires to serve. As pastor Welch said, “Those people leave the event with a great perception of our church. A positive perception then gives them less fear and hesitation to attend our church and hear our message when personally invited.”<sup>10</sup> This can only happen when churches get out into the community and show and share the love of Jesus. This is the main focus of the servant/event evangelism model.

A third strength of this methodology is the leadership that is fostered among the people of the churches. At Brighton Park Baptist, pastor Heath Peloquin saw this as their

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<sup>9</sup> Stephens, Survey.

<sup>10</sup> Welch, survey.

greatest strength.<sup>11</sup> His answer showed that many people stepped up and utilized their giftedness at their event. Peloquin leads us to see that people desire to be used and are ready to step up to the plate when called upon.

#### Question #5

The fifth question asked in the survey was, “What are the barriers to this approach?” Despite its strengths, there are some barriers that the servant/event model must overcome. These will be examined more in the next chapter. Here the survey responses will be looked at in detail.

In the surveys there were three barriers worthy of mentioning of which churches need to be aware. First, the servant/event model is costly. This approach will yield a great harvest, but it will bring with it a hefty price tag. Each church must decide how much it is willing to spend to give people the opportunity to come to know Christ. This was true in a few of the churches. However, pastor Peloquin said something that all churches need to hear: “God was faithful and He continually lead us to members within our church family who knew someone or could take care of a specific aspect of the event.”<sup>12</sup> This must be remembered; God will provide for a church when it is in tune with what He wants it to do.

The second barrier to the servant/event model is legal liabilities. York pointed this out in his survey.<sup>13</sup> A church must be aware of the liability of having this type of event.

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<sup>11</sup> Peloquin, survey.

<sup>12</sup> Peloquin, survey.

<sup>13</sup> York, survey.



That is to say, churches should be adequately equipped with insurance before hosting any event. In this way, the barrier can easily be removed.

A third barrier that was mentioned in the surveys was the unreliability of the weather when doing events. At any outdoor event churches find themselves completely dependant on God to provide favorable weather. A bad weather day can ruin an event and cost a lot of money. This is a barrier that is somewhat risky when implementing this model. However, in the four years that FBC Malakoff has used the servant/event model, weather has only been an issue one time.

#### Question #6

The sixth question asked by the survey was, “What were the steps to implementing this strategy to your church?” The servant/event model can be somewhat easily implemented into any church. However, the leadership needs to be focused and engage in the task at hand. Throughout the surveys there were four major themes that emerged. The first was that prayer was incredibly important. Many of the pastors felt that this was an absolutely crucial aspect to the vision becoming a reality. A church cannot depend on its strategic ability alone to accomplish something great. Instead, it must depend on the Holy Spirit to manifest himself in the hearts of the people. This can only be done by the church committing the event to prayer.

A second theme that emerged from the survey was the importance of casting clear vision. Several responses emphasized the how important communicating the event and strategy to the leadership and people of the church was for the success of the model. A strategy like this will only survive if the people understand why it is so significant.

A third theme that was seen in the surveys was the need to plan the event early. Pastor Nathan Lino believed that this type of event often takes up to ten months of planning.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, churches must begin planning early and communicate the date with people so that they have the opportunity to synchronize their schedule with the church's event. This is crucial to make this method effective. The event must be done with excellence and for that to happen strategic planning must take place.

A fourth common theme in the surveys was the need to enlist help for the journey. Pastor Meador enlisted the city in which he pastors to help them begin servant evangelism.<sup>15</sup> Churches need to realize that the more people involved the better the event can be. A pastor and staff should enlist help from people and businesses for these events. A great example is found within FBC Malakoff's own community. The local grocery store, Brookshires, values being out in the community. Therefore, when an event is done, the church tries to involve the grocery store in different ways. This can also be a great way to get items donated.

#### Question #7

The seventh question asked in the survey was the following: "What biblical passages led you to take this evangelism approach?" In a society in which there are numerous books on ministry, it is important to make sure that the servant/event model is based on the Scriptures. In the survey, many different passages of Scripture had touched the pastors' hearts. However, two passages appeared quite often. The first was the great

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<sup>14</sup> Lino, survey .

<sup>15</sup> Meador, survey.

commission found in Mathew 28. Most pastors base their entire strategy on the fact that Jesus said “go”! Therefore, this is a fitting passage for this strategy.

A second passage that consistently revealed itself in the survey was Acts 2. This chapter is a portrait of God’s power through Pentecost and the beginning of the church as we know it. This is a great place for any church to start and examine what the early church did to reach the masses.

#### Question #8

“What have been the results in your church since beginning this evangelism strategy?” was the eighth question asked in the survey. Robert Welch believes this strategy works well in his context. He said, “our Sunday morning attendance has increased by 49%.”<sup>16</sup> This is the incredible picture of what happens when churches get intentional about an evangelistic strategy. Nathan Lino says that the servant/event strategy has caused “men in our church to become much more bold.”<sup>17</sup> This is the result churches get when focusing on showing people the love of Christ by serving and sharing the gospel with them. Pastor Matt Pearson believes this has caused his church to go to another level. He states “it has given our church a deeper understanding of the culture in which they themselves live.”<sup>18</sup>

The surveys revealed many important points for this project. For example, it validated the need for churches intentionally to engage themselves in a strategy to reach

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<sup>16</sup> Welch, survey.

<sup>17</sup> Lino, survey.

<sup>18</sup> Matt Pearson, survey by author, November 2010.

the lost and give the believers a chance to serve. This can only be done by seeing the need and answering the call.

The foundation for the servant/event model is clear. It needs no other validation than the fact that Scripture clearly gives the example of how it's to be done. However, pastors who have begun the journey have seen great results from it. The reason for this is that it follows the example Jesus gave while he was on earth. This strategy has the most solid foundation it could possibly have; it now needs to be implemented into the life of churches all over America.

CHAPTER FOUR  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SERVENT/EVENT EVANGELISM STRATEGY IN  
THE LOCAL CHURCH

Creating an evangelism strategy in the local church is a contextual matter. What will work in metro areas may not be as successful in rural America. However, there are some common aspects of evangelism strategies, which should work in all contexts. The servant/event model can be used in all cultural contexts, in any size church, and on any size budget. This strategy can be implemented in the mega church as well as a small country church.

A servant/event evangelism strategy must begin as the vision of the pastor or church leader's heart. As Stetzer puts it, "It must come from the pastor because God has uniquely anointed the pastor to present His vision to the congregation."<sup>1</sup> The vision must find its origin in three things. First, it must come from the biblical mandate found in Acts 1:8. Many churches like to focus on a global missions strategy. This is attainable through mission trips and continuing partnerships around the world. However, for many churches, the global initiative is more important than the need for local evangelism and missions. Acts 1:8 shows that the church is to be multi-faceted in its evangelism. It is a great thing to have focus on global evangelism, but churches must reach their "Jerusalem, Judea,

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<sup>1</sup> Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishing, 2006), 317.

Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Churches must have a focus in their own back yards.

The second place from which the vision must come is a genuine heart for the lost. Believers must understand the heart of God when the Bible says that the Lord is “not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). This heart for the lost is what will drive the church to fulfill the great commission. A pastor must lead by example in order for his people to follow. If a pastor does not have a heart and a burden for the lost, the church he leads will never have a chance at having a successful strategy.

The third place from which the vision must come is examples of success. When a pastor sees a legitimate model of successful evangelism it should lead him to develop a vision of how evangelism could be done successfully in his context. As Rick Warren says, “anytime I see a program working in another church, I try to extract the principle behind it and apply it in our church.”<sup>2</sup> This can be done through research and visiting churches that have seen God move through their strategy.

### **Envisioning and Developing a Servant/Event Strategy for the Local Church**

Envisioning and developing a servant/event strategy in the local church will only happen if the pastor or leader is on board with the vision. This strategy takes much organization and support from leadership and volunteers, which makes it imperative that the lead person is in full support and can use the platform to promote the events.

However, when supported by the pastor or leader this type of strategy is highly effective.

The servant/event model requires five major areas of focus, which must be handled with diligence. It is important these areas have been bathed in prayer, for they

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<sup>2</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 66.

will develop the process the strategy must follow. These five areas will be discussed below.

### Advanced Planning

A church cannot develop an excellent servant/event evangelism strategy without planning far in advance. This is necessary in order to be ready to accommodate the people that will come. Planning must be done in order to make a great first impression on the unchurched that will attend. If a church fails to prepare in advance, they essentially prepare to fail at the event. However, “effective planners know the time they take to plan will ultimately pay dividends.”<sup>3</sup>

When a church is dealing with people’s destinies, it must be careful to make sure they do things right. This will afford the most opportunities for a lost person to come to a place of trusting Jesus as their Savior. However, this can only be done by taking all the time needed to execute the event with excellence.

In order for a church to do advanced planning for their event three things are necessary. First, it is wise for a church to have a one year time table for all major events. This means that a church should put events on the calendar as much as one year in advance. This will allow the church to check with all city, school, and civil calendars in order to ensure that there is not a conflicting event. This will also allow cooperation between all parties so that they can work hand-in-hand on making sure the event will be a success.

A second suggestion is to involve community leaders and businesses in the event. Though the event is a ministry of the church, many businesses often want to contribute to

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<sup>3</sup> Kenneth O. Gangel, *Team Leadership In Christian Ministry* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), 290.

things that will benefit the community. This is beneficial to the church's relationships and budgeting costs. This will also send a great message to the community that churches and businesses are working together to strengthen the community. The solicitation of business involvement will need to take place six months prior to the event. It is a good idea for one to meet with the manager of the business, giving them material explaining the event.

Third, it is important to have an adequate number of volunteers in order to make the event go smoothly. Having enough volunteers will allow the leader to be flexible on the day of the event. As Leith Anderson writes, "most of the work of the local church is done by volunteers. If the volunteers are ministering effectively, the church is ministering effectively."<sup>4</sup> The enlisting of volunteers needs to begin about four months in advance. This allows the volunteers to keep their calendar clear of any conflict on the day of the event. It also gives the leader four months to make sure that there are enough volunteers to adequately staff the event.

Strategic planning for an event of this magnitude can make or break the event. A major event that will utilize many volunteers and draw many lost people must have many hours of discussion, planning, and resourcing. A church is wise to try to keep every event planned far enough out that the proper process can be followed in order to maximize the effort.

#### Targeted Audience and Event

A second area of focus is the narrowing of the audience and event. This can be a simple task, but it can easily become very difficult. In order to see people come to an

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<sup>4</sup> Leith Anderson, "Volunteer Recruitment" in James D. Berkley, ed., *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 312.



event you must decide on two significant aspects. There is an old proverb that teaches that if you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time. This is true in church planning and strategy as well. Therefore, the church must decide on two factors with every event.

First, in the advanced planning stage it is crucial for a church to determine its targeted audience for that particular event. This decision will in turn determine the entire strategy for the event. For example if a church is trying to reach young families, it will want to have plenty of things at the event that are inviting to children. This will be more attractive to parents thinking of attending the event. An example of a plan without a target audience is an event that has many inflatable toys and cotton candy in an older population segment. A church must attend to its targeted audience, lest the event be a failure.

In order to determine audience of an event, churches must ask three specific questions. First, churches must determine the demographics of the area. There are many ways this can be done. For example, one author suggests to “gain insight as to the demographics you are considering by using the internet, library, city hall, chamber of commerce, etc.”<sup>5</sup> This will give a clear picture of who is in the area the church is attempting to reach. A second question to be pursued is the spiritual state of the area in which an event will occur. Asking this question will allow churches to identify the most unchurched areas in order to do events there. A third question churches must ask is how it can relate with the people for which the event will be planned. This allows a church to be able to enlist the volunteers that would be most effective in serving at the event.

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<sup>5</sup> Ahn Che, *Spirit-Led Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 2006), EBook.

Once a church answers these questions, they can then determine what type of event would be most effective for its purposes. Not only does the planning need to identify the targeted audience, but it must also develop a strategy to reach that audience. The event will be the drawing factor to the people, but it must be the right type of event. For example, if a church wants to reach singles, then it would be more effective if the singles in the church are the main ones out serving. However, one must plan such an event in an area that contains a high number of singles.

### Budget Allocation

A third area of focus must be budget allocation. This is an absolutely crucial aspect to doing events well. An event must be fully funded in order to have all the necessary things to produce excellence. As McNamara and Davis say, “It costs to reach your community, but money spent on evangelism is never an expense, it’s always an investment.”<sup>6</sup> In order for this to happen the event leader must be diligent in his or her preparation. Churches will find that evangelism can be done on a tight budget if carefully planned. At FBC Malakoff, block parties are a common occurrence. Over the years the church has figured out a formula that works which only costs \$2,000 per block party. This is an effective low cost servant/event for the church family and has produced many transformed lives.

When planning an event a leader must make a list of everything that will be needed for the event. For example, if food is to be served, the church will need all the paper goods and condiments that could possibly accompany the meal. The church also

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<sup>6</sup> Roger N. McNamara and Ken Davis, *The Y-B-H Handbook of Church Planting* (Fairfax: Xulon Press, 2005), 416.

needs to list all the costs associated with the entertainment. At FBC Malakoff's block parties, the inflatable toys and the generators cost money. Extra costs, such as an extra extension cord, should be factored in as well. These lists will help a church accurately budget for an event and allow it to track the actual cost of the event.

There is one additional thing that a leader should know about budget allocation for evangelistic events. If he or she does not budget for the event, it will likely not happen. Churches must be intentional in putting these type of servant/events into the budget. In *Total Church Life*, Darrell Robison says, "Every church and organizational leader should be equipped for intentional witnessing... The church should budget at least a tithe, 10 percent, to evangelism events and activities."<sup>7</sup> If a church does not set aside money for intentional evangelism, something else will use up the funds. When a church gets serious about evangelism, it will get serious about funding evangelistic events.

#### Specific Goal Setting

A fourth major area of focus in developing and implementing a servant/event evangelism strategy in the local church is specific goal setting. As Bracken, Timmreck, and Church suggest, "goal setting is the first step in the developmental planning process. A key principle in goal setting is that participation in setting the goal produces the commitment and motivation to pursue it."<sup>8</sup> Churches that set goals will be less likely to quit until they have reached the goal for which they are striving. In the pursuit of winning people to Jesus churches should set two categories of goals. First, churches need to focus on the goals that are reachable with rightly allocated resources and a sufficient staff.

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<sup>7</sup> Darrell W. Robison, *Total Church Life* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1985).

<sup>8</sup> David Bracken, Carol W. Timmreck, and Allan H. Church, *The Handbook of Multisource Feedback* (San Francisco: Wiley Publishers, 2001), 359.

These goals need to be attainable and have appropriate audience for the event. For example, a church that is in a town of 3,000 people should set a goal of seeing 200 people show up a given event. The church could also set a goal to see five people give their lives to Jesus. With the right resources and people serving, and with the gospel being preached to 200 unchurched people, the goal can conceivably be attained. Moreover, reaching a goal will provide a boost of excitement for the church and will allow it to see that when it sets a goal and works hard, the goal can be reached.

Churches should also set goals that are beyond they could accomplish on their own efforts; that is, churches need goals that can only be accomplished with God's help. Many churches only set goals are easily attainable. However, churches should have a hope and an expectation for God to work exceedingly beyond anything of which they could dream. A church should aim at a goal that is so impossible to attain that unless God is in the process it is doomed to fail. These kind of goals invite the Holy Spirit to do only what He is able to do. Churches should set goals that are attainable but that also leave room for God to do the unimaginable.

When setting goals for servant/event evangelism a leadership team should focus primarily on four priorities. The first priority should be to get as many volunteers as possible to help with the event. Typically, an event will require thirty to 100 volunteers depending on the size of audience the event is trying to reach. However, it would be hard to do any type of event with less than thirty people present to serve and to share the gospel. Volunteers are a key part of having a successful event and should therefore be a vital part of goal setting.

A second priority for which goals should be set concerns the number of unchurched people who will attend an event. A church must keep remember that the event is designed to serve its evangelistic strategy and will need to be driven by the desire to see unchurched people attend. Setting this type of goal will help determine where and how to reach these people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A third priority for an event setting needs to be how many people are expected to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Darrel Vaughan speaks poignantly about revival: “when we pray for a revival, we can expect God to move.”<sup>9</sup> This principle applies to any evangelistic event. We must expect a movement from God! This is the main purpose at which the servant/event strategy is aimed. Church leaders should be realistic and yet have faith that God will do more than they could ever expect. Setting numerical goals for how many could accept Christ allows the volunteers to have something tangible for which to pray.

A fourth priority for which churches should set goals is the timeline of following up with the attendees of the event. A church needs to follow up as soon as possible with the people who come to the event so that they can know how best to lead the attendees. As Allison and Anderson urge, “for local churches that want to host regular evangelistic events, make sure the follow up leaders are ready.”<sup>10</sup> Churches must stand ready and able to follow up. For example, if a person comes to faith in Christ at an event, the church needs to follow up with the person and explain the process of baptism to him or her.

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<sup>9</sup> Darrel Vaughan, *Do You Know How to Pray as You Should?* (Mustang: Tate Publishing, 2009), 71.

<sup>10</sup> Lon Allison, Mark Anderson, *Going Public With the Gospel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 160.

Follow up is as important as any other part of the event and needs to be done in a timely manner.

### Incorporation Into the Church

A final major area that needs to be considered when developing and implementing a servant/event evangelism strategy is how best to help incorporate people into the church for ministry. One could say that it is only after an event that the real work begins. Proper follow up after an event is essential to plugging people into the church. When one comes to faith in Christ he or she needs to get involved in church and ministry as soon as possible. As Searcy and Henson state, “you want to have a clear, simple way of getting people plugged into the next step.”<sup>11</sup> Many people seem to fall off the wagon after making the life-changing decision to follow Jesus. This is often because the person did not know what step to take next. Therefore, this should be an essential part of the advanced planning stages of each event.

When leading a church to do servant/event evangelism a pastor must remember that people who come to Christ will likely have a strong desire to serve at similar events. This will ultimately allow for more events and more volunteers. When this happens a snowball effect can occur, and many can come to faith in Christ and get involved in church ministry. This can and should lead a church into a season of numerical and spiritual growth.

### **Implementing a Servant/Event Strategy for the Local Church**

Once a pastor or church leader has developed the strategy for a servant/event model of evangelism, it is time to work on its implementation. This can be a challenging

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<sup>11</sup> Nelson Searcy and Jennifer Henson, *Fusion* (Ventura: Regal Books, 2007), 142.

yet rewarding time for the pastor and his ministry. Implementing a servant/event model into the church involves four of considerations, which will briefly be discussed in what follows.

### Communicate the Strategy with Great Passion

First, it is incredibly important for a pastor to communicate the goals of the servant/event model to his congregation with clarity. This is a key aspect of making the strategy successful. People want a clear vision to follow that shows them how they can make a difference. Therefore, the pastor must cast the vision with excellence or it will fail. As Malphurs teaches, “if the pastor struggles as a vision caster, the church may be in trouble.”<sup>12</sup> Therefore, a pastor must have an internal conviction regarding the vision. This is important, because a clearly communicated vision can light a flame in the church. This can be done by a pastor or leader clearly showing the people foundation and goals of the strategy. In turn, it should point people to the heart of the great commission and the purpose of the church.

When communicating such a strategy to the church a pastor should remember three guidelines. First, communication needs to be concise and simple. Pastors should not burden their congregations with unimportant details. The pastor should share his vision to reach people and explain how the church is going to seek to accomplish the vision. Finally, he must let the people plan an integral role in how the model comes together.

A second guideline for a pastor to consider when communicating the vision is the Scriptural mandate for serving and evangelizing. As Ryan puts it, “The great commission is a biblical mandate which should be considered by all believers as an obligatory part of

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<sup>12</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 161.

their faith.”<sup>13</sup> The Scriptures are the pastor’s greatest foundation upon which to build. If a pastor points his people to the demands in Scripture for believers to love by serving and sharing the gospel, the church will have no choice but to go forward in reaching people for Jesus.

A third guideline for communicating the vision is showing the church the need to reach people in the area for Christ. This can be done by carefully presenting demographics research. If people see the number of lost people surrounding them, they will be more likely to get involved in reaching the people. When a pastor communicates with accurate statistics it further validates his plea for the church to enter into a strategy to change the statistics for the better. A great resource for these statistics can be found at the website of North American Mission Board.<sup>14</sup>

#### Sell the Strategy to Key Leaders Within the Church

The second consideration for a pastor to consider when implementing the servant/event model into the church is the importance of key leaders in the church to the success of the model. If a pastor wants gain the church’s approval for a strategy, he will first need to win over the key leaders in the church. This will give him the vocal support of people who have influence in the church. An unfortunate truth is that pastors will come and go, but people of influence will stay in the church. Therefore, if a pastor can gain the support of the key leaders, he will set the strategy up for success. The pastor needs to meet often with the leaders to continuously communicate the vision. As Webster states, “senior pastors will need to conduct several meetings throughout the week with their key

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<sup>13</sup> J. Doeller Ryan, *Marketing God to Teens* (Bloomington: Xlibris Corporation, 2010), 44.

<sup>14</sup> “North American Mission Board,” <[www.namb.net](http://www.namb.net)>.



leaders.”<sup>15</sup> While the number of meetings will vary, but the important point is that pastors strive regularly to meet with these leaders.

At this point it is important to distinguish a ‘key leader’ from an average church member. The following criteria can be useful as guidelines. A key leader is one who will fulfill four requirements. First, a key leader is someone who tithes biblically to the church. He or she must follow the Scriptural commands for tithing. Second, the leader must have some tenure at the church. A key leader will have been at the church long enough to know the heritage of the church. Third, a key leader must have integrity, which is cultivated in sincerely following Christ. Having a reputation as a person of integrity is something that must be earned. Last, but certainly not least, a key leader should be classified as one who actively serves in the church. This is important because a leader cannot lead without also serving. If the pastor spends time sharing the vision with the key leaders of the church, he will find that the road to implementing the new strategy can be quite smooth.

#### Be Directly Involved in the Strategy

A third area of consideration when implementing a servant/event evangelism strategy in a church is the involvement of the pastor. A pastor will often allow people to start ministries in the church while avoiding involvement himself. However, Patrick Morley says that

the most striking finding was the level of personal involvement by the successful senior pastor. This is not to say that the senior pastor has to do everything. In the successful churches other pastors or laymen often did the work-but the senior pastor never fully let go.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Timothy L. Webster, *Christ-Centered Pastors* (Bloomington: CrossBooks, 2010), 290.

<sup>16</sup> Patrick Morley, *Pastoring Men* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009), 104.

For a servant/event strategy to be executed with success, the pastor must not only share the vision but lead by example in the vision. This is not to say that the pastor has to be dictatorial; he merely needs to be a part of the strategy in action.

Pastors would do well to appoint a team to be in charge of a specific event, and the pastor must pledge his wholehearted support both by being vocal and by being present at the event. People follow the pastor's example; they will be a part of what the pastor is a part of. Therefore, the pastor should be on the frontlines, serving and sharing Christ at these events.

#### Keep the Strategy in Front of the Congregation

The last consideration for implementing a servant/event strategy is for the pastor to constantly keep the vision in the front of the church's mind. America people will quickly abandon something if they believe there is a better option. If the pastor is not keeping this strategy in the consciousness of the people, they will be distracted by some other need, causing their heart for servant/event evangelism to grow cold.

In order for a pastor to keep this type of strategy in the people's minds, the vision must be continuously present. Many times churches will execute several events with excellence but have no clear vision implementing the strategy in the future. The strategy must be deeply embedded in the pastor's heart, which will make it natural for him to keep it on the people's minds.

One way to keep this type of strategy on people's minds is continuously to tell them of the success that is happening through the execution of the strategy.. People like to see results, and if they are consistently told of the number of people coming to faith in the Lord, they will continue to get excited and will most likely continue to be involved.

Implementing this type of strategy in the church is not a difficult task. When God places a burden in the heart of a church to reach the lost, the church will see results. As Dodd says, “when we get God’s burden, it will be aligned with His passionate focus on the least, the last, and the lost.”<sup>17</sup> Churches must spend time asking God to use them to change the surrounding culture. It is one thing to talk about the need to reach people but another actually to implement a strategy like this and see God move in a mighty way.

### **Examples of Servant/Events for the Local Church**

Servant/Event Evangelism can be an exciting part of the life of a church. These types of events will not only reach the lost and the unchurched, but they will encourage the congregation and help open the church’s eyes to the great needs around the community. The number of events that can be done is unlimited. However, there are fifteen events in particular that seem to work well and produce results for the kingdom of God. These events will be briefly discussed in what follows.

#### Block Parties

Block parties have been around for many years. They can be one of the most effective tools a church can use to get its foot into the door of many communities around them. As Reid notes, “a neighborhood block party will present Christ to those for whom the doors of the church are not readily accessible.”<sup>18</sup> This particular strategy has worked very well for FBC Malakoff, who made it a priority to identify the communities that were unreached and had great needs. The church built a process in which it could move into a

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<sup>17</sup> Brian J. Dodd, *Empowered Church Leadership* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 175.

<sup>18</sup> Alvin Reid, *Evangelism Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2009), 350.

community and set up for a block party within twenty minutes. The block parties are publicized about a week ahead of the party.

When going into a neighborhood FBC Malakoff identifies a place in which a bible study can be started and a church in the immediate area with which they could partner. This allows the partnering church to reap the benefits of any new believers who would come as a result of the block party. In the three years in which FBC Malakoff has engaged neighborhoods in block parties, it has seen dozens of people come to faith in Jesus.

A church that goes into a community and hosts a block parties needs to have things that are appealing to the residents of that neighborhood or community. These things can be anything from inflatable toys and waterslides to low budget foods such as hot dogs that will fit easily into any church's budget. If people know that they will be fed and that their families will be given something that will be fun and safe, they will be much more likely to come and take part in the event.

Block parties are an excellent source for unbelievers and unchurched people. They will provide the local congregation an opportunity to meet people where they are and to serve them with the love of Christ. A church that hosts block parties will want to register the attendees to ensure quick and well-organized follow up. A church can have as many block parties as the budget allows for; however, based upon the experience of FBC Malakoff, it is wise to do no more than four per year to ensure they are done with excellence.

## Fall Festivals

Fall festivals are another great way for churches to reach out to their community with a big event. Fall festivals are typically hosted around Halloween in order to capitalize on the kid's desire to participate in trick-or-treating. This type of event takes an enormous amount of volunteers but can reap some great results.

Fall festivals can be done inside or outside. Of course, anytime an event is planned for outside it runs the risk of bad weather. Churches that choose to utilize this form of servant/event evangelism must always have a backup plan in place in case of unpredictable weather. In FBC Malakoff's experience, a fall festival is best held outside in the evening.

This kind of event succeeds if the leader will enlist Sunday School classes to host booths and games in which the children can play. Fall festivals work well on Halloween because they offer families a safe alternative to door-to-door trick-or-treating. As Nick Harding writes, "one of the most effective ways in which a church can respond to Halloween is by providing an alternative party that focuses on light and gives children a really good time."<sup>19</sup> If a family knows that they can come to a safe place where their children can play games and receive candy, then they will be more likely to come.

In this type of event benefits the church in two ways. First, it will provide unity for the church as people meet to prepare for the event. Second, this event will provide opportunities to educate the community of the opportunities for children's ministry provided by the church.

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<sup>19</sup> Nick Harding, *Better than Halloween* (London: Church House Publishing, 2006), EBook.

Another great benefit of hosting a fall festival is the opportunity to share the gospel to what may be the largest gathering of people the church will have all year. This has proven true at FBC Malakoff, which typically sees around 1,500 people attend its fall festival. The church loves taking that opportunity to share the gospel at some point during the evening. In this way, this event is one churches must look at implementing into their evangelistic strategy.

### Easter Egg Hunt

Easter is another wonderful opportunity to hone in on reaching unchurched families with young children. As Nelson Searcy and Kerrick Thomas state, “if an unchurched person is going to attend church at all, it will likely be on Easter Sunday.”<sup>20</sup> This provides a chance for churches to not only have a large crowd in service on Easter Sunday but also to go the extra mile to reach out to the children. When done excellently, this event can produce many opportunities with somewhat minimal effort. A great example of this is Rock Hill Baptist Church in Brownsboro, Texas. This church usually averages around 500 people in their Sunday morning worship service. They decided to have 30,000 Easter eggs dropped from a helicopter for kids to find, and the event drew 4,000 people, most of whom were unchurched.<sup>21</sup>

Such an event can be done in many ways, and churches must allow their budgets to dictate the particulars of the event. However, it can be as simple as providing eggs for kids to hunt while attempting to connect with their parents. This type of event also gives

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<sup>20</sup> Nelson Searcy, Kerrick Thomas, *Launch* (Ventura: Regal Books, 2006), 118.

<sup>21</sup> Welch, survey

another opportunity for churches to share the gospel at a time of the year when people are open to hear the message.

One of the keys to making this type of event a success is to ensure the safety of the children by holding the event in a safe place. Parents notice when a church goes the extra mile to strive for safety for their children. An Easter egg hunt also provides a church the opportunity to expose the parents of the children involved to all the opportunities the church has for their family.

#### Easter Drama

Hosting an Easter drama is another way to reap results for the kingdom of God at a special time of the year. This event provides churches with the opportunity to share the gospel message with the unchurched in a more entertaining way. A drama takes a lot of participation by church members, but it will also create a unifying spirit during the holiday season.

Easter dramas can relate to people in a way that worship services often cannot. Churches that put the gospel into a drama will draw people who are passionate about the arts. These people often would not be interested in a typical church service but may be inclined to come to a dramatic production.

There are three crucial aspects to seeing great results in an Easter drama. First, and most importantly, a church must make sure that Jesus is the ultimate subject of the drama. People need to hear the gospel and in many cases see it played out before their eyes. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus must be at the forefront of this effort. Second, churches need to have a sufficient number of volunteers greeting people and helping them find seats. People will feel welcomed if they are personally greeted and

assisted upon their arrival. A third crucial aspect is to have something special for kids to do during the drama. Many times dramas contain violent depictions of the crucifixion, so it is a good idea to provide children with an alternative activity that shares the gospel in a less violent manner. This can be a significant element in a parent's decision to come to the event.

A church needs to capitalize on Easter dramas by publicizing well before the event. As Aubrey Malphurs says, "far too many established churches fail to make their presence in their community known to the unchurched."<sup>22</sup> Churches must make it a priority to get the word out! FBC Malakoff publicizes their Easter drama in as many ways as possible beginning a month before the event. It is a great idea to get as many media outlets as possible to do stories on the drama in order to help get the word out. In this way, Easter dramas can be effective if done well.

#### Community Car Washes and Clinics

Another type of event in which churches can experience great results are community car washes and clinics. This type of event provides the community with a chance to see church people serving on the weekends. A great time to host this type of event is during late spring through early fall. A community car wash or clinic will help people to get one on one time with guests. As Sjogren states, a carwash "provides the opportunity to have some in-depth conversations with motorists."<sup>23</sup> A person will be out of his or her car for fifteen to twenty minutes during the car wash. This gives church

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<sup>22</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 202.

<sup>23</sup> Steve Sjogren, *101 Ways to Reach Your Community* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2001), EBooks.



members the opportunity to connect with people in an environment in which they might be receptive.

One of the greatest aspects of a community car wash or clinic is that it is provided at no cost. This helps open the door to the idea that the church is simply there to serve out of love, which is something that the unchurched do not see or experience often. This can be a great pathway for the gospel to be shared to each of the people present.

Churches can also do car care clinics for single mothers and widows. This can involve—but is not limited to—oil changes, air filter replacement, tire rotation, and other basic auto services. This allows churches to identify single mothers and widows, which in turn will allow the church to follow up for future ministry. When a church serves in this capacity, unchurched people begin to see that it is not a group of exclusive people sitting behind the walls of a church building. This kind of event can be costly to a church but will allow the church to connect with people in difficult situations and will provide great ministry opportunities for the future.

#### Gas Buy Down

One way to implement a servant/event strategy in the midst of a difficult economic time for a church to sponsor a gas buy down day at a local gas station. Churches can pay a gas station in advance to offer gas at a reduced rate for the community to purchase. This type of event will generate a busy day of ministry and opportunity.

The strategy for this event is that for a two- or three-hour period a church offers people gas at a discounted rate. People will pull up to the pump and church members will pump their gas. One person will pump the gas while one washes the windshield. At the

same time another person will give the customer a bottle of water and briefly share the gospel with them.

This type of event will allow people to see the church out in the community doing something for the people. This has the potential to generate a lot of attention that can be beneficial to the church. However, gas buy downs come with a hefty price tag. A church must understand that the costly event will provide the chance to have some individual time with the customers. In addition, it also gives the church a chance to partner with a local business and let the community know that it cares about the community. Bethel Temple Church is a great example of how this kind of event can be done well. As the pastor of the church said, “There are many churches that put a great emphasis on people giving to the church. We want to fix that and be a church that rather gives back to the community.”<sup>24</sup> When the heart of a church is burdened to help the community in a time of need, they have the potential of seeing great results.

### Marriage Conference

Another servant/event for a church to sponsor in today’s culture is a free marriage conference. This type of event will address a specific need that could lead to a fruitful harvest for churches. Marriages are falling apart in all regions of the United States. This kind of event provides a great opportunity for churches to reach couples that are struggling or who are on the brink of divorce.

A marriage conference will give churches a captive audience to explain the fact that only God can help a marriage. As Youngs, Fuller, and Schuller put it, “if your

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<sup>24</sup> Samieh Shalash, “705 drivers filled tanks with discounted fuel during church’s gas buy-down,” *Daily Press*, April 9th 2011.

marriage is broken, a good counselor can help, but only God can mend it.”<sup>25</sup> In this type of event, people are hurting and looking for help, and the church has the opportunity to share the hope that can only be found by inviting God into the marriage. A conference such as this will not likely produce as many attendees as other events, but it will provide attendees that are open to the gospel because of their circumstances.

A marriage conference can lead to many opportunities for a church to reach out to its community. People who come to this type of event will connect in way that would not ordinarily happen. A marriage conference can be costly, but the opportunity to see God work in marriages that society would have forgotten outweighs the costs of the event.

#### Sportsman’s Expo

Another great servant/event opportunity for churches is a sportsman’s expo. This is an event that will draw many men possibly some ladies. A sportsman’s expo can be specifically geared toward one sport, or it can be general in nature. For example, FBC Malakoff hosted a successful sportsman expo in 2008. The church hosted this expo and enlisted The Duck Commander to be the speaker. The event drew hundreds from around the area who shared a love of hunting. The church held a fried fish dinner, and the people listened as the speaker shared the gospel. The sportsman’s expo attracted many men who are not in church and gave the people of FBC Malakoff the chance to connect with them.

A sportsman’s expo can be as simple or elaborate as a church wants to make it. Some evangelists today use this as a harvest event. For example, Jay Lowder of Harvest Ministries calls this event ‘Adventure Weekends.’ It “provides pastors and churches with

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<sup>25</sup> Bettie Youngs, B., Linda Fuller, and Donna Schuller, *Woman to Woman Wisdom* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), 23.

a completely new approach to evangelism by utilizing exciting and unique events to expose multitudes of unchurched people from all backgrounds to the gospel of Christ.”<sup>26</sup> Jay has events for men, women, and students throughout the weekend, and the event has proven itself as a cutting-edge approach to reaching the unchurched.

This type of event will have some costs associated with it, but it can bridge the gap between churches and local businesses. If a church contacts businesses and invites them to be sponsors, the cost of the event can be greatly reduced. A sportman’s expo will also bring these businesses great exposure to people of the community.

#### Fourth of July

A fourth of July extravaganza is another great way to reach the people of a community. Many people love the idea of watching fireworks but cannot afford them. This is where a church can step in and provide a family-friendly atmosphere in which to celebrate the nation’s independence together. But it also provides a chance for a pastor or leader to share how the gospel leads us to spiritual independence. As Steve Gains says, “I think every congregation ought to find creative ways to connect with unbelievers in their community.”<sup>27</sup> This event will do just that.

A fourth of July event will require two things. First, it needs to be publicized long well in advance. Families will go to what they deem to be the most attractive fireworks show. Therefore, a church must make sure that it is well-equipped for a large fireworks show. A family will sit through a thorough gospel presentation if they know that the will

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<sup>26</sup> Jay Lowder *Harvest Ministries*, “Adventure Weekends,” [www.JayLowder.com/](http://www.JayLowder.com/) (accessed July 15, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> Steve Gaines, Dean Merrill, *When God Comes to Church* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2007), 21.

be blessed by the light show. A second aspect that needs to be implemented into this event is food. Churches can charge for the food or they can provide it for free. FBC Malakoff always tries to provide the food without charging the guests, but it is different for every church.

A fourth of July event will allow a church to touch a large number of people with little effort. However, a church needs to be well prepared to register all the families at the event so that it follow up with them soon after the event. This type of event will show unchurched families that the church cares for them and is there to minister to them.

#### Back-to-School Bash

A back-to-school bash can produce many opportunities for churches. This is especially true if the church gives away free school supplies to children. Such an event will resemble a block party with inflatable toys and food. However, it also gives churches the opportunity to share the gospel with a large group of people.

The people who will receive free school supplies will likely be in need of them. This gives the church a chance to tell these people know that it cares for their needs. One church in Nederland, Texas gave away supplies and clothes, and a church leader described the motives for the event: “We just wanted to do something for the community to let them know we care.”<sup>28</sup> This mindset will open doors for the church to connect with people and allow the church to help them in their needs.

A back-to-school bash needs solely to focus on the children and youth of a community. The bash should be a high-energy day in which families come and have a

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<sup>28</sup> “Church Gives Away School Supplies, Clothes,” *Port Arthur News*, <[www.panews.com/nederland/x681417025/church-gives-away-school-supplies-clothes](http://www.panews.com/nederland/x681417025/church-gives-away-school-supplies-clothes)>.

great time. FBC Malakoff's has come to see that this type of event is best done within two weeks of the start of the school year. This will help to alleviate stress from parents who are wondering how they are going to get school supplies for their children.

### Christmas Tree Giveaway

Christmas time each year provides wonderful opportunities for churches to engage people with the gospel of Jesus. People usually have real needs during this time of the year, which means that people are typically open to hear about the hope that is found in Christ. Churches that want to utilize this holiday can do so by hosting a servant/event. One of the best events to hold is a Christmas tree giveaway. Churches can partner with local Christmas tree farms to negotiate a lower price for the less desirable trees. This will fit into the church's budget and will still provide an opportunity for churches to engage the people of the community.

One of the main benefits of this type of event is that it makes the children of families to receive trees quite happy. Typically, these kids will not have a tree for Christmas, but churches can give this gift while also giving the gift of Jesus. As one church who does this type of event said, "trees are especially needed in tough economic times when people don't have a lot of money to spend on Christmas trees."<sup>29</sup> This event will touch the hearts of young families who may be going through a difficult time and provide real opportunities on which the church can follow up.

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<sup>29</sup> "Reaching Out With Trees In Troy," *The Daily Review.com*, <[www.thedailyreview.com/news/reaching-out-with-trees-in-troy-1.1075391](http://www.thedailyreview.com/news/reaching-out-with-trees-in-troy-1.1075391)>.

## Christmas Store

One of the greatest opportunities during the Christmas season for churches to engage the people in their communities is a Christmas store. This will allow a church to reach those who have fallen on hard times and to help meet an immediate need. Churches should contact local schools and ask for a list of children who will not have Christmas gifts unless they receive assistance. Members can then begin buying gifts in October and bring them to the church.

The leader of this event should contact each family and ask about their situation. This will be the first step in opening the door of communication with these families. Once a date is set the families should be contacted and told when and where to arrive to get the gifts for their children. FBC Malakoff has seen this event produce amazing results.

When the family arrives there needs to be a process they go through to choose their gifts. The church should have a host for each family that will walk them through the process. After the family selects all the gifts, the host should lead them to the gift-wrapping table. This is where the opportunity to share the gospel begins.

Families have the opportunity to have refreshments and sit at a table with their host. It is here that the host will share the gospel and will seek out other needs that the family may have. This kind of event allows many people in the church to be involved in serving while also making sure that the gospel is clearly shared with every parent who comes into the doors.

## Friday Night Football Tailgating

A great servant/event for churches to do in the fall is a football tailgating party. A church can do this for one game or for every game. A church can give out free food and t-

shirts, which will encourage the people to come. This is what Coal Grove Memorial United Methodist Church did.<sup>30</sup> This type event is relatively inexpensive and has the potential to touch a lot of people on a Friday night.

A football party works extremely well in small towns. Friday night football is a big deal in many places across the country, and churches can take advantage of this by being a real presence in the community on these nights. This type of event also helps the community see that the church supports the local schools and the kids that attend them. While this type of event will certainly be contextual, it often brings with it an excitement that other events can lack.

### Crusade

One of the oldest and most effective servant/events that church have participated in are crusades. The goal of a crusade is to get as many people as possible to come to a certain place. Crusades have been very successful for many years. As John Bisagno says, “the old time evangelistic crusade is a piece of Americana that is dying, but it ought not to be...evangelist crusades inside and outside of the church are wonderful, lets not lose them.”<sup>31</sup> These crusades have seen millions of people come to faith in Christ. One of the crucial elements to these events is bringing in a full-time evangelist, who will be gifted in sharing the gospel and at drawing in the net during the invitation time. Many churches have forgotten this method or have deemed it irrelevant for today’s society. However, a church that does this with excellence will see excellent results.

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<sup>30</sup> “Where Can I Serve,” *Coal Grove Memorial United Methodist Church*, <[www.coalgrovememorial.org/ministries/](http://www.coalgrovememorial.org/ministries/)>.

<sup>31</sup> John Bisagno, *Pastor's Handbook* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2011), 306.



The key to this event is being prepared and having enough publicity and volunteers. A crusade will need to be advertised all over the community. Each night can be a different emphasis in order to engage all different age groups. For example, in 2010 FBC Malakoff hosted a crusade and saw ninety-eight people come to Christ. Monday night was for the children, and the church gave away two Nintendo Wii game systems to the kids. Tuesday evening was for the youth, and the church gave away a used car to a teenager that night. Wednesday evening was for the adults where main attraction was a free steak dinner. These special emphases drew in hundreds of people each night to hear the gospel.

#### Thanksgiving Meal

Another great servant/event is a Thanksgiving meal for the community. This event will let the people of the community know that the church cares for them at a special time of the year. This event will also give exposure to the church. A Thanksgiving meal does not need an enormous amount of volunteers if the church has the meals catered. In this way, it provides the members an opportunity to love people of the community.

The major roadblock this type of event can face is space constraint. When a church provides a free meal to the community there is no way of estimating the turnout. This can make preparation a problem. Therefore, the church should secure a large enough space to host at least three times its total church attendance. A Thanksgiving meal allows the pastor to share the gospel with a large number of people who will be open to hearing it as a result of the church's generosity to them. This is also a great opportunity to have

scheduled testimonies from people showing how God has radically changed their lives through various events.

If a church cannot find space or funds for a full meal there is an alternative. Churches can give away thanksgiving dinners to families who are in need. Swanson and Rusaw say that church's can have an "unannounced delivery of Thanksgiving dinners to low income residents."<sup>32</sup> This happens when members identify needy families and show up at their house with a full thanksgiving dinner.

### **Potential Barriers to Implementing a Servant/Event Evangelism Strategy**

A servant/event evangelism strategy is one of the most rewarding things a church can implement. However, any time a church does something that challenges the enemy there will be difficulties. Although this strategy can reap many souls for Christ, there are also several barriers with which church's must deal. Four of these barriers will be briefly discussed.

#### Lack of Vision

One of the most detrimental barriers to a servant/event strategy is a lack of vision. People will follow a clear vision, but if a pastor or leader is attempting to lead without a clear vision, the strategy will likely fail. As Malphurs writes, "a characteristic of far too many North American ministries in general and churches in particular is a lack of direction. They simply don't know where they are going, and many have not even thought about it."<sup>33</sup> This burden falls on the shoulders of the pastor or leader. A leader

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<sup>32</sup> Eric Swanson, Rick Rusaw, *The Externally Focused Quest* (San Francisco: Wiley Publishers, 2010), 86.

<sup>33</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 18.

must, first, make sure the vision is biblical. This will alleviate many difficulties along the way. If a pastor or leader is leading from biblical principles, then the strategy will be able to hold its own ground. Second, a pastor must make sure the people of the church buy into the vision before he attempts to implement it. A pastor who tries to lead without the support of the people will quickly become frustrated and will most likely give up. The people must be on board to ensure a successful launch of a servant/event strategy. Third, the pastor must make sure the strategy fits well in the context in which the church finds itself. One of the greatest mistakes that could be made is trying to lead people to do something that does not make sense to them. If a pastor follows these three steps, his vision is much more likely to succeed.

#### Cost

Although this strategy will work well in most churches, cost can cause the strategy to fail in others. Churches must take this into account when considering this type of strategy. As one author writes, “the church must budget its resources to provide the sowers the tools they need to do their job.”<sup>34</sup> A church must have the resources required to implement this strategy with excellence. Churches can customize events to fit their budgets with careful planning. A pastor must sit down and count the cost in order to determine if the church can afford to implement such a strategy.

#### Lack of Volunteers

A lack of vision can be a major obstacle to implementing the servant/event model of evangelism. Ron Satrape says that “80 percent of the work is done by 20 percent of the

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<sup>34</sup> Ronnie Prevost, *A Distinctively Baptist Church* (Macon: Smith & Helwys Publishing, 2008 ), 102.

people.”<sup>35</sup> A church cannot be effective this way for very long. A pastor must challenge his people to be active in an evangelism strategy. If a church lacks volunteers, the servant/event model will ultimately fail. Members must be willing to step up to the plate and meet the challenge, realizing that a strategy such as this will bring eternal rewards to the church.

### Critics

The final barrier that can stop a church from implementing a successful servant/event strategy is the critic. A pastor who spends his life fighting spiritual battles can become discouraged and even depressed if he listens to critics. The reality is that all pastors need to know that there will always be many critics along the way. God puts a vision in the heart of a pastor, and at the same time the enemy puts complaints in the hearts of people. A pastor must stay focused on the task at hand and guide the church to the destination God has called his people.

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<sup>35</sup> Ron Satrape, *Retooling the Church* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image Publishers, 2007), 188.

## CONCLUSION

In today's fast-paced society, evangelism can easily be put on the back burner. Churches get so wrapped up in programs and fellowships that they often lose focus on serving people and telling them about Jesus. The evangelism strategy discussed in this thesis will not only help churches become healthy, but it will also help them to see the eternal rewards of people coming into a relationship with Jesus.

The goal of this thesis is threefold. First, it is designed to help churches evaluate their unique situations. A church cannot make the necessary changes unless it has a time of deep evaluation. This thesis provides the necessary information for a church to gauge where it presently is.

The second goal of this project is for churches to develop and implement the servant/event strategy within their own contexts. This strategy is one that will ultimately change people within the church and reach those who are unchurched.

The third goal of this project is to provide pastors and church leaders with a practical tool to help implement a servant/event evangelism strategy in their local church. This thesis can be adapted to fit the particular context of any church, and it will guide pastors through the steps of leading his church to become evangelistically focused.

These goals can come to fruition in the life of a church if it uses this project as a manual. This is not to say that this is the only way to reach people. In fact, there are many other avenues that are effective for evangelism. However, with this tool a church can

become successful in engaging people with the gospel, while at the same time utilizing the gifts of God's children.

This project will help a church beginning with no strategy to incorporate a fully functioning and fruitful strategy. The process begins by honestly evaluating the state of the church in America. An evaluation of this will lead to the understanding that the church is experiencing a great crisis. This crisis is not based only on aspects such as the economy or culture; it is much more serious. The crisis is based upon the fact that believers in Jesus Christ have neglected sharing the life-changing message of the gospel. Believers must identify the realistic state that the church is in and engage the world with a strategy to reach the lost.

This project also helps churches to reach the community in which they are by developing a clearly defined understanding of what evangelism truly is. This can only be accomplished by realizing that evangelism is not only an action that goes along with an isolated event, but also a lifestyle that must continuously reflect the person of Jesus Christ.

Third, this project assists churches to reach the world for Christ by helping them understand the various models of evangelism that are available today and by helping them decide which are most appropriate in the church's own context. A church may have a heart for the lost, but if it does not know what models to implement in order to become successful, it will remain lost. This project lists many models and provides critiques of them based upon their effectiveness in modern culture.

Another way in which this project can help churches in their evangelism efforts is to help them lead people to see evangelism as it exists in Scripture. Many times people

will be on the brink of following leadership to implement a certain strategy, but they need to know what Scripture says about the task. There are numerous Scripture passages in this project that can lead people to see the need, command, and effectiveness of evangelism.

Some of the greatest tools found in this project for churches to utilize are the examples of other churches that have seen success in using various aspects of the servant/event method. Churches have learned by trial and error the most effective ways to reach out to their respective communities. One can quote a lot of statistics, but real experiences often become the greatest teachers.

This project not only lays the groundwork showing the need for a servant/event evangelism strategy, but it also illustrates the development and implementation of the strategy. This is accomplished by providing a basic step-by-step process of making this strategy a reality in a local church. In addition, this project also warns of potential barriers so that churches can be prepared to deal with obstacles as they come.

One of the greatest assets this project gives to churches is a brief description of servant/events that churches can utilize. This project is not only a description of the method; it gives churches of all sizes ideas of how to reach their communities. The events discussed have been tested, and the results have been fruitful. Churches can take some of these events and plug them into their own calendars in order to begin seeing servant/event evangelism model work.

The need for intense evangelism is greater today than it has ever been. Churches have the potential to change the world with the gospel of Christ. However, it is ultimately up to the people of God through the church of God to decide whether or not the world

will hear of the good news of Jesus. The lost are searching for an answer, and believers have the answer for which they are looking. It is time for the church to step up and focus on reaching the lost with an unparalleled intensity!



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APPENDIX A  
SURVEYS OF PASTORS

**Robert Welch, Rock Hill Baptist Church, Brownsboro, Texas**

Question #1: In your cultural context, why did you choose to take a servant/event evangelism strategy?

“In our part of East Texas there is a church on almost every corner. Most churches approach outreach through revivals, vacation bible school, door to door evangelism, and music groups. We've found these approaches have become less and less attractive to those outside the church. Our community is family driven. So though our event evangelism strategy we have attempted to provide events that center around the family. We view outreach as a process. Our event evangelism is the first step in that process. We offer the event so that those who come would leave with a positive perception of our church and our ministry. A positive perception then gives them less fear and hesitation to attend our church and hear our message when personally invited. Step two would in our outreach process would be them attending a smaller and more personal event, attending a Sunday morning worship, or one of our weekday ministries. During the intentionally and personally invite them to a smaller follow up event, Sunday morning worship, and make them aware of other ministries in our church that may be relevant to their lives. They are handed materials that make them aware of these follow up ministries. At registration we

obtain names and addresses of each family so that we can mail them invitations in the weeks following the event to these ministries.

Question #2: What is the greatest servant/event your church has done?

The Saturday before Easter we hosted an Easter Egg Drop. A helicopter flew over a field and dropped 30000 eggs filled with candy and prizes. We saw over 4000 people from our community attend the event. We had a live band, five bounce houses, and gave away four gaming systems, and 40 \$20 gift cards to Toys-R-Us.

Question #3: How was this measured as the greatest? (numerical results, new visitors, salvations)

Numerical attendance and first time visitors in church the two months following the event are the two ways we measure success. We saw over 4000 people at the Easter Egg drop. The month after the event saw our weekly first time visitor average double.

Question #4: What are the strengths to this evangelistic approach?

One positive factor is that event outreach draws a large number of people. Those people leave the event with a great perception of our church. A positive perception then gives them less fear and hesitation to attend our church and hear our message when personally invited. We've seen an large increase in first time visitors to our Sunday services as well as other smaller more personal children's and family events that we host following the event.

Question #5: What are the barriers to this approach?

Cost. We've found event evangelism is very expensive. We usually spend between \$4000 to \$7000 on an event. Because of the cost we are only able to do about two events a year. Volunteer labor is also another barrier. Putting on an event like this

requires a great deal of man power and hours. In our Easter Egg drop we had about 275 volunteers. Some of those volunteers put in about 40 hours of preparation in the weeks leading up to the event. Follow up can be very difficult as well. Event evangelism is less personal than a door to door approach. Most people at the event are just part of a big crowd. As a result we are not able to have a very personal touch with them at the event. We've sought to overcome this by training our volunteers to mingle with the crowd and get to know people at the different games. We are not able to do much personal evangelism at the event. That is why it is so important for us to inform, invite, and encourage the people to attend our services or smaller follow up events.

Question #6: What were the steps to implementing this strategy to your church?

Eight months prior to the event we have a leadership team meeting about the event. This usually involves three people who will spearhead the event. We develop a strategy for accomplishing the event at this meeting by developing a budget, a list of different volunteer jobs, a check list of what needs to be done, a timeline, and a promotional strategy. Immediately after the meeting all equipment reservations, deposits, and purchases are made and our key volunteers are recruited. Every month after the meeting we have a brief updating meeting with the leadership team. About two months before the event we begin promoting it to our church and developing a volunteer list. At this time we also begin asking our church for whatever donations are required (candy, plastic eggs, tents, and finances). About six weeks before the event we begin to promote the event to the community. We promote the event through newspaper ads, flyers, banners, and our website. The most effective promotion we do is provide personal invitation cards to our church members to hand to their friends, coworkers, and

neighbors. Four weeks prior to the event we contact the newspaper editor and news stations to see if they might want to run a story on the event. Two weeks prior to the event we do a mass mail out to the community. The month before the event a leadership team meeting is held once a week. The week of the event a leadership team meeting is held daily.

Question #7: What biblical passages led you to take this evangelism approach?

John 6:1-15, Mark 2:1-12, Acts 2:14-41, and Acts 5:12-16.

Question #8: What have been the results in your church since beginning this evangelism strategy?

We began doing event evangelism about a year ago. In that time, our Sunday morning attendance has increased by 49%. We have also baptized 65 people which is more than twice what our church has ever baptized in one year. At each event our volunteer numbers has double as well.

Question #9: Do you know of any other churches in the U.S. that are having success using this strategy?

Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, Texas and Elevation Church, Matthews, North Carolina.

**Heath Peloquin, Brighton Park Baptist Church, Corpus Christi, Texas**

Question #1: In your cultural context, why did you choose to take a servant/event evangelism strategy?

There were three groups of people that we immediately identified that we could serve in our city: 1. We tried to capture an opportunity based upon our surroundings. We have wide open spaces for hunting and the gulf and many lakes for fishing so it seemed

ideal for us to find a way to minister to the large hunting community in our area. 2. We saw a great opportunity to serve ladies of all ages by participating in a ladies only event that allowed them to be impacted by other ladies, and then engage in relationships that developed from our Brighton Park ladies and the lost or unchurched friends they brought. 3. We saw a way to reach into the lives of children. Have an outdoor expo with boats, touch tanks with sting rays, fish, star fish. We used the blow-up bouncy games, with pony rides, and a gospel presentation by Hank Hough (World Champion dog trainer). The event was prepared and organized well of many months, and we prayed that God would move, and He did.

Question #2: What is the greatest servant/event your church has done?

The Life on the Bay Expo was the greatest servant event our church has done to date. I believe that the reason is not that we had so many people, but that it required our entire church family to serve. We had over one hundred volunteers from the parking lots, to manning a booth for refreshments, and greeters everywhere telling families that we were glad that they were there. It left a great impact of love and ministry in our church family, and as a pastor I saw first hand how important servant leadership really is in the life and body of a church family. Our church has never been the same. The break down of the event was as follows: Friday evening, Women's Conference, Saturday morning Outdoor Expo and Kids Carnival, and Saturday evening Men's dinner, and Sunday morning Revival Tent Service, and Sunday evening Student Revival.

Question #3: How was this measured as the greatest? (numerical results, new visitors, salvations)

The measure of the event for me was really three fold. 1. Our folks came and gave their lives to minister to the lost and unchurched around us. We had at least 100-150 volunteers whose faces were excited that our community had come in such a big way. 2. Was the touch in our community, our church is off the beaten path, and we had to advertise largely to let folks know where we were located, the community came with some estimations between 3,000 to 4,000 people between the various events. We had over 100 salvations, many new visitors because of the event (around 100). We estimated between 2,500-3,000 at our Expo Event, 250 ladies at our ladies event, 750 men at our Men's Event, and 400 at our Student Revival, and over 600 at our Sunday tent revival, we were truly overwhelmed. 3. It created an awareness to our community around us that we are here, and we care, because the event was free, people were amazed and came in large numbers! The incredible part was that we were competing with an annual air show (draws thousands, and a new event in the downtown part of our city!) Yet, we still had a great time and the event was a complete success!

Question #4: What are the strengths to this evangelistic approach?

The strengths were in the leadership. We organized into various teams and groups with key lay leaders heading up many of the multi-facets of this event. Our advertising was handled by two ladies who are incredible in the corporate world, and they were able to get the word out many venues, radio spots, t.v. ads, television talk shows, mailers, and through other companies by way of sponsorships. They were incredible in their talents and hard work and it would not have been a success without them. We had another gentleman who handled getting exhibitors for the Expo, we had boats, ATV's, antique cars, and a silent auction. All were coordinated by volunteers who used their connections

and talents for the Lord, I was amazed at their dedication. Because of business relationships folks were glad to help and be apart. We received give-a-ways from companies that made the event more personal. God's hand was in every aspect of planning and implementing the event.

Question #5: What are the barriers to this approach?

Barriers are very real. There were times we thought we would not have enough money, there were times when we did not know how to get help from the community, but God was faithful and He continually lead us to members within our church family who knew someone or could take care of a specific aspect of the event.

Question #6: What were the steps to implementing this strategy to your church?

The steps of implementation were crucial we had to do several things to make this happen.

- 1) Communicate the vision early and often. Our people heard about Life on the Bay, voted to do Life on the Bay, and then were called to be involed. It was a total church effort from the beginning.
- 2) Create an oppportunity to serve. We showed a video that we made of our needs within our city, the local bars, adult entertainment clubs, the homeless, the affluent, any way we could show our family the need to serve our community, and then we had them pray about serving. And they did, many pulling double, and triple duty to make every facet of the event a success.
- 3) Challenge people to serve in a greater way. This event taught me that when God tells the pastor to step out of the comfort zones and to stand in God's faithfulness



it is both humbling, scary, and true! When I was willing to move out with God, He met us there, and our church is forever different from it!

Question #7: What biblical passages led you to take this evangelism approach?

Matthew 9:36-38, I saw our city and wept, and then I realized that if we are going to make a difference we had to begin with our own willingness to serve. Our folks saw the vision of reaching out to the lost and hurting within our community, and through obedience we saw Mormons, gang members, and families come to faith in Jesus Christ. The lostness around us drove a church with only a membership at that time of 500 to truly go after 5,000 folks, and if we did not achieve 5,000 we were close, and it proved to me that God did not want me to pray some silly weak pray, but to trust Him and step out in faith when He says to go to the lost around us we go.

Question #8: What have been the results in your church since beginning this evangelism strategy?

We now have a greater awareness and understanding that we must do our part in reaching the lostness around us. We are responsible for lives of folks around us and we must care. We still go door-to-door, and we still have a weekly visitation, but God also has called us to reach out to our city, and my church family is continually challenged to go and take the Great Commission to the our city, state, nation, and world.

Question #9: Do you know of any other churches in the U.S. that are having success using this strategy?

Yes, Church at Quail Creek in Amarillo, and Southcrest Baptist Church in Lubbock, both had similar events. Our event Here at Brighton Park was in between both

of these churches. You can contact Joe Simmons (Consultant with SBTC Evangelism Division for more details).

**Dr. Hershael York, Buck Horn Baptist Church, Frankfort, Kentucky**

Question #1: In your cultural context, why did you choose to take a servant/event evangelism strategy?

The community is far less suspicious when you serve them than when you simply try to convince them.

Question #2: What is the greatest servant/event your church has done?

We have done a single-women's oil change that has reaped GREAT benefits.

Question #3: How was this measured as the greatest? (numerical results, new visitors, salvations)

On the service level, we averaged changing the oil in more than 150 cars each time. We also gave these ladies food, clothing for their families, and even wood to heat their homes. On the spiritual side of things, we saw many of them trust Christ and become a part of our church.

Question #4: What are the strengths to this evangelistic approach?

By serving them, we gained their trust enough for a hearing of the gospel, and with solid follow-up our women's ministry built relationships so that we could reach them long-term.

Question #5: What are the barriers to this approach?

It is expensive and it comes with certain legal liabilities.

Question #6: What were the steps to implementing this strategy to your church?

Enlisting women to care for the women, men to change the oil, youth to wash the cars, church members to provide food, women to care for children, planning meetings, etc.

Question #7: What biblical passages led you to take this evangelism approach?

2 Cor 5:16-21

Question #8: What have been the results in your church since beginning this evangelism strategy?

We have a lot of single moms and people who see the needs more keenly than ever.

Question #9: Do you know of any other churches in the U.S. that are having success using this strategy?

Yes. Hillvue Heights, Bowling Green, KY

**Jarrett Stephens, Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, Texas**

Question #1: In your cultural context, why did you choose to take a servant/event evangelism strategy?

Most people in Dallas that are not believers tend to have huge walls up against Christianity. The average person has an idea of what Christians are and what Christianity is. To break down these walls and ideas, often incorrect and assumptive, we chose servant evangelism. We chose servant evangelism to get a foot in the doorway of many lost lives.

Question #2: What is the greatest servant/event your church has done?

Our Young Single Adults periodically go into apartment complexes, parks, and nature reserves to give out bottles of water. With the water, we also give out a card that

invites the person to Prestonwood. We generally organize one day in which dozens of our Young Singles cover North Dallas with servant evangelism. The greatest response we have seen was the week before Easter weekend. There were many people that were “on the fence” about attending church that weekend, and our simple gesture of servitude pushed them over the edge to attend.

Question #3: How was this measured as the greatest? (numerical results, new visitors, salvations)

This was the greatest to the number of first-time visitors that attended our church from this single event. We do not track actual numbers or percentages, but a large portion of people came into our buildings for the first time due to our servant evangelism focus.

Question #4: What are the strengths to this evangelistic approach?

Our group has been able to interact with a large number of nonbelievers in a short time with servant evangelism. We have also seen a great response from our people. Many of them see the effectiveness of this strategy and get involved.

Question #5: What are the barriers to this approach?

The main barrier we have faced is weather. We will plan and coordinate for a particular Saturday, and rain will come. Since we do all servant evangelism outside, this prevents us from going out that day.

Question #6: What were the steps to implementing this strategy to your church?

We simply announced the strategy to our people and led the way. Many of them did not participate the first time we did servant evangelism, but we grew in momentum over time. Our key mechanism in implementing servant evangelism was staff leadership.

Question #7: What biblical passages led you to take this evangelism approach?

Matthew 28:18-20

Question #8: What have been the results in your church since beginning this evangelism strategy?

Due to the size of our fellowship, it is impossible to measure the success of servant evangelism. We feel that many people have come to this church and to Christ through our efforts. A measurable result we have seen is in our own people. Through their serving, we have seen many of them take a larger role in the kingdom through a variety of ways.

Question #9: Do you know of any other churches in the U.S. that are having success using this strategy?

Hope Fellowship in Cambridge, MA, led by Pastor Curtis Cook is having HUGE success through servant evangelism. Over half of their congregation first attended Hope through the ministry of servant evangelism.

**Nathan Lino, Northeast Houston Baptist Church, Humble Texas**

Question #1: In your cultural context, why did you choose to take a servant/event evangelism strategy?

Statistics show that if you reach a man for Christ, there is a 90%+ likelihood you will reach his family. Reaching a woman is about 60% likelihood you will reach her family. Reaching a child drops to the 20% range. So, we decided to go after men because that's the biggest payoff. We are intentional about not being a feminine church and we try to offer a lot of things for men. One of the things we offer is Sportsmen's Day, an annual outdoor extravaganza for hunting, fishing, and camping. We draw approximately 800-1000 men each year.

Question #2: What is the greatest servant/event your church has done?

See #1

Question #3: How was this measured as the greatest? (numerical results, new visitors, salvations)

Number of unchurched adult men present AND the completeness/clarity of the gospel presentation AND how well the drawing of the net was. Those are the only 3 things we can control.

Question #4: What are the strengths to this evangelistic approach?

Men come in droves—they like that we don't allow women—there is something about men getting to hang out without women around. They like that we talk plainly and we don't put spin on anything. they like that we don't try to hide the purpose of the event—calling them to salvation and giving them a vision for God's purpose for their lives as men in their home. They like that there is tons of man stuff to do—shooting all kinds of guns, archery ranges, skeet shooting, vendors of all kinds, etc.

Question #5: What are the barriers to this approach?

Men don't like personal, meaningful, one-on-one conversations so post-event follow up is a real challenge.

Question #6: What were the steps to implementing this strategy to your church?

Sent men to see a similar event done well. Pastor got in pulpit to sell vision to church body b/c though it is a male only event—it is so big and comprehensive, we need everyone in the church to be on board and see the value of the event. Found men capable of leading and we don't let them serve anywhere else in the church so they can give all their attention to this one event that takes 10 months of planning.

Question #7: What biblical passages led you to take this evangelism approach?

Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8--Jerusalem

Question #8: What have been the results in your church since beginning this evangelism strategy?

We have reached men and their families. The men inside our church have become much more bold. It has increased the male leadership in our family units and within our church. and the event drives our men and their attitude about our church all year long. They have great pride in our church b/c of this event.

Question #9: Do you know of any other churches in the U.S. that are having success using this strategy?

Yes—lots of churches do this or something similar—wild game dinners, sportsmen’s days, etc.

**John Meador, First Baptist Church Euless, Euless, Texas**

Question #1: In your cultural context, why did you choose to take a servant/event evangelism strategy?

We are positioned in a changing community where a larger number of people each year are on subsidized school lunch programs and where an increasing diversity is evidenced. The lostness of our community challenged us to realize people weren’t looking for a “church home” because they had little care for the church, and little awareness of Jesus Christ. They did, however, struggle with basic needs of life that we could help with – and use as a bridge for the gospel.

Question #2: What is the greatest servant/event your church has done?

We began a series of “home make-over” weekends where we asked the city to select homes that were not being maintained, or were on the verge of being condemned – and we took those homes and renovated them in a few hours with large numbers of volunteers. In March of 2010, our E.R. (Euleess Revitalization) effort resulted in 16 homes being renovated by 750 people in one weekend. All of those homes felt the love and compassion of Christ as well as a presentation of the gospel and an invitation to church.

Question #3: How was this measured as the greatest? (numerical results, new visitors, salvations)

Numbers of people visited our church in the immediate weekends following. On Easter Sunday in 2010, we baptized 26 people who were specifically residents of the renovated homes. Beyond that, we sent a huge message to the community that the church is relevant and worth listening to. Numerous businesses and government groups joined with us and promised to do so even more in the future with these projects. So, we gained a great reputation as well as dozens of people coming to Christ.

Question #4: What are the strengths to this evangelistic approach?

This lets people who might never “share” their faith be involved in living it out in a tangible way that results in the gospel being communicated. If we only offer confrontational evangelism, we only get confrontational people involved. This type of evangelism allows those who love to “serve” do so in the name of Christ.

Question #5: What are the barriers to this approach?

People are typically skeptical when you begin such an approach. Only after you demonstrate authenticity do they lower their guard and become curious about your



motivation. So, a steady commitment to doing this is a requirement. It also takes considerable resources to renovate a home, and that investment has to be planned as well.

Question #6: What were the steps to implementing this strategy to your church?

We began by asking the city how we could help them meet needs in the community. They told us of the need and we agreed to try “just one.” It turned out to be an amazing situation, and after a year, the city presented us with a list of 29 homes and offered to reimburse us for some of the cost incurred. We’ve been going strong ever since.

Question #7: What biblical passages led you to take this evangelism approach?

Acts 2 was an instrumental passage, and began a message series called, “Arms Around the City.” Romans 12 was another passage that challenged us to serve our city with the gifts we were given. The Good Samaritan parable was another key passage we drew from.

Question #8: What have been the results in your church since beginning this evangelism strategy?

Our church has thoroughly embraced community evangelism and our community has thrown open the doors of involvement. We now have access to the public schools and can present the gospel in various venues. We’re also being called upon by our community to help tackle homelessness and adult literacy.

Question #9: Do you know of any other churches in the U.S. that are having success using this strategy?

I don’t have a list of them, but have heard of several who’ve attempted similar ministries.

**Dr. Glynn Stone, Mobberly Baptist Church, Longview, Texas**

Question #1: In your cultural context, why did you choose to take a servant/event evangelism strategy?

We were seeking to reach out to the unsaved and unchurched by providing something that would interest them. When they were on our campus, the gospel would be shared.

Question #2: What is the greatest servant/event your church has done?

1. Heaven's Gates and Hell's Flames – 4 different years
2. Car Show Rally/Tailgate Party
3. Revivals with Michael Silva, Johnny Hunt, other well known speakers

With special emphasis nights/ concerts for youth, activities for children, etc.

4. Musical Dramas – The Promise, Scrooge, etc.
5. One day events – Don Piper, Mark Cahill, passed out tracts at the Fairgrounds

Question #3: How was this measured as the greatest? (numerical results, new visitors, salvations)

We had hundreds saved at Heaven's Gates and Hell's Flames. All were followed up on with encouragers, calls, baptisms, etc. Unchurched and unsaved people came to our special emphasis for dramas, revivals, one day events like Don Piper, Mark Cahill, Fall Fest – Oct. 3

Question #4: What are the strengths to this evangelistic approach?

One day events allow exposure to speakers who have a unique way of sharing the gospel related their personal experiences. Also, dramatic presentations, music, etc has a

way of making the gospel clear to everyone and allows them to see their “sin” in a stronger light.

Question #5: What are the barriers to this approach?

We found the one day events are sometimes just as effective in producing salvations. However, Heaven’s Gates and Hell’s Flames brought about 1400 plus decisions for Christ over a 14 day period. Revivals and musical dramas were not as effective in reaching the unsaved. You need to consider the time and money spent on the event versus the results.

Question #6: What were the steps to implementing this strategy to your church?

1. Strong planning committee that begins 6-8 months in advance.
2. Prayer, prayer, prayer
3. Specific ways for members to be involved in inviting their friends:

Prayer walking their personal streets with tickets, inviter cards to take to work, ballgames, newspaper and tv advertising, etc.

Question #7: What biblical passages led you to take this evangelism approach?

The book of Acts...

Question #8: What have been the results in your church since beginning this evangelism strategy?

We began with EE over 13 years ago. Then we moved to FAITH Evangelism for 10 years. Now we do what we call Everyday FAITH. Everyday FAITH is a combination of people sharing their faith daily wherever they are and personal visits to people who have visited our church or to newcomers to town. We use the Bill Faye curriculum called “Share Jesus without Fear” as a class to equip our people.

Question #9: Do you know of any other churches in the U.S. that are having success using this strategy?

No

**Allan Thompson, First Baptist Church Clairemont, California**

Question #1: In your cultural context, why did you choose to take a servant/event evangelism strategy?

Many in my community are anti-church because of either bad experiences, media, or opinions on corrupt preachers. So events and services are a positive way to communicate with them.

Question #2: What is the greatest servant/event your church has done?

We teamed up with the local Chinese Baptist Church, Filipino Church, and Salvation Army Church and cleaned up the alley and held a rally afterward.

Question #3: How was this measured as the greatest? (numerical results, new visitors, salvations)

1. Service to the community.
2. Cooperation of local churches.
3. Relationships built with other great commission churches.
4. Contact with community.
5. We did get some visitors.

Question #4: What are the strengths to this evangelistic approach?

Distribution of fliers and tracts. Showing the community we care.

Question #5: What are the barriers to this approach?

We painted graffiti and one neighbor didn't like that. We picked the only hot day in San Diego to do this. It's a big alley. What do you do with the trash when you're finished?

Question #6: What were the steps to implementing this strategy to your church?

1. Announcement. Set the date.
2. Invite other churches.
3. Hand out fliers announcing our intentions.
4. Plan rally.
5. Complete the project.
6. Evaluate the results.

Question #7: What biblical passages led you to take this evangelism approach?

John 13 on serving. Matt 28 on going.

Question #8: What have been the results in your church since beginning this evangelism strategy?

Continued relationships and openness to do it again.

Question #9: Do you know of any other churches in the U.S. that are having success using this strategy?

New Seasons of San Diego.

**Dr. Matt Pearson, Wynne Baptist Church, Wynne, Arkansas**

Question #1: In your cultural context, why did you choose to take a servant/event evangelism strategy?

Wynne Baptist Church is a unique church in that it is a fairly large church (around 800 in attendance on Sunday morning) in a small town (population 8500). Thus, around

10% of the entire city attends WBC on a Sunday morning. It is almost impossible to go anywhere in town during the week and not run into a fellow WBCer. We do some servant/event evangelism events, but mostly I encourage our people to make it their lifestyle to be evangelistic where they are. Since our people are sprinkled throughout the city, that seems to be most effective, rather than big events.

Question #2: What is the greatest servant/event your church has done?

Good question. Probably what is called “Mission-Wynne.” Every year, for the past 3 years, during the summer, we call our church members to take a week-long mission trip to their own city. We equip the people to do block parties, back yard Bible clubs, football camps, prayer walking, service projects, etc. The idea, of course, is to get the church members doing what they should be (and can be!) doing all year long.

Question #3: How was this measured as the greatest? (numerical results, new visitors, salvations)

This has measured the greatest in the impact it has had on our community and in the number of church members we have had involved. Not sure of how many visitors or salvations we have had as a result. However, it has allowed WBC, the ‘county seat – wealthy-white’ church be seen as a church who cares. It has gone a long way in our community. It has allowed our members to have the trust of people of the community more than in years past. This, of course, allows for more opportunities to present the Gospel in the long term.

Question #4: What are the strengths to this evangelistic approach?

Gets our people doing evangelism where they live and earns the trust of the community.

Question #5: What are the barriers to this approach?

Can't think of any, other than having some church members who don't get the point of what we are trying to do.

Question #6: What were the steps to implementing this strategy to your church?

Putting the week on the calendar early – thus giving members time to plan vacations, time off, etc. Equipping Sunday School teachers, who in turn, equip members in their class. Budget for the week prior to the yearly budget presented in the Fall. Pray. Preach leading up to the week about the week coming up. Follow up and encourage those who participated to make it their lifestyle. We have also been able to go back into some neighborhoods later in the year to follow up with relationships made during the summer.

Question #7: What biblical passages led you to take this evangelism approach?

Can't think of any specifically – just reading the New Testament I guess.

Question #8: What have been the results in your church since beginning this evangelism strategy?

It has given our church a deeper understanding of the culture in which they themselves live. It has opened the eyes of our people, not only of the lostness, but of the poverty, the differences of people, etc. I cannot say (yet!) that the church has grown numerically due to this strategy, but it has definitely given all of us a deeper understanding of the need to take the Gospel to our community.

Question #9: Do you know of any other churches in the U.S. that are having success using this strategy?

I am sure there are, but I don't know of any off the top of my head.

**Dr. Bryant Wright, Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, Marietta, Georgia (1<sup>st</sup> Survey)**

Question #1: In your cultural context, why did you choose to take a servant/event evangelism strategy?

We wanted to provide an opportunity for our adults and teens to share Christ outside the walls of the church in our own backyard. We also wanted our children to experience Bible study with children from other ethnic and economic backgrounds.

Question #2: What is the greatest servant/event your church has done?

The greatest event in recent years has been “Playcation”, Vacation Bible School conducted at multiple sites throughout the community.

Question #3: How was this measured as the greatest? (numerical results, new visitors, salvations)

We recorded 1,571 total participants at 12 sites. Average daily attendance was 1,120. Of this number, 72% of the children had no prior connection to or involvement in our church. We also recorded 228 decisions for Christ...57 from our local church family and 171 from the community at large.

Question #4: What are the strengths to this evangelistic approach?

1. The opportunity for our volunteers to develop a relationship with the lost and unchurched.
2. The opportunity for our volunteers to share Christ with the lost and unchurched.
3. The opportunity for volunteers to experience a “mission trip” at a minimal cost.
4. Provides training for future mission projects.

Question #5: What are the barriers to this approach?



1. Fewer church children participated compared to our in-house Vacation Bible School.
2. Several potential sites would not allow us to use their facility.
3. Some individuals who showed up did not want to participate in some of the Bible stories and learning activities. They did not return on the second day.
4. We experienced an increased amount of discipline problems with children who had no church background.

Question #6: What were the steps to implementing this strategy to your church?

1. The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, AL conducted a similar event
2. Our Senior Pastor picked up on the concept and presented to the Executive Staff
3. Our Children's Ministry staff bought into the concept and spent several days in planning and preparation
4. The concept was presented to the volunteers in our Children's Ministry and then to the church at large.
5. Volunteers were enlisted; teaching teams formed and trained; sites identified; and supplies purchased

Question #7: What biblical passages led you to take this evangelism approach?

1. Matthew 28:19-20
2. Matthew 22:37-39

Question #8: What have been the results in your church since beginning this evangelism strategy?

1. A renewed excitement among our children and volunteer leaders about summer Bible study.

2. A growing excitement about local missions
3. Continuing partnerships with local schools
4. Opportunities for discipleship and social ministry

Question #9: Do you know of any other churches in the U.S. that are having success using this strategy?

The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, AL

**Dr. Bryant Wright, Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, Marietta, Georgia (2<sup>nd</sup> Survey)**

Question #1: In your cultural context, why did you choose to take a servant/event evangelism strategy?

We first heard of the idea from George Wright, pastor of Cedarcrest Church, a former campus of Johnson Ferry. It was such a tremendous experience for their church that we got excited about the possibility of challenging our congregation in the same way.

Question #2: What is the greatest servant/event your church has done?

Spontaneous baptism has produced a record number of baptisms and been a mountain top spiritual experience for our congregation.

Question #3: How was this measured as the greatest? (numerical results, new visitors, salvations)

On February 1, 2009 we baptized 228 persons in one day.

Question #4: What are the strengths to this evangelistic approach?

1. It allowed us to challenge individuals to examine their relationship with Christ.
2. It allowed us to challenge individuals to be obedient to Christ by following through with believer's baptism.

Question #5: What are the barriers to this approach?

1. There are those who question this approach.
2. The church must do a good job in following up on each person who is baptized to make sure that they have professed faith in Christ and that they are being disciplined.

Question #6: What were the steps to implementing this strategy to your church?

1. We told our deacons, elders, and staff so that they could be in prayer.
2. We told the congregation only that it would be the most unique service we had ever experienced.
3. Our senior pastor preached a message that morning entitled, “Jesus, Baptism, and You” from Mark 1:1, 9-11.
4. After each message, we asked everyone to consider being baptized by immersion if:
  - A. They had never trusted Christ for their salvation, but were ready to do so that morning.
  - B. They had become a believer after being baptized (maybe baptized as a child, but later came to faith in Christ as an adult)
  - C. They had already been baptized but by means other than immersion.
  - D. They were a believer who had never been baptized at all.
5. As people came forward they were counseled, information obtained, and then they were led to our baptismal dressing area where we had all the necessary clothing and supplies.

Question #7: What biblical passages led you to take this evangelism approach?

Acts 2:38-41, 8:25-39, 10:47-48.

Question #8: What have been the results in your church since beginning this evangelism strategy?

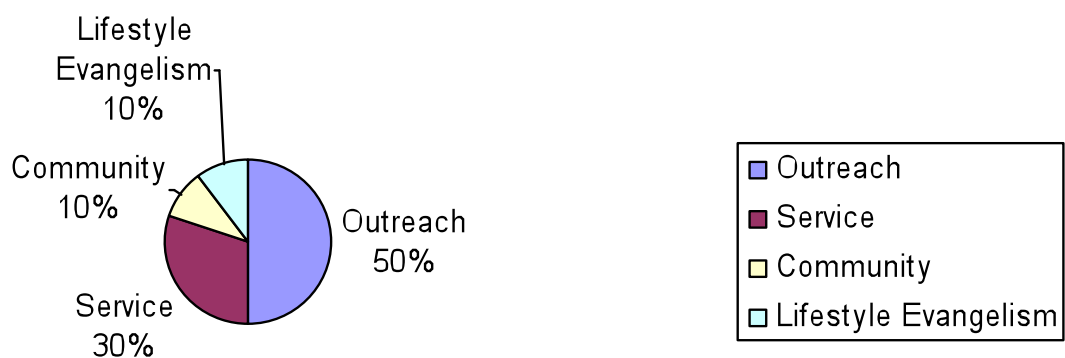
1. Our congregation has been energized by the work of the Holy Spirit.
2. Joy and unity was felt by participants and spectators.
3. Other individuals approached us about beginning a relationship with Christ and being baptized in the weeks and months that followed.

Question #9: Do you know of any other churches in the U.S. that are having success using this strategy?

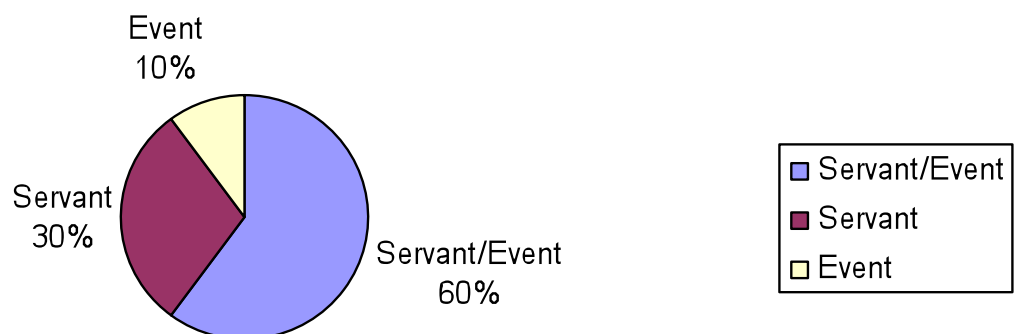
1. Cedarcrest Church, Acworth, GA
2. First Baptist Church of Woodstock, GA
3. Oakwood Baptist Church, Chickamauga, GA
4. West Ridge Church, Hiram, GA
5. Elevation Church, Matthews, NC
6. Mars Hill Church, Seattle, WA

### Survey Results

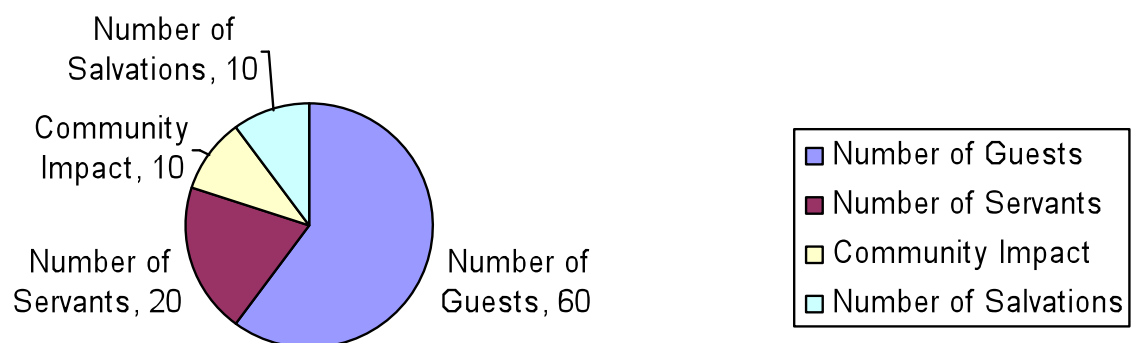
#### Survey Question # 1



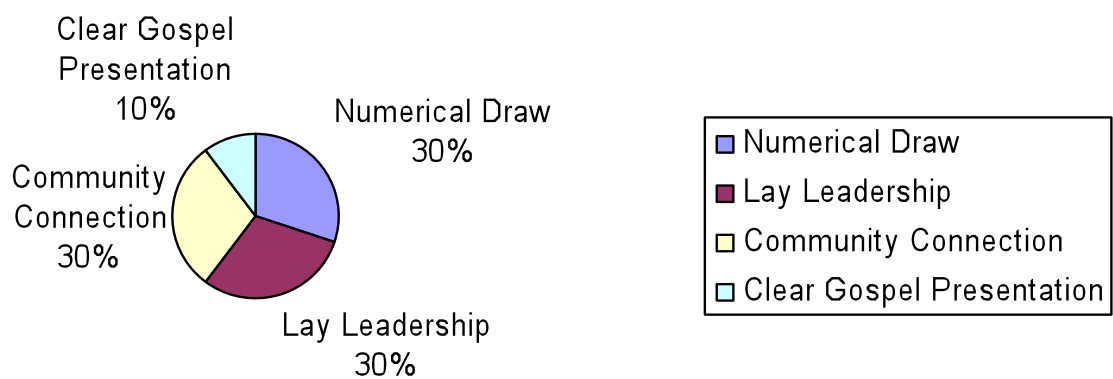
#### Survey Question # 2



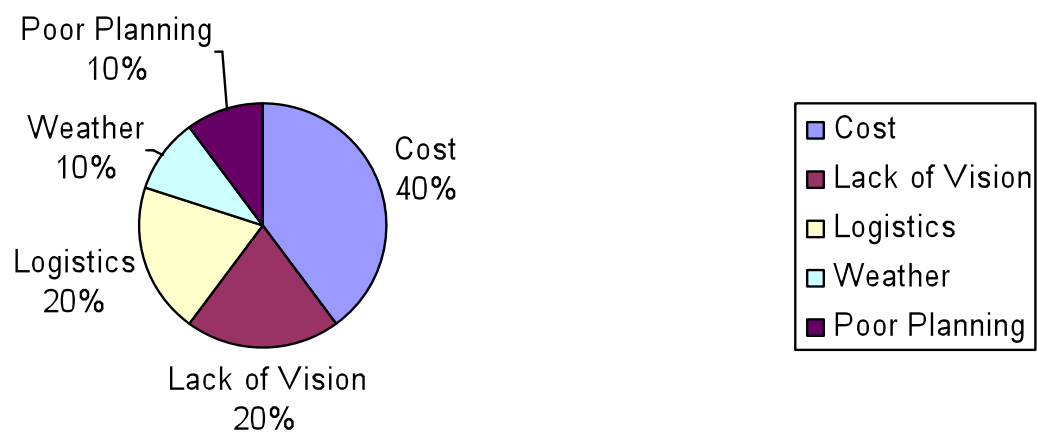
### Survey Question # 3



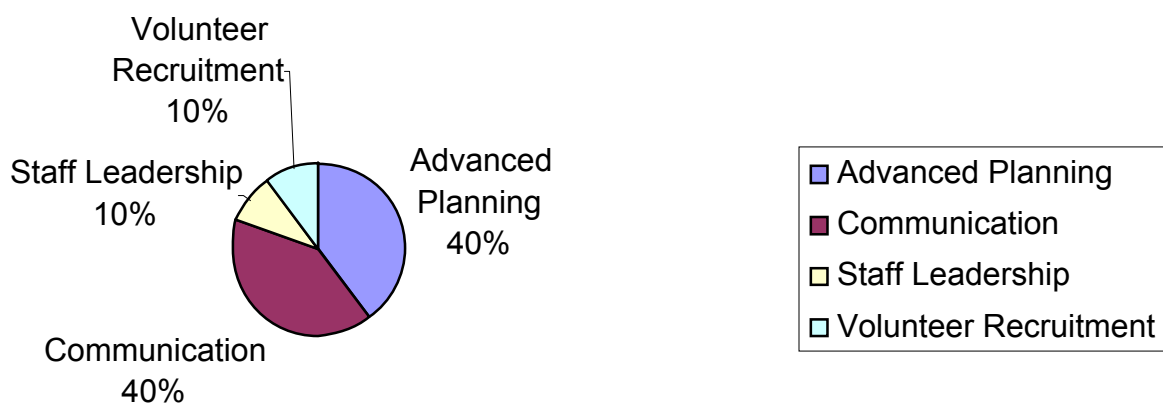
### Survey Question # 4



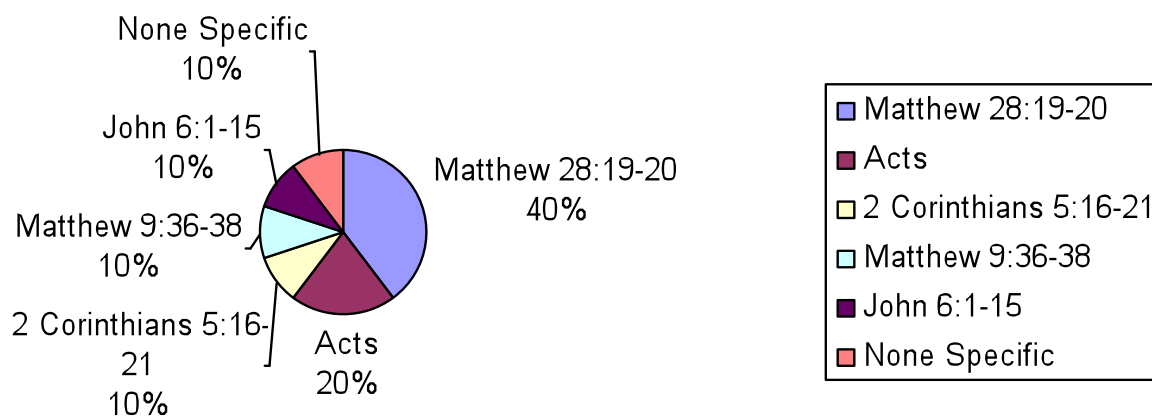
### Survey Question # 5



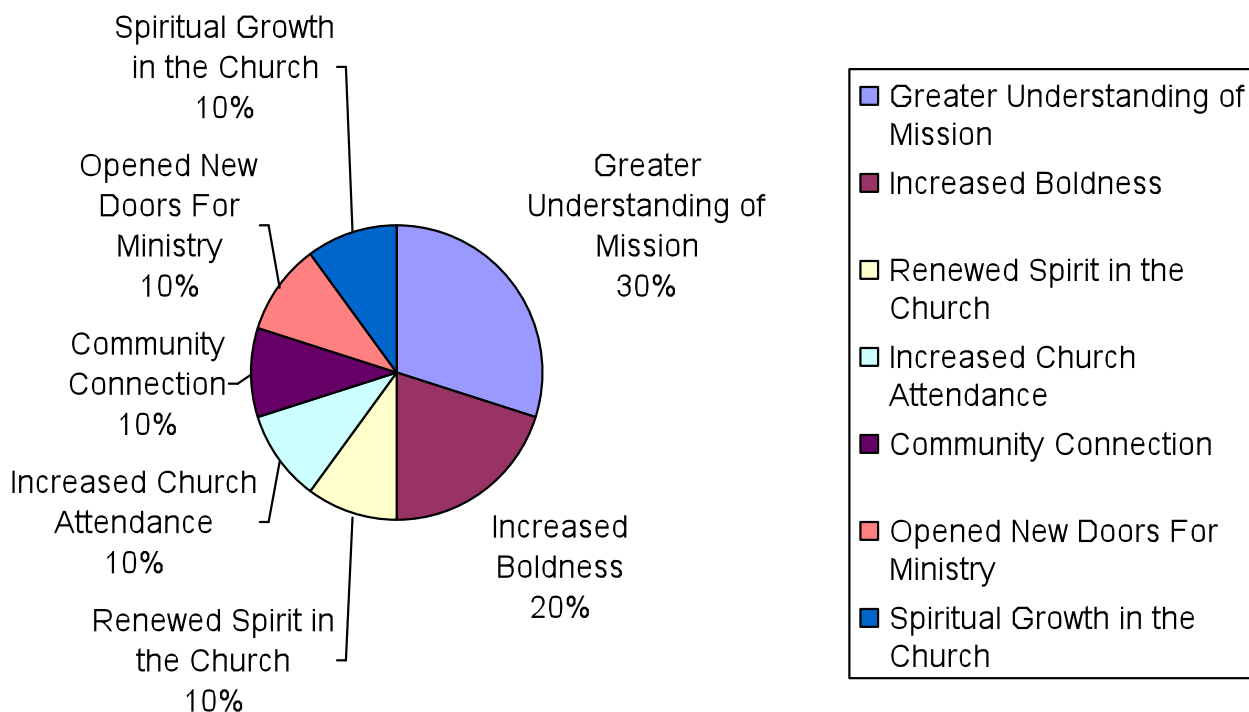
### Survey Question # 6



### Survey Question # 7



### Survey Question # 8





APPENDIX B  
MANUAL FOR BLOCK PARTIES

**Evangelistic Block Party Success Story**

The evangelistic block party (EBP) strategy began only a few years ago. A California Southern Baptist church had participated in a secular block party in the nearby government housing project and saw the possibility of using this strategy to reach lost people, as well as help poor people.

At this church's first party, more than 250 people attended and more than 25 people received Christ. Everyone was fed a barbecue lunch, free clothing was distributed, and food was given away. The gospel was presented to everyone, and each person received a New Testament.

This church hosted another EBP at a crime-ridden public housing development nearby. It was well attended, and 75 to 100 people were saved. As a result, the church began to overflow with new Christians. The church instituted other types of evangelistic outreach and extensive follow-up. The prayer ministry began to increase tremendously. A third EBP was held. Around 800 people attended and were fed a barbecue dinner. More than 200 people were converted, one ton of clothing was distributed, and thousands of pounds of food were given to poor people.

Thousands of people near the church were converted through intensive outreach efforts. In a two-year period, using marked New Testaments, door-to-door witness, and EBPs, 16,000 souls prayed to receive Christ!

Since that time evangelistic block parties have been held successfully throughout the United States. It is our prayer that this manual will encourage, equip, and motivate you to host your own EBP. At the EBP you will feed, clothe, and help people but always remember that without Christ, they have nothing. Give them Jesus. Witness in all you do. Make it your primary work.

### **What Is An Evangelistic Block Party?**

Churches all over America are using the evangelistic block party (EBP) to introduce people to Christ. An EBP is part of the Special Evangelistic Event strategy of the North American Mission Board (NAMB). It involves identifying a neighborhood and providing a meal and program. In needier areas clothing is distributed. This creates a friendly climate for evangelism as trained witnesses share the gospel. The EBP has been used all over the United States as the perfect marriage between ministry and intentional evangelism.

The EBP is also part of the Total Church Life strategy for NAMB's Evangelization Group. It is designed to reach our nation for Christ through the total penetration of an area with the gospel. One neighborhood after another throughout our country can be identified and saturated with the gospel through EBPs. The EBP calls for the total participation of every member of your church in evangelism. It allows a large number of church members to be involved in evangelistic outreach.

Jesus hosted a type of block party when he fed 5,000 people. On another occasion He fed 4,000. These events did not take place in a church, synagogue, or temple. Jesus went to the hillside where people gathered. He proclaimed the Gospel and met their needs.

### **Characteristics Of An Evangelistic Block Party**

The evangelistic block party is intimate.

Even though the evangelistic block party (EBP) is a mass evangelism event, its intimacy is enhanced by using a personal evangelism thrust. The church has too often cloistered itself behind institutional walls. EBPs provide churches with a ministry of presence and visibility as the church moves out of its building in Christ's name to feed, teach, clothe, and evangelize.

At most parties no "come forward" invitation is given, but at periodic times during the EBP a speaker will thank guests for coming and present a short testimony. He will also call attention to church members who are mingling among with the guests and giving them free marked New Testaments or evangelistic booklets. As trained witnesses distribute the Bibles or evangelistic booklets they explain the gospel. The EBP provides a non-threatening, intimate forum that can be used to enhance the sharing of the gospel.

The evangelistic block party is intentionally evangelistic.

Communicating the good news of Jesus Christ is the goal of every evangelistic block party. Evangelism should be the priority in planning any EBP. An EBP should include an interesting program, but entertainment is not the main point. It should include food, but feeding a crowd is not the ultimate outcome. Every element of the EBP should focus on people hearing the gospel and praying to receive Christ.

Block parties discussed in this manual are evangelistic harvest events. People who will be at your EBP will be at different stages in their spiritual understanding. Some will have no knowledge of God. Others will have a hazy awareness of a Supreme Being. Many, however, will be interested in hearing about Christ. Some will be ready to receive Him. EBPs provide a way to share Christ with those who are ready and to cultivate those who are further away from Christ.

The evangelistic block party is informal.

The outdoor get-together, the meal, and the friendly program personalities create a relaxed atmosphere of acceptance, so keep it informal!

The evangelistic block party is interesting

It is important that you organize your party to be interesting and relevant. Include activities that keep the event moving. Give away clothes, serve food, and distribute Scripture portions or witnessing booklets. A good sound system will enhance the appeal of the event. Play lively music the entire time. Talented people may be scheduled to sing or present other skillful entertainment. Choirs, talks, or clinics by famous athletes, puppeteers, or special groups may be used. Remember that people will be moving around constantly; entertainers should not expect exclusive attention during their presentations. Sometimes people are invited to share brief testimonies. Sermons are not usually included, but if a message is shared it should be short and simple and presented with enthusiasm. Keep the focus on Jesus and His great love for all people.

Planning a program that reflects the makeup of the neighborhood will create additional interest. For example, a predominately Hispanic neighborhood with many young children will certainly require a different type of program than one in an Anglo

suburban area made up mostly of senior citizens. Plan your music, meal, activities, program, and evangelism strategy with the ages, education, and ethnic and socioeconomic makeup of the participants in mind.

To increase interest and involvement the EBP is best conducted locally. Your own church members should staff the EBP, prepare the meal, and most especially, provide those who will witness during the party. What if the scope of your EBP is so large that you cannot effectively do it alone? Involve another church in your planning and implementations, but involve as few churches as possible to make the job of assimilating these new persons into local churches easier. An inner-city church is an ideal location to do EBPs, but they may lack the resources to sponsor one on their own. It can team up with a suburban church that can provide the resources of money and personnel to distribute clothing and meals. This will free members of the inner-city church to witness during the block party.

The location of the EBP should be within your church's field of ministry. An empty lot in the neighborhood, an apartment clubhouse, or your church property are effective sites. The primary audience to invite to the party is local residents, not transients or tourists. Inviting local residents allows for good follow-up.

The evangelistic block party is imaginative.

Imaginative variations on the basic EBP theme have been tried in various parts of the United States. Following are some short descriptions of other types of evangelistic block parties

### **Variations Of The Evangelistic Block Party**

#### Neighborhood Pasta Party

Christians in Boston have hosted a New England potluck supper. They prepare pasta for their entire subdivision. Neighbors are invited to bring their favorite sauces. This creates interest and involvement. As acquaintances become friends, the gospel can be shared more effectively.

#### Neighborhood Watch Block Parties

Recent surveys show Americans believe that crime is the major issue affecting our nation. Some churches have adopted as their community ministry ways to help neighborhoods, subdivisions, apartments, and mobile home communities set up neighborhood watch programs.

Your church should work with local law enforcement. Most police or sheriff's departments will be glad that a church would want to do this. Also, an apartment manager or homeowners association president would most likely appreciate a church helping with promotion of a neighborhood watch meeting.

The church should provide the site. The church building, if close enough, is an excellent place to meet. This will familiarize attendees with your church facilities in a nonthreatening atmosphere.

Additionally, your church should provide a meal. The pastor should welcome all participants and invite those present to future services. Introduce law enforcement personalities to present their program. Obtain names and addresses of all participants in the meeting. This can be accomplished through the use of a registration table as people arrive. After the meeting, give each attendee a witnessing booklet or marked New

Testament and information about your church. Share the gospel with those who show interest and follow up with the neighborhood periodically, addressing any problems or issues that come up during the meeting.

#### The Neighborhood Super Bowl Party

You can use the Super Bowl as an opportunity to share the gospel. The Super Bowl is an event that friends frequently gather to watch together. This event has grown in popularity since it began in the 1980s. Invite neighbors to a Super Bowl Party. The party can be held in a home, at the church, or in a nearby gym. You may want to rent a big screen TV. The Super Bowl is viewed in a group setting. During commercials the pastor, a well-known athlete, or another special speaker shares his or her testimony. You could show special evangelistic videos during half time. This event has grown in popularity since it began in the 1980s. Many people have come to Christ through this type of event.

#### Children's Block Parties

One church in Florida had a block party especially for children. They enlisted an ice cream truck to drive around the targeted neighborhood, passing out free tickets to be redeemed for free ice cream at the block party. This attraction brought children and their whole families to the EBP. Another large Florida church rented an entire carnival and provided bus transportation for 2,000 people from nearby neighborhoods and apartment complexes.

#### Simultaneous Block Parties for Children

Some churches have a type of simultaneous EBP for children in subdivisions, mobile home communities, and apartment complexes. Use Backyard Bible Club (BBC) teaching materials and music available from LifeWay Christian Resources (LifeWay).

The clubs should meet simultaneously. BBC material is supplemented with arts, crafts, and refreshments at each club. Clubs can meet from Monday through Friday, from 9:45 a.m. (or whatever time your Sunday School begins; this time is significant, as you will see) until 12:15 p.m. Clubs can meet in the evening, if necessary.

Make sure that the gospel is shared effectively with children who attend the BBC. Use the “God’s Special Plan” witnessing booklet for older children.

Commencement is held on Friday or Saturday evening. Have a special attraction that will draw children and their parents from the neighborhood clubs to the church commencement. Some churches rent a space walk, serve milk shakes, plan pony rides, or sponsor other activities of interest to children. It is important that you get the names of each person who attends, since some children and parents will attend who did not go to the BBC.

A 15-minute presentation can be held during Commencement to recognize each club. At the presentation, announce that you have a time like BBC at the church each Sunday at 9:45 a.m. (or whatever time your Sunday School begins), and invite the kids and parents to participate. Allow all the clubs to sing the music they have learned during the week. Give award diplomas to each child. Each club should set up table to “show off” each child’s Bible-learned projects. After the commencement give the children their projects to take home. Most parents, even those from unchurched families, will come to see their children at the church. The children will be proud of their projects and what they have learned. They will want to meet the children from the other clubs.



A few children from the clubs will not be able to attend the commencement. Give their projects to an outreach team to deliver to the child during your regular evangelistic visitation. The projects will provide a wonderful reason to visit and share the gospel.

#### Citywide Block Party

Some large churches that are located in smaller communities sponsor citywide EBPs which are designed to introduce people who attend to Jesus. Your church may rent a local city athletic field and provide a meal for the whole community. Set up a large sound system and feature popular Christian musical groups throughout the day. Church members can serve up food, create fun, and make music while they share the gospel. The receptivity of city residents to the gospel is often greatly enhanced by the party.

#### Sports Block Parties

Sports are an excellent attraction for many to come to a block party. Many people would come to hear a well-known Christian athlete speak, give a demonstration, or lead a sports clinic. The atmosphere of fun created by adding a sports strategy to your EBP will increase the receptivity participants.

#### **Should You Host An Evangelistic Block Party?**

Evangelistic block parties can be conducted with all types of cultural groups in many different locations. It is unlikely that your EBP will contain every element of the following list. However, at least two or three of the following elements should be present to ensure the success of your event:

#### Ethnicity

In many ethnic cultures the outdoor market is a cultural meeting places. For some reason, Anglos go indoors to party!

### Lower Socioeconomic Level

Evangelistic block parties tend to work better in lower socioeconomic areas. This may be because the meal and clothes distribution are more of an attraction to the needy. Block parties are tremendously effective in evangelizing poorer areas of our country. Find ways to continue ministry to these poorer areas.

### Identifiable Neighborhood

Another indicator of an effective block party is neighborhood identity. A well-defined neighborhood gives your church the opportunity to concentrate its promotion, resources, and attention on reaching a particular community for Christ. It also provides the opportunity to custom-make promotional items to enhance neighborhood participation.

### Children

Children are attracted to evangelistic block parties and are often receptive to the gospel. They become bridges across which the gospel can be shared with parents and other adults.

## **Conducting An Evangelistic Block Party**

### The Priority of Preparation

“Organize to evangelize” should be your motto as you plan. Preparation will determine the evangelistic success of the evangelistic block party. Preparation will ensure that the team doing the major portion of the work and leaders will have a good experience sharing their faith. The good experiences that preparation provides can make this event a strategy of your church for years to come.

Whatever location is selected for the event, necessary requirements, authorization, and procedures should be carefully considered. Sometimes you need to get permission and secure permits before events can be scheduled. Some places may require you to pay fees to secure the use of their facilities. Allow adequate lead time to ensure good calendar coordination. Consider safety and accessibility when selecting the place to conduct the event.

When using a street for the evangelistic block party, inform residents beforehand. Use proper signs and equipment for blocking off the street.

Plan for rest room accommodations and provide adequate direction signs. Clearly designate parking areas. Greeters should meet people in the parking area and direct them to the event location.

Give careful and thorough attention to the focus group. Consider the ethnic mix of the group. Anticipate special characteristics, including language needs, food selection, publicity, announcements, and cultural music styles for greater appeal. Leave nothing to chance.

Enlist, train, and coordinate a sufficient number of workers to conduct the block party. The number of workers needed to adequately staff the event will be determined by the number of people you expect to reach and the number of ministry actions included in the event. If the goal is to share with 100 people, everything should be planned with that number as a guide.

### The Priority of Prayer

This is the most important thing you will do in preparations for an evangelistic block party. You are entering enemy territory when you seek the lost. Satan will try to

discourage and disrupt everything you do. Feed, clothe, help, and comfort a person and Satan will not bother you. But share the gospel of Jesus Christ and Satan will block you and oppose you from every corner. Prayer is necessary to pull down the strongholds of the Evil One. Through prayer the Holy Spirit is given control of our every effort. Prayer will give those witnessing at the EBP strength and confidence. Prayer is also a recognition of dependence upon God, who alone is able to bring the lost to salvation.

The local church should present the plans for the evangelistic block party in a prayer meeting with the entire congregation. The church should agree to reach out in this way. An EBP is not a special group activity. It should be a total church activity. Involve every member in this work, including praying for and encouraging workers. Pray also at this meeting that the right people will be chosen to assist the pastor in the EBP's leadership.

After approval by the church, praying for the EBP should be a priority at every church meeting. Each EBP planning session should also include a special prayer time. Conduct a special prayer meeting the night before your EBP. This should involve the entire church. Pray for witnesses and workers who will serve in each capacity. Pray for good weather and God's protection of everyone involved. Pray that the Holy Spirit will be in control of all that happens. Most special prayer meetings last about an hour.

Some churches have an all-night prayer meeting for special EBPs. Start your prayer meetings at 7:14 p.m. to emphasize 2 Chronicles 7:14 (KJV): "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Immediately following the EBP gather the workers and have a short victory prayer meeting and testimony time. Include prayers of thanksgiving for what the Lord did. Let some of the witnesses and workers share blessings that God gave during the day. These testimonies should be short and positive.

Do not plan an evangelistic block party unless you are sure that God wants this kind of outreach to be done. You will certainly need His power and blessing to bring it about successfully. Pray!

### The Priority of Personnel

Selecting the leaders and workers is vitally important to the success of your evangelistic block party. Enlist responsible people.

#### **Pastor**

The pastor should be the leader of all the planning and implementation of an evangelistic block party. Everyone selected to head a work assignment or to work in a group must meet his approval. He should be an ex officio member of all groups, teams, and committees. If you ask outside help to assist you in conducting an EBP, the pastor should be the head of their work and planning also. He has the total responsibility for this effort. Since he is the overseer of the church, he must see that all is done Scripturally and properly. Also assign leadership responsibilities to the minister of evangelism, church Evangelism Council, and/or Missions Development Council.

#### **Food and Clothing Coordinator**

One person shall be chosen as food and clothing coordinator. This person should work with the pastor to see that all the details of the food and clothing aspects of the evangelistic block party are carried out efficiently. He or she will be in charge of

gathering food, cooking, and serving. The cooking facilities, utensils, serving tables, and cleanup will be this coordinator's responsibility. This coordinator will be in charge of planning an efficient method of serving food to those who attend the EBP and distributing food and clothing. These tasks may be divided between two coordinators—one in charge of food and the other in charge of the clothing distribution.

The food and clothing coordinator should select and train a team to be in charge of serving the food. Kind and courteous workers should present the food in a pleasing and appetizing manner. Have workers serve the meal at the EBP instead of distributing it in a self-serve, buffet style. This will ensure cleanliness and fair portions for all. If bags of nonperishable food are to be distributed at the end of the party, enlist volunteers to prepare a bag of food to give to each person who attends.

The coordinator should also secure a good place to prepare the food with proper stoves and pans to cook in. An outdoor barbecue is the most popular EBP meal. Barbecue can be done indoors in an oven but is easiest and best done outside on a grill. In many towns large grills on trailers can be rented. If large grills are not available, several small grills will work as well. Few churches have large commercial-size pots and pans, so rent or borrow them from restaurants and larger churches.

Sometimes supermarkets and wholesalers give discounts when informed of the EBP strategy. If food is bought earlier than the day of the EBP make sure you have proper refrigeration.

Food for giveaway can sometimes be secured without charge. Ask for donations from church members, local supermarkets, wholesale grocers, the Salvation Army, and

local gospel missions. Bakeries may give you their day-old bread and pastries. Include in your plans an appropriate recognition of all contributors.

The coordinator will also select a team to be in charge of clothing distribution. This team should possess qualities of cleanliness, orderliness, and organization. Kindness, courtesy, gentleness, understanding, and firmness are additional attributes that team members should possess.

Secure clothing from the Salvation Army or gospel missions in your hometown. Your church members can also provide clothing.

The coordinator should schedule as many meetings as are necessary to ensure that materials and food are located early enough to avoid stress. Begin well in advance to work at a steady and pleasant pace to ensure that food and clothing are available two weeks before the block party. Gather clothing before the event. Accept only clean clothing in good condition. Separate the clothing into six groups—men, women, boys, girls, preschool, and babies. Arrange the clothing attractively on hangers or folding tables. Provide adequate room for needy people to “shop” and look over the clothing.

Finally, the coordinator should work with the pastor to appoint a group to be in charge of setting up for the party and cleaning up afterward. This team should also assist in parking and security matters, if necessary. Set up clothing and food tables and set out trashcans in the shade, if possible. Put up tarps or tents if there is very little shade.

### **Program Leader**

A second person will be chosen as the program leader. This person will work closely with the pastor to invite music groups, puppet groups, clowns, speakers, or other

people to lead the program at the block party. Be creative and think big as you plan the program.

The program should be appropriate for the people you want to reach. Music, for example, can include black gospel, contemporary Christian, or Hispanic Christian mariachi-type music, depending on the audience that will be present. Music can be a problem at an evangelistic block party. Many Christian workers prefer only one kind—their kind. Educate workers about unfamiliar music that will be used to reach the chosen group.

Taped background music can also be effective. It can be very effective to have a person act as a disc jockey. A microphone should be available for announcements and an informal gospel message.

### **Promotion Director**

Select a promotion director. This person will be in charge of getting the word out about the evangelistic block party. Print attractive publicity flyers. If people of different ethnicities are present in the neighborhood you have chosen for the EBP, print flyers in their languages. Enlist a task force to distribute the flyers door-to-door no sooner than three days before the block party. Cover the area you want to reach. Door-to-door flyers, signs in front of the church, and posters in neighborhood stores also work well. Hang posters a week before the block party.

### **Witnessing Team Leader**

A witnessing team leader is the fourth leader that the church should appoint. Select a person who is motivated, capable, and experienced in soul winning. The pastor may choose to head the witnessing team. The witnessing team leader will enlist



witnesses, train them, and help secure witness materials. If there is no one in your church to handle this job, secure an experienced person from outside your church to fill this important position.

### **Additional Personnel**

Enlist additional personnel for special needs. Enlist a sound technician to set up and operate the sound system. Enlist an emcee to introduce entertainment, gift recipients, and make any necessary announcements. Enlist an activities coordinator to plan and conduct games for youth and children, if possible. Avoid activities that may result in injuries.

Every person staffing the evangelistic block party should be a greeter. Greeters can give directions and information. They can give a balloon to each child attending; balloons are inexpensive and a delight to children. Do not give balloons to children under five years of age. There could also be a drawing for children's toys. Have all workers wear a nametag identifying themselves as greeters.

### **Summary**

The basic evangelistic block party should include the following personnel: the pastor, food and clothing coordinator, program leader, promotion director, and witnessing team leader. Use about six people for the cooking team. Enlist four people to prepare food tables and serve. Use four people to maintain the clothing tables. A team of at least four should set up, take care of the garbage, clean up after the EBP, and provide security during the EBP. Recruit an emcee, a sound technician, and an activities coordinator. Most important, secure a team of 20 trained witnesses to share one-on-one. Everyone should serve as greeters.

Enlist a team of around 46 people to staff a basic evangelistic block party. Some churches are able to do effective parties with fewer personnel. However, the above personnel plan is ideal and should be adhered to as closely as possible.

### **Pastor/Block Party Coordinator**

The pastor should be the leader of all the planning and implementation of an evangelistic block party. Everyone selected to head a work assignment or to work in a group must meet his approval. He should be an ex officio member of all groups, teams, and committees. If you ask outside help to assist you in conducting an EBP, the pastor should be the head of their work and planning also. He has the total responsibility for this effort. Since he is the overseer of the church, he must see that all is done Scripturally and properly. Also assign leadership responsibilities to the minister of evangelism, church Evangelism Council, and/or Missions Development Council.

### **Initial Training Session**

At the initial training session, perhaps two months before the block party, inform volunteers of their duties and give them job descriptions. Duties of each position are listed under The Priority of Personnel in the chapter entitled “Conducting an Evangelistic Block Party.” This meeting should be an organizational meeting as well as an instructional one. The pastor should meet with all the volunteers.

At this session goals and a calendar of meetings and deadlines for securing materials should be determined. See the planning sheet for a suggested calendar of a basic evangelistic block party. Other planning meetings should be convened whenever necessary.

## Planning Sheet for Your Evangelistic Block Party

### Checklist

	STEP	WHAT	WHO	WHEN	WHERE
	1	Prayer meeting to present block party proposal to church.	Pastor	6-12 mos.	
	2	Enlist block party leaders	Pastor/church	6-12 mos.	
	3	Secure block party site (and permits if necessary)	Person assigned	6 mos.	
	4	Enlist block party committees	Pastor/block party leaders	6 mos.	
	5	Initial training session	Pastor/others assigned	6 mos.	
	6	Start collecting clothing and food for giveaway bags	Food/Clothing Coordinator	6 mos.	
	7	Secure outside program personalities, musicians, speakers, and children's performers if necessary	Pastor/program leader	6 mos.	
	8	Arrange for equipment, decorations, menu, and other inventory items	Committees assigned	3 months	
	9	Order witnessing, counseling and follow-up materials	Witnessing team leader	3 months	
	10	Make hospitality arrangements (motel, meals, etc.) for outside program personalities if necessary	Program leader	2 months	
	11	Print publicity flyers, registration cards, and make posters	Promotion director	2 months	
	12	Place ads in newspaper (and on radio and T.V., if necessary)	Promotion director	6 weeks	
	13	Promote prayer in services, committee meetings, and organizations	Pastor and persons assigned	6 weeks	

	14	Begin promotion of EBP in church newsletter and bulletin	Promotion director	4 weeks	
	15	Witness training session	Pastor and witnessing team leader	4 weeks	
	16	Distribute flyers, hang posters	Promotion director	1 week	
	17	Reconfirm all arrangements, permits hospitality, food, clothing worker, and workers	Pastor and committees assigned	1 week	
	18	Pick up outside program personalities	Program leader	1 day before	
	19	Final physical arrangements	Committees assigned	Event day	
	20	Clean-up	Committees assigned	Event day	
	21	Begin follow up with new converts	Witness team and trained witnesses	Immediately	
	22	Visit and contact all prospects	Witness team leader and trained witnesses	Immediately	

### Timeline

	STEP No.	WHAT	WHO	WHEN	WHERE
	1	Prayer meeting to present block party proposal to church.	Pastor	6-12 mos.	
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12	Place ads in newspaper (and on radio and T.V., if necessary)	Promotion director	6 wks.	
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14	Begin promotion of EBP in church newsletter and bulletin	Promotion director	4 wks.	
15	Witness training session	Pastor and witnessing team leader	4 wks.	
16	Distribute flyers, hang posters	Promotion director	1 wk.	
17	Reconfirm all arrangements, permits hospitality, food, clothing worker, and workers	Pastor and committees assigned	1 wk.	
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22	Visit and contact all prospects	Witness team leader and trained witnesses	Immediately	

### **Prayer Team Leader**

This is the most important thing you will do in preparation for an evangelistic block party. You are entering enemy territory when you seek the lost. Satan will try to discourage and disrupt everything you do. Feed, clothe, help, and comfort a person and Satan will not bother you. But share the gospel of Jesus Christ and Satan will block you and oppose you from every corner. Prayer is necessary to pull down the strongholds of the Evil One. Through prayer the Holy Spirit is given control of our every effort. Prayer will give those witnessing at the EBP strength and confidence. Prayer is also a recognition of dependence upon God, who alone is able to bring the lost to salvation.

The local church should present the plans for the evangelistic block party in a prayer meeting with the entire congregation. The church should agree to reach out in this way. An EBP is not a special group activity. It should be a total church activity. Involve every member in this work, including praying for and encouraging workers. Pray also at this meeting that the right people will be chosen to assist the pastor in the EBP's leadership.

After approval by the church, praying for the EBP should be a priority at every church meeting. Each EBP planning session should also include a special prayer time. Conduct a special prayer meeting the night before your EBP. This should involve the entire church. Pray for witnesses and workers who will serve in each capacity. Pray for good weather and God's protection of everyone involved. Pray that the Holy Spirit will be in control of all that happens. Most special prayer meetings last about an hour. Some churches have an all-night prayer meeting for special EBPs. Start your prayer meetings at 7:14 p.m. to emphasize 2 Chronicles 7:14 (KJV): "If my people, which are

called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

Immediately following the EBP gather the workers and have a short victory prayer meeting and testimony time. Include prayers of thanksgiving for what the Lord did. Let some of the witnesses and workers share blessings that God gave during the day. These testimonies should be short and positive.

Do not plan an evangelistic block party unless you are sure that God wants this kind of outreach to be done. You will certainly need His power and blessing to bring it about successfully. Pray!

### **Prayer Guide**

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Finally, the coordinator should work with the pastor to appoint a group to be in charge of setting up for the party and cleaning up afterward. This team should also assist in parking and security matters, if necessary. Set up clothing and food tables and set out trashcans in the shade, if possible. Put up tarps or tents if there is very little shade.

A food and clothing coordinator should stock the following for an EBP involving an expected 500 people.

## Nonfood Items

200 marked New Testaments 200 witnessing booklets

White paper tablecloths enough to cover every table

One box plastic food handling gloves

60 pounds charcoal briquettes Lighter fuel

500 paper plates

500 napkins

500 plastic cups (hot and cold type)

500 forks, spoons, and knives Large plastic garbage bags Two rolls of paper towels

Two twenty-five gallon cooking pots

Four steam table-serving pans Serving spoons

Serving forks

Three large folding tables

One pot each for serving punch and tea

Nametags for all workers

Clothing clean and ready for immediate use

Registration forms

Direction signs to registration, rest rooms, and parking

Folding chairs, if possible

Church promotional brochures

Gifts to be given at designated times during the event Sound system

1,000 plastic or paper bags for giveaway food and clothes

## Menu Items

The meal is of utmost importance at an EBP. Barbecue chicken, rice, and beans have almost universal appeal. Hot dogs should be available for children. A description of a delicious and cost-effective meal for an evangelistic block party involving 500 people is included below. Comprehensive recipes are not provided, but some general hints will help you as you prepare:

### **Barbecue Chicken:**

200 pounds chicken (frozen or fresh) 3-4 gallons barbecue sauce

1 pound Cajun spice to season chicken

2 sets grill utensils

3 barbecue brushes

2 steam table serving pans

Wash the chicken thoroughly in cold salt water before cooking. Consider using a meat thermometer to ensure the chicken is cooked thoroughly before serving. Rent or borrow a large trailer-type barbecue grill. If you cannot find one then the small backyard type will do, but it will take more time to cook. You will need about 10 small grills.

### **Beans**

40 pounds pinto beans

Wash and soak the beans all night before cooking. Put seasoning meat such as a ham hock into the beans. Add two #2 cans of stewed tomatoes and six small cans of tomato paste to the beans. Season beans with chili powder, garlic powder, salt, and pepper.

**Rice**

30 pounds rice (long grain—cooking time is 10-15 minutes if placed into boiling water).

After washing the rice, cook with butter and salt.

**Drinks**

25-30 pounds crushed ice 5 gallons of punch syrup

2 pounds of powdered tea 5 pounds of sugar for tea

**Hot Dogs**

If you choose to have hot dogs for the children, you will need the following:

20 packages hot dogs, or about 10 pounds 20 packages of hot dog buns

1 large bottle mustard

1 large bottle ketchup

1 large jar relish

Cover the tables with a paper or cloth tablecloth for the serving line. Servers should wear plastic serving gloves while serving food.

You will also need for the clothing and nonperishable food items you will be giving away. Place giveaway clothing and food tables away from the serving line.

**Promotion Director**

Select a promotion director. This person will be in charge of getting the word out about the evangelistic block party. Print attractive publicity flyers. If people of different ethnicities are present in the neighborhood you have chosen for the EBP, print flyers in their languages. Enlist a task force to distribute the flyers door-to-door no sooner than three days before the block party. Cover the area you want to reach. Door-to-door flyers,

signs in front of the church, and posters in neighborhood stores also work well. Hang posters a week before the block party.

### **Promotion Of The Evangelistic Block Party**

In the promotion of the evangelistic block party, people need to know:

What it is

Where it is

When it occurs

What time it starts

Who is sponsoring it

That it is free

Advertising the evangelistic block party is important. The best method of getting the word out is the door-to-door flyer. In some areas this can be followed by a mobile loudspeaker system going around the neighborhood reminding people that the block party will be held in the next two hours. Radio, television, and newspaper advertisements are generally not as successful, but can be used in some areas. Public service announcements are preferred over paid advertisement to keep overall costs down.

Do not promote the event too far in advance. People tend to forget. One week before the event should be adequate time. Some churches see their best results by distributing flyers on the day before a basic evangelistic block party and even on the morning of the block party. Also, you should have some volunteers walking through the neighborhood during the block party, urging people to come.

### Printed Materials

Posters and flyers can be used interchangeably if the size is small enough. Flyers can be copied onto heavy, colorful cardstock. Post them in shop windows, bus stops, and other visible areas. Put them in places where the many people will see them. Ask permission before you place the posters. This will foster good relationships within the community.

Here is a good rule of thumb: If you want 100 people to come, put out 1,000 flyers door-to-door. If you want 50, then put out 500. Usually, one person will attend for every 10 flyers you place at the doors. If you add posters, the number of people responding will increase. Also, if you add a loudspeaker announcing the EBP in the neighborhood on the day of the party, your numbers will be larger. The main object of advertising is to let people know about the EBP in a clear and inviting way. Do not be afraid to design your own flyers. Make them as attractive and professional as possible. Some ads and press releases are included for your newsletter.

### **Training For The Evangelistic Block Party**

Two training sessions are necessary for the evangelistic block party an initial training session and a witness training session.

#### Initial Training Session

At the initial training session, perhaps two months before the block party, inform volunteers of their duties and give them job descriptions. Duties of each position are listed under The Priority of Personnel in the chapter entitled “Conducting an Evangelistic Block Party.” This meeting should be an organizational meeting as well as an instructional one. The pastor should meet with all the volunteers.

At this session goals and a calendar of meetings and deadlines for securing materials should be determined. See the planning sheet for a suggested calendar of a basic evangelistic block party. Other planning meetings should be convened whenever necessary.

### Witness Training Session

The witness training session is the most important of the training sessions. Plan the witness training session four weeks before the block party. Schedule additional witness training times, if necessary, to ensure that enough witnesses will be equipped to share Christ at your EBP. Few, if any, people will receive Christ if no witness training is held. Teach trainees to share Christ boldly in a friendly, caring, compassionate, yet brief manner. Several training options are included later in this chapter.

### **Using Witnessing Booklets**

Witnessing booklets are an effective way to communicate the gospel at an EBP. Many, however, are much too long and detailed for a brief witness. A list of excellent witnessing booklets for street and open-air evangelism is contained in Appendix B at the end of this manual. Use them in the following manner:

“Hello, Mr. and Mrs. Williams. I'm Monty McWhorter. I'm working with this church today on this block party. We are doing this because we want you to know that we care for you, but better than this, Jesus cares about you. We'd like to give you a booklet. It is free and tells how to know Jesus Christ personally. Here it is; would you like it? Great! May I show you how to use it? It will only take a few minutes.”



Note that the term “booklet” is used instead of “tract;” it seems to be accepted better. Witnessing booklets are less expensive and easier to use than New Testaments. A witnessing booklet, however, usually has little or no follow-up, and the new Christian does not go away with a New Testament in their possession.

### **Using Marked New Testaments**

The marked New Testament method of witnessing is very effective at a block party. Eight powerful Scripture verses have been selected and organized in an efficient way to witness. The presentation ends with an invitation to pray and accept Christ as Savior and Lord. You can mark your own Bible or order already marked New Testaments to give away. Use it in this manner:

“Hello, Mr. Torres, I'm Bill Sims. I'm working with this church today. We want you to know that we care for you, but even better, Jesus cares about you. We'd like to give you a free New Testament. Here it is; would you like it? Great! May I show you how to use it? It will only take a few minutes, and I will only read eight verses to you.”

“In the Introduction it says to turn to page 144. We turn there and we read the bold print at the top of the page it says REALIZE YOU ARE A SINNER. Now look at the underlined verse. It says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." At the bottom of the page we are told to turn to page 146.”

“We turn to that page and the bold print says, YOUR PENALTY FOR SIN IS DEATH. The underlined verse by the arrow says, ‘For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.’ I admit both those

pages told us something bad. But the bottom of this page tells us to turn to page 217 now comes the good news.

“The top of this page says, **CHRIST PAID YOUR PENALTY**. The underlined verse says, ‘For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.’ The bottom of the page tells you to turn to page 113, where we read the first of three things God wants you to do in order to inherit eternal life.

“First, **YOU MUST REPENT**. The underlined verse says, ‘Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing shall come from the Lord.’ The note on the bottom says to turn to page 180 for the second thing God wants you to do in order to inherit this eternal life.

“The top of this page says, **YOU MUST ACCEPT CHRIST BY FAITH**. The underlined verse says, ‘For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.’ The bottom note says turn to page 149. This notes the last of the three things God wants you to do in order to inherit eternal life.

“The bold statement says, **YOU MUST CONFESS HIM AS LORD**. The underlined verse says, ‘That if you will confess with your mouth ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.’”

“Oh, the next and last verse is so beautiful! It simply says, ‘for Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ That means you and me, Mr. Torres.

Would you call upon the name of the Lord and be saved? In the back of this New Testament is this little prayer, ‘Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I know you died on the cross for me. I now turn from my sins and ask you to forgive me. I now invite you into my heart and life. I now trust you as Savior and follow you as Lord. Thank you for saving me. Amen.’

“Mr. Torres, pray that little prayer with me right now, mean it in your heart, and God will give you eternal life. I'll read it to you slowly and you can pray it silently in your heart. Let's bow our heads.”

At this point, lead the person to pray and receive Christ. After they pray begin immediate follow-up.

Does this method work? Yes! It has been used hundreds of times in California, Arizona, Texas, and many other states. It has been used in the inner city, in the country, in suburban homes, and in streets, parks, beaches, and at special events. The marked New Testament is inexpensive and people can easily be trained to use it. Adults, youth, and even older children have been taught to witness successfully using this method. More people accept the free Bible than accept a witnessing booklet. The block party guest has a New Testament to read, study, and use for years to come.

Those who continue as evangelistic block party witnesses should take further training in witnessing. The NET, an excellent witness training program from NAMB, is a good place to start.

Involve evangelistic block party witnesses in Sunday School outreach and church visitation before they attempt to share Christ at the block party. This gives team members practice and builds their confidence and effectiveness. Find areas where your EBP witnessing team can practice before the event. Parks, sporting events, and street witnessing are good training grounds.

### **Follow Up Director**

Many people will show up for your evangelistic block party. Some will show a real interest in your church, and many will be saved. How do you get them to come to church? How do you get them to make their decisions public? How do you give new followers of Jesus further training to mature them in Christ? This is what follow-up is all about.

Evangelistic block parties provide an excellent strategy for follow-up. Most of the participants will live in the neighborhood you have chosen. They will have an address close to the site of your party. They will probably be within your church's field of ministry.

Effective follow-up begins the moment people come to your party. You must register every guest and record every decision made at the party. This will enable you to be ready for future follow-up visits, telephone invitations, or communication by mail.

A well-defined, highly visible, and easily accessible registration area should be established and staffed. Each family should be identified and each person individually signed up. Registration materials may be produced locally. Names, addresses, telephone numbers, age classifications, church affiliation, and other helpful information should be on the forms. You may register people who attend by "funneling" them by the

registration table on the way into the party area. Also, a door prize provides a non-threatening reason to register guests. The gifts to be given at the drawings may be contributed by local business operators. A boom box, a football or baseball signed by a professional athlete, or a gift certificate are excellent gifts.

You should be especially friendly at the EBP, welcoming guests to the event as well as inviting them to church on Sunday. You may want to provide a creative "bridge" to your Sunday service which will probably be the next day, since most block parties are on Saturdays. A bridge could be a special children's activity at Sunday School, a free ticket for ice cream after the Sunday night worship service, or a recognition honoring those who attend the EBP at the Sunday morning worship service.

Train each witness to use the "Personal Commitment Guide," available from the North American Mission Board. This guide provides information about salvation, assurance of salvation, church membership, rededication to Christ, and commitment to church vocation. It also has a commitment card in the back that can be used for registering the decisions made. Use the section called "Toward Christian Maturity" as an introduction to your church's follow-up program.

Emphasize to counselors the importance of getting accurate information about each respondent. Train counselors to begin to assimilate respondents into the total church program. The best way to do this is to make sure the witness is involved in the church's Discipleship Training and Bible study programs.

Gather all personal commitment cards and enrollment forms and give them to the pastor or his designee. If the writing on some of the cards and forms is not legible, locate the witnesses and make corrections on the day of the block party rather than a later date.

Arrange for a follow-up visit with each person who accepts Christ. Ideally, the person who counseled the new believer should be the one to make this contact. If this is not possible, distribute the name of the person who receives Christ to an experienced follow-up team member to visit within two weeks of the EBP. Deliver materials to help this new believer grow as a Christian.

The witness should invite those he or she shares with to come to church. He or she should be willing to pick them up, meet them on Sunday morning in front of the church, introduce them to the proper Bible study class, or sit with them on the first day of class and worship. Do anything necessary to get them to church! You have introduced them to Christ; now introduce them to your church, His body. The work of follow-up should be bathed in prayer. Make prayer a priority. This will determine the long-term success or failure of your block party. All witnessing efforts and hard work of the evangelistic block party will be sustained if you take the job of follow-up seriously.

### **Ministries That Can Result From The Evangelistic Block Party**

An evangelistic block party unites evangelism and ministry. Jesus practiced this kind of evangelism. He fed, blessed, healed, taught, and cared about people and their problems. He was always involved with the people to whom He ministered.

As you plan and execute your evangelistic block party, you will see many people come to Christ. Other things frequently happen as the result of a successful EBP. Although evangelism is the primary goal of an evangelistic block party, the following are some ministries that may result from your EBP. Some are followed by further explanation and resources.

Worship attendance

Sunday School and Bible study attendance

Discipleship programs Start a pastor's basic Bible class for new Christians. Give every new church member and new convert a Survival Kit For New Christians.

After studying the kit, you may choose to begin MasterLife, which is a more comprehensive discipleship program. Both are available from LifeWay Christian Resources.

Food pantry

Clothes closet

Language ministry—Some churches will realize the need for a service in the native language of some of the neighbors they have met in their party. You can start language Bible classes and worship services for a particular language group.

English-as-a-Second Language Classes Using the English-as-a-Second Language (ESOL) method of teaching you can teach English to someone without knowing his or her language.

Literacy classes

Special services for the homeless

Drug and alcohol substance abuse aid

Family crisis counseling

Food to the elderly

Child care

Medical care

New churches Block parties provide a tremendous way to start a church. People from the same area congregate in one location. They hear the message of Christ. The host

church can use the EBP to establish a core group of interested people to form a mission congregation.

These are only some of the many ministries you could become involved with in your church. You will probably discover many more needs at your EBP. God will help you envision ways to meet these needs. Pray and ask God to show you His strategy to reach out in love and compassion.

### New Churches

A church planter's initial activity among an unreached people group is evangelism. A church planter identifies a group of people who do not have a church. Having identified the people group, the church planter or church-planting team begins developing relationships that communicate Jesus' love, and intentional evangelism takes place.

The evangelistic block party can be part of the overall church-planting strategy. Its place in the strategy can be one of the relationship-building activities that establish credibility with the people group being targeted. Using an evangelistic block party can result in accelerating the number of relationships formed through a church-planting effort. In addition to people who experience a focused commitment to Christ during the block party, others may acknowledge Christ as Lord of their lives as a result of relationships begun during the evangelistic block party.

The church-planting strategy similar to the following should be developed:

1. Study and Research
  - A. Identify the unreached people
  - B. Study demographics



- C. Conduct interviews with people among the unreached focus group
2. Cultivate the Focus Group
    - A. Build relationships among people in the focus group
    - B. Carry out ministry activities to meet needs identified in the interviews
    - C. Cultivate those who make positive responses
    - D. Initiate and conduct community activities as appropriate
    - E. Begin intensive cultivation
    - F. Begin Bible study groups
    - G. Conduct Backyard Bible Clubs for one or two weeks in various locations
    - H. Hold an evangelistic block party
  3. Worship in a Larger Group Setting
    - A. Provide worship opportunities in a style compatible with the target group
    - B. Involve new Christians in planning and conducting worship activities

In this strategy, the evangelistic block party is a significant bridge from cultivative activities and separate Bible study groups to a larger corporate body. It provides a unique opportunity for the newly emerging church to gain an identity in its own community. Also, Christians can express their faith in their own context. Their witness will be more meaningful than a witness imported from outside the target group.

### **Taking The Initiative In An Evangelistic Block Party**

Successful witnessing has been defined as taking the initiative to share Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God. This definition of witnessing stresses several important ingredients, but at the beginning is “taking the initiative.”

Keep the spirit of the evangelistic block party alive in your church. Do not stop caring and lose your burden for the lost. The harvest is truly plenteous. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send more laborers. Will you take the initiative to share Christ through an evangelistic block party soon?

## VITA

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